Prokofiev and the Soviet Dilemma: Censorship, Autonomy, and the Piano Transcriptions

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ABSTRACT

This monograph presents a study of Sergei Prokofiev’s piano transcriptions connected with the ballets *Romeo and Juliet* (1935-36) and *Cinderella* (1940-44). It is primarily concerned with the ways in which Prokofiev’s circumstances as an artist working in the Soviet Union inhibited his creative freedom, particularly with respect to his late ballets, and how these circumstances motivated him to compose piano transcriptions as an alternate outlet for his work.

To fully explore this idea, this thesis analyzes four particular transcriptions and the ways in which they are musically distinct from their ballet counterparts. Chapter 1 focuses on Prokofiev’s 1936 return to the Soviet Union, after having spent nearly two decades in the West. This provides context for the artistic frustrations which quickly came to define Prokofiev’s later years, and establishes an impetus for the proliferation of piano transcriptions composed in his Soviet period. Chapter 2 is concerned with the ballet *Romeo and Juliet*, providing an overview of the political and musical factors which shaped its outcome. This chapter also contains an analysis of the final movement from *Ten Pieces from Romeo and Juliet*, Op. 75, “Romeo and Juliet Before Parting.” Chapter 3 focuses on Prokofiev’s next ballet, *Cinderella*, highlighting the factors which influenced another three sets of piano transcriptions. This chapter contains detailed analyses of three transcriptions from *Cinderella*, “Pavane,” Op. 95, “Gavotte,” Op. 95, and “Amoroso,” Op. 102, each of which illustrates a unique musical distinction from its ballet counterpart. Chapter 4 establishes connections between Prokofiev’s compositional practices, his artistic beliefs, and the material presented in previous chapters, with an emphasis on how his approach relates to other great pianist-composers, such as Liszt and Busoni. Chapter 5 reflects on the previous chapters from both musicological and performance perspectives, and suggests avenues for future research.
Keywords:

Ballet, Censorship, Interpretation, Musicology, Performance, Piano, Sergei Prokofiev, Revision, Soviet Union, Transcription.
This monograph presents a study of Sergei Prokofiev’s piano transcriptions connected with the ballets *Romeo and Juliet* (1935-36) and *Cinderella* (1940-44). Although they are now considered two of the composer’s finest achievements, both ballets suffered significant delays, censorship, and revisions as a result of Soviet cultural pressures. This monograph argues that these artistic frustrations were a major factor in Prokofiev’s decision to arrange his ballet music for solo piano. These piano arrangements, or transcriptions, are musically distinct from their ballet counterparts in several ways. This monograph provides detailed analyses of four particular transcriptions, each of which reflects a notable change from its ballet counterpart. The transcriptions analyzed include one from *Romeo and Juliet*; “Romeo and Juliet Before Parting,” and three from *Cinderella*; “Pavane,” “Gavotte,” and “Amoroso.” Considering the challenges Prokofiev faced while composing the ballets, and the ways in which the piano transcriptions are musically unique from their ballet versions, this monograph argues that the piano transcriptions offer a unique insight into Prokofiev’s musical vision, one which could not be fully realized in the ballets alone. To support this claim, this monograph explores the relationships between Prokofiev’s compositional practices, his artistic beliefs, and the circumstances surrounding *Romeo and Juliet* and *Cinderella* and their subsequent piano transcriptions. The monograph concludes with a reflection on the connections made and how they can influence both performers and musicologists, followed by a few suggestions for future research.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract and Keywords ........................................................................................................ ii

Summary for Lay Audience ................................................................................................. iv

Acknowledgments ................................................................................................................ v

Table of Contents ................................................................................................................ vi

List of Musical Examples .................................................................................................... vii

List of Figures ...................................................................................................................... viii

Introduction ........................................................................................................................ 1

Chapter 1: Prokofiev’s Piano Transcriptions: Historical Context ................................. 5

1.1 Return to the Soviet Union ......................................................................................... 5
1.2 Prokofiev and the Piano Transcription .................................................................... 9

Chapter 2: Romeo and Juliet ............................................................................................... 12

2.1 Ten Pieces from Romeo and Juliet, Op. 75 ......................................................... 14
2.2 “Romeo and Juliet before Parting,” Op. 75 ......................................................... 23

Chapter 3: Cinderella .......................................................................................................... 28

3.1 The Cinderella Transcriptions .............................................................................. 30
3.2 “Pavane,” from Three Pieces from Cinderella, Op. 95 ....................................... 33
3.3 “Gavotte,” from Three Pieces from Cinderella, Op. 95 ....................................... 41
3.4 Ten Pieces from Cinderella, Op. 97 ................................................................. 46
3.5 Six Pieces from Cinderella, Op. 102 .............................................................. 47
3.6 “Amoroso,” from Six Pieces from Cinderella, Op. 102 ...................................... 49

Chapter 4: Musicological Findings ..................................................................................... 55

4.1 Perspectives on the Art of Transcription ............................................................. 55
4.2 Prokofiev the Composer-Pianist ........................................................................... 61
4.3 Prokofiev’s Piano Transcriptions as Revised Editions .......................................... 63

Chapter 5: Conclusion ........................................................................................................ 66

Bibliography ....................................................................................................................... 74
LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

Example 1: Prokofiev, *Ten Pieces from Romeo and Juliet*, Op. 75, “Folk Dance,” mm. 20-31 ................................................................. 18


Example 3: Prokofiev, *Ten Pieces from Romeo and Juliet*, Op. 75, “Romeo and Juliet Before Parting,” mm. 74-76 ..................................................... 19


Example 8: Prokofiev, *Ten Pieces from Romeo and Juliet*, Op. 75, “Romeo and Juliet Before Parting,” mm. 70-75 ..................................................... 25


Example 11: Prokofiev, *Three Pieces from Cinderella*, Op. 95, “Pavane,” mm. 7-8 ............... 36


Example 14: Prokofiev, *Ten Pieces from Cinderella*, Op. 97, “Grasshoppers and Dragonflies,” mm. 1-4 ........................................................................... 47


Example 17: Prokofiev, *Six Pieces from Cinderella*, Op. 102, “Amoroso,” mm. 34-35 ........... 52
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: List of piano transcriptions by Sergei Prokofiev ........................................ 10

Figure 2: Chronology of Musical Material in *Romeo and Juliet* Piano Suite, Ballet, and Orchestral Suites ........................................................................................................ 16

Figure 3: Figure 3. Chronology of Musical Material in *Cinderella* Piano Suites, Ballet, and Orchestral Suites ........................................................................................................ 31

Figure 4: Structural organization of Prokofiev’s “Dance of the Courtiers,” Op. 87, and “Pavane,” Op. 95 .................................................................................................................... 34

Figure 5: Structural organization of Prokofiev’s “Gavotte,” Op. 87 no. 10, and “Gavotte,” Op. 95 no. 2 .................................................................................................................... 42
INTRODUCTION

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953) holds a unique status in the canon of Western art music, having made significant contributions in the fields of modernism and neo-classicism, as well as ballet, opera, and piano technique. He was one of the finest and most influential composers of the Soviet Union, where he lived and worked from 1936 until his death in 1953. Many of his orchestral works, from his symphonies to his ballets, have become staples of the twenty-first century performing repertoire. His prolific output for the piano is particularly remarkable: his nine piano sonatas, five piano concerti, and wide array of shorter pieces are among the most frequently programmed and widely appreciated works for the instrument, and represent ground-breaking contributions to the evolution of piano technique. It is rather surprising, then, that his piano transcriptions have not garnered the same attention. Prokofiev made piano adaptations of several of his orchestral works, most notably his ballets Romeo and Juliet (1936) and Cinderella (1944). These transcriptions contain some of the composer’s most beloved themes, and, by virtue of their orchestral origin, necessitate some of his most exciting and daring pianistic challenges. Nevertheless, the piano transcriptions are rarely performed, and with the exception of the Ten Pieces from Romeo and Juliet Op. 75, their very existence is virtually unknown to most pianists.

