Rachmaninoff, Horowitz, and the discursive arena between (re)composition and performance: The case of Rachmaninoff’s Piano Sonata, Opus 36.

by

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Supervisor: Prof. Z. Potgieter
For my dad...

who never really understood, but accepted,

encouraged and supported my every venture.

Thank you.
Declaration

By submitting this treatise, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining qualification.

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Preface: Acknowledgements

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Summary

This treatise aims to uncover possible reasons as to why composers rework their compositions. In attempting to answer questions regarding musical and extra-musical (referential) criteria, surrounding conditions and the role performers play in acting as conduits of the aforementioned, the study focuses on three versions of Rachmaninoff’s second Piano Sonata, opus 36. The first of these was composed in 1913, the second constitutes the composer’s revision of this work in 1931, and the third, a subsequent amalgamation of both previously mentioned versions by pianist Horowitz in 1943.

The research is grounded in the theoretical ideas of organicist musical structuralism and thematic/motivic transformation (Reti), musical hermeneutics and phenomenology, musical forces (Larsen) and authenticity in musical performance (Taruskin). In addition this study explores methods of critical reading that may be used to disclose the conflicting yet complementary demands of “conciseness” and “drama” contained within the parameters of the three aforementioned versions of Rachmaninoff’s Piano Sonata Op. 36.

An introductory chapter is followed by one in which a historical context provides the intertextual matrix against which the musical personae of Rachmaninoff and Horowitz, as well as the three versions of Rachmaninoff’s Piano Sonata Op. 36, may be understood. The chapter thereafter provides a concise overview of the history of musical analysis and the Tendenzwende which signified the change from a purely positivistic analytical approach to a post-modernist perspective on musical critique, against which background a motivation is provided for the analytical approaches applied in this treatise. Chapters 4 and 5 present detailed readings of the sonata from the perspective of “conciseness” and “drama” respectively. In conclusion, the final chapter reflects on findings made and conclusion drawn, with particular reference to the authenticity debate in current musicological discourse.
Key words

Rachmaninoff; Horowitz; Reti; Larson; Analysis; Piano Sonata Opus 36; (re)composition.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction to this Study

1.1 Aim of this Study

It often happens that composers find it necessary to rework their compositions. Reasons motivating such actions can be extensive, and these raise a number of questions. For example, what criteria – musical or extra musical (referential) - are involved in creating a structurally sound work with artistic intent and aesthetic value? Under what conditions would a composer consider a work previously written to no longer meet with these criteria? In addition, what role do performers play in acting, on the one hand, as the conduits of these criteria, but on the other hand, as inevitably bringing to bear upon this music that brand of performative authenticity that Richard Taruskin describes as the “need [for] values of our own and the courage to live up to them, whatever the music we perform” (1984: 10)?

In attempting to answer these questions, this study will focus on the interesting case of three versions of Rachmaninoff’s second Piano Sonata, opus 36. The first of these was composed by Rachmaninoff in 1913, the second constitutes his own revision of this work in 1931, and the third, a subsequent revision thereof by pianist Horowitz in 1943. Various analytical approaches will serve to facilitate a disclosure of the many dimensions of intertextuality in the (re)composition and performance of these three versions of the work in question.

From a phenomenological point of view, Koffka reminds us that any act of analysis or explanation should begin with an attempt at locating the objects of our study within an appropriate environmental field (Koffka 1935: 73). Thus, as a point of departure, a historical perspective on both Rachmaninoff and Horowitz will be given. From a Barthesian perspective their shared Russian heritage, education and training in the Russian piano tradition and their mutual immigration to a foreign country links them intrinsically on various intertextual levels, and inevitably influences their approach to their respective reworkings of this sonata.
Second, a Retian analysis of the respective musical scores will serve to highlight structural differences between the aforementioned three versions of this work.

Third, a critical reading of both Rachmaninoff and Horowitz reveals an inherent performative instinct – both being highly regarded concert pianists - which manifests clearly in their reworkings of this sonata. Thus the environment becomes ideal to uncover the three-dimensional ‘geometry of [musical] experience’ – composer, performer and perceiver/listener. In the words of Thomas Clifton:

...the theoretical act will consist not only of observing the music, but also of observing the self observing the music. If music theory wishes to be objective, it can do no better than to ground objectivity in the act of experiencing, and to attempt (at some risk, to be sure) to reveal the geometry of experience (Clifton 1983: 37).

Clifton’s phenomenological approach to musical analysis addresses the questions of what we hear, why we hear, and how we hear as we listen to a performance (Tenney 1985: 198). An understanding of the ‘sense’ of any action must first be formed before any analysis of the conditions surrounding its creation can be done, and this also requires consideration of questions relating to musical hermeneutics (Dahlhaus 1983: 72), which in the case of this study will find ultimate manifestation in a comparative analysis based on Steve Larsen’s theory of musical forces (Larsen 2012).

Fourth, the relative importance we ultimately attach to each of these reworkings positions the object of this study midway in the authenticity debate. Taruskin rightly remarks that “we may ask nonetheless whether the better performance [...] heard was better because it was more faithful to the music in some obscure way, or because it perfectly suited [the performer’s] tastes as another's rendition could not?” (1995: 53). This study will therefore conclude by taking issue against the modernist position of musical authenticity as equivalent to Werktreue, and citing these three versions of Rachmaninoff’s second Piano Sonata as evidence instead of the need to understand musical authenticity as one wherein

[...] the object is not to duplicate the sounds of the past, for if that were our aim we would never know whether we had succeeded. What we are aiming at, rather, is the startling shock of newness, of immediacy, the sense of
rightness that occurs when after countless frustrating experiments we feel as though we have achieved the identification of [our own] performance style with the demands of the music […] as the hallmark of a living tradition (Taruskin 1984: 11).

1.2 Context / Rationale

In 1913, Russian-born composer, pianist and conductor, Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943) composed his second Piano Sonata, Opus 36. At that time he had already established an international reputation as one of the greatest pianists of his day and had undertaken various tours outside of his home country, being particularly well received in Germany and America. Harold Schonberg states:

> He returned to his homeland [from America], made European tours, [and] became one of the idols of musical Russia… (Schonberg 1987: 396).

Together with pianists, composers and pedagogues including Rubinstein, Safonov, Zverev, Siloti, Gabrilowitsch, Joseph and Rosina Lhevinne, Blumenfeld, and modern descendents including Horowitz, Gilels, Richter and Ashkenazy, Rachmaninoff became a significant contributor to the great tradition of the old Russian Piano School (Gerig 1974: 292-293).

In 1917, following the events of the Russian Revolution, Rachmaninoff and his family were forced to flee Russia, and finally settled in America the following year.

> He received offers from American orchestras […] But Rachmaninoff felt unprepared; his symphonic repertory was too small. So to the piano he went. […] Almost immediately [he] secured for himself a place among the piano immortals (Schonberg 1985: 314-315).

Rachmaninoff was never entirely at ease in his new surroundings, however, and suffered the rest of his life from intense homesickness and melancholia as a result of his longing for the Russia he had once known. Plaskin mentions that “[his] frequent depressions – in fact, the melancholy for which he was legendary – were largely the result of an acute homesickness, which only increased as the years passed” (Plaskin 1983: 186). In this time the composer often became discontent with his earlier
works, and took to constantly revising them (Norris 1973), and his second Piano Sonata was no exception. In 1931 a second version of this work thus emerged, which Rachmaninoff motivated as follows:

I look at my early works and see how much there is that is superfluous. Even in this sonata so many voices are moving simultaneously and it is too long. Chopin’s Sonata [Op.35] lasts nineteen minutes, and all has been said (Rachmaninoff in Swann 1944: 8).

In 1928, Rachmaninoff met and befriended compatriot Vladimir Horowitz, who had also settled in America and who was enjoying an illustrious career, widely acknowledged as one of the greatest pianists of the 20th century (Walsh 2008). The two musicians had the highest regard for each other and maintained their close friendship until Rachmaninoff’s death in 1943. Horowitz was well-known for his unconventional yet spectacular pianistic technique, greatly admired by some but frowned upon by others (Schonberg 1985), and for his transcriptions of works by other composers (Schonberg 1992). In addition he would not hesitate to alter compositions if he felt the composer had been guilty of unpianistic writing or structural clumsiness. “If once in a while he strongly felt that it involved touching up the notes, then Horowitz had no hesitation to do so…” (Schonberg 1985: 413). Rachmaninoff’s second Piano Sonata, Opus 36, also did not escape Horowitz’s critical scrutiny. Of Rachmaninoff’s 1931 revision of this work, Horowitz commented as follows:

What might have been gained in conciseness of expression had been outweighed by losses in pianistic sonority and drama (Horowitz in Martyn 1990: 323).

In 1943, therefore, with the consent of Rachmaninoff, Horowitz proceeded to produce his own version of this work, drawing from both the original version of 1913 and Rachmaninoff’s own revision of 1931:

Still others, including (famously) Vladimir Horowitz [...] performed and recorded their own amalgams of the 1913 and 1931 versions (in Horowitz's case, with Rachmaninov's blessing) (Carruthers 2006: 48).
The “others” to which Carruthers refers quite aside, today Horowitz’s version of this sonata has acquired an authenticity equalling, if not rivalling, both of the Rachmaninoff versions.

Historical circumstances surrounding these three versions of Rachmaninoff’s Piano Sonata Opus 36 spur a number of questions concerning authorial and performative authenticity, pertinent not only in this particular case, but also with significant implications for musicological discourse in general, where for some time now debates have occurred around, on the one hand, the older Modernist notion of musical authenticity as equivalent to *Werktreue*, emanating from the assumption of the ultimate authority of what Roland Barthes has called “the author-God” (Barthes 1977: 146), and on the other hand, the so-called New Musicology and its embracing of “performativity” in the Barthesian sense of “a rare [sonic] form (exclusively given in the first person and in the present tense) in which the enunciation has no other content [...] than the act by which it is uttered” (Ibid: 145-146). As such they lend themselves well to textual analysis in the Barthesian sense, which opposes structural analysis insofar as the musical work is understood

( [...] as production of *significance* and not as philological object [or] custodian of the Letter). Such an analysis endeavours to 'see' each particular text in its difference - which does not mean in its ineffable individuality, for this difference is 'woven' in familiar codes; it conceives the text as taken up in an open network which is the very infinity of [music], itself structured without closure; it tries to say no longer from where the text comes (historical criticism), nor even how it is made (structural analysis), but how it is unmade, how it explodes, disseminates - by what coded paths it goes off (Ibid: 126-127).

These notions resonate well with contemporary understandings of musical performances – and indeed also of scholarly readings of musical works – as acts of (re)composition. In this regard Harrison states:

The fact remains that musical meaning is elusive and ephemeral. The character and, in a sense, even the identity of a work continue to evolve as they undergo successive interpretations, and the extent to which they can
The authentic status of all three versions of the sonata - and their obvious intertextual connections - is further strengthened by the musical friendship between Rachmaninoff the composer-performer and Horowitz the performer, and also by their joint “membership” of the highly regarded Russian Piano School of the late 1800’s and early 1900’s. These intertextual connections – both of the work and its three renditions and of the two musicians involved - deserve further scrutiny.

Furthermore, Horowitz’s claim that two contrasting - in some respects mutually exclusive - musical considerations are at stake here, requires further thought. On the one hand he concedes that Rachmaninoff’s 1931 version of the work has “gained in conciseness of expression”, but, on the other hand, bemoans its resultant “losses in pianistic sonority and drama”. In this treatise therefore, these two considerations will form the basis for the comparative analysis of all three versions of the work. An evaluation of the relative merits of each of these versions of the work will ultimately be made accordingly, and the relevance of these findings in the light of the ongoing authenticity debate in musicological discourse will be considered.

1.3 Research Design

1.3.1 Theoretical Underpinning

This study is of a qualitative, critical nature, grounded in the following theoretical ideas: organicist musical structuralism and thematic/motivic transformation (Reti), musical hermeneutics and phenomenology, musical forces (Larsen) and authenticity in musical performance (Taruskin).
1.3.2 Research Problem Statement

This study seeks to explore methods of critical reading that may be used to effectively disclose the conflicting yet complementary demands of “conciseness” and “drama”, with reference to Rachmaninoff’s 1913 and 1931 versions of his second Piano Sonata Op. 36, and to Horowitz’s version of the same work in 19431.

1.3.3 Research Methods

A number of research methods will be undertaken to meet the aim of this study.

Firstly, a critique will be given of the historical circumstances surrounding the lives of Rachmaninoff and Horowitz, their musical friendship, their respective connections to the so-called “great Russian Piano School”, and their respective renditions of the musical work that is the subject of this study. This critique will be aimed at identifying the many intertextual layers that have bearing on the understanding and appreciation of all three versions of this sonata.

Secondly, a Retian structural analysis will be undertaken to disclose those aspects of Rachmaninoff’s musical thinking (both in 1913 and in 1931) that answer to the need for “conciseness of expression”, the significance of which is highlighted by Rachmaninoff’s own admission of the need to rid the work of all that is “superfluous”. Emigration to a new country and new socio-economic circumstances had a radical effect on Rachmaninoff, and in his “American Period” his piano music underwent a change of style (Lasarenko 1988). Efstratiou is of the opinion that “the motivic work in the later music, far from the sentimentality which one would assume from reading popular criticism, is highly concentrated” (Efstratiou 1995). A Retian approach “proposes that the organic unity and the aesthetic quality of a musical work derive from a basic melodic shape and its transformations” (Schwejda 1967). Despite this sonata having three distinct movements, it is “really a continuous work

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1 This treatise relies on the amalgamated score of Horowitz’s 1943 performance of the sonata, although the two Horowitz performances included on Appendix B, to which the analysis of musical forces in chapter 5 refer, are based on his subsequent recorded performances of this same work in 1968 and 1980 respectively.
with much thematic cross-reference between them [movements]” (Matthew-Walker 1993: 31). From this perspective the commensurability of Rachmaninoff’s and Reti’s organicist structural aesthetic is evident, and Reti’s theories of thematic transformation provide a particularly apposite critical lens through which to appreciate Rachmaninoff’s self-confessed attempts at structural economy.

Thirdly, in order to avoid sole “reliance upon the formal systems which are artefacts of theoretical reflection on music” (Bowman 1989), and in keeping with the post-modernist approach to music criticism rather than music analysis, Rachmaninoff’s two versions of this work as well Horowitz’s amalgamated version of 1943 will be scrutinised for their musical and pianistic “drama”, from the point of view of the performativity of the work. Harrison emphasises the precedence of the performative experience over the structural or analytical one when he states that “[...] we need to remember that the performance, not the work in its abstract, written form, should be the centre of interest” (Harrison 2005: 3); furthermore, that “music can exist only if it reflects the inner life of humanity, not the outer life of its technology” (Wilder in Harrison 2005: 353). Within the general context of hermeneutics and phenomenology, in this study performativity will be sought in particular in a comparative reading of the three versions in question of this work by way of Larsen’s theory of musical forces (Larsen 2012). This will include reference both to the three versions of the score itself (see Appendix A) and to four performances of the work (see Appendix B). The latter will also be read in the context of Taruskin’s understanding of performance as (re)composition in which “performers are essentially corrupters” (Taruskin 1995: 13), and in which the notion of performative authenticity is defined as “knowing what you are, and acting in accordance with that knowledge [...] having what Rousseau called a 'sentiment of being' that is independent of the values, opinions and demands of others” (Taruskin 1984: 1).

1.3.4 Research Objectives

This study has attempted to address the following research objectives:
3.4.1 To explore the notions “conciseness of expression” and musical “drama” in a historical context, from the point of view of the so-called Russian Piano School in general and of Rachmaninoff and Horowitz in particular, and to determine intertextual dimensions accordingly.

3.4.2 To provide a concise overview of approaches to musical analysis, and to motivate the selection of analytical methods thus made.

3.4.3 To consider the original work of 1913 and the composer’s revision of it in 1931 from the point of view of “conciseness of expression” by means of a Retian organicist structural score analysis of their thematic and motivic transformation processes.

3.4.4 To consider all three versions of this work from the point of view of musical “drama”, with general reference to hermeneutics and phenomenology, and with a particular emphasis on the analysis of musical forces and performative experiences.

3.4.5 To conclude from the above critique and analysis a nuanced reading of the relative value of each of the three versions of Rachmaninoff’s Piano Sonata, Opus 36.

3.4.6 To reflect on the relevance of these conclusions for musicological discourse in general, with particular reference to notions of authenticity.

1.4 Literature Study

Aside from the critical and theoretical sources cited in the previous sections of this document, this treatise draws from the following existing body of knowledge pertaining to the focus of its study.

1.4.1 Sergei Rachmaninoff

There exists a great deal of literature dealing with the life and works of Rachmaninoff in general, although all of these sources are not equally objective in their tone or reputable in terms of the information they provide. Many sources
dating from the first half of the 20th century, although decisive at that time and even to this day in the extent to which they influenced generally-held perceptions of the composer, have for the most part since been refuted by contemporary scholarship in this field.

In this regard Harrison’s *Rachmaninoff: Life, Works, Recordings* (2005) is an invaluable source, providing scholars with well-researched factual data as well as profound insights into the composer from a contemporary critical and post-modern point of view. Haylock’s *Rachmaninov: An essential guide to his life and works* (1996), Martyn’s *Rachmaninoff: composer, pianist, conductor* (1990) and Walker’s *Rachmaninoff, his life and times* (1980) are equally reliable sources from which this study draws an overview of Rachmaninoff’s life and work in general. Further sources available include those focussed on Rachmaninoff as performer and recording artist (e.g. Norris 1973), whereas Swann and Swann (1944) provide rare insights into the private life and thoughts of the composer.

1.4.2 Rachmaninoff’s Piano Sonata, Opus 36.

Detailed studies of Rachmaninoff’s second Piano Sonata include Theodore’s *Piano Sonata no. 2 in B flat minor, opus 36: Sergei Rachmaninov. The formal and technical differences of the two versions analysed and compared* (1982) whose focus on “formal and technical differences” in the two Rachmaninoff versions addresses but one aspect of the insights this treatise attempts to provide. Nelson’s *Rachmaninoff’s Second Piano Sonata Op. 36: Towards the Creation of an Alternative Performance Version* (2006) examines recorded performances of two different so-called “combined” versions of this sonata in an attempt to extract from the performances possible reasons which would merit an ideal “combined” version. The analysis is limited to the “performers’ choice” and consideration of various empirical elements.

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2 In addition to those briefly described above, the author is also cognisant of A. Tamura’s *The revision of Rachmaninoff’s second piano sonata, op. 36* (2008), an unpublished doctoral dissertation from the University of Ulster in Belfast, Ireland, and KM. Lasarenko’s *A style change in Rachmaninoff's piano music as seen in the second piano sonata in B-flat minor, opus 36 (1913 and 1931 versions)* (1988), an unpublished doctoral dissertation from Ohio State University in Columbus, USA, but was unable to secure copies of these for the purposes of this study, despite every effort to do so.
– like technical difficulty, texture, structure and sonority – in music. Nelson concedes that: “It would not be possible to create an [ideal] alternative performance version [...] For as long as there are musical, sensibly intelligent performers [...] there will be new, alternative versions with a view to effective performance” (Nelson 2006: 71). Van Zyl’s *Motivic unity in Rachmaninoff’s piano sonata no. 2 in B-flat minor, op. 36* (1993) presents a structural analysis of the 1931 version of the sonata only, in which motives and their appearance in various guises throughout the composition are identified, thus this study is also more limited in its intended scope than is the present treatise.

1.4.3 Vladimir Horowitz

Horowitz is remembered not only as a concert pianist but also as an entertainer. Sources that provide the greatest insight into this enigmatic character therefore derive from those authors who are able to relate their personal encounters with him. Two authors are particularly valuable sources of information and reflection in this latter regard; Dubal’s contributions include *The Art of the Piano* (1989), *Evenings with Horowitz: A Personal Portrait* (1991) and *Remembering Horowitz: 125 Pianists Recall a Legend* (1993), whereas Schonberg’s *Horowitz: His Life and Music* (1992) is equally insightful. The most thorough biography of Horowitz, however, is Plaskin’s *Biography of Vladimir Horowitz* (1983), which has therefore served as an invaluable source of reliable information for the purposes of this study.

1.4.4 Musical Scores

Sources that have served as a basis for the comparative score analyses of Rachmaninoff’s 1913 and 1931 versions of this sonata are taken from the 1947 Boosey and Hawkes editions of these, and are reproduced as the first two lines on each page of Appendix A of this treatise. Horowitz’s reworking of these as exists in his recorded performance of 1943, has never been published. This author is thus
indebted to pianist Masatoshi Yamaguchi\textsuperscript{3} who in 1998 compiled an unofficial score, taken from the two Boosey and Hawkes editions of 1947, and derived from the Horowitz recordings in question. This reworking is included as line 3 on each page of Appendix A.

\textbf{1.4.5 Sound Recordings}

The following musical recordings serve as a basis for the comparative performance analysis of the elements of musical “drama” in the three versions of this sonata:

- 1913 Version: As performed by Howard Shelley (Hyperion CDS 44043).
- 1931 Version: As performed by Howard Shelley (Hyperion CDS 44046).
- 1943 (Horowitz) version: As performed by Vladimir Horowitz, recorded live in 1968. Sony Classical SK 53472.

These recordings are duplicated for the benefit of the reader on the CD attached as Appendix B to this treatise. Although much has been written about Rachmaninoff’s “grain of voice” (Barthes 1977: 179) as concert pianist, some reference to which is made in chapter 2, no recordings of Rachmaninoff’s own performances of the 1913 and 1931 versions exist, thus an additional intertextual layer is considered here in the extent to which the former two sources add Howard Shelley’s performative voice to the phenomenological experience of these two recordings respectively.

\textbf{1.5 Outlay of Chapters}

In the forthcoming chapter a historical context provides the intertextual matrix against which the musical personae of Rachmaninoff and Horowitz may be

\textsuperscript{3} The author acknowledges the assistance of South African born pianist Petronel Malan, through whose intervention a copy of this compilation score was acquired.
understood, as may the three versions of Rachmaninoff’s Piano Sonata, opus 36, that are the focus of this treatise. The chapter thereafter provides a concise overview of the history of musical analysis and the *Tendenzwende* which signified the abandonment of a purely positivistic approach to analysis in lieu of a post-modernist approach to musical critique, against which background a motivation is provided for the analytical approaches applied in this treatise. The chapters which follow, chapters 4 and 5, present detailed readings of the sonata from the perspective of “conciseness” and “drama” respectively. Thereafter the study concludes with a reflection on findings made, with particular reference to the authenticity debate in current musicological discourse.
Chapter 2 – Of Heritage and Legend

2.1 The Russian Piano School

Most - if not all – pianists today would acknowledge the certain existence of a “Russian Piano School”, extending to the great and well-known figures of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, and ultimately exerting its influence on a global scale, even to this day. Yet, a literature search reveals little or no evidence of such a “school”, since of course it was never officially constituted as such nor has it ever existed in any formal sense of the word. Instead – as is the case with so many other disciplines in the performing and visual arts – it is manifest in a rich pedagogic and performance tradition, an essentially “oral” heritage passed from generation to generation by legendary practitioners of their craft. Zenkin explains:

To discuss traditions in pedagogical matters means to intrude almost into the history of the oral tradition. Both in oral art and teaching the most important, essential things are, as a rule, not fixed in written form for posterity, so that we often have to gather indirect information about them, such as certain scarce facts, non-material data and odd documents (2001: 93).