In general, the genre of the piano transcription is often considered to be less artistically valuable than original compositions and is regularly neglected in the repertoire of modern performers.1 2 This perspective has only increased in recent decades, with twenty-first century pianists and musicologists placing an ever-increasing emphasis on the value of Urtext (German:

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1 Glen Carruthers, “Bach and the Piano: Editions, Arrangements and Transcriptions from Czerny to Rachmaninov” (PhD Diss., University of Victoria, 1986), 74-76.
“original text”). The German publishing house G. Henle Verlag describes the value of Urtext editions in providing “an undistorted, reliable and authoritative musical text,” in which “the musician is offered a musical text which solely reflects the composer’s intentions.” Indeed, Urtext editions are seen as indispensable resources for serious musicians in the twenty-first century, owing to the elevated, almost sacred status with which we now view original manuscripts. However, inherent in the practice of Urtext is the assumption that the original version, or manuscript, is the most artistically authentic version of a work, and the one which reflects a composer’s intentions with the highest accuracy. To be sure, this is certainly true in many cases. However, it is not all-encompassing; many composers, such as Franz Liszt (1811-1886) and Anton Bruckner (1824-1896), undertook significant and purposeful revisions of their works, making it impossible for contemporary musicologists to determine which version of a work would be most appropriately deemed “authoritative.”

In the case of Sergei Prokofiev, the Urtext venture of providing an “undistorted, reliable and authoritative musical text” is highly problematic, particularly with regards to works written during his Soviet period (1936-1953). Due to censorship, political and societal pressures, and other performing limitations and logistics, Prokofiev was often unable to compose works as he envisioned. As a reaction to this artistic frustration, he created secondary versions of his own works in the form of piano transcriptions, many of which reveal important distinctions from their “original” counterparts. Such distinctions are often reflective of the restrictions inflicted on the originals, and are therefore crucial in our understanding of Prokofiev’s artistic wishes. This, of course, does not suggest that analyses of Prokofiev’s Soviet-era manuscripts and original

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versions are not valuable; on the contrary, they provide invaluable insight into his artistic practice within a uniquely challenging working environment. However, an analysis of Prokofiev’s oeuvre necessitates looking beyond the first, or oldest, documents, instead considering the extramusical factors influencing his music, and, most importantly, subsequent versions of previous material and how they differ from their “original” sources. Against the backdrop of Prokofiev’s tumultuous career as a Soviet composer, this monograph will present the argument that his piano transcriptions of the ballets Romeo and Juliet and Cinderella represent more than mere arrangements, but that they are authoritative, autonomous works of art.

This monograph is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 provides a brief summary of Prokofiev’s return to the Soviet Union, which I establish as a main catalyst for his adoption of the piano transcription as one of the main artistic genres of his later years. A full list of Prokofiev’s piano transcriptions is provided towards the end of this chapter. In Chapter 2, I discuss the ballet Romeo and Juliet, with an emphasis on its conception and the cultural and political issues which shaped its outcome and delayed its premiere. The Ten Pieces from Romeo and Juliet Op. 75 are the focal point of this chapter. Chapter 2 also provides a general overview of the entire piano suite. This is followed by a more detailed examination of the suite’s final piece, “Romeo and Juliet Before Parting,” and how its conclusion lies closer to Prokofiev’s original vision than the ballet’s ending. Chapter 3 discusses the ballet Cinderella, Prokofiev’s follow-up to Romeo and Juliet. It begins with historical background on the ballet’s creation, followed by an overview of the three sets of piano transcriptions from Cinderella. I then analyse three of the more noteworthy Cinderella transcriptions in detail. The first piece I discuss is “Pavane” Op. 95, paying close attention to its structure, dynamics, and articulation, and how these differ from their ballet counterpart. For “Gavotte” Op. 95, I focus primarily on structure,
positing that structural inconsistencies between the ballet and piano versions may be related to
the importance of ballet in the early Soviet Union and the artistic restrictions this entailed. I then
discuss “Amoroso” Op. 102, the last of the nineteen Cinderella transcriptions, focusing on
harmony and how the piano transcription offers a more idiomatic representation of Prokofiev’s
chromatic tendencies.

While Chapters 2 and 3 establish the distinctions between the ballet and piano versions of
music from Romeo and Juliet and Cinderella, as well as the causes for such distinctions to exist,
Chapter 4 explores the piano transcriptions within the context of Prokofiev’s compositional
method and how the distinctiveness of the piano transcriptions augments their artistic value. This
chapter includes an overview of the philosophies of some of the major piano-transcribers in
music history, including Bach, Liszt, and Busoni, and where Prokofiev fits among them.
Prokofiev’s pianism is established as a major factor in my assessment of the piano transcriptions
as artistically fulfilled endeavours. I make the claim that, because of the factors discussed in
Chapters 2 and 3, Prokofiev’s piano transcriptions should be considered among his many revised
editions, elevating their status above mere arrangements. In Chapter 5, I provide a brief
discussion on performance and how the monograph might shape pianists’ interpretations of the
transcriptions. The monograph concludes with a summary of what has been determined, what
remains unknown, and suggestions for future research.
CHAPTER 1

PROKOFIEV’S PIANO TRANSCRIPTIONS: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The creative life of Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953) is typically divided into three periods. The first, the period of his youth (1907-1918), spans the years during which he entered and studied at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory. It was during these early years that he discovered and developed his artistic voice, refined his pianistic abilities, and cultivated a reputation as an “enfant terrible” of Russia’s new generation. The second period, often called the “foreign period,” was spent outside Russia (1918-1936), first in the United States and eventually in Paris, where he was based for about fifteen years. Despite spending nearly half of his mature years in the West, Prokofiev’s identity is firmly bound to his homeland, due in large part to the third and final stage of his career, the Soviet Period (1936-1953).

1.1 Return to the Soviet Union

In March 1936, Prokofiev moved to Moscow with his wife Lina (1897-1989) and their two sons, in what was surely the most impactful decision of the composer’s life. This relocation from the artistically vibrant city of Paris to the uncertainty of Soviet Russia has, not surprisingly, become the focal point of Prokofiev-related scholarship for over half a century. The emotional seeds of this drawn-out return, however, were planted as early as January 1927, when the composer traveled to Russia to perform a series of concerts, his first time on Russian soil in almost nine years.

The Soviet tour of 1927 was nothing short of a sensation, shocking even Prokofiev, who was treated as a sort of national hero. Soviet composer and music critic Boris Asafyev, a lifelong friend of Prokofiev, emphasized the sheer triumph of Prokofiev’s return:
A trumpet flourish, followed by applause that was a long time dying down, announced Prokofiev’s appearance… After the Third Piano Concerto, which he performed brilliantly, the joy already noticeable at the concert’s start intensified, turning into unanimous enthusiasm… The triumphant reception that Moscow has given him demonstrates the inextinguishable, spontaneously burning creative energy of his homeland. It resounds in him and in his temperamental art.⁴

Prokofiev had spent the previous nine years in America and Western Europe, and, despite many successes during this middle period, nothing matched the enthusiasm which greeted him in Russia in 1927. Just a few days into this months-long tour, he applied for and was granted renewal of his Soviet citizenship.⁵ He became reacquainted with many old friends, and had the chance to hear music by young Soviet composers – among them Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975) – many of whom betrayed a distinctly Prokofievian influence.⁶ For the first time in his adult life, he was receiving the veneration he had always craved.

Prokofiev’s list of Soviet allies expanded over the next several years, resulting in an ever-increasing number of commissions for large-scale works. An important facilitator of this transition period was Levon Atovmian (1901-1973), an executive member of the All-Russian Society of Composers and Dramaturgs and the future director Muzgiz, the state publishing house. Atovmian organized Prokofiev’s Russian tours during the early 1930s, personally ensuring that the composer always felt both comfortable and admired in the Soviet Union. “I am now convinced,” Prokofiev wrote to Atovmian in 1933, “that in the Soviet Union there are wonderful opportunities for creative activity.”⁷ In the West, by contrast, Prokofiev’s career suffered a major setback when Sergei Diaghilev, ballet impresario of the Ballets Russes and one

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⁵ Ibid., 204.
of his most reliable advocates, died in 1929. Moreover, the economic climate of the early 1930s largely precluded any opportunity for new stage and symphonic works in the West. While Prokofiev still maintained a successful career in Paris, the scales seemed to have tipped in Russia’s favour.

Musicologists often focus their attention on a small number of failures over Prokofiev’s years abroad as a clear explanation for his return to Russia. This was the original narrative, and understandably so, since the first musicologists to write about Prokofiev’s life were behind the Iron Curtain themselves. Israel Nestyev, for example, who knew Prokofiev personally and wrote the first full-length biography of the composer, frames his middle period as almost entirely fruitless, depressing, and detrimental. An unbiased view suggests, however, that Prokofiev’s Paris years were rather successful overall: both his reputation and financial situation improved year after year, Paris audiences received a number of his works favourably despite mixed reviews elsewhere, and he earned the collective admiration of his Paris-based peers Francis Poulenc (1899-1963), Maurice Ravel (1875-1937), and Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971). To be sure, Prokofiev’s competitive nature made it difficult for him to work in the same environment as the older and more established Stravinsky, whose reputation cast an enormous shadow; Prokofiev’s diaries from his Paris years reveal a near-obsession with trying, and often failing, to

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11 After the Paris premiere of *Chout* in 1921, Ravel pronounced Prokofiev a genius, and Stravinsky described the ballet as the only modern piece he could bear to listen to. See Frolova-Walker, “‘Monsieur Prokofieff,’” 63.
outdo the elder composer.\textsuperscript{12} As Richard Taruskin writes, “the greatest benefit the move to Soviet Russia conferred on Prokofiev was surely relief from the pressure of competing with Stravinsky in chic innovation.”\textsuperscript{13} Nevertheless, it was not professional failure, nor Stravinsky’s mighty shadow, that pushed Prokofiev out of Western Europe; rather, various figures in the Soviet Union, and the vitality of the Soviet music scene more generally, were tantalizingly effective at convincing the composer of the potential for even greater success at home. “He was not fleeing the West from lack of professional fulfillment,” Marina Frolova-Walker writes, “but, quite to the contrary, it would seem: he had triumphed in the West, and now wanted to test his abilities against a new and steeper challenge in the Soviet Union.”\textsuperscript{14} The move to Soviet Russia also signaled an end to his tiresome traveling routine, promising a more secure and steady list of commissions: “And, I suppose,” Prokofiev wrote to Atovmian, “there actually is no reason for me to go on torturing myself endlessly with border crossings just to give concerts.”\textsuperscript{15} Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we now know that if Prokofiev did not officially relocate to Soviet Russia, he risked forfeiting his Soviet commissions and may no longer be permitted to travel there as a visitor.\textsuperscript{16}

A month before Prokofiev’s move was finalized, the Communist newspaper \textit{Pravda} issued a scathing critique of Dmitri Shostakovich’s opera \textit{Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District}, marking the beginning of a massive anti-formalism campaign in Soviet art. Due in part to Joseph Stalin’s distaste for \textit{Lady Macbeth},\textsuperscript{17} the anonymous \textit{Pravda} critique offered a clear warning sign

\textsuperscript{14} Frolova-Walker, “Monsieur Prokofieff,” 85.
\textsuperscript{15} Kravetz, “Prokofiev and Atovmian,” 114.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 40.
of the dangers of creative life in the Soviet Union. Prokofiev’s wife Lina also expressed
trepidation about moving to Russia in the wake of the Pravda editorial.\textsuperscript{18} For Prokofiev,
however, the idea that Soviet policy might interfere with his art did little to dissuade him. Quite
to the contrary, as Simon Morrison notes, “Prokofiev allowed himself to believe that, with
Shostakovich under a cloud, he had automatically become the preeminent Soviet composer.”\textsuperscript{19}
Prokofiev therefore took the risk of relocating to the Soviet Union in what Morrison fittingly
calls a “Faustian bargain,”\textsuperscript{20} his sights set upward towards new levels of professional success
which would, he hoped, eclipse those of his years abroad. As we now know, it did not take long
before he fell victim to many of the same criticisms which had befallen Shostakovich, their styles
often being labelled as overly formalist, modern, or Western. Despite reassuring his wife that “if
the experience soured, they could always return to Paris,”\textsuperscript{21} by 1938 the Soviet Union refused to
renew Prokofiev’s travel permit,\textsuperscript{22} and he had no choice but to stay.

1.2 Prokofiev and the Piano Transcription

Prokofiev’s move to the Soviet Union marks an important shift in his piano writing: it
represents the end of his original character works for the piano, a genre which had defined his
earlier periods, and the beginning of a comprehensive exploration of his stage works in the form
of piano transcriptions. With the exception of his last four piano sonatas, piano transcriptions
form the entirety of his Soviet-era piano works. Due to this proliferation, transcriptions

\textsuperscript{19} Morrison, The People’s Artist, 41.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 6.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 41.
ultimately make up approximately a third of his overall piano oeuvre. In contrast to contemporaries Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943) and Leopold Godowsky (1870-1938), Prokofiev’s transcriptions are drawn primarily from his own body of work, with the major Soviet-era ballets *Romeo and Juliet* and *Cinderella* representing the most prominent sources. A full list of Prokofiev’s piano transcriptions is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. List of piano transcriptions by Sergei Prokofiev

- Organ Fugue in D minor by Buxtehude (without opus number; c.1920)
- Op. 33ter: “March” and “Scherzo” from *The Love for Three Oranges* (1919-1920)
- Schubert Waltzes (without opus number; 1923)
- Op. 43bis: Divertissement (1938)
- Op. 52: Six Pieces for Piano (1928-1931)
- Op. 75: Ten Pieces from *Romeo and Juliet* (1937)
- Op. 77bis: Gavotte from *Hamlet* (1938)
- Op. 95: Three Pieces from *Cinderella* (1942)
- Op. 96: Three Pieces from *War and Piece* and *Lermontov* (1941-1942)
- Op. 97: Ten Pieces from *Cinderella* (1943)
- Op. 102: Six Pieces from *Cinderella* (1944)

In this monograph, I discuss the twenty-nine piano transcriptions from *Romeo and Juliet* and *Cinderella*, the two main ballets of Prokofiev’s Soviet period and the two works for which he wrote the highest number of piano transcriptions. There are four individual transcriptions which I have chosen to analyse in greater detail: “Romeo and Juliet Before Parting” from *Ten

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23 Prokofiev also made various piano reductions of early stage works for rehearsal purposes; these are not listed in Figure 1 because they are generally seen as practical rather than artistic endeavours. During his Soviet years, he typically left the preparation of piano reductions to his editor, Levon Atovmian, who completed the piano reductions for *Romeo and Juliet*, *Cinderella*, *Semyon Kotko*, *Betrothal in a Monastery*, and *War and Peace*, among others.

Pieces from Romeo and Juliet Op 75, “Pavane” and “Gavotte” from Three Pieces from Cinderella Op. 95, and “Amoroso” from Six Pieces from Cinderella Op 102. These pieces were chosen because they most clearly demonstrate the important issues and topics of the monograph, but reflect characteristics and tendencies seen across the four sets of piano transcriptions.
CHAPTER 2

ROMEO AND JULIET

The most significant of Prokofiev’s Soviet commissions in the 1930s was for a ballet based on Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*. First envisioned in 1934 and composed primarily during the summer of 1935, *Romeo and Juliet* was scheduled to be premiered at Moscow’s Bolshoi Theatre in the Spring of 1936. For Prokofiev, the ballet represented the perfect opportunity to announce his arrival as a newly minted Soviet composer.