It should be noted, moreover, that such a pedagogic or performance tradition is never a static one; it is constantly reformed as each new generation amongst its practitioners seek to expand their horizons through interaction with other traditions, enriching and developing their own. Thus Zenkin is of the opinion that:

...the influence of pedagogical principles and traditions is not limited to passing one's experience to one's pupils, and usually involves the influences of other schools and traditions. This is the reason why pedagogical schools [as such] are as a rule not very long-lived, and their influence does not last longer than the life of one or two generations (2001: 93).
Given the absence of documented evidence in this regard, and given the constantly changing essence of this tradition from one generation to the next, the question arises as to what exactly may be understood by the widely accepted yet vaguely defined notion of the “Russian Piano School”. This chapter presents this author’s attempts to answer this question through its construction of a lineage of pedagogues and performers who may be considered to have contributed in one way or another to its existence, so that the place of Rachmaninoff and Horowitz within it may be understood accordingly, as may the mutual influences in their respective musical personae.

In the 17th and 18th centuries Russian pianists had no presence on the international music scene. The arrival in St Petersburg of Irish pianist, composer and teacher John Field in 1803, and that of German Adolf von Henselt as court pianist and inspector of musical studies in 1838, marked the beginnings of a change in this situation. Having studied amongst others under Johann Nepumuk Hummel in Weimar, Henselt was greatly admired by Franz Liszt for his legato playing, and later acknowledged by Rachmaninoff for his significant influence on the development of Russian pianism. The characteristic of Henselt's playing was a combination of Liszt's sonority with Hummel's smoothness (Chisholm 1911). Field, on the other hand, widely acknowledged as the “father” of the piano nocturne, brought with him the pedagogical influence of his teacher, Muzio Clementi, and greatly influenced the emergence of a “poetic” approach to pianism, not only in St Petersburg itself, but also across Europe, famously inspiring the works of Frederic Chopin in this same genre (Piggott 1973: 213). His student Alexandre Dubuque taught the French immigrant Alexandre Villoing¹, who in his prime was the most influential teacher in Moscow, educating amongst others Anton Rubinstein (Gerig 1974: 290). Together Henselt and Field had a decisive influence in Russia. Thus, according to Gerig, “it was not until the second half of the 19th century that a school of Russian pianists began to achieve international recognition. And

¹ Alexandre Villoing (1804-1878) accepted a position at the St Petersburg Conservatory in 1862. As lecturer he published, in 1863, his method titled “School of Piano” which has been translated into French and German. Although he did compose (nothing of significance) his legacy lies in teaching, with a focus on developing a rounded, sonorous tone. Anton Rubinstein attributed his solid foundation in music to Villoing (http://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/biograf2/2840. Accessed on 5 January 2014).
when the Russians finally came into their own, they all but took over the piano scene” (1974: 288). The blend of western European pianism and the characteristic passion of the Slavic people (Ibid: 288) was the spark which ignited the Russian fire.

The mid-19th century saw Thalberg past his prime and Liszt retired, thus leaving the position of ‘world’s greatest pianist’ vacant (Schonberg 1985: 168). Anton Rubinstein was the first Russian pianist to achieve true international recognition, and by default a candidate for the position. Born in 1830, Rubinstein was a child prodigy who, like so many other musicians of his time, started lessons with his mother. At the age of five the family moved to Moscow where he and his brother Nikolai studied with Villoing (Gerig 1974: 292).

Anton Rubinstein had great success in Europe as a concert pianist and received encouragement from both Chopin and Liszt. As a twelve year old he had heard Liszt in concert and it left a lasting impression. Rubinstein acquired finger dexterity and tonal sensitivity through Villoing’s musical heritage, but his free use of full arm movement was naturally adopted from Liszt; he was also observed to use the full weight of his body and shoulders (Lhevinne in Gerig 1974: 292). Schonberg describes his playing as of extraordinary breadth, virility and vitality, with an immense sonority and technical grandeur (Schonberg 1963: 272), with the distinct Russian musical character ever present in his “warm emotional projection, drive, abandon and sincerity” (Gerig 1974: 291). He approached the piano as if it was an orchestra and, in spite of his exceptional technique, when his excitement grew he was known to lose control, believing that the message was more important than the means (Schonberg 1985). However, his at times sloppy playing did not deter audiences; according to Eduard Hanslick “Rubinstein […] had the immediacy and sensual energy that always attract a public more than intellectual integrity… His excesses derive from an irresistible primeval force rather than from mere vanity of virtuosity” (Hanslick in Schonberg 1974: 169).

In 1849, at the age of 19, Rubinstein returned to Russia, settled in St Petersburg and embarked on a period of teaching and intense self-development (Gerig 1974). It was in this period preceding his immensely profitable American tour, that he founded the St Petersburg Conservatory in 1862. Unbeknown to him at the time, this would cement his place in history as the father of Russian pianism. His younger brother Nikolai (by now a well-known and
accomplished pianist in Russia) would establish the Moscow Conservatory only four years later, in 1866. The Rubinstein brothers are widely credited with fostering the influence of Liszt’s teaching methods and performance philosophy in Russia (Zenkin 2001: 96). This was not easily accomplished; they were met with opposition from a narrow minded and intolerant nationalist movement (Bennigsen 1939), and justly criticized for their “autocratic rule over their respective creations” (Ibid: 407). With Liszt came new ideas – principles of pianism which were, in the words of Zenkin:

...absolutely new in Russia in the middle of the 19th century. Above all, his [Liszt’s] art was based on the potential of the modern instrument, intended for large halls. Hence the absolutely different techniques and approaches, unknown in Field’s or Hummel’s schools - the use of the entire arm weight, the flexible wrist and mobile body. All those led to a new method of phrasing, which was distinguished by a ‘broader breathing’. The new features resulted in a free treatment of musical time, contrary to the strict meter of the earlier manner... [piano performance was] viewed [...] in the context of supreme artistic and poetic goals... [it was an] indispensable requirement that the student should work at technique and exercises consciously, with the artistic purpose in view, and never do anything mechanically (Zenkin 2001: 97).

Rubinstein worked to establish a philosophy of piano playing and interpretation characterised by a Romantic sonority, the ability to project a musical line, and freedom in expression, all grounded in thorough training (Schonberg 1985). Josef Hoffmann relates the essence of the “Russian piano method” when he describes the teaching method of Rubinstein (his teacher) as a refusal to demonstrate at the piano, an indirect approach through the use of imagery, a refusal to allow liberties with the text, and an insistence on mood projection. “He explained, analysed, elucidated everything that he wanted me to know; but, this done, he left me to my own judgement, for only then, he would explain, would my achievement be my own incontestable property [...] the self-created conception [that] will last and remain [my] own” (Hoffmann in Gerig 1974 :295-296).

What started in St Petersburg as the Russian musical society (Bennigsen 1939) would develop and grow into its conservatoire in 1862, which in turn would spur the founding of
conservatoires elsewhere - in Moscow in 1866, in Gnessin in 1895, and in Kiev in 1913. These centres of musical learning became the places where many of the great Russian pianists and piano pedagogues not only learnt their craft from those who came before them, but often were also later to become members of faculty, and so continued the legacy by teaching those that succeeded them. Table 1 traces this lineage from the European pedagogues of the 1700’s – Clementi, Hummel and Czerny - through the first generation of pedagogues in Russia – Field, Villoing and Henselt in particular – to the central figure of Anton Rubinstein and his founding of the St Petersburg Conservatory. From there it was to produce, amongst many others, a lineage that impacted upon Rachmaninoff (via Clementi, Villoing, Rubinstein, Hummel, Henselt and Kross, to Ornatskaya and Demyanski, and thence to Rachmaninoff), and ultimately also upon Vladimir Horowitz (via Clementi, Villoing and Rubinstein to Blumenfeld, and thence to the founding of the Kiev Conservatory, where Horowitz was taught by Tarnowsky), who taught (in so far as teaching is possible for a person of Horowitz’s psychological disposition) Byron Janis and Murray Perahia. Its lineage can also be traced, via Isabelle Vengerova, to the Curtis Institute in the USA (United States of America), and to important global musical figures who studied there. Table 2 traces this lineage via Clementi, Czerny, Kullak, Field and Villoing to the central figure of Nikolai Rubinstein and his founding of the Moscow Conservatory in 1866. Nikolai Zverev, who taught piano there at the request of Rubinstein and studied for a time with Tchaikovsky, was also one of Rachmaninoff’s teachers. Its lineage can further be traced to the founding of the Gnessin Institute in 1895 by the Fabianovna-Gnessin sisters, who were graduates of the Moscow Conservatory. Other influential graduates of the Moscow Conservatory include Josef Lhevinne and his wife Rosina, who were to extend this lineage to the Juilliard School of Music in the USA where Rosina taught, amongst others, Van Cliburn - its most famous graduate2.

2 The constituting information on both the St Petersburg Conservatory and the Moscow Conservatory was obtained through cross referencing at http://www.wikipedia.org/. Accessed on 28 October 2013.
Table 1 - The Russian Piano School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event/Person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1750</td>
<td>Clementi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1775</td>
<td>Czerny, Field, Hummel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>Kullak, Field, Villoing, Henselt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>St. Petersburg Conservatory is founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Leschetizky, Zaremba, Tchaikovsky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>Kross, Ornatskaya, Demyansky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>Anton Rubinstein, Rimsky-Korsakov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>Rimsky-Korsakov, Blumenfeld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>Hoffman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>Shostakovich</td>
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<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>Yesipova, Saffonov</td>
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<td>1904</td>
<td>Prokofiev</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Vengerova</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>Kiev Conservatory is founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Curtis Institute (USA) is founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Barber, Vengerova</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>Graffman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Bernstein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Janis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 – The Russian Piano School

1750
Clementi

1775
Czerny
Field

1800
Kullak
Villoing

1866
Moscow Conservatory is founded

1870
Nikolai Rubinstein
Tchaikovsky

1871
Josef Lhevinne

1885
Safonov
Rosina Lhevinne

1894
Glière

1895
Gnessin Institute is founded by the Fabianovna-Gnessin sisters

1901
Neuhaus

1912
Katchaturian
Gilels
Richter

1924
Julliard School of Music (USA)

1929

1935

1937

1951

1961

1977

Van Cliburn
Lupu

Katchaturian
Kissin

20
This brief outline of the so-called “Russian Piano School” provides some insights into the interconnectedness of its many prolific role players and the enormity of its ultimate global impact. Prevailing social and political conditions in Russia in the first half of the twentieth century, especially the Russian Revolution and the two world wars, hastened the Russian musical and pianistic diaspora - to the USA in particular - amongst which were Rachmaninoff and Horowitz, the two central figures in this study.

2.2 Sergei Rachmaninoff

On the 1 April 1873, Rachmaninoff was born as the sixth child of a musical family. His grandfather was a wealthy military man and amateur pianist who studied with Field; his uncle was a student of Henselt. With both parents also playing the piano, the family was quick to recognise the child’s talent, and thus he had his first piano lessons from his mother. His next teacher would be Anna Ornatzkaya from the St Petersburg Conservatory (Bertensson and Leyda 1965).

Rachmaninoff’s carefree childhood was ruined by a father who squandered the family fortune, forcing the sale of all their estates and subsequent relocation to St Petersburg where Sergei entered the conservatory as a scholarship student. Their changed social circumstances and the death of his youngest sister led to the separation of his parents, putting Rachmaninoff under severe emotional and psychological strain – he failed all his subjects and all but lost his scholarship. The situation was salvaged by Rachmaninoff’s cousin, Aleksandr Ziloti, who recommended relocation to Moscow to study with Nikolai Zverev (Norris 2001: 708). Zverev was the turning point in Rachmaninoff’s musical career. Schonberg describes this strict disciplinarian as an unusual man who was demanding and irascible, expecting unconditional obedience from his students as he oversaw their entire cultural and musical development (Schonberg 1985: 310). Here Rachmaninoff was introduced to the likes of the Rubinstein brothers and his greatest influence – Tchaikovsky. Zverev’s main concern was the development of piano technique and, for Rachmaninoff, who saw himself as more of a composer, the situation became less ideal. They parted ways after only three years (Norris 2001: 708).
The young composer (by now a student at the Moscow conservatory) found lodging with wealthy family relatives, the Satins, whose daughter Natalya he would later marry. As was their custom, the Satin family would spend summer holidays at Ivanovka, their country estate. Ivanovka became a place of great significance for Rachmaninoff. According to Norris it was the one place where he [Rachmaninoff] could be sure to find a tranquil atmosphere and the peace of mind he needed to compose (Norris 2000: 44), and notes further that “most of the music Rachmaninoff wrote in Russia – which means most of his entire output – had some association with Ivanovka, be it the preliminary thinking or the actual writing down on paper” (Ibid). Rachmaninoff graduated from the Moscow Conservatory with honours in piano in 1891, and in the following year was awarded the Great Gold Medal for composition when he received the highest possible mark (Norris 2001: 708).

In the years leading up to 1897 Rachmaninoff enjoyed great success as composer, composing amongst other pieces his most famous Prelude in C-sharp minor, with Schonberg noting that he “used the piano primarily to introduce his own music” (Schonberg 1963: 392). The dismal failure of his first symphony troubled him greatly, leaving the composer depressed and unable to compose anything of significance. Instead he turned to conducting, working at the Moscow Private Russian Opera with his new friend Theodore Chaliapin.

In 1899 Rachmaninoff left Russia for his first major international engagement in the United Kingdom. Regardless of the fact that the concert programmes showcased himself and his music, and that he was received favourably (Norris 2001: 710), he could not rid himself of his depression to the point that “he had become so severe in his self-criticism that completion and even initiation of any composition had become impossible” (Bertensson and Leyda 1956: 89). Professional help was needed, and it came in the form of Dr. Nikolai Dahl, a hypnotherapist. Norris explains:

...a great deal of wild speculation has been disseminated about the nature of Dahl’s meetings with Rachmaninoff. Rachmaninoff far from being clinically depressed, was merely (and understandably) low after the First Symphony debacle, and it was most likely that Dahl, as a gifted amateur musician and a man of culture, simply conversed with him on subjects of music and art and, together with friends
Rachmaninoff had mixed with on holiday and in Moscow, gradually rebuilt his confidence (Norris 2001: 710).

Rachmaninoff returned to composing with reassured confidence, manifesting in the second Piano Concerto which premiered in 1900, though only the last two movements. However, complete trust and faith in his abilities would never return. In 1912 he admitted that:

...the illness hangs on to me tenaciously and with the passing years digs in ever more deeply, I fear. No wonder if I should, after a while, make up my mind to abandon composition altogether and become, instead, a professional pianist, or a conductor, a farmer, or even, perhaps, an automobilist (Rachmaninoff in Bertensson and Leyda 1956: 180).

The years after Dahl were very productive. Rachmaninoff established himself as an internationally known composer and conductor, touring in Russia and abroad (including the USA in 1909), but always returning to Ivanovka in the summer. The unstable political situation in Russia was taking its toll and when Rachmaninoff returned to the estate in 1917 he found it looted and vandalised. The Satin’s associations with the tsarist regime caused difficulties for them all, and when an invitation to concertize in Stockholm arrived, they used the opportunity to leave Russia for good (Norris 2001: 711).

Faced with the financial implications of being in exile, Rachmaninoff had to make some serious decisions regarding his career and country of residence. One was to broaden his piano repertoire – he felt that a performing artist, in comparison to a composer, had a better chance at earning a steady income. As an internationally established artist he received many offers, the most lucrative ones from the USA. Notwithstanding the fact that he initially declined them all, it did eventually persuade him to relocate there, where he chose Charles Ellis as agent and was donated a piano by Steinway (ibid). That the USA was not his first choice (but rather an economic one) is evident when he writes home from his first of the country in 1909:
You know, in this accursed country, where you’re surrounded by nothing but Americans and the ‘business,’ ‘business,’ they are forever doing, clutching you from all sides and driving you on [...] I am very busy and very tired. Here is my perpetual prayer: God give me strength and patience. Everyone treats me nicely and kindly, but I am horribly bored with it all, and I feel that my character has been quite spoiled here (Rachmaninoff in Bertensson and Leyda 1956: 163 – 164).

After buying their first house in New York, and subsequently the villa Senar on Lake Lucerne, the Rachmaninoffs went about consciously re-creating the atmosphere of Ivanovka, entertaining Russian guests, employing Russian servants and observing Russian customs. Rachmaninoff never mastered English and remained a nostalgic Russian expatriate who favoured tradition. The latter however did not diminish his appreciation of the latest that technology could offer¹, or the benefits he enjoyed in his new home country: he enjoyed sampling the latest ice cream crazes and in the years to follow acquired a speedboat for use on Lake Lucerne where Senar was built in the then favoured Bachaus-style (Norris 2001: 711-712). Rachmaninoff’s eagerness to embrace the benefits of his new situation also extended to the possibilities that the budding recording industry in the USA offered his career. At the same time he remained strangely averse to performing for radio broadcasts, which he justified by stating that “I cannot conceive of playing without an audience. If I were shut up in a little ‘cigar-box’ of a room and were told that my audience was listening somewhere outside I could not play well. [...] An artist’s performance depends so much on his audience...” (Rachmaninoff in Bertensson and Leyda 1956: 290–291). But since the absence of an audience as physical presence applies as much in a recording studio as it does in a radio broadcast, it seems unlikely that this was Rachmaninoff’s sole reason for expressing his aversion to the latter.

The years that followed 1920 were very kind to Rachmaninoff; he signed more recording contracts, and undertook exhaustive concert tours both locally and abroad, playing his own

¹ Already in Russia, preceding his immigration to the USA, Rachmaninoff owned the first car where he lived in the rural part of his native country (Norris 2001: 712).
music and main stream Romantic pieces – the last on 17 February 1943, just a little more than a month before he died.

In his own lifetime it was as pianist rather than as composer that Rachmaninoff made the greatest impact on the musical world. In this regard Schonberg notes that Rachmaninoff:

[...] almost immediately [...] secured for himself a place among the piano immortals. It was not only his remarkable playing that attracted audiences. He also had a reverse kind of charisma. Audiences were awed when this grave, stately, tall [...] unsmiling man with slightly Mongoloid features and close-cropped hair [...] walked quietly to the piano (Schonberg 1985: 315).

This description attests to the character and nature of Rachmaninoff as a gentleman with no time for nonsense, punctual and very serious about his art. The discipline Zverev instilled shaped his whole work ethic. Sophie Satin recounts (in Schonberg 1985) her brother-in-law keeping a steady schedule which would become much more rigid when he was composing, almost to the point of his becoming quite unsocial and unapproachable. This structured and disciplined approach to life also manifested in his performances. In his typical poetic terms, Schonberg describes Rachmaninoff’s infallible hands welding bronze-like sonorities into “structures of imposing architectural solidity” (Schonberg 1963: 390), whereas Norris provides us with this more considered description: “he [Rachmaninoff] possessed a formidable piano technique and his playing (like his conducting) was marked by precision, rhythmic drive, a refined legato and an ability for complete clarity in complex textures [...] His performances were always carefully planned, being based on the theory that each piece has a ‘culminating point’” (Norris 2001: 714). Rachmaninoff explained to Shaginyan (in Bertensson and Leyda 1965) the importance of this “culminating point” as the pivot around which the whole piece centres; to illuminate this point is to communicate its message, a notion inherited from Anton Rubinstein, and one typical of the “Russian Piano School” in general.

Rachmaninoff died on the morning of 28 March 1943.
2.3 Vladimir Horowitz

Vladimir Horowitz was born in 1903 at his grandmother’s house in Kiev. Though a child prodigy, Horowitz was never treated as such (Schonberg 1985). His musician-mother detected his talent at an early age and became his first teacher. In the words of Horowitz himself:

I wasn’t a wunderkind, never. I had very intelligent parents – a very cultured papa and mama – and although I could perform, my father said no: ‘till he reaches maturity, I will not let him play’ (Horowitz in Plaskin 1983: 17).

And thus at the age of nine he entered the Kiev Conservatory to study with Tarnowsky, a Leschetizky pupil, and later Felix Blumenfeld who studied with Anton Rubinstein (Schonberg 2001: 739). According to Plaskin (1983: 39), Horowitz was instantly drawn to Blumenfeld’s freer, more heroic piano style (inherited from Rubinstein), rather than to that of Tarnowsky, attesting to the star-quality already present in the Horowitz personality. Tarnowsky did not approve:

...he [Blumenfeld] gave Volodya [Horowitz] largely a carte blanche in his studies. Volodya always had a strong tendency towards brilliance and the freedom he was given under Blumenfeld allowed the purely virtuoso side of the young pianist to take a dominant position (Tarnowsky in Plaskin 1983: 39).

Horowitz momentarily entertained thoughts of becoming a composer (Schonberg 1963: 434) but the Russian Revolution depleted the family fortune and, not unlike Rachmaninoff, he turned to the piano for survival; in the 1924-25-season he gave twenty solo recitals consisting of ten different programmes. Despite him being well established as a professional
performer, the unstable political circumstances in Russia forced Horowitz to seek stable
ground elsewhere, and in 1925 he left his home country for good.

Throughout the remainder of his life, Horowitz’s drive for success was in part motivated by a
fear of failure that would compel him to return to Russia. He felt that Russia had destroyed
his family; he lost two brothers and had to leave all the others behind. Of his European
debut he told Chasins: “I wanted to do it [drive the public crazy], but unconsciously, in order
to have success so that I would not have to return to my country” (Horowitz in Plaskin 1983:
69). It is a matter of conjecture whether in fact this “fear” was one of the deep rooted
causes of the psychological problems and feelings of inadequacy which would start to
plague him as early as 1936.

Horowitz had great success in Germany. It all began when he had to step in as a last-minute
replacement for an indisposed pianist, set to perform Tchaikovsky’s first Piano Concerto.
There was no time for another rehearsal, so Horowitz had met with conductor Pabst only
very briefly before the concert to discuss tempi and dynamics. When the concert got
underway, and when Pabst heard Horowitz strike the first opening chords of Tchaikovsky’s
Concerto, the startled conductor jumped off the podium to stare at the keyboard action,
where he remained for the remainder of the performance, conducting from the pianist’s
side (Schonberg 1985: 420). Thus the Horowitz name spread through Europe like wild fire.
His debut in the USA caused a similar furore, with Horowitz (again playing Tchaikovsky’s first
Piano Concerto) appearing with Sir Thomas Beecham. Schonberg describes this first musical
encounter between Horowitz and Beecham as follows:

Horowitz, who thought Beecham’s tempos too slow, took his own
tempo in the finale, throwing in a shower of octaves that astounded
the audience. He was now acclaimed as the most exciting pianist of
the new school (Schonberg 2001: 739).