During the early stages of planning, Prokofiev and scenarist Sergei Radlov (1892-1958) made the radical decision to rewrite Shakespeare’s tragic ending to allow the star-crossed lovers to survive. This “happy ending” aligned well with the creative aesthetic of Socialist Realism, which espoused accessibility for the masses (*dostupnost* and *massovost*) and a character of optimism.25 Radlov viewed the youthful energy of the story’s protagonists as a reflection of the *Komsomol* (Communist Youth League), necessitating their triumph as symbolic for the future of the Soviet Union.26 From a more practical perspective, Prokofiev said quite plainly, “living people can dance, the dying cannot.”27 The happy ending was originally approved by the Central Committee of Arts and Affairs, for whom “the primary function of the arts [was] to uplift and inspire the Soviet people.”28 Rewriting classics to suit the agenda of the Soviet cultural project was a common practice in the 1930s, with both the Bolshoi and Kirov theatres similarly staging

26 Deborah Annette Wilson, “Prokofiev’s Romeo and Juliet: History of a Compromise” (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 2003), 87.
28 Wilson, “Prokofiev’s Romeo and Juliet,” 86-87.
versions of Swan Lake with happy, victorious endings. The happy ending became a topic of controversy, however, with some viewing the triumph of two rebellious youths as contrary to the structure of Soviet society, and others decrying the sacrilege of Shakespeare. Prokofiev, whose main priority was seeing his music performed, began work on a revised version which would reinstate Shakespeare’s tragic ending. Radlov also fell in line, commenting that “it was not worth his dying ‘so that Romeo and Juliet should live.’”

On January 28, 1936, the Communist newspaper Pravda issued the now-famous editorial “Muddle Instead of Music,” which labelled Shostakovich’s opera Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District as a cacophonous, vulgar display of formalism. Joseph Stalin had attended a performance of the opera at the Bolshoi theatre just two days earlier (with Shostakovich also in attendance), and his disapproval of the work was undoubtedly the catalyst for the Pravda critique. A second article in Pravda, released the following week, condemned Shostakovich’s ballet The Limpid Stream, which was scheduled for production at the Bolshoi later that season. Within a matter of days, the Bolshoi Theatre became the focal point of a massive controversy. A complete overhaul of the theatre’s personnel was undertaken, resulting in the arrest and eventual execution of administrative director Vladimir Mutnykh. Adrian Piotrovsky, co-scenarist of both The Limpid Stream and Romeo and Juliet, was also arrested and later died in captivity. Prokofiev, who was in the late stages of moving to Moscow, was judged as “[requiring] ideological guidance.”

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30 Morrison, The People’s Artist, 37.
31 Ibid., 37.
33 Morrison, The People’s Artist, 37. Radlov also survived the ordeal, though he was eventually sent to the Gulag in 1945 on an eight-year sentence. See also Ezrahi, Swans of the Kremlin, 156.
Juliet a high-risk production, and it was quickly cancelled. The ballet became blacklisted by its association with the Pravda fiasco, and was not produced in Russia until four years later, at the Kirov; the Bolshoi Theatre left it untouched until 1946, a full decade after its completion. Prokofiev’s original score, with the happy ending, did not premiere until 2008, 55 years after the composer’s death.\textsuperscript{34}

Having spent nearly two years on Romeo and Juliet, Prokofiev began seeking alternative outlets for his work. First, he arranged two orchestral suites of music from Romeo and Juliet (Opp. 64bis and 64ter).\textsuperscript{35} This was familiar territory for Prokofiev, who had previously arranged several earlier works into orchestral suites. In some cases, as in the Scythian Suite and the cantata from Alexander Nevsky, these arrangements went on to become the most successful iterations of their material. Ultimately, by separating the music of Romeo and Juliet from its controversial scenario, Prokofiev succeeded in rendering the work acceptable for performance, and the first suite made its Moscow premiere in late 1936. The following year, Romeo and Juliet served as the basis for the first major piano work of Prokofiev’s Soviet period, Ten Pieces from Romeo and Juliet, Op. 75 (1937).

2.1 Ten Pieces from Romeo and Juliet, Op. 75

Prokofiev had previously experimented in the genre of piano transcription (See Chapter 1.2, Figure 1), but never on so large a scale: a performance of Op. 75 takes approximately thirty-five minutes. Like the two Romeo and Juliet orchestral suites which preceded it, the Romeo and


\textsuperscript{35} A third Romeo and Juliet orchestral suite, Op. 101, was completed in 1946.
Juliet piano suite is diverse in its genre types, thematic content, and the dramaturgical significance of its episodes. Some of the themes bear little importance in the narrative context of the ballet (e.g., “Scene”), while others represent crucial scenes in the ballet’s plot (e.g., “Romeo and Juliet before Parting”). Nearly all of the piano suite’s material was also used in the first two orchestral suites, reflecting Prokofiev’s preference for these themes. The composer described the suites as follows:

I made two symphonic suites from the ballet, each consisting of seven movements. They do not follow each other consecutively; both suites develop parallel to each other. Some numbers were taken directly from the ballet without alteration, others were compiled from different sources within it. These two suites do not cover the entire music and I shall perhaps be able to make a third. Besides the suites I compiled a collection of ten pieces for piano, selecting the parts best suited for transcription.  

As Prokofiev’s statement suggests, the piano and orchestral suites display very little narrative consistency when compared with corresponding episodes in the ballet. For instance, Prokofiev opens both the piano suite and first orchestral suite with “Folk Dance”; in the ballet, “Folk Dance” does not appear until nearly an hour into the ballet as the opening number of Act 2 (No. 22). Prokofiev evidently considered this to be effective opening material and prioritized its scene-setting, statement-like character above narrative cohesion. In general, the plot of Shakespeare’s drama cannot be distinguished by listening to the orchestral or piano suites on their own, other than a general shift in tone from light to dark. For a clear summary of the chronology of ballet material in the piano suite, refer to Figure 2, which lists the ten pieces of Op. 75 alongside corresponding ballet material and their placement in the orchestral suites.

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Sergei Prokofiev, Soviet Diary, 299.
Figure 2. Chronology of Musical Material in *Romeo and Juliet* Piano Suite, Ballet, and Orchestral Suites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transcription</th>
<th>Ballet Scene</th>
<th>Orchestral Suites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Ten Pieces from Romeo and Juliet</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Folk Dance</td>
<td>Act 2, No. 22. Folk Dance</td>
<td>Suite 1: No. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Scene</td>
<td>Act 1, No. 3. The Street Awakens</td>
<td>Suite 1: No. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Minuet</td>
<td>Act 1, No. 11. Arrival of the Guests (Minuet)</td>
<td>Suite 1: No. 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Young Juliet</td>
<td>Act 1, No. 10. The Young Juliet</td>
<td>Suite 2: No. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Act 3, No. 46. Juliet’s Room</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Act 4, No. 59. Juliet’s Death</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Masks</td>
<td>Act 1, No. 12. Masks</td>
<td>Suite 1: No. 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The Montagues and the Capulets</td>
<td>Act 1, No. 13. Dance of the Knights</td>
<td>Suite 2: No. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Act 3, No. 46. Juliet’s Room</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Friar Laurence</td>
<td>Act 2, No. 28. Romeo at Friar Laurence’s</td>
<td>Suite 2: No. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Mercutio</td>
<td>Act 1, No. 15. Mercutio</td>
<td>Suite 1: No. 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Romeo and Juliet Before Parting</td>
<td>Act 3, No. 38. Romeo and Juliet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Act 3, No. 39. Romeo Bids Juliet Farewell</td>
<td>Suite 2: No. 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Act 3, No. 43. Interlude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Act 3, No. 47. Juliet Alone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Israel Nestyev described the *Ten Pieces from Romeo and Juliet*, Op. 75, writing, “The entire cycle was written in a very simple style, with no virtuoso effects… All the pieces are completely pianistic, and despite their simplicity, they quickly won the interest of many Soviet pianists with the richness of their thematic material.”

Contrary to this assessment, the Op. 75 suite covers an enormous range of pianistic territory and virtuoso effects. A performance of the set amounts to approximately thirty-five minutes of music, and, as a transcription of an orchestral work, presents several unique technical challenges, including: rapid hand crossings (e.g., “The

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Young Juliet”); wide and synchronous two-handed leaps (e.g., “Masks”); simultaneous management of several distinct voices (e.g., the Moderato tranquillo section of “The Montagues and the Capulets,” and “Romeo and Juliet Before Parting,” and throughout the cycle); uncomfortable syncopations at rapid tempo (e.g., “Mercutio”); and, as in so much of Prokofiev’s music, a machine-like rhythmic momentum and toccata character (e.g., “Folk Dance,” “Masks,” and “Mercutio”). Furthermore, many of the chords contain intervals of a tenth, with little time for preparation of the hand, posing an additional challenge for pianists with smaller hands.

The suite’s most unique technical challenge is its demand for the use of the sostenuto (middle) pedal, allowing pedaled voices to sustain while others continue independently. Although Prokofiev does not make this recommendation directly, the sostenuto pedal enables the performer to remain faithful to Prokofiev’s articulation markings while playing three separate voices simultaneously. In “Folk Dance” (See Example 1), for example, the sostenuto pedal should be employed for the held middle voice (originally assigned to the oboes) in mm. 21-22 and mm. 25-26 to preserve the accurate articulations in each of the three voices. An accurate rendering of these measures cannot be achieved with the damper pedal alone, as it would handicap the staccatos of the bass and upper voices; on the other hand, a complete absence of pedal would preclude the sustaining of the middle voice’s tied half notes for their full value. Likewise, in the Moderato tranquillo middle section of “The Montagues and the Capulets” (See Example 2), the sostenuto pedal should be used for the tenor theme beginning at m. 62 to sustain the middle voice without disturbing the staccato of the bass voice or blurring the melody of the top voice (see mm. 63, 65, 71, 73). Finally, a skillful use of the sostenuto pedal would assist with the Andante finale of “Romeo and Juliet Before Parting,” beginning at m. 74, to hold the bass melody while maintaining the contrasting articulations of the top (legato) and middle (staccato)
voices (See Example 3). The sostenuto pedal may be considered for other passages throughout the suite, but these three passages represent the most clear and striking examples where performers can benefit from the use of this rare technique. Even Prokofiev’s nine piano sonatas, which are considered seminal contributions to twentieth century piano technique, do not require the use of the sostenuto pedal. Most of Romeo and Juliet’s pianistic challenges arise simply by virtue of the work’s nature as a transcription, since Prokofiev’s full orchestral palette must be condensed onto a single keyboard (on which the composer was an unmatched virtuoso in his own right).

Example 1. Prokofiev, Ten Pieces from Romeo and Juliet, Op. 75, “Folk Dance,” mm. 20-31

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38 Boris Berman mentions the sostenuto pedal only once in his book on Prokofiev’s nine piano sonatas, with regard to the first movement of the Seventh Sonata, and even here he advises against its use. See Boris Berman, Prokofiev’s Piano Sonatas: A Guide for the Listener and the Performer. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008, 162-163.


Regarding Prokofiev’s style of transcription, one notes a generally high level of fidelity to the ballet source material. Some of the movements, namely “Scene,” “Masks,” “Friar Laurence,” and “Dance of the Girls with Lilies,” are nearly identical copies of their orchestral equivalents. As Nestyev writes, “the pieces are parts of the original piano score, carefully edited
Indeed, the ballet rehearsal score (arranged for piano by L. Atovmian) is almost identical to Prokofiev’s piano transcriptions of these movements, attesting to the composer’s fidelity to the orchestral ballet score. See, for example, the opening measures of “Minuet,” Op. 75, alongside the opening measures of “Arrival of the Guests” from Atovmian’s piano score (Examples 4 and 5).


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Despite this overall fidelity to the ballet source material, there are nevertheless several important distinctions that showcase Prokofiev’s skill in the art of transcription and composition. “Folk Dance” begins as a relatively straight-forward duplicate of its orchestral counterpart with only a few minor differences (e.g., the piano transcription omits the *Meno mosso, poco accelerando* and *a tempo* indications at R159-161 [mm. 82-102]). However, the piano transcription diverges from the ballet score in the form of an extended, original ending. At R169, the ballet closes with a brief, nine-measure recap of the main theme in the primary key of D Major. In the piano transcription’s equivalent moment (m. 178), however, Prokofiev modulates to A Major for a presentation of the secondary theme, before modulating at a rapid rate to cover six different keys over 79 measures of new material (mm. 178-265) – compared with nine keys over the previous 177 measures. This new section is also notable for Prokofiev’s use of *stretto*, the overlapping of thematically similar, but independent melodic voices in close succession, which results in a more frenzied sense of direction. The incorporation of *stretto* into the piece’s
polyphonic makeup and the accelerated pace of modulation in the final section combine to create a sense of instability and agitation not heard in the ballet version.

“The Montagues and the Capulets” is also notable for the differences from its ballet counterpart, “Dance of the Knights,” (Act 1, No. 13). Immediately apparent is the piano transcription’s omission of two of the ballet number’s themes, those appearing at R81-83 and R86. Prokofiev likely chose not to include these themes since they already appear elsewhere in Op. 75; R81-83 represents the secondary theme of “Minuet” (mm. 29-47) and R86 appears in “The Young Juliet” (mm. 27-34 and mm. 64-71). By removing thematic material which appears elsewhere in the piano suite, Prokofiev ensures a more compact, condensed version of “Dance of the Knights.” From a pianistic perspective, Prokofiev’s most noteworthy contribution to “The Montagues and the Capulets” is the accompanimental figuration at mm. 63-77 (See Example 6). At m. 63, the *Moderato tranquillo* theme – first introduced in the right hand’s soprano voice at m. 47 – is repeated in the tenor voice, played with the left hand. To accompany this second iteration of the *dolce* theme, Prokofiev incorporates an arpeggio-like accompaniment of eighth notes in the right hand. This figuration is not included in the ballet’s “Dance of the Knights,” but comes instead from Act 3, No. 46: “Juliet’s Room,” which uses the same melodic material as “Dance of the Knights.” Prokofiev also used this accompanimental figuration in his orchestral version of “Montagues and Capulets,” as part of Suite No. 2 from *Romeo and Juliet*, Op. 64ter. In both the orchestral suite and the ballet’s “Juliet’s Room,” the accompanimental figure is played initially by the first violins and later by the celeste.

2.2 “Romeo and Juliet Before Parting,” Op. 75

“Romeo and Juliet Before Parting,” sometimes called “Romeo Bids Juliet Farewell,” is the longest and most developed piece in Op. 75, comprised of five sections taken from four separate numbers in the ballet’s third act. In general, the piano transcription does not stray far from the ballet source material with regard to pitches, rhythms, or harmonies. Prokofiev’s most notable changes are structural, as he implements brief interludes and unusual yet deft modulations to smoothly navigate the piece’s sectional nature while augmenting the ever-present sense of storytelling.
The first section, mm. 1-16, is a *Lento* introduction which draws its material from the opening of the ballet’s third act, No. 38: “Romeo and Juliet.” The next two sections, the *Andante* portion from mm. 17-34 and the *Poco piu animato* at mm. 35-50 are both from ballet No. 39: “Romeo Bids Juliet Farewell.” It is because of the prominence of this material that the piano transcription shares its name with this particular ballet number (both the transcription and the ballet number have been published as “Romeo and Juliet Before Parting” and as “Romeo Bids Juliet Farewell”; the two distinct titles are due to mere differences in translation). These first three sections (mm. 1-50) depict Romeo and Juliet waking up together and embracing each other before their departure. The thematic material presented in the *Adagio* section at mm. 51-71 also appears briefly in “Romeo Bids Juliet Farewell”; however, this section is more closely modeled after ballet No. 43: “Interlude.” While the “Interlude” ends with an F# dominant seventh harmony in its final measure as preparation for the B Major opening of the following number, “At Friar Laurence’s Cell,” the piano transcription modulates instead into E minor. At mm. 70 Prokofiev begins the top melody line on a C# instead of the G# of the ballet version’s corresponding moment (played by the flute and clarinet). The melody unfolds the same as it does in the ballet, only a fourth above, leading to a B dominant seventh harmony in m. 71. Finally, at m. 72, Prokofiev resolves the dominant harmony with an E minor triad, a surprising resolution given the ballet’s corresponding moment resolves into the major key of B Major (See Examples 7 and 8). The fifth and final section in “Romeo and Juliet Before Parting” is a mysterious and ghoulish *Andante*, which is based on ballet No. 47: “Juliet Alone.”