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2Eugen Pabst seems to have been active as conductor in Hamburg around the time Horowitz debuted there.
Except for the reference made to him regarding Horowitz, no particular biographical information is available.
Plagued by self-doubt, Horowitz later explained that he felt he was losing the audience, that his American career lay in ruins and that he therefore had nothing to lose. In his own words:

I kept thinking that if I did not have a success I would have to go back to Russia. [...] I took my own tempo. I ran away. I played the octaves the loudest, the fastest, they ever heard in their life. I was too fast, I admit it. It was not artistic. It was show-off... (Horowitz in Schonberg 1992: 106).

But his fears were unfounded, and he was subsequently to embark on a very successful performing and recording career, to become one of the highest paid musicians of his time, and would never have to return to Russia again.

Joseph Horowitz (1990) is of the opinion that it was the pianist’s decision to move to the USA that doomed him to a career of “maximum fame, fortune and virtuosic display”, suggesting that “the populist fervour of America’s new audience, exacerbated by wartime patriotic fervour, excited possessive adulation of expatriate celebrity performers - and imposed commensurate expectations on the performers themselves” (Horowitz 1990: 644). Horowitz was constantly fluctuating between two poles: the one, artistic quality and the other, entertaining his audience. On several occasions his neurotic self-doubt would get the upper hand and drive him into periods of retirement, which he defended once in stating:

They always listened to how fast I could play octaves [...] I played for two hours but they only remembered the last three minutes [...] I felt dissatisfied with what I was doing and what I felt I had to do to fulfill my own identity as a musician (Horowitz in Schonberg 1992: 176).

Schonberg (1985) is of the opinion that despite Horowitz’s resentment of the public regarding him as a “musical trapeze artist”, he would at the same time cater to it – a psychological dichotomy inescapable to any respectable artist. In expressing dissatisfaction with his own difficulty to reconcile ‘what’ he was doing with what he felt he ‘had’ to do, Horowitz defined his own art as more than just a mere perfect technique. He was a passive
pianist who didn’t use excessive movements. The hands were turned outwards, wrists low and fingers flat with the little one curled up tightly until needed (Schonberg 1963: 436). Use of the pedals were only in aid of the infinite degrees of colour and unparalleled sonority for which he was renowned (Schonberg 2001: 739).

Horowitz’s heritage in the Russian tradition rings clear when he relates the fundamental nature of his approach to his art, in an interview with Holcman, as feeling an inner obligation to strive for perfection without succumbing to false ambitions or expectations of quick and superficial rewards. He advocates the “expressive treatment of technique” and likens it to temperament - this is the Rubinstein tradition (Holcman 1960: 60). But Horowitz was technically far more accurate than his predecessor, as he explained to Tom Frost in regard to his recordings: “It has to be note perfect, because that’s the world we live in” (Horowitz in Schonberg 1992: 266).

This ‘inner obligation’ subsided towards the end of his life and in his last few years he played with serenity and joy (Schonberg 2001: 739). Horowitz died at 1 pm. on 5 November 1989. Schonberg’s words aptly capture the essence of Horowitz’s remarkable career:

Horowitz remained the archetype of the Romantic pianist, his name still a legend to all pianists and the public, the most potent and electrifying virtuoso of the twentieth century, the musician with the strongest, most individual personality, a reincarnation of the nineteenth-century artist-as-hero. He was unique, the last of his kind; and when he died there was nobody to replace him. In his day, in his way, he was [...] the only one (Schonberg 1992: 315).

2.4 Camaraderie, the Second Sonata and (re)composition

Horowitz grew up with Rachmaninoff’s music and idolized the composer. An opportunity to have the then twelve year old boy play for the composer was sadly missed when Rachmaninoff did not keep the appointment. In later years, when Horowitz reminded the composer of this incident, he laughingly replied that he hated child prodigies and he worried that if Horowitz was no good, he would have to lie to his mother and tell her he (Horowitz)
was good, which he would not do (Rachmaninoff in Plaskin 1983: 30). In 1922 Rachmaninoff was again made aware of Horowitz’s significant progress when Blumenfeld wrote to Rachmaninoff and, amongst other news, told him of his extremely talented student who was so passionate about his music. This aroused Rachmaninoff’s curiosity and made the subsequent arrangement to meet that much easier.

The two musicians would eventually meet in the USA and stay friends for life. Horowitz states:

My greatest musical triumph in New York was not playing the Tchaikovsky but meeting Rachmaninoff, who was a god for me at the time. From that moment, Rachmaninoff and I were friends, until he closed his eyes (Horowitz in Plaskin 1983: 105).

Whenever possible they would visit each other, even abroad if they were in the same cities (Bertensson and Leyda 1956).

Their mutual admiration sprung from a shared heritage and near identical life path. Born into musical families, both started lessons with a parent and continued their musical education in the Russian tradition at a conservatory. Both families were impoverished and uprooted by the Russian revolution, from which emigration followed. In order to make a decent living, both Rachmaninoff and Horowitz adopted a concertizing career with great success, first in Europe and then in the USA where both eventually settled. With his flamboyant personality, acceptance of American culture came easily to Horowitz, whereas he described Rachmaninoff as “the eternal refugee, unhappy wherever he was. He remained Russian... [and]... he preferred to speak Russian” (Horowitz in Schonberg 1992: 112). Despite fame and fortune, both were plagued by self-doubt resulting in severe self-criticism, forcing Horowitz to periodically retire from the stage and Rachmaninoff into a three-year depression from which he never completely recovered (ibid 1985). The latter was often criticised for his traditional and conservative approach, especially in his compositions. Horowitz, on the other hand, endured much unfavourable publicity for what was perceived
to be his empty showmanship. Each was very aware of their significant position in the music world and approached their careers accordingly, for better or for worse.

What is easily overlooked, however, especially in the more recent literature on these two musical personalities, is that, as pianists, they collectively represent a formidable pianistic tradition descending from Anton Rubinstein, refining that tradition to greater heights of technical accuracy, as formerly discussed with regard to Table 1 and 2. In spite of their thirty year age difference, their pianistic style and platform manner were fairly similar – they were gentlemen of the stage, always groomed impeccably for performances. At the piano they resembled each other, sitting very still and playing with no unnecessary physical movements. Horowitz’s technique was uniquely his own, and after their first encounter Rachmaninoff observed: “I don’t know how Horowitz does it. He plays against all the rules and regulations of piano playing as we were taught – but with him it works” (Rachmaninoff in Schonberg 1992: 104). In so saying, Rachmaninoff acknowledges their common musical heritage, whilst at the same time admitting to the importance of the idiosyncrasy that each individual pianist may bring to that tradition. As earlier discussed, Rachmaninoff the interpreter aimed to uncover the ‘point’ in a composition. He was a calculated pianist who played with precision, rhythmic drive and a refined legato with the uncanny ability to achieve complete clarity in complex structures (Norris 2001: 714). From Rachmaninoff Horowitz acquired his typical left-hand thrusts and bigness of conception, executed with the same technical infallibility (Schonberg 1992: 415).

It was at the piano where Rachmaninoff and Horowitz were not merely friends, but two coinciding artistic forces. Bertensson recalls:

Horowitz frequently visited Rachmaninoff, and they played duets for their own pleasure, without an ‘audience’ – a pleasant practice that had begun in Switzerland. I was once invited to attend […] It is impossible to word my impression of this event. ‘Power’ and ‘joy’ are the two words that come first to mind – expressive power, and joy experienced by the two players, each fully aware of the other’s greatness (Bertensson and Leyda 1956: 371).
The two exchanged views in regard to composition and recording. As pianists they held a stance in full support of the latter as is evident in their ample recordings. Horowitz’s belief that all pianists should compose (Holcman 1960: 61) was probably reminiscent of his musical training in the Russian Piano School-tradition, which encapsulated all elements (including composition) of musical tuition, and manifested itself in the form of his many transcriptions for solo piano. Rachmaninoff was all but unfamiliar with this art which he “regarded as a normal part of music-making” and contributed greatly to it (Matthew-Walker 1993: 34). They frequently made carefully considered alterations to existing scores and arrangements for piano, a habit which Horowitz later justified in an interview with Holcman when he stated his belief that “no artistic concept is final” (Holcman 1960: 43). This same treatment also befell Rachmaninoff’s second Piano Sonata – revised by the composer and reissued in 1931, after which Horowitz made his own amalgamation of the two versions in 1943 (Carruthers 2006). Nowhere does Horowitz’s justification for these actions manifest itself more prominently than in the many recordings of his performances; from one recording to the next, no two Horowitz interpretations of any given piece are ever the same. In this he differed greatly from his idol Rachmaninoff, who, once he had attained a satisfactory interpretation, would always play it the same way. According to Goldsmith it is this unpredictability that made Horowitz such an exciting artist (1989: 601). Even Rachmaninoff admitted in *Gramophone* that “until I heard Horowitz, I did not realize the possibilities of the piano” (Rachmaninoff 1931: 11-12).

In closing this overview of the musical friendship between Rachmaninoff and Horowitz, their shared musical ancestry, and the subsequent brief comparison of their different musical personalities, Howard Shelly’s (who recorded all Rachmaninoff’s piano music) recalling of Arthur Rubinstein’s answer, when asked about the greatest pianist he had ever heard, is particularly apt:

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3 According to Robert Matthew-Walker children from that era could only learn new music through playing it. The only way by which children (and adults alike) could get to know new compositions was through solo piano arrangements and transcriptions of orchestral and chamber music for two pianists at one piano (1993: 34).

4 These three versions of the work are duplicated in Appendix A of this treatise.
Arthur Rubinstein apparently replied, ‘Horowitz!’. Somewhat taken aback, the interviewer gently responded, ‘Not Rachmaninoff?’ Rubinstein paused for a moment and then continued, ‘You asked me about pianists. Rachmaninoff was a god’ (Shelley in Haylock 2000: 55).
Chapter 3 – Of Paradigms and Pluralisms

3.1 The Tendenzwende: Towards a Cultural Musicology

Innate to human nature is the need to understand the world around us. We are born curious creatures with the need to form our own perception of life and all its facets; thus, we analyse to make sense of things. In the case of music, analysis has over the centuries been practised in many different ways and for a variety of reasons. For a very long time, musical analysis was practised for purely pragmatic reasons, as a way of teaching composition. It was not until the 19th century that musical analysis increasingly became both more dogmatic and more esoteric in its intent, initially practised somewhat haphazardly in the service of journalistic music criticism, but ultimately increasingly focused on the development of grand, all-encompassing systems or theories of explanation for tonal music. In the early 20th century, this latter tendency also led to similar theories of explanation for atonal music. Fuelled

1 Amongst many others, examples include those of late Antiquity, such as Boethius’ (c.480-524) De Musica and De Institutione Musica, those of the Early Middle Ages, such as the anonymous Musica Enchiriadis and Scholia Enchiriadis, those of the Medieval Period, such as Guido d’Arezzo’s (c.950-1050) Micrologos, those of the Late Middle Ages, such as Phillipe de Vitry’s Ars Nova of c.1325, those of the 15th century, such as Tintorius’ Terminorum musicae diffinitorium of 1473, those of the 16th century, such as Thomas Morley’s A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke of 1597, those of the 17th century, such as Praetorius’ Syntagma Musicum of 1615-19, and those of the 18th century, such as Fux’s Gradus ad Parnassum (1725) and Mattheson’s Der volkommene Capellmeister (1739).

2 Amongst many others, examples of 19th-century journalistic criticisms include the writings of Robert Schumann (who founded the periodical Neue Zeitschrift für Musik in 1834 and remained its editor in chief for 10 years), ETA Hoffmann, Berlioz, Liszt and Wagner.

3 Crucial in the development of this new tendency was Viennese critic Eduard Hanslick. His book Vom Musikalisch-Schönen of 1854 is a milestone in the history of criticism. It took an anti-Romantic stand, stressing the autonomy of music and its basic independence of the other arts, and encouraged a more analytical, less descriptive approach toward criticism. In the wake hereof followed the work of the first generation of theorists who were to exercise a decisive influence on the practice of analysis and theory from the late 19th century onwards and into the 20th century, including Ernst Kurth (e.g., Die Voraussetzungen der theoristischen Harmonik und der tonalen Darstellungssysteme, 1912), Heinrich Schenker (e.g., Das Meisterwerk in die Musik, 1926 – 1929) and Hugo Riemann (e.g., Handbuch der Harmonielehre).

4 The most notable first attempts made in this regard were by composers such as Schoenberg (e.g., Style and Idea, 1950) and Hindemith (e.g., A Composer’s World, 1952), in their efforts to find systematic explanations that encompassed the history of tonal music, but significantly also foretold its inevitable culmination in atonal music. From this followed other structuralist theories of atonality, such as those of Allen Forte and Milton Babbitt in the case of Set Theory.
by the prevailing spirit of positivism and structuralism that typified the period of Modernism, these latter systems cemented a long-held sense of the indivisibility of theory and analysis. In contrast, since the latter half of the 20th century, our scholarship has of course been dominated by the so-called “Postmodern turn”, according to which we currently practice what Kramer refers to as ‘cultural musicology’. He explains that “the idea [of ‘cultural musicology’] is to combine aesthetic insight into music with a fuller understanding of its cultural, social, historical, and political dimensions than was customary for most of the twentieth century” (2003: 6). The place of musical analysis in ‘cultural musicology’, in the sense that analysis had come to be seen as inseparable from structural theory, became for a time hugely polemicised, spearheaded by articles such as Joseph Kerman’s How we got into analysis and how to get out (Kerman 1980). This, in turn, prompted a theorist such as Kofi Agawu to respond as follows:

[...] it is no use insisting on context if you cannot specify its units and a set of procedures for discovering relationships embedded in context-to-music or music-to-context approaches. Could it be that the appeal to an ill-defined context is a strategy for avoiding the more technical aspects of analysis? [...] How, in short, can we create a syntax of networks? It seems unlikely that context-mongers will be able to provide us with an answer to this question if, as often happens, the invocation of context engenders a retreat from hard analysis (Agawu 1993: 91).

Today this polemic has largely run its course; theorists/analysts and cultural musicologists have come to new agreement about the value of analytical insights in any musicological endeavour, whether ‘cultural’ or otherwise. Thus in his recent and aptly-named article, How we got out of analysis, and how to get back in again, Agawu concludes that “with the benefit of twenty-five years of hindsight [...] the catchy title of his 1980 article notwithstanding [...] Kerman did not want us to get out of analysis, only ‘out from under’. He wanted to see analysis done via the mediation of history, aesthetics, and, above all, criticism” (Agawu 2004: 269).

In addition to the challenge of re-appropriating analysis for the purposes of such ‘cultural musicology’ as Agawu ascribes to Kerman above, moreover, is the need to consider the nature of music itself. Music is a complex, multifaceted cultural
phenomenon, encapsulating acts of creation (composing), execution (performance) and perceptive experience (listening), as a corollary to which a systematic explanation for all of the many different kinds of analytical acts that can be carried out in the practice of this phenomenon is a hugely intimidating and close-on impossible task. Comprehension of this diversity within the field of musical analysis is further complicated by the need to recognise amongst its many approaches the varying degrees to which ontological perceptions and epistemological groundings may sometimes be shared amongst them. Given the extent to which this study relies on the author’s choice of analytical strategies, however, some attempt at understanding these choices within the broader context of this diversity must be attempted, despite the many challenges presented by such a task, and the inevitable recourse to selectivity and simplification that the limitations of this study place upon it. In this chapter the author therefore presents a brief historical account of analysis as musicological activity, in which context the subsequent overview of the analytical approaches applied in this study should be understood.

3.2 A Brief History of Musical Analysis

3.2.1 Traditional Structuralism

In keeping with the 19th-century notions of humanism and egocentrism, the essence of traditional analyses focussed on explaining what is: the analyst imposed preconceived abstract formal constructions on the musical score and determined its genius - or lack thereof – based on the composers’ treatment of these constructions. Treitler states:

...what characterized aesthetic writing in general and analytical writing about music in particular during the nineteenth century was a pre-occupation that had two sides: reflection about the nature of the creative process, and the search for structural coherence in music. These were not abstract, scientific interests; they were motivated by ideologies about the human faculty of genius and the quality of greatness in music, for which structural unity was the sine qua non (1982: 157).
Both sides of the “pre-occupation” to which Treitler refers are closely bound with the nineteenth-century belief (particularly amongst German/Austrian theorists) in musical autonomy⁵, wherein “structural unity” was largely sought in the form of organismism, a belief since widely denounced as nothing more than a veiled form of German nationalism.

Organicism can be seen not only as a historical force which played into the great German tradition but also as the principle which seemed essential to validate that tradition (Kerman 1980: 315).

Scott Burnham reminds us, however, that we need to be sensitive to the historical circumstances which give rise to such beliefs when he states that “music theory is never purely an act of codification, as it is sometimes portrayed [...]; mixed with the urge to account for what is vital in any given composer or style is the urge to idealize musical practice in ways congruent with one’s world view” (Burnham 1993: 77). In line herewith, Carl Dahlhaus provides the following plausible and somewhat more sympathetic account of the widely-held belief in musical autonomy in 19th century German aesthetics:

Aesthetic autonomy as understood by the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie is by means equivalent to the principle of art for art’s sake [...] Far from implying the isolation of music, aesthetic autonomy meant just the opposite, namely that music played an active part in one of the main currents of the age: the notion of Bildung, or liberal education and the cultivation of the mind (Dahlhaus 1983: 146).

Music was thus used as an educational tool, and consequently the analytical process became more theoretical, with emphasis placed on the properties of the system rather than on the characteristics of a particular piece (Cook 1987: 7). Innovative amendments to, or deviations from these constructions were seen as progress in stylistic change (Levy 1987) in that it shed some light on “the nature of the creative

⁵ See footnote 3 for reference to Hanslick’s influence in this regard.
process”. Bent enforces this notion in stating that “…it followed that comparison of a work with an idealized model of structure or process produced a measure of its greatness” (1980: 528). Out of this “search for structural coherence”, thus, grew organicism and the thematic process, two perspectives which propelled the theoretical nature of analysis to a climactic high, with analysts focussing on “explaining music by means of deriving it from something” (Cook 1987: 8).

Accordingly, Agawu surmises that “detailed and intensive scrutiny of a work brings one into close contact with the musical material, leaving the analyst permanently transformed by the experience” (2004: 270). Great significance thus lies in the fact that analysis affords the analyst some intimacy with the composer; supposedly, in getting to know the ‘creator’, a better understanding of his creations is eminent, and visa versa.

3.2.2 Contemporary Post-structuralism

In the minds of contemporary analysts and the Postmodern worldview, the claim to universal validity implied by the positivistic spirit of traditional structural approaches – which favoured music of the German tradition - became increasingly questionable (Potgieter 1998: 34-36). Hepokoski supports this when he draws attention to the fact that “these disputes [in German universities from 1960 to about 1980] were touched off by a collapse of faith in positivistic inquiry, a collapse attributable to the continued (but by now widely acknowledged) decline of the notion of objectively attainable truth” (1991: 223). A realization dawned that “the very existence of an observer – the analyst – pre-empts the possibility of total objectivity” (Bent 1980: 528). This change of approach was first noticed in literary circles, with critics ignoring what was said in favour of why and how it was said (Hepokowski 1991).

In the case of music as phenomena, answering questions like why? and how? has proven infinitely more complicated. Modernist analytical approaches are supported by the notion of a musical composition being autonomous. In the post-modernist realm autonomy is discarded in favour of the composition as an “inexhaustible
source of possible meaning” (Treitler 1982: 156). Treitler’s use of the word “possible” mirrors the ideas and spirit of Postmodernist analysis and the practice of ‘cultural musicology’. It also illuminates the fact that no one approach is preferable in favour of another – music is multi-faceted and needs a heterodox approach to inquiry. Kerman echoes this notion in suggesting that analysis should be done “via the mediation of history, aesthetics and, above all, criticism [...] [with less] formalism [...] empiricism and [...] positivism” (Kerman in Agawu 2004: 269). Individual experiences and responses become overt (rather than covert) ingredients of criticism, which in turn form the basis for opinions formed and conclusions drawn. Given its dualistic nature as both a “descriptive” and a “judicial activity” (Bent 1980: 527), criticism therefore makes no secret of its inclination to practise musical analysis in a more descriptive and personal manner. Thus Agawu states that “the aim of [...] analysis [...] is rather to provide the analyst with an opportunity to make the [music] his or her own” (2004: 274). The data rendered through Post-structural analysis is thus often of a less empirical nature, which in turn necessitates more innovative means of data disclosure. Music is analysed within its full context, inclusive of both intra- and extra-opus factors, and manifests itself as the analyst’s personal, inner response to the experience at hand, rendering data as a descriptive narrative. The use of exclusive analytical or theoretical methods is rendered obsolete in favour of a mutually inclusive approach. In the words of Lewis: “It is essential that we continue to find ways to regard the various analytical postures as complementary rather than antithetical” (1989: 18).

3.3 Finding the Crossroads

In attempting to offer a close reading of a musical text, as this study aims to achieve in the case of Rachmaninoff’s second Piano Sonata, the analyst cannot escape the need to first position him- or herself vis-à-vis the legacy both of traditional structural approaches (emphasizing musical autonomy and the intra-opus characteristics of the composition) and the more recent tendency to post-structural approaches (with focus on the extra-opus, including texts, contexts, intertexts, act, experience and
meaning). In so doing, the author takes his cue in this study from Joseph Kerman, who calls for structural theory and analysis to serve the Postmodern musicologist through a process of “infiltration”, which can be achieved, he maintains, by applying such perspectives in a “pragmatic and eclectic” manner (Kerman 1985: 148). To this Leo Treitler adds the call, previously referred to, for “a crossroads of approaches” (Treitler 1982: 154), implying that close reading should admit as many perspectives as may be deemed necessary in order to elucidate the musical work as “an inexhaustible source of possible meaning” (Ibid.: 156). Thus the forthcoming two chapters of this treatise, chapter 4 and 5, begin by providing some motivation for the “crossroads of approaches” pragmatically and eclectically selected here, in this case with the express goal of expounding upon a personal experience of what Cook calls “perception of musical sound”, and which he further explains as follows:

In the West today, it is the perception of musical sound that is generally considered to be paramount in defining the meaning of a piece of music. Hence one of the most crucial questions we can ask about any theory of music - one which bears directly upon the validity which we can ascribe to it - is how it relates to the perceptual experience of the listener (Cook 1989: 117).