Example 8. Prokofiev, *Ten Pieces from Romeo and Juliet*, Op. 75, “Romeo and Juliet Before Parting,” mm. 70-75

A crucial distinction between the *Ten Pieces from Romeo and Juliet* and the ballet is that, as is also the case with the orchestral suites, Prokofiev leaves the piano suite ambiguous as to whether or not Romeo and Juliet die. To be sure, the ending of the piano suite’s “Romeo and
Juliet Before Parting” is unquestionably dark, and, if one is imagining Shakespeare’s story while listening, it is easy to envision the death of the star-crossed lovers in the piece’s final measures. However, Prokofiev ends the piano suite with material from “Juliet Alone,” which, from a narrative perspective, occurs before the deaths of the story’s titular heroes. In Shakespeare’s play, Juliet stages her death by drinking a special potion offered by Friar Laurence, which is meant to put her into a temporary coma so that she will appear dead, allowing her to escape her arranged marriage with Count Paris. Friar Laurence promises to send word of their plan to Romeo so that he may rejoin Juliet after she has awoken. However, after the friar’s messenger fails to deliver the message, Romeo believes Juliet to be truly dead, and goes to her crypt to kill himself by her side. When Juliet awakens to find Romeo dead beside her, she then stabs and kills herself. In the ballet, Juliet drinks Friar Laurence’s potion during No: 44: “At Friar Laurence’s Cell,” and in No. 47: “Juliet Alone” the potion takes effect, causing her to lose consciousness and collapse into a coma. Since the piano suite ends with material from No. 47: “Juliet Alone,” it appears that Prokofiev has chosen to only depict Juliet’s staged death. None of the ballet material which depicts the “real” deaths of Romeo or Juliet appear in Op. 75. Therefore, even though the piano suite’s ending sounds tragic in its own right, there remains a hopeful possibility that Juliet will awaken to find Romeo waiting by her side. As Deborah Annette Wilson writes (of both the piano and orchestral suites), “from the suites either the happy or a tragic ending is possible.”

Since Prokofiev was unable to realize his original vision for Romeo and Juliet with the ballet itself, one in which the lovers survive and live happily thereafter, the piano transcriptions seem to have offered an alternate outlet to explore this possibility. Though the happy ending is not entirely fulfilled, it is, at the very least, suggested by the omission of any musical material

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40 Wilson, “Prokofiev’s Romeo and Juliet,” 159.
relating to the actual deaths of the star-crossed lovers. The hope inherent in this reimagined ending supports the notion that Prokofiev’s *Ten Pieces from Romeo and Juliet* Op. 75 embody a unique artistic value beyond their basic connection to the ballet.
CHAPTER 3

CINDERELLA

*Romeo and Juliet* finally appeared before Russian audiences on January 11, 1940, at Leningrad’s Kirov Theatre.\(^{41,42}\) Despite heavy alterations to the score and orchestration, of which Prokofiev strongly disapproved, the ballet’s reception was overwhelmingly positive. To capitalize on this success, the Kirov Theatre promptly commissioned a new ballet from Prokofiev, one which they hoped would “equal the success of *Romeo and Juliet* while avoiding the political and logistical problems that had long delayed its premiere.”\(^{43}\) Not long before, the Kirov had turned down a proposal by the ballet critic and scenarist Yuriy Slonimsky for a ballet which set Charles Perrault’s classic fairy tale *Cinderella* to existing music by Tchaikovsky.\(^{44}\) Despite the initial rejection, *Cinderella* seemed an ideal story for the Soviet stage; already a well-known classic, it aligned with Socialist Realism and communist values, portraying an “all-suffering working girl who does her chores day in, day out, and never once frowns for a moment or thinks of rebelling… who is content to live with the dream of a better future while merrily lending a helping hand to her oppressors; and who never, never would think of complaining about her fate to earthly or heavenly powers.”\(^{45}\) On the heels of the widely acclaimed *Romeo and Juliet*, The Kirov commissioned Prokofiev to compose for *Cinderella*, effectively replacing the music of Tchaikovsky.

\(^{41}\) This marks the Russian premiere of *Romeo and Juliet*. In fact, the world premiere of *Romeo and Juliet* took place one year earlier, at the Brno Opera House in Czechoslovakia, on December 30, 1938.

\(^{42}\) The Mariinsky Theatre (established 1860) was renamed as the Kirov Theatre for most of the Soviet Period. In 1992 its original name was reinstated.

\(^{43}\) Morrison, *The People’s Artist*, 258.

\(^{44}\) Ibid., 258.

Slonimsky’s Tchaikovsky-like vision for *Cinderella* elicited immediate pushback from Prokofiev. While he endorsed the inclusion of classic dance-forms when necessary, he refused to let such formal procedures lead to a watered-down version of his compositional style. Prokofiev wrote to Slonimsky in 1940:

Balletomanes grumble that my *Romeo and Juliet* lacks dances. This is because they are used only to considering galops, polkas, waltzes, mazurkas, and variations as dances. I am not against traditional ballet forms. Don’t you think that I know how to compose them? I can. I just don’t want to. It’s easy to compose in an old-fashioned way. But one has to move forward. And in Chaikovsky’s ballets they don’t always dance; sometimes they just walk about the stage. Why don’t you complain about that? In my ballets, incidentally, everything has to be danced. It has to be and can be.

It’s a pity that there isn’t a scenario that would allow me to illustrate how to compose waltzes, polkas, variations, and so on in a contemporary way. Your scenario doesn’t allow this: it only requires imitating Chaikovsky.\(^\text{46}\)

Slonimsky eventually departed the project and was replaced by Nikolay Volkhov, who rewrote the original scenario. But Prokofiev also clashed with Volkhov, this time over their preferred source material. Volkhov sought to maintain the spirit of Charles Perrault’s 1697 fairy tale,\(^\text{47}\) while Prokofiev favoured the darker potential of Alexander Afanasyev’s Russian version of *Cinderella*, which ends, in one particularly grim example, with the two stepsisters having their eyes pecked out by Cinderella’s magic doves. Prokofiev considered the Russian version better-suited to his modern musical language, offering a more realistic depiction of the heroine in contrast to Perrault’s more fantastic portrayal. “I see Cinderella not only as a fairy-tale character,” wrote Prokofiev, “but also as a real person, feeling, experiencing, and moving among us.”\(^\text{48}\) Despite this honourable vision, Prokofiev’s artistic autonomy was again met with uncompromising circumstances.

\(^{46}\) Quoted in Morrison, *The People’s Artist*, 259.
\(^{47}\) Ibid., 260.
\(^{48}\) Quoted in Nestyev, *Prokofiev*, 324.
The Soviet Union’s entry into the Second World War in June 1941 halted the production of *Cinderella*, and Soviet composers shifted to writing patriotic works as contributions to the war effort. During these years Prokofiev composed the *Ballad of an Unknown Boy* (Op. 93), *Hymn to the Soviet Union* (Op. 98), and the Fifth Symphony, the three of which represent some of his most patriotic works (although the program of the Fifth Symphony is sometimes debated\(^\text{49}\)). Rather than shelve *Cinderella* indefinitely, Prokofiev took to writing orchestral suites and piano transcriptions as he had done previously with *Romeo and Juliet*. In total he arranged three orchestral suites (Opp. 107, 108, 109) and three piano suites (Opp. 95, 97, 102). *Cinderella* premiered on November 21, 1945, at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, after the end of the Second World War.