Towards this end, the contingencies emerging from a Retian structural approach – discussed in chapter 4 – and broader contexts pertaining to hermeneutics, particularly as manifest in the psychology and the phenomenology of musical experience and in performance analysis – discussed in chapter 5 – will ultimately provide a basis for the “crossroads” or intertextual matrix which, along with the historical perspectives provided in chapter 2 of this treatise, will serve to enlighten conclusions drawn in the final chapter, particularly as these pertain to notions of authenticity and the perceived value such notions ascribe to the three versions of Rachmaninoff’s Piano Sonata, Opus 36, that are the subject of this study.
Chapter 4 – Towards ‘conciseness’: A Retian analysis of Rachmaninoff’s Piano Sonata, Opus 36

4.1 Introduction

Rudolph Reti, musicologist, pianist and composer, was born in 1885 in Uzice, Serbia. His musical education was completed at the Viennese Conservatoire and he was one of the founding members of the International Society for Contemporary Music. In 1938 he relocated to the United States of America. During his lifetime Reti’s ventures as composer included an opera, orchestral music and several insignificant works of smaller scale. However, it is in the field of musicology – especially music theory and analysis - where he made a lasting contribution. He is the author of The Thematic Process in Music (1961), Thematic Patterns in the Sonatas of Beethoven (1967) and Tonality, Atonality and Pantonality (1958). Reti died in Montclair, New York, in 1957.

The essence of a Retian approach to the analysis of tonal music is focussed on the concept of thematic and motivic homogeneity, both between the themes of a single movement (Reti 1961: 4) and between those of different movements in a multi-movement work (Ibid: 5). In focussing on melodic structure in particular, Reti does not mean to denounce the significance of other aspects of musical design, merely to suggest that these other aspects are already accounted for in existing theoretical systems. He thus states:

... this whole sphere of thematic connections and thematic technique has never been included in our theoretical system; it is entirely absent from our educational curriculum; a specific discipline of thematic structure analogous to, and complementing, the old disciplines of harmony, counterpoint, and the general schemes of form has never been developed (Ibid).

Reti’s analytical approach should therefore be seen to complement, rather than to be practised as an exclusive and all-encompassing theory for tonal music. But in addition to serving as complement to established systems of formal and tonal analysis, Retian theory also seeks to elucidate and expand upon such systems. In the
case of our understanding of musical form, for example, Reti professes the existence of two concerted form-building forces ever present in the creative process (Ibid: 109). The first deals with theoretical schematism in which “a work’s architecture ... [is] ... brought about by the proportioning and sectioning of its parts” (Ibid.), a method of seeking out unifying qualities by illuminating what is described as “thematic resumption”, the tendency to repeat musical ideas to form a logical whole, which leads to the recognition of traditional forms such as binary form, ternary form, sonata form and so on (Ibid: 111). This approach to formal analysis succeeds only in addressing the surface appearance of a composition, but offers no explanations in regard to the reasons why a particular grouping results in a comprehensive architectural whole. In other words, it offers no explanation for “why ... [a] ... particular theme belongs in this work” (Ibid: 112). Consequently Reti proposes the existence of a second form-building force – an “inner force” or “thematic force” (Ibid: 109) which manifests on a subsurface level as thematic connections between the various themes of one movement as well as between those of the different movements of a multi-movement work, effecting a unity “which makes it impossible to replace a group, section or movement of a logically built composition by a part from another work” (Ibid: 349).

Reti’s theory is thus not unlike that of Heinrich Schenker’s\(^1\) in seeking organic coherence beneath the immediate musical surface, in maintaining that simple underlying structures bind together the diverse manifestations of the musical foreground, and in stressing a linear approach to an understanding of these underlying structures in music. But whereas for Schenker linearity is a phenomenon which owes its existence to the various middleground and foreground manifestations and elaborations of the *Urlinie* as a mere ingredient of the background *Ursatz*, thus one always conditioned by its harmonic counterpart and by the *a priori* structure of that *Ursatz*, in Reti’s case, “the composer starts not with a theoretical scheme but with a motif that has arisen in his mind, which he allows to grow by constant transformation” (Bent 1980: 558). Thus for Reti, the process of composition is one which constitutes an “organic elaboration” of an idea manifest at

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the musical surface or immediate subsurface (Cook 1987: 98). Reti’s idea of organic coherence is thus closer in its essence to Schoenberg’s concept of the \textit{Grundgestalt}\textsuperscript{2}, both being what John Rahn would call a “bottom-up” approach to musical analysis rather than, as is predominantly the case in Schenkerian analysis, a “top-down” one (Rahn 1979: 205)\textsuperscript{3}.

From the point of view of the contemporary post-modernist turn in music criticism, briefly discussed in the previous chapter, Reti’s theory may thus be criticised for lacking a sufficiently anthropocentric epistemology, an ability to effectively describe musical perception and experience, hence for being a “theory of piece” approach rather than a “theory of experience” approach (Rahn: 1979: 206). However, Reti is of the opinion that the thematic process is in fact synonymous with our musical experience, and that it serves this experience by providing a technical basis - other than mechanisms like harmony, counterpoint and form, or philosophical and poetic narratives - to explain musical meaning and drama (1961: 136-137). In uncovering a composition’s thematic processes, he maintains, the analyst exposes the thematic architecture within which “meaning” and “drama” are encapsulated. Reti explains the architectural plan to be

\begin{quote}
... the method of shaping the motifs and themes from the beginning in such a way that, by transforming them in an appropriate manner as the work progresses, and finally leading them to a resolution, a kind of story or ‘architectural plot’ is evolved which makes all the shapes of a composition a part and expression of one higher unity (Reti 1967:141).
\end{quote}

The “expression of one higher unity” is thus achieved when “the dramatic development of the work and its thematic content are intertwined” (Reti 1961: 139), and thus, the process of thematic transformation becomes the musical meaning (Potgieter 1998: 328).


\textsuperscript{3} See Rahn, J, 1979. Aspects of Musical Explanation. \textit{Perspectives of New Music} 17(2):.204-224.
In the first chapter of this treatise, this author’s choice of the Retian analytical approach in the case of Rachmaninoff’s Piano Sonata, Opus 36, was motivated by pointing to its “highly concentrated” structure (Efstratiou 1995), and to the fact that, despite this sonata having three distinct movements, it is generally acknowledged to be “a continuous work [...] with much thematic cross-reference between them [the movements]” (Matthew-Walker 1993: 31). An insight into Rachmaninoff’s self-confessed attempts at structural economy, particularly during his so-called “American period”, may therefore well be enlightened from the point of view of Retian theory, in order to determine whether indeed the “inner force” (Reti 1961: 109) of the musical material has in fact been better served (or not) by ridding it of all that Rachmaninoff later felt to be “superfluous” (Rachmaninoff in Swann 1944: 8).

At the same time, this prompts a return to my assumption of Horowitz’s claim that two conflicting imperatives are at work in the original 1913 version of this sonata and its reworking of 1931, motivating his own reworking thereof in 1940, namely, that in the 1931 revision, “what might have been gained in conciseness of expression had been outweighed by losses in pianistic sonority and drama” (Horowitz in Martyn 1990: 323). In this treatise I have not only assumed the validity of this claim, but have derived from it the structure of its overall argument, namely, that a “crossroads” of analytical approaches would be needed to weigh the relative merits of “conciseness” and “drama” as these are manifest respectively in the three versions of the sonata under discussion here. For Reti, however, conciseness and drama are not mutually exclusive imperatives, but in fact derive from one and the same “inner force”, as has been explained above. Ultimately, the matter devolves upon what it is exactly that one chooses to understand as musical “drama”. Is it merely the working out of an intraopus “inner force” or “thematic force”, or are there additional factors at play, not least of which would be found in Horowitz’s reference to “pianistic sonority”? Although Reti’s understanding of musical drama is not without merit, and although it is one that must ultimately be understood within the context of what Dahlhaus, cited in the previous chapter, has ascribed to the particular social meaning that the notion of musical autonomy held within the Austro-German aesthetic tradition dating from the nineteenth century (Dahlhaus
1983: 146), it is nevertheless one that holds limited sway today, at least not if held to the exclusion of all else. For this reason, I believe, factors in addition to organic thematic coherence must ultimately be added in order to disclose what today would be understood to contribute to the “drama” of this sonata in all respects, thus inevitably requiring insights beyond those that Reti’s theory alone can offer.

4.2 Concepts, Terminology and analytical Method in Retian Theory

Reti perceives transformation as a structural agent (1961: 276) and, as discussed above, identifies two form building forces present in music. The first “…models its outward shape. It is the method of grouping […] by which a musical composition assumes a comprehensible form” (Ibid: 106). The second is the uncovering of the “inner force”, the “thematic and motivic affinities” between different musical groups uniting them to form an architectural and organic whole (Ibid: 109 – 111). It is on this basis that a chronology of analytical processes can be deduced in the practice of Retian analysis. The first step is thus to demarcate and label the whole and its parts in the manner of traditional formal and tonal analysis. Once this is done the all-important second step can begin. Accordingly, the process of organic growth from the musical surface towards deeper levels of musical structure must be systematically exposed (Reti 1967: 141), implying that the application of Retian theory requires a reductive approach to analysis (Potgieter 1998: 329). Such reduction begins with the identification of themes which are then broken down into their comprising components, consisting of thematic fragments, motifs or cells. Reti explains that “the motifs, and subsequently the themes, are developed from the cells … [which] … usually represent the essence of the motifs rather than the motifs themselves” (Reti 1967: 17). This is the first step in comprehending organic unity. Concomitant with that, however, is its second step, namely, the uncovering of those underlying structures that expose the so-called “thematic process”, according to which “unity … is brought about … by forming themes from one identical musical substance” (Reti 1961: 4).
Thematic analysis endeavours to explain composition as an organic process by which a random thought in the composer’s mind\(^4\) develops through thematic evolution into a large scale, multi-movement work. Reti states that:

> What makes a musical utterance appear as a unit, an entity, is first its melodic-rhythmical shaping as such. As a composer hardly wishes to express musical thoughts which the listener is unable to follow (analogous to endless sentences in literature), he will invariably choose utterances which sooner or later come to repose not merely through their content but through their shape. This moulding of a musical series into a group is usually supported by the harmonic shaping [that is cadences]. Through a succession of several such groups or “periods” [...] a “section” can be developed... [often]... as a clearly defined and particularly characteristic musical utterance. [...] thus [assuming] a leading role and would be termed a theme. A succession of such theme-carrying sections, then, brings about a larger piece, perhaps even of symphonic proportions (Ibid: 110).

In choosing the term *evolution*, Reti emphasizes the idea of an entity reappearing, but always in a different guise. Thus we are brought to reconsider two of the most fundamental and universal phenomena in compositional technique, well-known to all educated musicians, namely imitation and variation. Imitation and variation are the life force of thematic analysis and are realized through various transformative techniques discussed in greater detail below. Reti’s understanding of the history of composition leading up to the so-called “thematic era” (Ibid: 67), that is, the Classical and Romantic periods, is taken back as far as the 15\(^{th}\) century, where the basic techniques of imitation and variation were at first used in a quite obvious manner, easy to detect and indicative of an inspired awareness of style. Ensuing centuries brought a change in life philosophies and musical styles, and consequently a change in compositional approach: what was at first obvious was now obscured. On the face of it, sonata form, the prime vehicle of Classical and Romantic expression, serves as an example of showcasing the importance of contrast between themes, rather than emphasising the techniques of imitation and variation. But through Reti’s “thematic analysis”, the obscured affinities between themes are exposed. According to Reti, “…from the point of view of thematic development, a theme is that basic musical

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\(^4\) Reti states that: “Thoughts like these enter a composer’s mind as entities that occur to him, without much “forming” activity on his part. This does not imply that this theme is not, even from a structural point of view, extremely well shaped” (Reti 1961: 116).
thought from which the further utterances of the work are derived in constant transformation and evolution...” (Ibid: 205). It follows that for any imitation or variation to become detectable, a constant feature reminiscent of the original needs to be identified. Reti proposes the fundamental line and motifs to fulfil this role. However, in this guise, imitation in the musical work is often replaced by thematic transformation. Whereas imitation involves the near identical repetition of material as signified in the treatment of themes according to the principles, for example, of fugue and canon, with thematic transformation the appearance of a theme is altered, leaving its affinity to earlier themes hardly recognisable. Furthermore, various transformative techniques can be used in combination, resulting in endless possibilities. Reti explains:

A shape, for instance, which was a theme in one movement would appear in the next in its inversion, simultaneously with shifted accents, in a new tempo, and so forth. In fact, this tendency to combine and intensify the [compositional] devices became the main idea of shaping in the thematic era. It is the very phenomena which we call transformation (Ibid: 67).

In the process of applying his analytical method, Reti proposes that the analyst be on the look-out for a number of possible compositional techniques, some of which suggest a very particular use of terminology, or describe concepts unique to his analytical approach. For the benefit of the reader, a brief summary of these concepts and terms are given below, that may serve to clarify the analysis of the Rachmaninoff Piano Sonata which follows.

4.2.1 Kernel

A kernel can only be observed once a work’s thematic processes have been exposed through reductive analysis – it embodies those affinities between structural components which a Retian analysis ultimately seeks to expose as the “inner force” or “musical substance”, the driving force behind the composer’s inspiration. Important to note is Reti’s inconsistency when referring to this “musical substance”,

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labelling it either “kernel” (ibid:14), “basic pattern” (ibid:14) or “basic line” (ibid:118). For the purposes of this study, however, the term “kernel" will be used. The kernel is usually simultaneously found at different layers of the musical architecture, occurring as a manifestation on the musical surface in form of a motif or a melodic fragment (e.g. a phrase or a sub-phrase) whilst also underlying entire thematic statements in the form of a subsurface fundamental line. In the course of the discussion the reader is referred to various notational figures which comprise larger and smaller note-heads. While the former serves to illuminate an element of importance (like the presence of the kernel) in a notational figure the author wishes to draw attention to, the latter represents the notational landscape of its current context or transformed appearance.

4.2.2 Cell

This unit forms the smallest discernible entity that can be identified through the reductive analytical process. Reti describes it as containing the essence of a motif (Reti 1967: 17).

4.2.3 Motif

Reti retains this term in much the same manner as it is used in traditional formal analysis, thus as the smallest complete musical idea, easily identifiable upon repetition and even in variation, from which themes are comprised (Reti 1961: 11).

4.2.4 Theme

This term is also retained from traditional formal analysis. A theme is a larger unit constructed from a combination of motifs. Reti identifies themes as thoughts or entities that randomly occur to the composer (ibid: 116).

4.2.5 Thematic evolution

Thematic evolution is the process through which themes and motifs are appropriately transformed as the work evolves. Herein lies the creative energy of the composer (ibid: 137), his inspired treatment of the “thoughts or entities that randomly occur” to him.
4.2.6 Thematic resolution

Themes and their evolution exist in a relationship of symbiosis – the one affecting the other - and thematic resolution is achieved when “all the shapes of a composition [are made] a part and expression of one higher unity” (Reti 1967: 141).

4.2.7 Transformation

Transformation is the process through which thematic evolution is achieved. It is a phenomenon of the musical surface, leading to the perception of apparently different themes in the overall musical structure, but underlying which subsurface affinities of the musical kernel are retained. Transformation techniques include inversion, retrograde, diminution, augmentation, change of metre, segmental combinations of different themes, (notational) thinning out or addition to motifs or themes, thematic expansion or contraction, harmonic changes and enharmonic alterations (Reti 1961: 56-61).

4.2.8 Fundamental line

A fundamental line retains only the most essential notes of a theme’s melodic contour. It is the easiest means of determining any relationship between different themes, and may or may not expose the presence of a subsurface kernel (Ibid: 19, 20, 22, 94, 118)5.

4.2.9 Thematic pitch

In addition to a basic tonal analysis that accompanies the traditional approach to formal analysis, practised as the necessary preliminary step in the Retian approach, a second aspect of tonal analysis, more peculiar to the Retian approach, is often intimated in the analysis of the thematic process, and this is indicated by those pitches most common to the melodic contour of a particular theme or fragment – the perceived harmonic “feel” of it. In some instances this tonal “feel” may in fact stand

5 Reti never cites the term ‘fundamental line’ as such. However, he does refer to a ‘basic line’ (Ibid:118) as a melodic contour which is uncovered through either ‘etching out the corners’ (Ibid:19), extraction (Ibid:20, 22) or reduction (Ibid:94).
contrary to the key in which the theme in question is understood to function (Ibid: 219-223).

4.2.10 Contrary motion versus inversion
A clear distinction needs to be observed in Reti’s use of these two terms. Whereas contrary motion indicates the mirror image of a given melodic entity (where, for example, an ascending second interval reappears as a descending second interval), inversion involves the use of an intervallic complement (where, for example, an ascending second interval reappears as a descending seventh interval) (Ibid: 68-69).

4.2.11 Retrograde
Reti retains the generally accepted meaning of this term. Thus retrograde is accomplished when a figure is transformed by writing it backwards – starting with the last note and ending with the first, retaining each note (Ibid: 68-69).

4.2.12 Interversion
With this technique of thematic transformation, the order of the specific notes is changed, but original note values retained (Ibid: 72).

4.2.13 Change in metre, tempo, rhythm and accent
Reti introduces no new terminology here, but indicates that diminution and augmentation of note values are a prevalent means of thematic transformation. Through change in metre a change in accentuation results, which may contribute considerably to the transformation of a musical theme formerly encountered (Ibid: 75).

4.2.14 Thinning or additions of notation
This procedure retains the original melodic contour and length of the figure being transformed, but either omits details from or adds details to that contour. Thus spaces are created in or removed from the melodic line (Ibid: 85).
4.2.15 Re-working of themes

Closely allied with “addition” as described above, the reworking of a theme involves adding notes to the original. In the process of analytical reduction, an original theme may thus be exposed as hidden within a new theme. This kind of relationship between themes is exposed when their contours are compared. Demarcated by the fundamental line, a thematic contour forms the cornerstone of thematic analysis – always maintaining its original shape, irrespective of changes in tonality and surface-rhythmic character (Ibid: 93).

4.2.16 Thematic contraction / compression

Closely allied with the technique of “thinning” described above, thematic contraction is a transformation technique whereby an original theme’s middle section is later omitted and its beginning and ending merged (Ibid: 95).

4.2.17 Harmonic changes

This technique of thematic transformation involves a distinctive change of the harmonic vocabulary and character of an original theme, whilst retaining its melodic contour (Ibid: 99).

4.2.18 Enharmonic changes

Reti’s use of this term concurs with its generally accepted meaning. Thus in this technique of thematic transformation, the theoretical notation is altered whilst the pitch remains unchanged, and may allow for a theme to sound identical when stated in a different key (Ibid: 100).

In concluding this brief summary of Reti’s analytical method, attention must be drawn to the fact that a Retian analysis is never governed by a set of cast-in-stone rules. Reti illuminates various analytical principles (substantiated with an array of literature examples) which, through transformative treatment, may generate a life force unique to each musical composition. It should be remembered that these techniques are open to use in unlimited combinations, rendering a vast range of possible analytical choices and solutions. In addition, the musical material should
never be separated from its sound world, the latter in itself always rendering informative clues. The obligation resides with the analyst to investigate all the possibilities, and then, in the words of Reti, “once the structural idea of a composition is thoroughly established, it is left to the individual to reproject the structural idea into the spiritual sphere and interpret the work according to whatever symbolism may seem to him fitting” (Ibid: 138).

4.3 A Comparative Retian Analysis of the 1913 and 1931 versions of Rachmaninoff’s Piano Sonata, Opus 36.

As described in the previous section of this chapter, the first step of the Retian analysis is to demarcate and label the whole and its parts in the manner of traditional formal and tonal analysis, after which the all-important second step can begin, which is to delve beyond the musical surface in order to expose its “inner force”.

To begin with, therefore, we note that Rachmaninoff has composed this work within the bounds of the following ‘outer form’:

- a first movement in sonata form, in the key of B-flat minor
- a second movement in binary form, centred for the most part in the key of E minor
- a third movement in abridged sonata form, providing tonal resolution for this multi-movement work in the tonic major key, B-flat major.

This larger structural perspective forms the framework within which the second stage of the Retian approach is addressed, namely, the uncovering of the thematic process itself. It is this thematic process which I address in some detail in the remainder of this chapter. The reader is referred to Appendix A, where the three versions of the sonata are aligned, starting with Rachmaninoff’s original version of 1913 at the top of each page, his revision of 1931 in the middle, and Horowitz’s subsequent merging of the two versions beneath these. In this Appendix
Rachmaninoff’s omissions in the 1931 revision are clearly indicated, as are the subsequent amendments made hereto by Horowitz. In this chapter I focus on the two Rachmaninoff versions alone, but will return to consider Horowitz’s changes in chapter 5. Unless stated otherwise, bar numbers referred to in the analysis below derive from the 1913 version of the sonata, this being the most “comprehensive” of the three, whilst comparative reference will be made to the 1931 version where this is pertinent to the discussion.

4.3.1 The First Movement

Composed in sonata form, this movement commences with a descending flourish introducing the exposition’s first thematic section in B-flat minor (bars 1-13). The first theme (1.1) consists of two thematic fragments: the first (fragment 1.1.1) in bars 1-3 and the second (fragment 1.1.2) in bars 3 - 4. These two fragments are of primary importance in that they hold the motivic essence, the ‘primary idea’ or thematic kernel, from which the whole composition stems; their characteristic significance in support of this claim will become clear as this analytical endeavour progresses.

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6 The reader should note that in this analysis, thematic entities are assigned a first digit according to the movement in which they occur (movements 1, 2 and 3), and a second digit according to the placing of a given theme within each movement. Thus the first movement’s first theme will be numbered ‘theme 1.1’ and the second theme of the third movement ‘theme 3.2’, and so forth. A third digit is then used to indicate a particular thematic fragment within a theme. Hence ‘thematic fragment 1.2.1’ indicates the first thematic fragment of the second theme from the first movement, and so forth.
The extraction of the kernel from the constituting elements of the first thematic section requires further discussion. When deconstructed, as seen in figure 2, the opening flourish reveals its comprising components to be descending arpeggiated repetitions of the tonic chord in second inversion. Bearing in mind Reti’s concept of thematic key relationships in which relationships are “not always [...] brought about by the keys themselves, but may occasionally be materialized by pitches immersing within the keys” (1961: 222), the dominant (V) character of this descending flourish is clearly discernible⁷, as it initiates this movement. The third repetition is altered to facilitate a bold statement of the tonic root, thus establishing the key of this movement (bar 1-2).

The reader is once again referred to the preceding definition of ‘Thematic pitch’, and to Reti’s notion that analytic deductions should be understood as heard musical utterances which is discussed in this chapter’s conclusion. In this regard the sonata’s initiating arabesque-like figure manifests as an anacrusis to the subsequent declamatory statement of the tonic chord.

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⁷ The reader is once again referred to the preceding definition of ‘Thematic pitch’, and to Reti’s notion that analytic deductions should be understood as heard musical utterances which is discussed in this chapter’s conclusion. In this regard the sonata’s initiating arabesque-like figure manifests as an anacrusis to the subsequent declamatory statement of the tonic chord.
As a result it also serves to focus the listener’s attention on the ensuing and characteristic dotted-rhythmic motif and accompanying elaboration in semiquaver triplets in bar 2, both constructed entirely from the tonic triad.

Following fragment 1.1.1 is an augmented, more melodically pronounced statement (fragment 1.1.2 in bars 3-4) which resembles the essence of the opening flourish and incorporates the characteristic dotted rhythmic motif from bar 2 of fragment 1.1.1, as is clearly heard in the guise of this definitive motif in bar 4. The subsequent repetitions of this statement (in bars 7-8, 10-11 and 11-12) emphasize the apparent significance it holds for the composer, and thus, in comparing the various repetitions to the opening flourish, a kernel can be derived by extracting the essential notes common to all. As figure 3 shows, the first and last notes as well as those of metric and rhythmic significance are included in the extraction to produce a kernel in the form of an arpeggiated, descending second inversion of the tonic chord.

As a whole, the first thematic section (bar 1-13) is constructed from three harmonically varied statements of the first theme. The first announcement of this theme (bar 1-4) is constructed on the tonic chord, the second (bar 4⁴-8) on the submediant seventh chord, and the last (bar 8⁴ - 14) on the tonic major seventh chord. In the latter appearance (bar 10), however, the thematic material of the theme is contracted to allow for an additional entry of fragment 1.1.2 in the treble clef (bar 11³). Contrary to the proceeding statements, Rachmaninoff places the first note of
this last statement on a strong beat, and in so doing solidifies its definitive significance.

As aforementioned, the first theme constitutes two thematic fragments of which the second is directly evolved from the first. Although the exact notes are retained, a passing note (E natural) is added, the thematic fragment contracted and the rhythm altered. Rachmaninoff anchors this new thematic idea in the original by changing the metre of bar 3 in order to retain the characteristic rhythmic motif in its prominent metric position. As a result the content of bar 3 acquires the same harmonic quality as the opening flourish. Figure 4 illuminates the process.

The flourish initiating the first statement of the first theme is never repeated as such in the ensuing two statements thereof; rather, it is more likely that the composer elaborated there upon by adding passing notes to create a stepwise, descending link (bars 5 and 9) which, in concurrence with the indication of a crescendo achieves the same effect of initiating subsequent statements of the first theme (bars 6 and 10). The last note of each ‘link’ is changed to facilitate each new statement’s harmonisation.

Figure 4. The opening flourish (bar 1-2), and its transformation into the main motif of the composition (bar 3-4).

Figure 5. The opening flourish transformed into a link initiating the first theme's second statement, bars 1-5.
Further support of the abovementioned link’s origin can be found in its melodic contour and rhythmic structure which, when scrutinised, reveals a direct link to the compositional elements of bar 2. The acquiescent figure 6 shows an uncovered melodic affinity to the abovementioned link when transformative techniques are applied.

As is evident in figure 7, the rhythmic affinity with bar 2 becomes clear when bar 5’s material as a whole is compacted into a singular rhythmic representation consisting of sextuplets. It commences with an anacrusis, an important characteristic essential to the rhythm in that it aids the aural experience of the link as reminiscent of the distinctive dotted rhythm in bar 2.

Having analysed the first thematic section as a whole, it is now possible to uncover the ‘motivic essence’ referred to at the beginning of the discussion on the first
movement. The first theme (bar 1-4) constitutes two thematic fragments (bars 1-2 and 3-4) from which two very distinct motifs can be derived. The first motif, hence forth referred to as motif A\(^8\), is the previously encountered definitive dotted rhythm (bar 2\(^1\) and 4\(^1\)) associated with a downward melodic leap. The second motif is a descending chromatic melodic line consisting of four notes (bars 3-4\(^1\)), and will be named motif B. Figure 8 refers:

In ascribing the whole composition’s motivic essence to these two motifs, it follows logically that they should contain the smallest structural unit Reti identified, a cell. Structural analysis and aural perception reveal the melodic interval of a descending third to be this cell. In bar 2 Rachmaninoff emphasizes this interval (as part of motif A) by writing it in the higher register, adding accents to aid its declamation; it forms the cornerstone of the accompanying rhythmic figure as first announced in bar 2, and is then submitted to variation and transformation for most of the remainder of the movement thereafter. The cell is pertinent to motif B in that its melodic line encompasses the interval of a descending third (bar 3-4\(^1\)).

As previously stated the first thematic section draws to a close with the composer’s insertion of an unexpected thematic entry contrasted in the upper register (bar 11\(^3\)). In spite of evident rhythmic and enharmonic changes to this thematic statement (bars 11\(^3\)-12) which is sequentially expanded in a manner akin to the previously discussed ‘link’ (bars 13-14), cohesion is still achieved through the presence of the kernel as a chord in second inversion, constituting the appropriate letter names, though not necessarily the identical intervals. Figure 9 presents the melodic line of the thematic statement under discussion (bars 11\(^3\)-14).

\(^8\) The numbering of motifs does not consider its position within a particular theme within a particular movement – the uniqueness of each motif deems such numbering unnecessary.
Figure 9(a) above shows that Rachmaninoff, in order to achieve optimum aural appeal, starts this statement of the theme on a chromatically altered note from the dominant triad rather than the expected natural fifth step of the scale. As the line progresses we encounter a G-sharp in bar 12 which, when altered enharmonically to A-flat, fits the kernel-profile; on the third beat of bar 12 the next kernel-specific note is F. In concluding this thematic statement with a C-sharp (bar 14³) Rachmaninoff not only completes the kernel (as shown in figure 9(b)), he also aids a smooth transition to the bridge passage commencing in bar 15.

An extended bridge passage (bars 14³-37) connects the first theme to the second D-flat major-theme in bar 38. Its initial section (bars 14⁴-23) commences with an anacrusis in the form of the aforementioned cell combined with the dotted rhythm of motif A. Rachmaninoff employs the cell in its inverted form as building block for the melody in bars 17-18. This melody in turn is accompanied by a transformed version of fragment 1.1.2, which appears with equal, diminished note values alternating between an original contour and its retrograde version (bars 17-18). In lieu of the declamatory content of bar 24, bars 19-23 acquires the same introductory qualities as the links between the various statements of the first theme in the preceding section (bars 1-10). The figure below illuminates the affinity, in spite of their rhythmic transformation, between the simplified presentation of bars 19-23 and bars 8-9.
In applying a number of the compositional techniques discussed in the previous section of this chapter, Rachmaninoff extends the bridge passage by transforming motifs from the first theme as patterns, repeats and sequences. A slow and uniform harmonic rhythm (bars 24-27) results, following the composer’s coloristic handling of the second inversion D-flat – F – A-flat (bar 26) with the inclusion of an upper diatonic third. As such bars 24-27 manifest as a transformed version of the first theme in which the minims B-flat (i) – D-flat (III) – B-flat (i) and D-flat (III) – D-flat (III) contained in bars 24 and 26 resembles, though transformed through augmentation and rhythmic alteration, motif A in bar 2. Figure 11 below illuminates bars 25 and 27 as derived from thematic fragment 1.1.2 and presented in the upper voice with diminished and altered pitches. The accompaniment constitutes a combination of both motif A (which is perceived aurally as a dotted rhythm) and motif B, quoted directly in its inner voice.

The passage which follows (bars 28-36) is tonally androgynous, a characteristic which might have induced the composer to continue improvising without end, but this is a
matter that will be further discussed with reference to the presence of musical forces in the forthcoming chapter of this treatise. The content, however, is derived from motif B and the accompanying figure from bar 2, and presented as pattern and ascending sequences (bar 28-29). Bars 30-35 commence with a pattern and descending sequences resembling the melodic contour of the first theme’s second thematic fragment. The ensuing descending line of bars 33-35 is reminiscent of the latter’s conclusion (bar 4) and subsequent link (bar 5). Rachmaninoff ends the bridge passage by stating the cell lodged in the guise of motif B as arabesque-like figures (bar 36), concluding (in bar 37) with a contracted version inducing a rhythmic \textit{ritardando} which, in combination with the \textit{faux} entry of the second thematic fragment, manifests as an introduction to the movement’s second theme in D-flat major.

In slowing the tempo, marked \textit{meno mosso}, Rachmaninoff complements the softer dynamic level ascribed to the second theme which he, by changing the time signature from simple quadruple to compound quadruple time (bar 38), successfully contrasts with the preceding one. The second theme (as shown below in figure 12) shares a structural affinity with the preceding one in that it also consists of two thematic fragments: the first fragment numbered 1.2.1 (bars 38-41) and the second fragment 1.2.2 (bars 41-43). The second theme is repeated in bar 44, though significantly altered from bar 46 towards its conclusion.
On the surface the first thematic fragment (fragment 1.2.1) appears to be solely constructed from motif B, as perceived in the first theme’s second thematic fragment. Closer scrutiny, however, uncovers the complete fragment woven through the various voices, as the larger note heads illuminate in the following figure.

The second phrase of fragment 1.2.1 features a statement of fragment 1.1.2 with diminished note values as accompanying bass line (bar 40). In the upper register, the melodic line at first appears to be reminiscent of the semibreve movement in bar 24 and 26; however, in considering the origin of the bass line, the melodic line is more likely to have originated in the first theme. Analysis thereof consequently reveals its
origin in the three statements of the first theme. As mentioned before, the stepwise melodic movement induced by the significant harmonic progression (I - VI\(^7\) - I) manifest as F - G\(\flat\) - F, or 5 – 6 – 5 in B-flat minor (in reference to bars 2, 6 and 10), and when this progression is transposed to D-flat major the A\(\flat\) - B\(\flat\) - A\(\flat\) becomes steps 5 – 6 – 5. The larger note heads in figure 14(a) serve to illustrate this. The melodic contour derived from the amalgamation of the melodic line and its accompaniment resembles that of the accompanying elaboration shown in figure 14(b) as found in bar 2. The reader is also referred to figure 6 above in further support of this claim.

![Figure 14](image)

The second thematic fragment (1.2.2) is constructed from the rhythmic and melodic elements of the preceding theme’s second fragment, while bar 41 presents an instantly recognisable, but altered version of motif B. More interesting though, is a closer look at bar 42 as a transformed representation of the first movement’s ‘link’. Figure 15 shows a clear affinity between the respective melodic contours of bars 5 and 42.
The identical repetition of bars 38-39 in bars 44-45 is followed by transformed appearances of motif B in the melodic line of bars 46-48. In the lower register (bar 46) motif B appears in retrograde, though metric displacement obscures its prominence. The second thematic section draws to a close in bar 49 with the chordal movement echoing the similar movement of semibreves in bars 24-25¹ and 26-27¹.

As will be noted from the comparison of Rachmaninoff’s 1913 and 1931 versions of this work in Appendix A, Rachmaninoff left the exposition of the first movement unaltered in his later reworking of this sonata.

The development section (bars 49⁴-121) exploits the motivic material from the preceding exposition, using imitation, sequences and repetitions to showcase the rich chromatic harmonic vocabulary typical of the Romantic period, culminating in the unmistakable climax of the movement when a passage of descending chords reintroduces the recapitulation and subsequent first theme in B-flat minor (bar 122).

When the different versions of this sonata-movement are compared, this section features the largest cuts made due, in no uncertain terms, to the excessive repetition of ideas which hamper the musical impetus. The nature of and effects experienced because of this ‘musical impetus’ can best be explained in terms of musical forces, and will consequently be addressed in the next chapter of this treatise. For now
attention will be focussed on these cuts as an attempt to achieve structural conciseness.

Rachmaninoff initiates this development section with an unmistakable statement of motif B, the last note of which is altered to facilitate the tonal development to follow. A rhythmically transformed and augmented version of the preceding statement is transposed to the upper voices in bar 50, creating the ensuing counterpoint in bars 50-52 through the use of imitation and repetition. It is followed by a prime example of thematic contraction in bars 53-54¹ (as shown in the figure below) which renders a more concise and transformed version of bars 50²-51³. The transformed version is repeated (bars 54-55¹) to correspond with the latter’s repetition in bars 51¹-52². This is followed by a retrograde presentation of motif B in the accompaniment (bar 46).

![Figure 16. Bars 30-52, comprising three versions of a transformed thematic fragment 1.1.2](image)

In the figure above, the extracted melodic contour of bars 53-55 is shown to be representative of those preceding it.

The section continues as the melodic rather than rhythmic characteristics of motif A (as found in bar 2) are developed in bar 55. As such, the B-flat (bar 55¹) naturally completes the preceding descending line and is followed by F and D-flat in the upper voice. After it is repeated in bar 56, Rachmaninoff continues the development through the transformation of the cell. At first the idea of the descending third is filled and expanded to encompass two statements across the interval of a fifth (bar 57), then transposed up a minor third (bar 58), after which it is contracted to retain only the top and bottom notes in bars 59-60. The latter representation is also metrically contracted to render a written *accelerando* culminating in a literal statement of motif B at the end of bar 60, which releases the tension with a virtuoso
passage of descending diminished seventh chords (bar 61 – 62). This whole section from bar 55 up to bar 61 is supported by an ascending bass line, most likely as a means of building dramatic tension directed towards a climax. The next two bars are an elaborate statement (reminiscent of bars 24 and 26) of the tonic 7 chord, and are repeated in bars 65-66 prior to the continuation of the development. Bars 53 – 66 are cut from the 1931 version, supposedly to avoid the unnecessary repetition of material, but primarily to increase the dramatic impulse of this section as a whole. As a result, by removing the first apparent high point, the composer allows the development of the 1931 version to build gradually to a single striking climax.

In contrast to the preceding bars, Rachmaninoff introduces four bars marked \( mf \) (bar 67) and ending \( pp \) (bar 70) as a brief pause amidst all the excitement generated in the development. Scrutiny of the melodic structure, as seen below in figure 17, reveals the kernel contained in each beat, though only in part. The omission of the cell, as initiating interval of the kernel, is compensated for in the augmented presentation of motif B as D♭-C - C♭ - B♭ in bars 67-70, where each note of the motif appears as the first note of each bar’s melodic fragment.

The \textit{poco piu mosso}'s initiating statement of thematic fragment 1.1.2 in the lower register becomes the D minor-pattern (bar 703) for the repeats to follow in bars 713, 723 and 743; hence after it is transposed to E minor (bars 76 and 773) and C major (bars 783 and 793). Rachmaninoff further develops this thematic fragment by creating accompanying counterpoint in a manner reminiscent of that in the upper voices of bars 50-52. In his reworked version of the sonata, the composer follows bars 55-58 (comparable to bars 67–70, 1913) with a singular statement, in D minor, of thematic fragment 1.1.2, thus discarding the prolonged modulation contained in
bars 72-82 of the original version. It is instead replaced with a more concise three bars, similar to bars 67-70, which initiates transposed statements of thematic fragment 1.1.2, first in A-flat minor (bar 62³, 1931) and second in E minor (bar 63³, 1931). In comparison to concluding this section of the development with a rhythmic reference to the exposition’s second theme (bars 83 – 85), Rachmaninoff’s aim at conciseness in the latter 1931 version results in the retention of the same idea, though shortened by two bars (bars 66–67, 1931). Further structural analysis uncovers the ultimate section of the development (bars 86-121) as constructed from transformed versions of the kernel, cell and motif B. Figure 18 shows the kernel embedded amongst the comprising notes of its initiating melody (bars 86-88¹).

![Figure 18. The kernel embedded in the melody of bars 86-88.](image)

In ascribing agogic accents (as seen above) to the first note of both bar 87 and 88, Rachmaninoff emphasizes the significance of the cell as constitutive element in the section to follow. The continuation and subsequent conclusion of the phrase is achieved in rendering an augmented motif B as the inner voice of bars 88²-90¹. Thereafter, in the 10 bars which follow, the composer develops the abovementioned elements, combining the rhythmic characteristics of motif A with a descending melodic line similar to the type associated with the ‘link’ from the exposition’s first theme. As is the case with the latter it also introduces a transformed version of motif A in bar 92, as is evident in figure 19.

![Figure 19. The descending line of bars 90 and 91 introduces a transformed motif A.](image)

Bars 94-99 are effectively a transposed, though elaborated version of bars 86-90¹ and as such are not retained in the latter 1931 version; rather, coherence is achieved as a result of reconstructing bars 92-93 in the manner of bars 25 and 27, achieving
subsequent conciseness through the omission of bars 94-98 as superfluous repeat. In the bars following the preceding alterations, Rachmaninoff re-introduces the idea from bars 90-92 which is developed and presented as a pattern (bars 100-102) with sequences (bars 102-108). Realization of the climax is accomplished, in spite of the thickened texture and altered rhythm, through the sustained sequential treatment of the abovementioned pattern. For the sake of consistency, Rachmaninoff omitted bars 118-119 in the 1931 version, thus keeping the two-bar sequential procedure intact. The composer concludes the development with a dramatic chordal passage (bars 118-121) descending over the range of three octaves, initiating the recapitulation and subsequent return statement of the first theme in B-flat minor (bar 122).

As is customary in sonata form, the schematic design of the exposition is essentially maintained in the recapitulation (bars 122-129). The accompanying elaboration associated with the first theme is here omitted, which accordingly shortens the three statements of the theme (now comprising 3 bars), and thus, in comparison to the exposition, shortens the recapitulation’s first thematic section to 8 instead of the original 12 bars. Rachmaninoff introduces 3 bars (122, 125 and 128) similar in content to that of bar 24 and 26 to initiate each statement of the first theme. The first statement is in B-flat minor (bars 121-123), the second in B-flat major (bars 124-126) and the third in D major (bars 127-129). Conjugated to the shortened bridge passage (bars 130-140) is an expansion of the arabesque-like figures (bars 137-140) which, through a change of key, introduces the second theme in G-flat major (bars 141-148); these figures are omitted in the 1931 version of the sonata. The presentation of the second theme is characterised by a reduced focus on its first thematic fragment (bars 141-143) in favour of the second thematic fragment, stated as pattern (bars 143-145) and sequence (bars 145-148). This is in turn followed by a lengthy repeat of material from the bridge passage (bars 148-169) which, supposedly in another attempt at conciseness, is drastically cut to 7 bars in the 1931 version (bars 119-125, 1931).

The movement draws to a close with a short coda in the tonic key (bars 170-185), drawing on the descending line of motif B and the accompanying elaboration as
illuminated in figure 6. In the 1931 version’s coda (bars 126-138, 1931) the bass line expands on the characteristic melodic curve of motif B, and concludes softly in bars 137 and 138 with a affirming statement of thematic fragment 1.1.2 and, per implication, the kernel lodged within.

4.3.2 The Second Movement

The second movement’s binary structure is clearly defined in two sections: section A (bars 192⁴-220) and section B (bars 220⁴-258). It commences, however, with an introduction in E minor marked non allegro (bars 186-192) which is constructed on a descending melodic line comparable to the ‘link’ (bar 4³-5) in the preceding movement’s exposition. It is thus no coincidence that this section is presented, as is the case with the abovementioned ‘link’, in a similar introductory capacity, initiating a theme. A chordal reduction (figure 20 refers) shows the introduction as descending stepwise, covering the range of one octave.

The melody is presented as a sequential procedure with the pattern in bars 186-187³ and a descending sequence in bars 187⁴-189². Conclusion is reached after two more contracted sequences (bars 189³-191¹) and a progressive cadence (reminiscent of the melodic curve D-(Eb)-Eb-D in bar 38) in bars 191³-192³.

Scrutiny of the abovementioned pattern’s melodic line reveals a contracted fundamental melodic contour⁹ akin to that of thematic fragment 1.1.2 (bar 4). Therefore, having established the introduction’s roots in the second thematic fragment of the first theme, the analyst can now trace the thematic development of this fragment (as outlined in the preceding discussion on the first movement) to the

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⁹ The fundamental contour is contracted (in comparison to thematic fragment 1.1.2) in the sense that the first interval of a third in thematic fragment 1.1.2 comprising motif B (bar 3) is incorporated in the second interval of a third (bar4), thus effectively shortening the thematic fragment to contain only two – instead of three – intervals in its fundamental melodic contour.
second theme of the exposition. Subsequent evidence in support of this claim (presented in figure 21) can be found when the extracted fundamental melodic contour of the pattern (bars 186-187\textsuperscript{3}) is compared to that of the arabesque-like figures (bar 36) introducing the second theme.

![Figure 21](image1)

The discussion above exposed a clear affinity between the second movement’s introduction and the passage initiating the second theme of the first movement, which inevitably leads to the assumption that the actual theme of section A (bars 192\textsuperscript{4}-196\textsuperscript{5}) will be comparable to the actual second theme of the first movement. Analysis reveals first of all a rhythmic affinity, as shown in figure 22.

![Figure 22](image2)
In addition to the rhythmic affinity, the theme shares a similar stepwise descending four-note contour with the second theme’s second thematic fragment (bar 46) in the preceding movement. The four-note fragment (as extracted in the figure below) will form the essence of this thematic section.

As a whole section A constitutes three, almost identical statements of the theme (bars 192⁴-196³, 196⁴-200 and 208⁴-212³) of which the second and third statements are appended with a bridge or link (bars 201-208³ and 212³-220) to the ensuing section. The first thematic statement concludes with a fragment similar to that in bar 43² which, rather than facilitate continuation to a succeeding section, effectively stops the melodic movement (bar 196). In contrast to this procedure, Rachmaninoff uses this fragment in the subsequent two thematic statements (bars 200³ and 212³), in much the same way as in bar 43, in that it initiates the section to follow. The latter two statements are also embellished (as seen in figure 24): the first with an augmentation of motif A, and the second with an elaboration on the tonic chord.

Concurrent with the approach taken in the discussion above on thematic origin, the inspiration for the two previously mentioned bridge passages can be found in respectively the ‘link’ (bars 4-5) and bridge passage (bars 28-29) of the initial movement’s exposition. The latter’s influence on the first bridge passage (bars 201-208³) is evident in figure 25, when both melodic lines are simplified and compared.
The essence of the kernel is illuminated (in the figure below) within the accompanying figures (bars 202-204).

In turn, as figure 27 shows, the second bridge (bars 212\textsuperscript{3}-220) bears upon the ‘link’ in the first movement’s first thematic section.