### 3.1 The *Cinderella* Transcriptions

Prokofiev composed three sets of *Cinderella* piano transcriptions: *Three Pieces from Cinderella*, Op. 95 (1942); *Ten Pieces from Cinderella*, Op. 97 (1943); and *Six Pieces from Cinderella*, Op. 102 (1944). In contrast to *Romeo and Juliet*, the piano suites from *Cinderella* were written before the orchestral suites, not after. Although there are but few traces of Prokofiev’s thoughts on these piano pieces, his description of the orchestral suites provides an analogous perspective: “These suites are not simply a collection of numbers mechanically taken out of the ballet… Much has been reworked and been put into more symphonic form.”\(^\text{50}\) One can reasonably assume that Prokofiev viewed the piano suites in a similar light and that ‘much had been reworked and put into more pianistic form.’ Indeed, in many cases Prokofiev makes such

\(^{49}\) Tooke, “Prokofiev and the Soviet Symphony,” 44-51.
\(^{50}\) Nestyev, *Prokofiev*, 384.
drastic changes to texture, structure, and harmonic palette, that the piano versions can be viewed as independent works in their own right.

Like the Ten Pieces from Romeo and Juliet, the Cinderella transcriptions largely abandon any sense of narrative consistency. Refer to Figure 3, which lists the nineteen Cinderella transcriptions alongside their ballet and orchestral suite counterparts. Although the Cinderella transcriptions are not bound to the ballet’s narrative, Prokofiev employs other factors to grant each suite its own sense of cohesion: As Choah Kim points out, the first set, Op. 95, combines three dances – a pavane, a gavotte, and a waltz – into a dance suite; the second set, Op. 97, focuses primarily on offering character studies of the ballet’s diverse roles (e.g., “The Spring Fairy” and “The Fairy Godmother”); and the third set, Op. 102, acts as a kind of program music in which each piece depicts a particular scene, mood, or character relationship from the ballet (though still detached from narrative chronology).51

Figure 3. Chronology of Musical Material in Cinderella Piano Suites, Ballet, and Orchestral Suites52

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transcription</th>
<th>Ballet Scene</th>
<th>Orchestral Suite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three Pieces from Cinderella</td>
<td>Cinderella Op. 87 (1940-44)</td>
<td>No. 1 Op. 107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Op. 95 (1942)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1946)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Gavotte</td>
<td>Act 1, No. 10. Gavotte</td>
<td>(1946)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Slow Waltz</td>
<td>Act 3, No. 49. Slow Waltz</td>
<td>No. 3 Op. 109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1946)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten Pieces from Cinderella</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Op. 97 (1943)</td>
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</table>

52 This table is based on Tables 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 in Kim, “Choreographic Character Piece,” 31-32, with some minor revisions.
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<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Spring Fairy</td>
<td>Act 1, No. 12. Spring Fairy</td>
<td>Suite 2: No. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Summer Fairy</td>
<td>Act 1, No. 13. Summer Fairy</td>
<td>Suite 2: No. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Autumn Fairy</td>
<td>Act 1, No. 15. Autumn Fairy</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Winter Fairy</td>
<td>Act 1, No. 16. Winter Fairy</td>
<td>Suite 1: No. 4</td>
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<td>Act 1, No. 5. The Fairy Godmother</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Act 3, No. 48. The Prince Recognizes Cinderella</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Grasshoppers and Dragonflies</td>
<td>Act 1, No. 14. Grasshoppers and Dragonflies</td>
<td>Suite 2: No. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Passepied</td>
<td>Act 2, No. 21. Passepied</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Capriccio</td>
<td>Act 2, No. 24. Dumpy’s Variation</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Bourrée</td>
<td>Act 2, No. 22. Bourrée</td>
<td>Suite 2: No. 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Adagio (Cinderella and the Prince)</td>
<td>Act 2, No. 36. Duet of the Prince and Cinderella</td>
<td>Suite 3: No. 2</td>
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**Six Pieces from Cinderella**

Op. 102 (1944)

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<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Cinderella’s Dance</td>
<td>Act 2, No. 32. Cinderella’s Variation</td>
<td>Suite 1: No. 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Quarrel</td>
<td>Act 1, No. 7. The Dancing Lesson</td>
<td>Suite 1: No. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Act 1, No. 2. Shawl Dance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Act 3, No. 46. The Morning After the Ball</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Act 1, No. 4. The Father</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Act 3, No. 47. The Prince’s Visit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Waltz: Cinderella Goes to the Ball</td>
<td>Act 1, No. 19. Cinderella’s Departure for the Ball</td>
<td>Suite 1: No. 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Pas de Châle</td>
<td>Act 1, No. 2. Shawl Dance</td>
<td>Suite 1: No. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Act 3, No. 46. The Morning After the Ball</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Act 2, No. 35. Duet of the Sisters with Oranges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Amoroso</td>
<td>Act 1, No. 9. Cinderella Dreams of the Ball</td>
<td>Suite 3: No. 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Act 2, No. 29. Cinderella’s Arrival at the Ball</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Act 3, No. 50. Amoroso</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

This chapter briefly touches on all of the nineteen *Cinderella* transcriptions. There are, however, three particular transcriptions which I have chosen to analyze in greater detail:

“Pavane,” Op. 95, “Gavotte,” Op. 95, and “Amoroso,” Op. 102. These pieces were chosen for the clarity with which they reflect the differences between Prokofiev’s piano transcriptions and their ballet counterparts, with each piece highlighting one or more specific topics: “Pavane” covers a few areas of interest, including structure, dynamics, and articulation; for “Gavotte,” the main focal point is structure; and finally, “Amoroso” provides an ideal example of the drastic harmonic differences between the piano and ballet versions.
3.2 “Pavane,” Op. 95 no. 1

The trio of dance pieces which form Op. 95 is the most popular of the *Cinderella* suites; notably, the first and third movements were performed by Vladimir Horowitz (1903-1989) in the 1940s and the “Gavotte” was a fixture in the repertoire of Sviatoslav Richter (1915-1997). Unlike Prokofiev’s other transcription sets, wherein the titles directly refer to their ballet narrative (e.g., “Romeo and Juliet Before Parting”; “Cinderella Goes to the Ball”), the Op. 95 dance suite uses non-specific titles (pavane, gavotte, waltz), which helps establish its status as an independent piano work.\(^{53}\) The set’s third piece, “Valse lente,” is nearly identical with its ballet counterpart (and, likewise, Atovmian’s piano reduction); the first two pieces, by contrast, are distinct from their ballet episodes.

The first entry in *Three Pieces from Cinderella*, Op. 95, is “Pavane,” a playful and capricious dance in B♭ Major. It is sometimes known by the alternative title “Intermezzo.” “Pavane” corresponds with the musical material presented in “Dance of the Courtiers,” the first scene of the ballet’s Second Act (No. 20), during which the audience is first introduced to the interior of the palace for the ceremonial ball.

The most obvious difference between the ballet version and the piano transcription lies in their structure. Granted, both versions are roughly the same duration (ballet = 50 measures; transcription = 56 measures) and they both fall within the framework of ternary form: “Dance of the Courtiers” begins with an introduction (mm. 1-6), followed by the A section (mm. 7-14), B section (mm. 15-38), return of A (mm. 39-46), and a brief coda (mm. 47-50); “Pavane” follows a similar overall form, containing an A section (mm. 1-16), B section (mm. 17-40), return of A

\(^{53}\) Kim, “Choreographic Character Piece,” 42.
(mm. 41-48), plus a coda (mm. 49-56). There are, however, notable differences in the smaller sections upon which the larger sections are built (See Figure 4).