The second section of the binary structure (bars 220\textsuperscript{4}-258) draws on the motivic material of thematic fragment 1.1.2, which is developed in a manner akin to that of the preceding movement’s development section. The original version suffers from excessive repetition and, as a result, an extensive section (bars 220\textsuperscript{3}-240) is removed in the reworking of 1931. A further attempt at conciseness manifest in the ensuing bars with the composer’s strettto-like treatment of the first movement’s initiating
theme’s second fragment. In the 1931 version the texture is thinned to more clearly
define the thematic entries and includes a direct reference to the second theme in
the first movement’s exposition (bars 38 – 39). The climax is realised through the
combination of diminution, transposition and retrograde as transformative
techniques, manifesting as a gradual rhythmic acceleration which becomes
increasingly louder. Constituting bars 248-252 is a diminished version of thematic
fragment 1.1.2 presented in the upper voice, as an ascending sequence. From bar
252 the sequential direction is changed, denoting the aforementioned cell with
accented notes on each beat of bars 253-256. In concurrence with the preceding
presentation of the thematic fragment, the lower voice draws attention with motif B
(as constituent of thematic fragment 1.1.2) accentuated in the bass line of the same
bars. It is, however, altered to accentuate the cell (as descending third) on the off-
beats of bars 253-256, supported by an added third melodic line (bars 250-252)
which yet again emphasizes the cell in the form of descending consecutive thirds.
The penultimate bar’s descending passage initiates bar 258 wherein the current
material is presented in retrograde as ascending arabesques in conclusion of section
B.

Following the climax of this movement there is a brief return to the material of the
A-section in the form of a codetta in E major (bars 258-274). The section is initiated
with a two-bar modulation (from E minor to E major) of which, in the latter 1931
version, the repetitions of bars 259-263 are omitted in favour of directly quoting the
first movement’s second theme in E major (bars 203-204, 1931), hence after the
section is continued with material similar to that of section A. In this continuation
the tonic chord manifests as a broken chord (G♯ – E – B – G♯ – E - B) with each
member-note presented on the first beat of each of bars 264-270, in a manner
reminiscent of the kernel as arpeggiated chord. The movement is concluded with the
familiar descending line ending on the tonic with the characteristic rhythmic idea of
thematic fragment 1.2.1 (bars 271-274). In the 1931 version Rachmaninoff
rearranged the voices of the last two bars of the second movement, affording the
thematic statement prime position in the upper melodic line. The composer’s
intention to keep the tension span between the second and third movements
unbroken, is evident not only in his indication of *attacca subito* (bar 214), but also in the introduction (bars 275-281) of an altered repeat of the second movement’s introduction (bars 1–6), which can either be interpreted as concluding the second movement, or initiating the one to follow. For the purpose of this analysis the latter is considered part of the third movement.

### 4.3.3 The Third Movement

It can be argued that, in an attempt to culminate the formal schemes of the preceding movements in the sonata’s third and final movement, Rachmaninoff opted for a formal structure which incorporates both the elements of sonata form and the dualistic quality of binary form. As such, abridged sonata form accedes in that it comprises the elements of sonata form (though devoid of a development section) and binary form, with both an exposition (bars 281-399) and recapitulation (bars 400-543). The composer further affirms this attempt at structural coherence in ascribing, as is the case in both preceding movements, a coda (bars 544-570) to the third movement of his second sonata.

The introduction of the third movement (bars 275-281) at first appears to be a transposed repeat of the introduction to the preceding movement, especially from a listener’s perspective. However, it is characterised not only by a change of key, but also of time signature. In comparison to its predecessor which is in the key of E minor, this introduction commences in the key of C major, the secondary dominant key of the ensuing dominant key. As in the first movement, the composer takes the same approach in establishing the movement’s key; the descending passage marked *ff* (bars 282-283) acquires a dominant character as a result of the repeated statements of the tonic chord (bars 284-287), thus establishing the movement’s key as B-flat major.

The exposition’s first theme in B-flat major (bars 282-364) comprises two thematic fragments; the first thematic fragment (3.1.1) is stated in bars 282-293, and stems from the first theme of the first movement. Bars 281 and 282 recall the descending flourish at the very beginning of the work; the repeated tonic chords correspond to bar 2, and the descending passage (bars 288–293) to bar 5. The first thematic
fragment is repeated (bars 294-301), with the initiating chord spelt in the same manner as in the corresponding idea in the first movement (bar 2), and appended with a second thematic fragment (3.1.2) encompassing bars 302-322. As seen in the figure below, the upper voice of bars 302-305 presents a transformed version of material found in bars 28-29 of the bridge linking the two themes of the first movement.

![Figure 28](image)

The filled version of thematic fragment 1.1.2, which resembles the bass line of bars 302-305, is also represented (as figure 29 shows) in the inner voices of bars 310-313.

![Figure 29](image)

The repeat of the first theme in bar 322 is preceded by four bars pertaining to thematic fragment 3.1.2. It constitutes a transformed, however obvious, statement of the cell in the upper register (bars 314-317), whilst in the figure below, the corresponding bass line is shown to exhibit the augmented and transposed version of the ascending four-note figure contained in the bass line of bars 28 and 29.
The second thematic fragment (3.1.2) concludes with a link (bars 318-321) initiating the repeat of the first theme, which in turn is appended with a shortened second thematic fragment (bars 322-337). In the 1931 version Rachmaninoff cuts the first statement of the first theme’s second thematic fragment to eight bars (bars 242-252, 1931), thus achieving consistency in length when compared to the second statement of thematic fragment 3.1.2 (bars 261-270², 1931).

A bridge passage, constituting various statements of the ascending four-note figure¹⁰ contained in bars 28-29 (shown below) of the corresponding bridge passage in the first movement, links the two themes of this movement (bars 338-364).

After a brief reference to thematic fragment 1.1.2 is made in bars 346-349², Rachmaninoff expands on the four-note figure, presenting it as a pattern (bars 349³-350²) followed by two sequences (bar 350³-353³), with a repeat in bars 253⁴-356. Having transposed the four-note figure an octave higher (bar 356), the composer repeats the sequential procedure, though now the figure is rhythmically altered and each statement repeated (bars 357-362). In the two bars preceding the second theme’s first appearance the four-note figure is condensed to three notes and presented with no repeats (bars 363-364), thus effectively slowing the momentum in anticipation of the subsequent thematic statement. In the 1931 version Rachmaninoff omitted bars 357-364 in favour of a two-bar elaboration on bar 345.

¹⁰ The four-note figure is a transformed version of motif B.
The second theme is introduced in E-flat major (bar 365), and consists of two thematic fragments (fragment 3.2.1 in bars 365-374 and fragment 3.2.2 in bars 375-399). Extraction of the first thematic fragment’s fundamental melodic contour reveals its unquestionable affinity with thematic fragment 1.1.2 in the first movement. Figure 32 shows the extracted contour in enlarged note heads.

The second thematic fragment’s origin is uncovered in the second theme of the first movement. Evidence in support of this claim emerges when bars 375-378 are compared to bars 39³ - 40 and 46 of the first movement.

The recapitulation (bars 400-543) is announced in the same manner as the preceding exposition, and constitutes the bigger part of the remaining movement, comprising 144 bars. Rather than stating the theme as a whole, issues of key necessitate an altered repeat (bars 404-409) of the first four bars. Different fragments from the theme’s initial statement in the exposition are combined in a modulation (bars 400-409) preceding the primary statement of the first theme in A minor (bars 410). Evidence in support of this claim manifests in the comparison of bars 402-403 and 406-409 to bars 284-289, and is followed by the abovementioned theme’s presentation as a pattern (bars 410-419) with sequences in bars 420-431 (B-flat minor) and 432-439 (B minor). Rachmaninoff introduces a fourth thematic statement (bars 470-481) to secure the original key of the movement. It is, however, preceded
by a lengthy passage (bars 440-469) which completely slows the impetus of the movement - drawing on material from the first movement that was most probably incorporated to strengthen the sense of unity within the whole composition – that is cut from the later 1931 version.

The ensuing bridge passage (bars 482-513) linking the first theme of the recapitulation to the second appears at first to be new material, but closer analysis reveals its essence to be analogous to that of the exposition’s bridge (bars 338-364). Rachmaninoff constructs this section from the idea of the ascending four-note pattern (represented in the crochet-movement of bars 339-340 and 342-343) and the descending chromatic passage (bars 345-346²). Bars 485³-505, which are analogous to bars 349³-353², are presented as a pattern and sequence (bars 490³-495³). In anticipation of the movement’s climax, the composer develops this idea even further through contraction (bars 495³-499²), statements in the left hand part (bars 499³-502²) and repetition, though transformed, in the upper voice (bars 503-505). In figure 34 below, the abovementioned procedures are explained.
In an effective manifestation of coherence, the third movement’s high point is approached (bars 506-513) in much the same way as the corresponding moment in the first movement (bar 122). Consequently Rachmaninoff, in contrast to the link’s expected descending melodic contour (bar 124), inverts and transforms it in bars 510-513 in order to focus all attention on the entry of the second theme in B-flat major, marked \textit{ff}. The dissimilarity in the theme’s conclusion (when compared to its prior appearance in bars 365-399) is evident in the obvious omission of the pseudo-repeat of its first thematic fragment (bar 391) in favour of an expanded conclusion (bars 540-543), characterised by a change in articulation and tempo. As an amalgamation of preceding material, the coda, marked \textit{presto}, is initiated with a transformed version of the kernel (shown below), and constitutes the
The aforementioned four-note figure (bars 552-555) as well as statements of the cell (bars 556-559).

The second Piano Sonata is concluded with a boldly stated version of motif A in B-flat major (bar 570).

4.4 Conclusion

The foregoing structural analysis highlights structural differences between the 1913 and 1931 versions of the sonata, and illuminates the thematic process and subsequent presence of an underlying kernel or thematic pattern throughout the entire composition, thus laying bare the intraopus “inner force” at the core of the work’s perceived coherence. Though of cardinal importance, the thematic kernel and the structural coherence it brings about through its conciseness of use should not be understood as the sole governing force in the reworking of this sonata; Reti states that: “in order to comprehend the full meaning of the [...] analytic deductions [...] [the figures] must be understood, indeed, heard, as musical utterances” (Reti 1961: 6), thus the intuitive musical instinct of the composer is an all-important motivating factor, and this instinct must ultimately be understood to encompass more than merely structural coherence. The latter issue will be further addressed in the following chapter on musical forces, in which the experience of music ‘as heard’, especially from a performative perspective, is discussed. In uncovering the thematic process, the analyst can nevertheless draw some significant conclusions pertaining to Rachmaninoff’s understanding of structural coherence in so far as he declared his 1931 reworking to have rid the work of all that was “superfluous”. The ensuing brief discussion will highlight some of those sections of difference between his two versions of the sonata.
Essentially, the analyses presented in this chapter show that the kind of conciseness of expression that the 1931 reworking achieves is not merely based on an indiscriminate removal of repetition, but that, underlying the removal of material deemed “superfluous”, is a conscious thematic realisation of the composer’s subconscious musical instinct. Rachmaninoff’s compositions are meticulously thought out and his relentless insistence on a single high point in a composition (and its respective constitutive movements alike) is the most probable reason for the changes made to the first and last movements, where the omission of two particularly lengthy sections (bars 52-62 and 440-469, 1913) occur. Smaller cuts appear to be thematically motivated. For example, due to the melodic affinity between bars 50-52 and bars 41-43 of the 1931 version (as shown below), the composer is able to exploit the rhythmic characteristics of bar 42 as an agent of change in bar 52. A musically satisfying transition manifests as completely devoid of any musical tension, thus enabling the unhindered continuation of the development section.

Most often the element of coherence between bars is the underlying and transcending presence of the kernel, which is often less obscured in the 1931 version than is the case in the initial version. In addition to the aforementioned being a direct consequence of the revised version’s more transparent texture, this characteristic aids the aural perception of thematic and motivic elements. The following figure illuminates exactly such a clearly detectable kernel, as direct consequence of the alteration made, in bars 54 and 55 of the 1931 version.
Rachmaninoff affects the link between bars 67 and 68 (1931) seamlessly in that he ascribes, in much the same way as in the exposition’s first thematic section, a different harmony to the same melodic notes. Subsequently, in comparison to bars 78-86 of the 1913 version, bars 66-67 of the 1931 version (with motif B stated in the inner voices), is shown in the ensuing figure to be thematically linked to bar 68, with a transformed version of motif B. This harmonic procedure is mimicked in the link between bars 75-76 (1931).

An embellished kernel, presented in retrograde, is transformed as the bass line of bar 68; Rachmaninoff draws attention to this fact in that he indicates the G at the beginning of bar 67 to be stressed. The basic line of the kernel is presented in bar 70 (again indicated with an agogic accent) with motif B continued in the inner voice to initiate the key of B-minor.

Changes to the 1913 version’s second movement prohibit the introduction of foreign material (bars 221 – 230) which exhibits a less direct thematic link to the current themes. The ensuing changes to bars 174-190 aim to restructure the sequential procedure by simplifying it, thus facilitating the more effective approach to the high point in the reworked version’s bar 200. As concluding section this movement’s coda contains both a direct quote of the first movement’s second theme (bar 203, 1931) as well as thematic material reminiscent of the second movement’s first theme (bars 205-210, 1931), as a derivative of the former. In eliminating the repeated fragments contained in bars 259-263 (1913), the coda is more concise, to the point, although thematically rich.
Thematic resolution$^{11}$ is the driving force behind the changes made to the third movement. Although the removal of material which is not on the surface akin to this thematic section appears to be the main motivation for Rachmaninoff’s changes here, it is debateable whether all of these changes are equally successful$^{12}$. The omission of bars 307-313 (1913), as a transformed version of the kernel, dilutes the thematic essence of the last movement’s first thematic section. On the whole, excessive repetitions are treated in much the same manner as foreign material. As such, the following figure shows justification for the omission of bars 357-364 contained in the earlier version, in that it illuminates (in the latter 1931 version) characteristic elements associated with the kernel, presented in a transformed version, respectively in bar 278 and bar 279.

Flanking the biggest section removed in the whole of the original sonata, are two less severe cuts (bars 391-399 and 508-509) which were made to eliminate the unnecessary repetition of material. The 34 bars comprising the biggest cut (bars 440-473, 1913) contain material associated with the first movement, most probably included as an attempt at coherence of the three-movement structure as a whole. Instead, Rachmaninoff concedes in his reworking to the greater need for thematic resolution when the first theme’s repetition (bars 432-439, 1931) is followed uninterrupted by a transposed statement of its second thematic fragment (bars 474-

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$^{11}$ See again section 4.2.6 of this chapter for Reti’s understanding of this term.

$^{12}$ Whereas the omission of, for example, a large section like bars 440-473 is structurally and thematically defensible, the omission of a section like bars 307-313, when reflected upon from a perceiver’s perspective, deprives the ultimate movement of essential rhythmic and dramatic momentum.
477, 1931). As a result the momentum intensifies as the movement builds to its high point when the second theme is presented (bar 514, 1931).

Ultimately, evidence in support of the thematic process is observable in both versions of the sonata, so that this process cannot conclusively be shown as the primary driving force behind Rachmaninoff’s reworking thereof. While conciseness in the 1931 version has been shown to have been achieved through adhering to the principles of the thematic process, these same principles are present in equal – if at times somewhat different – measure in the 1913 version. As argued in the following chapter, therefore, questions of “superfluity” should consider more than structural coherence, and should include subconscious musical instinct guided by the experience of musical forces from a performative perspective, wherein the respective reworkings of Rachmaninoff and Horowitz are shaped according to their experience and understanding of the material at hand.
Chapter 5 – Towards ‘drama’: Hermeneutics and musical forces in a performative reading of Rachmaninoff’s Piano Sonata, Opus 36

5.1 Introduction

In the first chapter of this treatise, Horowitz was quoted as justifying his 1940 reworking of Rachmaninoff’s Piano Sonata, Opus 36, on the basis that the “conciseness of expression” the composer’s 1931 revision had gained in comparison to the original work of 1913, was “outweighed by losses in pianistic sonority and drama” (Horowitz in Martyn 1990: 323). This chapter seeks to interrogate the notion of “drama” as Horowitz might have understood it, to establish the parameters of a methodology according to which such drama can be understood, to “measure”, if such be possible, the relative impact of the three versions here discussed for their dramatic impact accordingly\(^1\), and thus to establish the extent to which Horowitz’s attempts to reclaim the work’s “lost pianistic sonority and drama” may be considered to have been successful.

To a very large extent, the aim of this chapter must therefore be informed by what it is exactly that may be understood as “drama”. Etymologically, the word is derived from the Greek δρᾶμα, meaning “action”. As a very broad definition, and yet a very telling one in this context, drama may accordingly be understood to mean “the specific mode of fiction represented in performance” wherein “collaborative modes of production and [...] collective form[s] of reception” are pre-supposed\(^2\).

In considering matters of drama in the case of this particular study, therefore, we are inevitably challenged to venture beyond mere score reading and structural analysis, and to consider the “human element”; that is, to adopt an anthropocentric approach to its subject matter. In so doing, “performance”, “production” and “reception”, as highlighted in the

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\(^1\) See again the three versions of the sonata contained in Appendix A; that is, Rachmaninoff’s original version of 1913, his revision of 1931, and Horowitz’s subsequent amalgamation of the two in 1940.

above definition, become the focus of the research activity. Also, by this means this chapter aligns itself with postmodern and post-structural criticism, rather than merely with musical analysis⁴, insofar as it embraces the open-ended contingency of human involvement and therefore acknowledges the need to understand Rachmaninoff’s Piano Sonata, Opus 36, as a potentially “inexhaustible source of possible meaning” (Treitler 1982: 156).

In defining different “schools of thought” or meta-theoretical positions in social research, Babbie and Mouton (2001) identify three basic categories:

- The first being positivism, wherein the social sciences and humanities are encouraged to “emulate the methodology or the logic of the natural sciences” (Babbie and Mouton 2001: 21)
- The second being those approaches described as “hermeneutic”, “phenomenological” and/or “interpretivist”, which, although there may be many nuanced differences between them, collectively represent that movement within the social sciences and the humanities in particular, towards “understanding (not explaining)” our objects of study, as these are considered to be “conscious, self-directing and symbolic” rather than merely “biological” (Ibid: 28)
- And the third being “radical hermeneutics” or the “critical tradition”, largely begun in the writings of Karl Marx who, in his famous Feuerbach Theses, insisted that the point of such endeavour was to change consciousness rather than merely to understand it (Ibid: 34).

It is in the second of the above categories of thought that the approach taken in this chapter locates itself. In its totality, this category encompasses a vast plethora of related metatheories (Babbie and Mouton 2001: 28-30), all, in one way or another, pertaining to the essential qualities of human experience (Cook 1987: 67). In amongst these, the particular focus of this chapter will be on Steve Larsen’s understanding of the musical forces that shape or “dramatise” our musical experience. Towards this end, a brief overview of this plethora of related metatheories is first given in the following section, so that Larson’s position within it may be understood accordingly.

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³ The reader may refer to chapter 3 for a brief overview of this distinction between (structural) music analysis and (post-structural) music criticism.
5.2 Hermeneutics, Phenomenology and Interpretivism in Music Criticism

Hermeneutics focuses on the understanding and interpretation of linguistic and non-linguistic expressions. As a theory of interpretation hermeneutics reaches back to ancient Greek philosophy, where Plato, for example, used the term in a number of dialogues, contrasting hermeneutic knowledge (i.e., knowledge of what has been revealed or said) with that of sophia (i.e., knowledge of the truth-value of what is said). In the Middle Ages and Renaissance, hermeneutics was predominantly pursued by church scholars concerned with how to read and understand Scripture. For Augustine, for example, the interpretation of Scripture involved a deeper, existential level of self-understanding, whereas Martin Luther’s sola scriptura heralded the dawn of a genuinely modern hermeneutics, according to which it was possible to question the authority of traditional interpretations of the Bible in order to emphasize the way in which each and every reader faces the challenge of making the truths of the text his or her own (Ramberg and Gjesdal 2013: np).

With nineteenth-century German romanticism and idealism, hermeneutics became a favoured branch of philosophy, laying a significant foundation for the writings of contemporary philosophers concerned with questions of meaning, both in the Anglo-American philosophical tradition (e.g. Rorty, McDowell, Davidson) and in the Continental one (e.g. Habermas, Apel, Ricoeur, and Derrida). Thus, for example, according to Schleiermacher⁴, understanding other cultures is not something we can take for granted, but requires an openness to things beyond that which we ordinarily take as rational, true or coherent, which is only possible if we systematically scrutinise our own hermeneutic prejudices. With Dilthey⁵, the search for a philosophical argument to legitimise the human sciences is further advanced. Dilthey argues that scientific explanation must be complemented with a theory and also an empirical method of how the world is given to us through symbolically mediated practices, and that this is the task of the humanities, of the philosophy of the humanities in particular. In so doing Dilthey gives impetus to the so-called

⁴ Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768 - 1834) was a German theologian, scholar, and author, amongst other works, of Hermeneutics and Criticism (1838).

⁵ Wilhelm Dilthey (1833 – 1911) was a German polymath philosopher and author, amongst many other books, of Leben Schleiermachers (The life of Schleiermacher) (1922).
“ontological turn” towards general theories of human life and existence (Ramberg and Gjesdal 2013: np).

In *Sein und Zeit* (1927), Heidegger’s account of hermeneutics is that it is “neither a method of reading nor the outcome of a willed and carefully conducted procedure of critical reflection. It is not something we consciously do or fail to do, but something we are”. Understanding is a mode of being, and as such it is characteristic of human being, of *Dasein*. Thus “the world is tacitly intelligible to us” (Ramberg and Gjesdal 2013: np).

In *Wahrheit und Methode* (1960), on the other hand, Gadamer argues that we cannot really understand ourselves unless we do so from within a linguistically mediated, historical culture. “Language is our second nature”, he maintains, and this has consequences for our understanding of art, culture, and historical texts. Historical works do not present themselves to us as neutral and value-free objects of scientific investigation. They are part of the “horizon” in which we live and through which our world-view gets shaped. We are, in other words, formed by these great works before we get the chance to approach them with an objectivising gaze. Furthermore, we cannot know a historical work as it originally appeared to its contemporaries because we can never fully access its original context of production or the intentions of its author. Thus tradition is always alive, and we always encounter such works in what Gadamer calls their “effective history”. Moreover, we ourselves are a significant part of that effective history. As a part of the tradition in which we stand, historical texts or works of art have an authority that precedes our own, yet this authority is kept alive only to the extent that it is recognized by the present, thus to the extent that we enter into “a dialogical relationship with the past”. This is what Gadamer calls the “fusion of horizons” wherein we gain a better and more profound understanding not only of the historical text or work of art, but also of ourselves. In so doing we achieve the particular kind of truth-claim that Gadamer ascribes to the human sciences: the truth of self-understanding. Thus, says Gadamer, it is not only we who address the texts of tradition,

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6 Martin Heidegger (1889 – 1976) was a German philosopher and author, amongst other works, of *Sein und Zeit* (*Being and Time*) (1927).

but also these canonic texts that address us, hence completing the so-called “hermeneutic circle” (Ramberg and Gjesdal 2013: np).

Much of what musicology has busied itself with since its inception and even to this day, can, in the broadest sense of the word, be classified under the umbrella of hermeneutics (i.e., as an effort at understanding and interpretation), whether the term occurs as such in its writings or not. One of the first musicologists who expressly named his writings thus, is Carl Dahlhaus. Dahlhaus’s approach to musical hermeneutics draws from many aspects of 19\textsuperscript{th}- and early 20\textsuperscript{th}-century European intellectual history, including Russian formalism and the Neo-Marxist writings of Theodore Adorno and Max Weber. It tends in particular to the notion of \textit{Verstehen} (“meaningful understanding”) and \textit{Lebensmoment} (the work of art understood as a “slice of life”) as set out in the writings of Dilthey, Schleiermacher, Heidegger and Gadamer (Dahlhaus 1997[1977]: 80-81). But whereas Dahlhaus’s application of these ideas in his construction of historical and analytical musicological texts may arguably be considered closer in its empirical or “positivist” application to that of Dilthey, a later scholar such as Leo Treitler tends far more to the thinking of Gadamer, in so far as it admits to the significance of the “co-determination of text and reader” in the hermeneutic circle. Treitler’s outlay of the musicologist’s task, as quoted below, is an almost literal translation from Gadamer:

The work of art is regarded, not as a fixed and passive object of study, but as an inexhaustible source of possible meaning. It exists in tradition and the effort of understanding it is episodic; every understanding is a moment in the life of tradition, but also in the life of the interpreter. The interpreter confronts, not the work alone, but the work in its effective history […] The encounter is more a conversation with a respondent than an operation on a passive object. The interpreter’s knowledge and interests are as much factors in understanding as are the meanings of his objects in their successive contexts (Treitler 1982: 156).

In the broadest sense, the empirical hermeneutic stance of Dilthey has informed the related discipline of phenomenology, and this has also found its manifestation in musicology, most notably in the analytical approach of Thomas Clifton. Thomas Clifton defines music as “the actualization of the possibility of any sound whatever to present to some human being a
meaning which he experiences with his body – that is to say, with his mind, his feelings, his senses, his will, and his metabolism” (1983: 1). Comprehension of this definition is essential if one is to understand Clifton’s phenomenology, which stems from the philosophical ideas of Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty (Mauk 1986). He claims music to be a “constituted object” of which the experience is “those actions of the body by which feeling, understanding, time, motion, and play are all directed toward something. That something is the object of the act: a possession, a concern, a project, a relation, a form, or a problem” (Clifton 1976: 74-75). He thus views music not as an auditory experience, but as a synaesthetic perception. Meaning is generated through the experience of the actual sounds, for in Clifton’s view, music need not be referential or representative (Clifton 1983: 2–3) – its significance is found in the music’s motion which generates feelings, sensations and emotions akin to those physically experienced by the human body (Christensen 2014: 14). The aforementioned occurs in ‘musical space’ where the body interacts with sound in order to experience music.

Berleant emphasizes Clifton’s very clear distinction between physical space and the musical space of a piece of music when he states that: “Spatial relations are therefore not physical properties of objects here [in this approach] but fields of action in which a perceiver participates. [...] musical space [is] lived [as opposed to] the lived space of geographical, architectural, or environmental phenomenology” (1984: 346). In relation to “musical space lived”, Clifton posits the temporal aspect of his approach “as the experience of human consciousness in contact with change” (1983: 56). Thus, we live the changing motion of music in musical space, and therefore experience the continuation of time (Ibid: 81, 223). The phenomenological and hermeneutic roots of this perspective on time are evident in Clifton’s choice to retain typical terminology like “horizon” (consciousness in the present), “protention” (anticipation of the future) and “retention” (memory of the past) (Berleant 1984: 345). This concept of “time in motion” (Clifton 1983) is interpreted as music evoking time – it (music) is always or continually coming into being (Christensen 2012: 16).

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8 Christensen explains Clifton’s concept of constituted music – in regard to his influences - as “an action of the body (Merleau-Ponty). This action is directed toward an object and its manifestations (Husserl). And the action is a concern and a project (Heidegger)” (2012: 12).
Clifton’s phenomenological approach is not only closely aligned with hermeneutic approaches in general, but, in so far as it is based on his experience of “music’s motion which generates feelings, sensations and emotions akin to those physically experienced by the human body”, as discussed above, it is also more particularly aligned with those approaches Carl Dahlhaus has collectively referred to as characterised by their inclination to experience music as a series of “tension spans” (Dahlhaus in Bent 1980: 370). Potgieter names this “family of approaches” for their “dynamic” rather than “static” epistemology, and traces their history to what Stephen Parkany has called the “University of Vienna school of absolute music”, represented by the aesthetic and theoretical views of Eduard Hanslick, Guido Adler and Ernst Kurth (Potgieter 1998: 161). As such they may also be seen to resort in what John Rahn has called “in-time” rather “time-out” or in “theory of experience” rather than “theory of piece” approaches to musical analysis (Rahn 1979: 206). Potgieter further points to their “ontological analogy with a whole spectrum of psychologically related experiences” (Potgieter 1998: 161), an analogy which is explained by Terrence McLaughlin in the following terms:

[...] if we consider the tensions and resolutions communicated to us in music, it is clear that they are only examples or representations of a far larger class of similar experiences – all circulating in our brains in the same electrical language and all reduced to the same terms. Hunger and thirst followed by satisfaction, pain and its relief, expectation culminating in the arrival of the desired object, sexual excitement and its fulfilment, bowel retention and evacuation, all have their own patterns, yet with a family likeness which is unmistakable. Some of these impressions form our earliest experience: before our eyes have learnt to focus or our fingers to grasp, we have experienced one particular cycle over and over again – tension from lack of oxygen in the blood, followed by relief as we breathe in, then tension from the effort of raising the rib-cage, followed by relaxation as we lower it to breathe out (McLaughlin 1970: 80-81).

Although many music analytical approaches could be cited as examples of this tendency to explain the “drama” of music by means of the psychological experience of tension and

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resolution\textsuperscript{10}, as one such example, this chapter will focus further attention on that of Steve Larson’s theory of musical forces only.

5.3 Steve Larson’s Musical Forces

Steve Larson (1955 – 2011) was the Robert M. Trotter Professor of music at the University of Oregon and member of its Institute of Cognitive and Decision Sciences, also serving as visiting researcher at Indiana University’s Centre for Research on Concepts and Cognition and the University of Oslo’s Institutt for Musikkvitenskap. As well published author he first introduced his theory of musical forces in 1993, when he published the article On Rudolf Arnheim’s Contribution to Music theory. Larson developed his theory as an analogy of the work done by Arnheim\textsuperscript{11} (Meyer 2012: 38) in the field of perceptual dynamics, musical expression and expressive meaning in music (Larson 1993), explaining that “the theory of musical forces concerns the experience of certain listeners: those listeners of tonal music who have internalized the regularities of ‘common-practice tonal music’ to a degree that allows them to experience the expectations generated by that music” (Larson 2012: xi)\textsuperscript{12}. In essence, Larson’s contribution to analysis can be distilled to five particular features (Larson and VanHandel 2005: 119):

- The identification and careful description of three musical forces
- Illumination of the aforementioned musical forces as metaphor, and their role as central to, explanatory for, and constitutive of both the discourse about music, and the experience of music
- A firm grounding in Schenkerian theory
- The conditioning role of ‘musical forces’ in explaining a variety of musical behaviours

\textsuperscript{10} These would include, amongst others, Leonard B. Meyer’s implication-realization model for tonal melody and Jan La Rue’s concept of musical growth (see Potgieter 1998: 168-221).

\textsuperscript{11} Rudolf Arnheim (1904-2007) was a German art and film critic, perceptual psychologist, and philosopher, author of inter alia Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye (1954). For Arnheim (1954: 214) musical meaning is derived from perceptual qualities he describes as auditory or perceptual dynamics. Following Arnheim, Larson states that: “the perceptual dynamics of a visual percept are directed forces that are immediately perceived and inseparable from properties such as shape, size, texture and colour. Likewise, the perceptual dynamics of a musical sound are directed tensions or patterns of forces that are immediately perceived and inseparable from properties such as pitch, duration, loudness and timbre” (Larson 1993: 97).

\textsuperscript{12} This assumption on Larson’s part is directly derived from Leonard B. Meyer’s notion of “stylistic competence”. See Meyer’s Emotion and Meaning in Music (1956: 34-35) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
• Convincing evidence, through various practical and experimental sources, of the cognitive reality of musical forces\textsuperscript{13}.

As point of departure, Larson considers questions such as:

• “How does that melody go?”
• “Why do we talk about music as if it actually moved?”
• “Why does music actually move us?”

The physical motion implied by such questions becomes a metaphor for what Larson attempts to capture in his understanding of musical motion. Even though actual physical forces are not at work, music is experienced as though possessed of such forces (Larson 2012: 83); it is, in other words, the listeners’ experience that attributes these tendencies or effects to the music. He posits that we (the listeners or perceivers) intuitively develop metaphors of expressive meaning\textsuperscript{14} in order to inform our musical discourse and experience accordingly (Ibid: 20-21, 82). Consequently these metaphors form cross-domain mappings\textsuperscript{15} which facilitate a better understanding of our experience of musical motion in terms of the physical motions that we experience in our daily lives. The three identified ‘metaphorical musical forces’ are (1) melodic gravity, (2) melodic magnetism and (3) musical inertia. Larson extends the first two forces to include a rhythmic dimension, which he calls ‘rhythmic gravity’\textsuperscript{16} and ‘metric magnetism’\textsuperscript{17} (Ibid: 1-3).

Inextricably linked to forces and motion is the concept of stability, which Larson and VanHandel describe as “a state toward which motions may tend” (2005: 126). Without a
point of stability as reference, no degree of measurement in regard to the aforementioned forces and motion is possible. Larson states that “melodic continuation depends on the operation of musical forces, which depend on stability conditions, which depends on key determination” (Larson 2012: 132). Thus a hierarchy of notes develop wherein the notes associated with the tonic chord or key (as tonal centre) will be the most stable; all the other notes will have varying degrees of stability, depending on their position in relation to these perceived stable pitches and their location to one another. Notes located in “local” trajectories will experience stronger forces than those in “global” trajectories.

5.3.1 Melodic gravity

Gravity is the tendency of a perceived unstable pitch to descend towards a stable point of reference. It is experienced as a less potent force, reflected (for example) in the rules of composition as the procedural resolution of suspensions, more clearly perceived in global rather than local trajectories, and subsequently it strengthens rather than propels or drives a melodic pattern (Larson 2012: 22; Larson and VanHandel 2005:122-123).

5.3.2 Melodic magnetism

In contrast to gravity, magnetism concerns the tendency of unstable notes to either ascend or descend to the nearest stable pitch. In comparison to the preceding force discussed, this multi-directional magnetic pull produces a much stronger effect and is consequently perceived or experienced to be a much stronger force than gravity. Larson employs

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18 Larson and VanHandel explain ‘local’ as those patterns that consist of notes that are adjacent to one another and ‘global’ as patterns constituent of notes separated by notes of embellishment (2005: 120). Larson does protest the use of the word ‘embellishment’ as unfortunate in that “it may suggest that notes are added as a decoration or ornament, but it really refers to the effect of a part on the whole to which it belongs – here, ‘embellishment’ should be regarded as a structural modification rather than a frivolous addition” (Larson 1993: 98).

It is in this implicit hierarchy, which can be relayed back to the tonic key and ultimately to the tonic chord, wherein Larson’s ideas most strongly resonate with those of Heinrich Schenker and his theory of the Ursatz, the latter, in turn, derived from the so-called “chord of nature”. But Larson also parts ways with Schenker in emphasising that greater forces operate in “local” trajectories than in “global” ones, whereas Schenker’s theory gives greater structural and theoretical status to middleground and background structures than to foreground ones.
Lerdahl’s\textsuperscript{19} “tendency algorithm”\textsuperscript{20} to support this notion of strength. It suggests that when unstable pitches or actors act upon stable pitches or attractors, the consequent magnetic pull “is directly proportional to the stability of its attractor” (Larson and VanHandel 2005: 124). It follows that the effects of magnetism are more easily detected in local rather than global trajectories (Ibid).

5.3.3 Musical inertia

Stemming from its physical source domain, Larson describes this musical force as “the tendency of a pattern of pitches or durations, or both, to continue in the same fashion” (Larson 2012: 22). He is careful to elucidate the meaning of “same” as dependent upon what the musical pattern is heard as (Ibid) or how it is represented in musical memory (Larson and Van Handel 2005: 125). According to the theory of musical forces, inertial representations inform inertial expectations, and are consequently not limited to interval size or direction, as inertia in its source domain concerns both an object’s tendency to stay in motion when in motion and its tendency to stay at rest when at rest (Ibid). Musical inertia thus affects the strength of melodic pattern completion and the frequency of its appearance. Compared to other forces its effects are the strongest and perception of it is less dependent on learning; it has the tendency to extend musical motions beyond the points of stability aimed at by other forces, striving towards finding a balance with other forces (Ibid: 125-126).

5.3.4 Pitch patterns

As discussed above, the way we think in music is dependent on musical forces in motion, shaping its pitch patterns. The implied presence of an inevitable point of stability enables the interaction of musical forces which, in turn, manifest as a musical motion or gesture.


\textsuperscript{20} Lerdahl and Larson both used algorithms to quantify the interaction of musical forces. In comparison to Lerdahl who used only magnetism and inertia, Larson included gravity in his algorithm (Larson and VanHandel 2005: 124).
(Meyer 2012: 45), and as a result, according to Larson, “we experience musical motions as shaped by an interaction of constantly acting but contextually determined musical forces” (Larson 2004: 463). It is from this “interaction of musical forces” that scale-degree function emerges (Larson 1993: 99). Larson states that: “a single motion may be represented by a pattern that begins on a stable note, moves through an unstable note, ends with a stable note, and ends by giving in to the musical forces of gravity, magnetism and inertia” (Larson 1997-98: 58). For the purposes of this study, an analysis of musical forces as the basis for musical drama will assume a tonal paradigm for Rachmaninoff’s Piano Sonata, Opus 36, identifying pitches by using numbers corresponding to their position in the major or minor scale. The tonic triad constitutes the stable pitches (1, 3, 5 and 8), referred to as the “goal level”, while all others are deemed unstable, forming stepwise connections between the stable pitches of that tonic chord’s diatonic scale, referred to as the “reference level”. According to Larson the “goal level” favours leaps and the “reference level” stepwise movement (Ibid: 59) which both bears heavily on the type and strength of force experienced. He identifies the following force-driven stepwise connections (taking the stable pitches of the tonic triad as departure point) as basis for all possible pattern combinations regarding musical forces in motion (Ibid: 59):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5-6-5</th>
<th>5-4-3</th>
<th>5-6-7-8</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-4-3</td>
<td>3-2-1</td>
<td>3-4-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2-1</td>
<td>1-7-1</td>
<td>1-2-3</td>
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5.4 Towards Drama: Musical Forces in Rachmaninoff’s Piano Sonata, Opus 36

5.4.1 Intraopus Drama

Since this study aims to investigate the possible governing factors behind the (re)composition of this Piano Sonata, the focus of this discussion will be on those sections which have been altered or completely removed when Rachmaninoff’s 1913 version is compared with his later 1931 version, and with Horowitz’s amalgamation of 1940, thus disclosing the way in which the acting forces influence the outcomes in each particular instance. The 1913 version will be the point of reference against which the other two are compared.
As discussed in the previous chapter of this treatise, the presence of a kernel plays a significant part in the structural shape of the composition and, as such, its potential for the creation of drama – derived from the musical forces it unleashes – is taken as point of departure. Constructed from all the notes contained in the tonic chord, the kernel (shown below), as constitutive of all the stable pitches presented in downward leaps, is a manifestation of pitches at “goal level”.

![Figure 40](image)

Consequently all the kernel’s comprising notes are located in a global trajectory which lessens the impact of the acting forces, thus enhancing the perception and experience thereof as stable. However, in presenting the kernel as a second inversion of the tonic chord, initiated and closed with the dominant note (F), Rachmaninoff establishes the B-flat as its point of stability but, in spite of this apparent appearance of stability, the inherent unstable qualities (induced by musical inertia) of any chord in second inversion (as perceived aurally), favours continued motion, and reflects clearly in the composer’s treatment of the material at hand.

5.4.1.1 The First Movement

The initial alteration involves the removal of a section perceived to be a faux climax, and comprises bars 53-62 in the first movement of the 1913 version. Although driven by musical inertia in that the descending chromatic pattern of the preceding bars 50-51 is continued in bar 52, the pattern gives in to musical gravity as it proceeds along a local trajectory towards D-flat as the point of stability. In this instance (bar 53) the D-flat is not presented in the context of the tonic chord, which weakens the stability and thus inertial tendencies are continued in bars 53-62. This musical inertia is nurtured by an ascending bass line (bars 55-60) culminating in a descending pattern (bar 61) which concludes by giving in to musical gravity, as the manifestation of the combination of patterns 7-8 and 2-1 (on the last beat of
bar 62, shown below) tends towards the D-flat in bar 63 as the contextually supported point of stability.

In the abovementioned instance inertial tendencies induce unnecessary repetition of material and, in removing it from the 1931 version, the composer heeds the stronger force of musical magnetism. In spite of the latter moving along a more elaborated local trajectory (bars 52-53 in the 1931 version), its perceived effects are strengthened by the harmonic context which demands the C resolving to D-flat as 7-8, the E-flat (due to the passing note E-natural) to F as 2-3 and the B-flat (through the passing note A-natural) to A-flat as 6-5. As can be seen in the following figure, the preceding resolution is obscured not only within a local trajectory, but through the transposition of the resolving tonic chord to a lower register.

The Horowitz version retains the initial version’s bars 53-62 which, in this author’s opinion, is mainly due to the fact that the dramatic nature of the material appealed to his need as a performing musician to exhibit his skill. It will become clear as the discussion proceeds that this ‘need’ often guided Horowitz’s choice of material when he fashioned his own version of this sonata.
The contraction of bars 63-66 (1913) to only two bars (53-54, 1931) is evidence of Larson’s claim that inertia is by its very nature the stronger musical force. When considering Rachmaninoff’s melodic style, it is notable that inertia often takes precedence over the forces of gravity and magnetism. As a continuation of the preceding descending pattern, the contracted statement creates a strong sense of anticipation and subsequent drama, favouring the performative perspective of Horowitz. Horowitz retains bars 53-64 of the 1931 version as bars 63-74, after which he returns to the 1913 version with bar 78 as his bar 74 to continue with imitative statements of the descending thematic fragment. On the one hand, this procedure is driven by musical inertia as the patterns are continued in the same manner (bars 62, 63 and 64) and, on the other hand, by musical gravity in that the chromatic patterns of the accompanying counterpoint (bars 63-65 in the Horowitz version) continue to descend towards a point of stability which seems never to arrive. In this regard Rachmaninoff introduces bars 58-67 (as a reworked version of bars 70-85 from the 1913 version), within which musical inertia is resolved as it gives way to musical magnetism (bar 67-68). Figure 43 shows the implied pattern completion of 4-3-(2)-1 in the counterpoint, with musical magnetism experienced in the pattern 6-7-8, and with both patterns finding their respective points of stability in the ensuing F-sharp, member note of the tonic chord in the following B minor section (bar 68-73).

In spite of Horowitz’s general opinion of the 1931 version as being dramatically poorer when compared to the 1913 version, he is quick to adopt material from the 1931 version when he

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21 The reader is referred to section 5.1.3 above.
22 Nelson states that “the principles governing the structure of melodic lines in Orthodox Church music can be found underpinning many Rachmaninoff melodies. In this liturgical music an interval of a third is very rare and anything greater non-existent. This limits the framework for constructing a melody, tending to emphasize one particular note from which the melody continuously departs and returns, and encourage largely stepwise movement” (2006: 8). This style of melodic writing suits musical inertia and is especially prominent in the All-night Vigil (Vespers).
deems it supportive of drama. As such, an amalgamation of bars 92-99 (1913) and bars 74-77 (1931) left him in two minds. In his 1968 recording Horowitz adheres to Rachmaninoff’s 1931 changes, completely excluding the former passage in favour of the latter; however, in his 1980 recording he substitutes only bars 92 and 93 of the original version with two bars (74 and 75) from the 1931 version. Either way, in all the various alterations of the respective versions the governing force is musical gravity which (as shown below) manifests itself in a global trajectory as a descending third interval (identified in the previous chapter as the cell of the main motif), ultimately reaching a point of stability in F (bar 76\(^1\) and 77\(^2\)).

In the bars to follow, of which Horowitz maintained the original, the drama unfolds as the movement builds to its climax. In order not to curb the sense of anticipation, Rachmaninoff’s 1931 version removes the repetition (being bars 118-119) of bars 116-117 in the 1913 version, thus strengthening the dramatic momentum of the 1931 version, which is experienced as a result of musical inertia, to run its course through bars 96-97 and to achieve stability in bar 98.

Rachmaninoff’s later attempts at structural conciseness are most evident in the recapitulation of the first movement, hence the considerable difference in length of this section between his two versions of the work. In removing from the 1913 version what would inevitably be perceived as another high point in the movement (bars 150-169), the dramatic content of the recapitulation can, unlike the corresponding section in the first version, proceed in a single vector. This is achieved by adding two bars marked *meno mosso* (bars 124-125, 1931) which allows the acting musical forces to find stability earlier, rather than later, in the resolution of a perfect cadence (as shown in figure 45). In this passage, scale degree functions highlight the interaction of musical gravity and magnetism. As such, the effect of musical gravity is experienced in the upper voices as 7-6-5 and 3-2-3(1)
respectively, and in the lowest voice as 5-1. The inner voices attest to the strength of musical magnetism, denoted as scale degree functions 7-8 and 4-3 within the respective voices.

Horowitz commences the recapitulation of his version by replacing bars 122-129 of the 1913 version with bars 98-105 of the 1931 version, which, due to the strong presence of rhythmic forces in the latter bars, add to the experience of drama. In bar 122 (1913), for example, the listener’s first and foremost perception is that of the minims (on the first and third beats of the bar) as rhythmically stable points within the experienced rhythmic gravity. In bar 98 (1931) however, the changed rhythm enhances the experience of metric magnetism, as the ascending note values are drawn towards the minim on the third beat and, in return, “pulled” down towards the attracting first beat of the next bar as magnetism heeds to gravitational stability. The penultimate alteration which Horowitz made to this movement is found in bar 133 of his own reworking and, as once before, there is a discrepancy between the two recordings he made. While retaining only part of bar 137 (1913) in the 1980 recording, the whole bar is removed in the 1968 recording. As such, the nature of these changes does not impact on the acting musical forces and appears to be a mere contraction of repetitive material. As with his previous alterations, Horowitz’s way of linking the coda to preceding material differs from one performance to the next. The 1980 recording conveys Horowitz’s attempt to maintain the sonata’s original integrity, whereas

The reader is referred to the aforementioned explanations of rhythmic gravity and metric magnetism, respectively, in footnotes 7 and 8.
the 1968 recording is liberated of bars 166-169 (1913). Horowitz concludes the movement (bars 178-179) in a near identical manner to Rachmaninoff’s 1931 version, bar a change to the bass line wherein the melodic line or pattern is completed with a 7-8 resolution, as the musical magnetism finds a point of stability in the B-flat (bar 179).

5.4.1.2 The Second Movement

The opening section A of this binary movement is almost identical in all three versions under discussion. There are two subtle textural differences between the 1913 and 1931 versions: first, an omission (in the upper voice) of the tied D and C is apparent when bars 192-194 (1913) and 157-160 (1931) are compared; and second, the thinned texture perceived when bars 158-160 (1931) is compared to bars 205-207 (1913). With the above-mentioned tied notes as exception, Horowitz retains the 1913 version of the second movement’s initial section.

Unlike the case of the first movement, the changes Horowitz made to section B of the movement manifest as an interchange, rather than a reworking, of material contained in the respective Rachmaninoff versions. In this regard Horowitz initiates section B (in bar 215) with bars 174 – 190 of the 1931 version, which in turn is followed by a return to the 1913 version (bars 248-265) in bar 232, continued in bar 249 with bars 206-212 of the 1931 version, and concluded in bar 256 with bars 73-74 of the initial version of the sonata. Once again the differences between Horowitz’s 1968 and 1980 recordings illuminate the way in which he consciously or subconsciously submits to the experience of musical forces. In the 1968 recording the repeat of the last beat in bar 248 could be construed as musical inertia, although more likely a slip of memory on the pianist’s part, rectified in the 1980 recording.

The significant cut to the second movement’s B-section (bars 224-231) in the 1980 recording is less successful, with none of the musical forces achieving a point of stability. In conclusion, Horowitz’s coda is an amalgamation of both the 1913 and 1931 versions of the sonata, which in both recorded instances has the third and fourth beats of bar 261 of the original version removed in bar 244, thus (as in figure 46 below) giving in to musical inertia as the melody finds completion in the G sharp contained in bar 246, and metric magnetism
as the B in the preceding bar is pulled towards the same G sharp. The same process is at work in bars 202-203 of the 1931 version.

As discussed above, bar 249 of the Horowitz version marks the return to material of the 1931 version, denoting a sense of calm relaxation as musical inertia induces a descending contour in bars 248-255, taken from bars 206-212 as of the 1931 version. Musical inertia gives in to musical magnetism when the melody is completed with the pattern 3-2-1 in the bass line of bars 273-274 (as bars 256-257 in the Horowitz version), and the movement concludes with stability achieved in the E of the ultimate bar.

5.4.1.3 The Third Movement

As discussed in chapter 4, Rachmaninoff’s attempt at conciseness left this movement with minimal structural changes. As is to be expected, therefore, Horowitz’s 1940 version also indicates very few changes to this movement. Horowitz’s innate musical instinct, which afforded him a great sense of musical drama, led to only two pertinent changes being made. The first alteration comprises the omission of the repeats contained in bars 357-362 (1913) which is presented as bars 337-339 in the Horowitz version. As such, shown in figure 47, the melodic pattern completion is driven by musical inertia, which manifests as the four-note pattern descends with each bar. Although this process might have continued until a point of stability could be reached, Rachmaninoff’s 1931 revision contracts the pattern to contain only three notes, resulting in the transformation of musical inertia to musical magnetism as the last presentation of the pattern achieves stability when reaching the G in bar 342 (of the Horowitz version).
The penultimate change administered by Horowitz, that is the removal of bars 440-460², corresponds in part to the change Rachmaninoff himself made when reworking the sonata. Rather than effecting musical drama and tension by introducing a direct modulation as in the case of Rachmaninoff’s reworking (bars 349-350 of the 1931 version), Horowitz retains bars 460³-473 of the original version as bars 417-430 of his own. In so doing he allows the experience of musical inertia to continue, strengthened by metric magnetism (bars 424-426), only to release the tension through the experience of rhythmic gravity as the musical inertia achieves stability in bar 427.

In the last instance, Horowitz’s 1980 recording offers an elaboration of the seven concluding bars contained in the 1913 version, presented as bars 521-529 of his own. This alteration (shown in figure 48) favours metric magnetism which, when it achieves stability in bar 529, provides the movement, and the sonata as a whole, with a certain satisfactory sense of closure.
In conclusion, from the preceding discussion it is clear that Horowitz approached his structural changes to the sonata from a performative perspective. This perspective would not have been limited to his own instinct as performer, but most likely encompassed full consideration of the perceived audience experience thereof. Although Horowitz deplored pure showmanship, it was ultimately public adoration that spurred him on. In this regard his alterations speak of a keen awareness of the extent to which expressive meaning can be communicated when musical expectations are either confirmed or denied. In manipulating musical forces, Horowitz successfully conveys his understanding of Rachmaninoff’s creation as an expression of his own personality to an emotionally perceptive audience, thus finding...
that synergy of “production”, “performance” and “reception”\textsuperscript{24} which is the essence of drama.

\subsection*{5.4.2 Extraopus Drama}

If “performance”, “production” and “reception” can be shown to manifest as intraopus drama, then this is equally true – if not more so - of extraopus drama, where the contingency of human agency is more strongly foregrounded. It is the performer who brings life to the music, so that, ultimately, “a performer is no good at all if he does not express himself as much as he expresses his concept of the composer’s meaning” (Schonberg 1985: xiv). In the context of this study, the element of self-expression intrinsic to musical performance presents somewhat of a challenge, particularly in light of the juxtaposition of the musical personalities of Rachmaninoff and Horowitz presented in chapter 2, which should ideally have been able to be further explored in this chapter by considering Rachmaninoff as composer-performer against Horowitz as performer-(re)composer, with reference to their respective performances of the different versions of this same sonata. From this point of view, then, it may appear that such an endeavour has hit the proverbial brick wall here, since no recordings were ever made of Rachmaninoff himself performing either the 1913 or 1931 versions of this sonata, therefore that no evidence exists today of how such self-expression may have been manifest in these latter two cases, or of how these expressions may have resonated or contrasted with those of Horowitz. We may only surmise how these different expressions of the self may have materialised, based on the evidence we have of other Rachmaninoff recordings. These differences - alongside significant similarities in both musical and technical approach - were discussed in the concluding section of chapter 2.

At the same time, it should be remembered that the purpose of this study has not been to present a comparison of particular performances \textit{per se}, but rather to explore \textbf{why} the reworking of the sonata was deemed necessary, and to understand what the sonata

\textsuperscript{24} See again the definition of drama given at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drama, and referred to earlier in this chapter.
expresses and how it affords musical experience as a result of being realised in performance. It is the general notion of the work of art as a potentially “inexhaustible source of possible meaning” (Treitler 1982: 156) – in this instance as this is manifest in and through musical performance – rather than a focus on any one (or more) particular performance(s) – that is of importance. To contrast with the two recordings made by Horowitz (those of 1968 and 1980), therefore, this study seeks to find a compromise between the need for some evidence of Rachmaninoff’s own performative voice on the one hand, and the need to accept the open-endedness of musical meaning constructed through performance on the other hand, by focussing attention on Howard Shelley’s recordings of Rachmaninoff’s 1913 and 1931 versions of this work. As highly-regarded Rachmaninoff specialist, Shelley’s performances are taken here as an excellent compromise between self expression and a sensitivity to the manner in which Rachmaninoff himself may have performed them.

On listening to these recordings, one cannot but be immediately struck by their differences in tempo. The Horowitz-recordings are infinitely faster than those of Shelley. Rachmaninoff ascribed the indication allegro agitato to the opening bars of the first movement, and, given Horowitz’s neurotic personality, his approach emphasizes the element of required agitation, which in turn results in more forceful accentuation and dynamic extremes, especially in the 1980 recording. Herein Rachmaninoff and Horowitz’s respective approaches to performance practice are far more alike than different. Shelley, on the other hand, renders a more sensitive and musical interpretation, typical of a generation of musicians trained to always respect the score, manifesting in both cases as rhythmically timid and dynamically contained renditions. In general, Horowitz conveys a very clear structural picture of the work,

25 Treitler’s remark resonates well with that of Horowitz, quoted in chapter 2 as stating that “no artistic concept is final” (Horowitz in Holcman 1960: 43).

26 Howard Shelley is a distinguished Rachmaninoff exponent who, during the 40th anniversary of the composer’s death, became the first pianist ever to perform the composer’s complete solo piano works, including both versions of the second sonata, in concert. Amongst others his performances included, at the invitation of the composer’s grandson, a recital at Rachmaninoff’s villa in Lucerne. He also featured in a major documentary of Rachmaninoff shown on BBC television (Matthew-Walker 1993: 38).

27 The reader is referred to the compact discs attached as Addendum B to this treatise, wherein Disc 1, tracks 1 – 3 present the 1913 version and tracks 4 – 6 the 1931 version (both performed by Shelley). The Horowitz-recordings are presented on Disc 2, respectively as 1968 (tracks 1 – 3) and 1980 (tracks 4 – 6).

28 See again chapter 2 for background on Rachmaninoff and Horowitz’s respective approaches in performance.
advancing, in each movement, towards an undisputed high point with a solid rhythmic impetus, supported by a wide dynamic range and a variety of timbre.

In his reading of the sonata, Horowitz achieves, throughout both recordings, a very distinct sense of directed motion, which generates tremendous excitement in his subsequent interpretation. This sense of direction is a direct result of Horowitz sensitizing himself to the musical forces at work, especially that of metric and musical magnetism which emerges as a build up of momentum towards a particular point of interest. A significant example is found bars 55-62 within which the momentum is supported by an accentuated ascending bass line. In this example Horowitz conveys the experience of melodic magnetism as it yields to melodic and rhythmic gravity (bars 61-62) to achieve stability in bar 63. In the corresponding passage of the 1913 version, Shelley slows the momentum by incorporating a *ritardando* (bar 60), thus diminishing the sense of stability achieved. Shelley’s interpretation of this same section, as changed in the 1931 version, is more successful as he allows both musical inertia and gravity (in bars 52-53) to run their course and achieve stability in bar 53.

To continue the development section Horowitz shares, at least in part, Rachmaninoff’s changed perspective of the 1913 version, in adopting bars 53-67 of the reworked version, but adding to it bars 78³-85 of the original. This pertains to both his 1968 and his 1980 recordings. When Shelley’s recording of the original version is compared to Horowitz’s reworking, the overriding force of musical inertia predominates at this point, stalling the momentum that – even in the reworking – struggles under the burden of the excessive repetition of thematic entries. Horowitz highlights the imitative thematic entries with a more pronounced tone, thus keeping the sense of expectation alive until it is satisfied in bar 82, with a change in timbre, a quickened tempo and increased dynamics. Horowitz’s acute awareness of how certain types of musical fragments can incite a certain experience, is reflected in his choice to replace (in his own version) bars 92 and 93 of the original with bars 74 and 75 of the 1931 version, which he presents (in bars 88-89 of his own version) as an energetic descending cascade of semiquaver-triplets. The inertial energy contained in the ensuing sequences fuels Horowitz’s approach to the climax of the movement, which he presents as exultant and triumphant sonorities reminiscent of bells.
A prime example of the way in which musical forces shape and inform the perceiver’s experience can be found in the comparison of the recapitulation’s opening bars. The original 1913 version is rhythmically uninteresting at this point, and Shelley’s rendition of it does little to sustain the excitement of the preceding section. Horowitz, on the other hand, taps into the energy of the metric magnetism as well as the rhythmic and melodic gravity contained in each of bars 118, 121 and 128 which, in combination with his sonorous touch, sustains the listener’s interest. He maintains this interest throughout the remainder of the section by creating a sense of motion in various ways. In bars 144-155, for example, in spite of the *Tempo 1* indication, Horowitz slightly accelerates the tempo and greatly increases the dynamic level. In bringing the first movement to a close, in both of their respective recordings both pianists allow for a reduction in the level of perceived motion and force, while closely adhering to Rachmaninoff’s written text.

The expressive nature of the second movement’s initial sections, respectively marked *non allegro* and *lento*, is firmly rooted in the poignant melodic content thereof and supported by Rachmaninoff’s added indication of *espressivo*. As such, Horowitz and Shelley choose much the same tempo for both sections in both of their respective recordings, maintaining this tempo throughout bars 186-220 of Rachmaninoff’s 1913 version (which Horowitz favoured, bar the minimal omission of notes described in the intraopus section above), and bars 139-173 of the 1931 version. In this movement Horowitz exhibits the tone quality he is legendary for and a superior ability to shape phrases, the latter (especially in the *lento*-section) as a result of yielding to the inertial forces manifesting in the rhythmic structure of the compound quadruple time signature. In comparison to Shelley, Horowitz draws from a much broader dynamic spectrum to aid the emotional expression.

The B-section, as continuation of the movement towards its climax, draws on material from the first movement, and in this regard it governs not only Horowitz’s choice of material (that is the B-section of the 1931 version), but also the way in which he interprets the content. As a whole the section is an approach towards the movement’s high point, and Horowitz, not unlike his treatment in the 1968 recording of similar material in the first movement, exploits the urgency embedded in Rachmaninoff’s *stretto*-like presentation of the imitative thematic entries, in order to maintain the musical tension as the dynamic intensity increases. In
comparison, the elimination of bars 183 - 190 of the 1931 version in his 1980 recording is less effective. In both Horowitz recordings the tension is only released as the coda of the movement returns to material reminiscent of that contained in its opening. By comparison, Shelley’s rendition of the corresponding section (bars 183 – 190) in the 1913 version seems to wonder around aimlessly, thus providing affirmative support for Rachmaninoff’s decision to change it.

In the hands of Horowitz, the third movement of Rachmaninoff’s second Piano Sonata becomes a tool to showcase his skill as pianist, directed, as both live recordings attest, to the achievement of maximum perceived excitement. Infinitely faster than any of the Shelley attempts, Horowitz’s rendition thrives on the energy experienced through the emphasis on metric magnetism and rhythmic gravity which, as a direct consequence, results in the over-accentuation of the main beats of the bars comprising the first theme. In spite of the latter being rendered with excessive sonority, bordering on banging the instrument, he still achieves crispness of articulation without sacrificing any of the full-bodied tone - an essential requirement if any successful rendition of the second theme is to be attempted. In the bars preceding the ultimate presentation of the latter theme (bars 439-462), Horowitz, as opposed to Shelley, maintains a brisk tempo in anticipation of the movement’s high point. The faster tempo is concurrent with Rachmaninoff’s revisionary thoughts and, subsequent to the experience of musical inertia, propels the musical momentum towards an elusive point of stability. In bars 463-466 the inertial energy is transformed to melodic and rhythmic gravity, which in turn (in bars 467-470) is transformed to melodic and metric magnetism. As a means of drawing attention to the eminent high point, Horowitz over-emphasizes the ritardando, generating an immense sense of expectation; this leads to experienced anticipation which is satisfied as the musical forces at work achieve stability in the statement of the second theme in bar 471. In the bars preceding the coda, the sense of anticipation is rekindled as Horowitz adds a contrasting dynamic dimension to the already rhythmically energised passage and, as a culmination of the various musical forces, drives the sonata with the utmost speed and unflattering articulation towards its conclusion in bar 529. As noted earlier, Rachmaninoff made little changes to this movement when he revised the sonata in 1931, so that Horowitz’s changes of 1940 are also minimal. In spite of the fact that on these four recordings Horowitz and Shelley therefore play essentially the same
notes for each rendition of the final movement, Shelley’s two performances pale in comparison to those of Horowitz, attesting yet again to the importance of the performer in bringing to life qualities of “pianistic sonority and drama” essential to any vital performance.

The pianist is the artist who, as catalyst, is inextricably linked to the process of realising the composer’s creation. The impact of such a personality on the work’s “performance”, “production” and “reception” is unavoidable; as much as it is a rendition of the composer’s intentions, it is always also an expression of the artist’s personality.\footnote{A myriad of pianists have recorded some version of this sonata. Shelley, however, is one of the very few pianists who recorded both versions by the composer and, in lieu of Rachmaninoff not having recorded it, renders a singular performative perspective and practice on the composition. Subsequently it limits the possibility of multiple performative perspectives to include only two, those of Shelley and Horowitz.} In the case of Horowitz such expression is dependent on and suffers from (or excels because of) his neurotic demeanour and his dualistic position as both artist and entertainer. Although some find Horowitz’s excesses distracting and disturbing, from the preceding comparative discussion focussed on musical forces it is clear that Horowitz achieves superior levels of dramatic expression when compared to a pianist like Howard Shelley who, in regard to this sonata, renders performances devoid of risk-taking. The latter, due to its very nature, is essential if exceptional spheres of dramatic expression are to be attained.
Chapter 6 – Conclusion

This study takes issue with the act of (re)composition as manifest in Rachmaninoff’s Piano Sonata Opus 36. In identifying and exploring factors that might be argued to motivate such reworking, an attempt has been made to establish the relative value of three of its different versions. As point of departure, the cue is taken from Rachmaninoff’s own two most distinctive traits as musician, namely that of composer and of performer. As a means of disclosing some of the many intertextual layers such an investigation suggests, two theoretical prisms in particular have been used, namely a Retian structural analysis in conjunction with a performative analysis guided by Larson’s theory of musical forces. In keeping with the need for a more anthropocentric view on the matter in contemporary theory, however, both analytical perspectives are pinned against the composer’s social background and circumstances. In turn, the latter reveals an added dimension in Rachmaninoff’s friend and colleague, Horowitz who, through a sanctioned amalgamation of the composer’s two versions, created his own version of the sonata.

The Retian analysis revealed the structural coherence of the sonata as a whole as manifest in the identified kernel, its recurring motifs, and the cell underlying these motifs. Accordingly, meaningful coherence was found to be equally present in both the longer 1913 and more concise 1931 versions, as composed and reworked by Rachmaninoff. In the course of the analysis it became clear that the nature of the changes Rachmaninoff made were directly influenced and informed by the composer’s performative instincts, and in this regard the motivation for his 1931 reworking is no different to that which gave rise to the subsequent reworking of Horowitz in 1940. Furthermore, it was noted that the two recordings by Horowitz included for discussion in this treatise (respectively in 1968 and 1980), although structurally essentially identical, gave rise to performances wherein significant differences in the creation of musical forces could nevertheless sometimes be discerned. Thus the analysis of the musical forces present within these reworkings disclosed the intrinsic symbiotic relationship which exists between the performer as subjective executant, and the composer as creator. It is the latter notion of an ‘intrinsic symbiotic relationship’ which positions this discussion midway in the current authenticity debate. A
reworked (or re-performed) version of frankly anything can never be identical to the
original, and therefore begs the question whether indeed a ‘preferred version’ can or
cannot ever be said to exist.

In this regard, Richard Taruskin takes serious issue with the related notions of “werktreue”
and authenticity (the latter as understood by proponents of the 20th-century Historical
Performance Practice movement), and as such, exposes the fallacy of the masterwork-
ideology as apparent source of authentic performance. He asserts that in claiming fidelity to
the score (“werktreue”), performers often assume that they are communicating, in an
authentic performance, the (often deceased) composer’s intentions, which by law of nature
we can never really know. This gives rise to the misleading notion that the concrete
manifestation of the composer’s thoughts - that is, the notes on paper - is wholly and
completely equivalent to the composer’s thoughts.

First and foremost, says Taruskin, textual fidelity (as measure of authentic performance)
may be called into question on the basis of having been ‘polluted’ by editors and their
anthology of supporting evidence. Furthermore:

In fact, by making the edition, the musicologist has undertaken to mediate between
the ‘lesser’ performer and the notation. Contact is not direct after all. [...] Ultimate
authority [...] rests not with the composer, not with the notation, but with [...] the

Musical performance achieves the desired “immediacy”, the desired “sense of rightness”
that is the hallmark of true authenticity by seeking perfect identification of individual
performance style with “the demands of the music” (Taruskin 1984: 11). If either of these
considerations overshadows the other, the sense of its “rightness” is inevitably
compromised. In line with such thinking, one might argue that, as far as ‘mediators’ go in
the case of the music of Rachmaninoff, Horowitz certainly has more credibility and
“authority” than most. Horowitz was not only a personal friend of the composer but also
discussed his ideas on the reworking of the sonata with the composer and obtained his
consent for the changes made in his amalgamated version, in addition to which their mutual
membership of the so-called Russian Piano School renders in their respective performative
voices a certain intrinsic similarity.
More than this, however, true authenticity in musical performance results when the performer has come to terms with what Taruskin describes as the need for “knowing what you are, and acting in accordance with that knowledge [...] independent of the values, opinions and demands of others” (Taruskin 1984:1). It is precisely the absence of a tangible sense of such self-knowledge, in this author’s opinion, that is lacking in Howard Shelley’s performances of Rachmaninoff’s 1913 and 1931 versions of the work, thus why Shelley fails to achieve a level of dramatic expression comparable to that of Horowitz. In dehumanizing the masterwork, the expressive and communicative qualities of performance are discredited, while at the same time inhibiting the performer’s contingent subjectivity (Taruskin 1995: 23).

Current analytical perspectives find the definitive authority grounded in the work as “object negotiated by tradition” (Taruskin 1992: 318), wherein the notion of “tradition” is understood to be “an invention designed to serve contemporary purposes” (Hanson in Taruskin 1992: 313). In the first chapter of this treatise Roland Barthes was quoted as describing the essential and inescapable performativity of any text (musical or literary), hence that, in seeking to come to terms with a living tradition, our interest should ultimately come to rest upon “how [music] is unmade, how it explodes, disseminates - by what coded paths it goes off (Ibid: 126-127). Seeger clarifies tradition as “the handing on of acquired characteristics [...] which are...] inherited socially” (in Taruskin 1992: 317). In light of these insights, it becomes ever-more clear that the search for the unattainable definitive performance can never be based on textual fidelity alone, but needs in equal measure the performer’s imaginative re-creation aided by skills and insights acquired through tradition. As such they lend themselves well to textual analysis in the Barthesian sense, which opposes structural analysis insofar as the musical work is understood:

([...] as production of significance and not as philological object [or] custodian of the Letter). Such an analysis endeavours to ‘see’ each particular text in its difference - which does not mean in its ineffable individuality, for this difference is ‘woven’ in familiar codes; it conceives the text as taken up in an open network which is the very infinity of [music], itself structured without closure; it tries to say no longer from where the text comes (historical criticism), nor even how it is made (structural analysis) (Barthes 1977: 126-127).
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Rachmaninoff, SV & Horowitz, V.  
Appendix A

Three Versions of Rachmaninoff’s Piano Sonata,
Opus 36 (scores)
Appendix B

Three Versions of Rachmaninoff’s Piano Sonata,

Opus 36 (CD recordings)