Figure 4. Structural organization of Prokofiev’s “Dance of the Courtiers,” Op. 87, and “Pavane,” Op. 95

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cinderella, Op. 87: No. 20, &quot;Dance of the Courtiers&quot;</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mm. 1-6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Three Pieces from Cinderella, Op. 95: No. 1, &quot;Pavane&quot;</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mm. 1-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ballet scene and transcription both open with the same tempo indication (Andante grazioso, quarter=76). However, the ballet version contains a six-measure introduction, which is noticeably absent in the piano transcription; this discarded introductory material does not appear in any of the nineteen transcriptions from Cinderella. At m. 7 (R.133) of the ballet scene, the first theme is introduced in the flutes and clarinets (mm. 7-14). This main theme is reflected in the opening (mm. 1-8) of the piano transcription (See Examples 9 and 10). In the ballet version, the eight-measure main theme (mm. 7-14) leads directly into a second theme (mm. 15-31), followed by a bridge section (mm. 32-38). In the piano version, however, the main theme (mm. 1-8) is immediately repeated in variation (mm. 9-16). This variation is more energetic in the consistency of its sixteenth-notes and explores more pianistic figurations such as arpeggios, broken chords, and expanded polyphony. Thanks to the perpetuum mobile quality of its
sixteenth-notes, the variation of the main theme draws closer to one of Prokofiev’s primary compositional tendencies, or “five lines”\textsuperscript{54}: namely, the toccata style.


One of Prokofiev’s other idiosyncratic techniques, octave displacement, appears throughout “Pavane”, in both its ballet and piano versions. Prokofiev used octave displacement for the duration of his career to add energy, whimsy and variety to narrow melodic material. In

\textsuperscript{54} Prokofiev identified five principal features of his musical style: “first, ‘classical’ (the use of classical instrumental forms or imitation of the classical style); second, ‘innovatory’ (the search for new harmonic idioms, and later, for a medium through which ‘to express powerful emotions’); third, toccata (an interest in rapid, rhythmically precise motion); fourth, lyrical; and fifth, scherzo-humorous.” Quoted in Nestyev, *Prokofiev*, 323.
m. 7 of the main theme (piano version m. 7; ballet scene m. 13), the chromatically-ascending melody (F-F♯-G-G♯-A) leaps back and forth between octaves, rather than simply climbing a chromatic scale within a single register (See Example 11). Soon after, the piano version’s repetition of the main theme in variation (mm. 9-16) presents an opportunity for further exaggeration of octave displacement: at m. 9, for example, the melody begins on an F6, before being shifted down an octave on the second beat of the bar, and down another octave on the third beat. The variation section’s melody (m. 9) therefore begins an octave above its earlier placement (F5 in m. 1), and within just two beats, falls to an octave below its original iteration. Prokofiev varies the main theme via octave displacement again in m. 11 (beat 1 shifts up two octaves) and m. 14 (beat 3 shifts down one octave). The addition of the variation on the main theme, and the stylistic identifiers it afforded, help shape the piano transcription into a more idiomatic presentation of the music than the ballet version.

Example 11. Prokofiev, Three Pieces from Cinderella, Op. 95, “Pavane,” mm. 7-8

After the variation (mm. 9-16) of the main theme, the piano transcription enters a new section, which contains a secondary theme (mm. 17-33), and bridge material (mm. 34-40), both of which are somewhat developmental in nature. This section (mm. 17-40) corresponds directly with mm. 15-38 of the ballet scene. Following this section, both the piano and ballet versions enter an eight-measure reprise of the main theme (piano mm. 41-48; ballet m. 39-46) in the
subdominant key of E♭ Major. After four measures of recapitulation, both versions modulate back to the original key of B♭ Major in the fifth measure of their respective reprises (piano m. 45; ballet m. 43). Finally, both versions end with a coda. The ballet scene’s coda lasts four measures (mm. 47-50), ending softly in the starting key of B♭ Major. The piano transcription’s coda is eight measures, the first four of which correspond to the ballet’s coda, plus a four-measure variation. Once again, Prokofiev uses repetition as an opportunity to add more musical variety, individuality, and pianistic flair. Ultimately, the two variation sections (mm. 9-16 and mm. 53-56) not only present an opportunity for the composer to shape a more personalized rendering of his music, but they also help to exaggerate the desired character of the piece by adding further whimsy and charm.

Apart from its structure, Prokofiev makes notable changes to dynamics in “Pavane”. In the ballet version, the main theme opens mp; in the piano transcription it is only piano. While it is possible that Prokofiev simply changed his mind, the most likely explanation for this alteration of dynamics is that, unlike the ballet version, the piano transcription repeats the main theme in variation directly after its initial presentation, so the dynamics were chosen to heighten contrast between the first theme and its subsequent variation (piano transcription, mm. 1-16). As a result, the piano version’s main theme appears first in piano, then repeated (and varied) mf, while the ballet version’s main theme is presented only once in mp. A more significant difference in dynamics occurs at the end of the reprise of the main theme leading into the coda. In the ballet version, the reprise of the main theme ends in a powerful forte (m. 46), which is quickly contrasted by the mp entry of the coda which follows (m. 47). The piano transcription unfolds in the opposite manner, with the reprise of the main theme ending piano (m. 48) followed by an
accented mf entry of the coda (m. 49). The outcome of these differences in dynamics is unmistakable, with the two versions conveying a radically different character than the other.

In the bridge section (piano mm. 34-40; ballet mm. 32-38), we find another drastic and unusual alteration in dynamics: at m. 36 in the ballet, the melody in the oboe is marked forte, accompanied by clarinet and strings marked piano, while the corresponding melodic material in the piano transcription (m. 38) is simply marked piano. One wonders whether this stark difference in dynamics reflects the many unsolicited changes Cinderella underwent leading up to its premiere, against Prokofiev’s wishes. Yuri Fayer (1890-1971), who conducted the ballet’s premiere in 1945, considered Prokofiev’s orchestration too light for the Bolshoi Theatre, so he recruited the theatre’s percussionist, Boris Pogrebov, to make several significant changes.\textsuperscript{55} The conductor Gennady Rozhdestvensky (1931-2018), who was a pupil of Fayer, recalled:

In the run-up to the premiere, the task of interpreting Cinderella fell to the rehearsal pianist, which resulted in a mismatch between the orchestral music and the dance. On one occasion, the choreographer heard the rehearsal pianist playing a forte section of the score and decided, in light of its robustness, to assign it to six men. At the first orchestral rehearsal, however, they found out that ‘these six men are dancing to a solo flute that just happens to be playing forte.’ Sensing a fiasco in the offing, the dancers began protesting. At this point, Rozhdestvensky continues, Pogrebov was summoned to correct the orchestration. ‘In place of the unfortunate flute he inserted three trumpets in unison and added a large drum which beats to the count of ‘I’… Pogrebov reorchestrated Cinderella from A to Z.\textsuperscript{56}

In the end, the orchestration was so unrecognizable that Prokofiev famously stormed out after the First Act on three consecutive nights. One can only imagine his frustration upon hearing the reaction of Aram Khachaturian (1903-1978), who described the new orchestration as “too

\textsuperscript{55} Morrison, \textit{The People’s Artist}, 265.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 265.
heavy,” and Dmitri Shostakovich, who wrote, “I was nonetheless surprised that Prokofiev, who is such an outstanding orchestrator, had not completed the orchestration himself.”57 The changes were made during Prokofiev’s recovery from a recent collapse, leaving little opportunity for earnest protest until after the ballet had already premiered. In any case, the distortion of Prokofiev’s original orchestration serves as a reminder of the value of his piano transcriptions; since they were not subject to the same level of scrutiny as the ballets themselves, the transcriptions represent original, authentic, and untampered primary sources, on which the composer’s musical vision is expressed in unequivocal and certain terms. In the example described above (“Dance of the Courtiers,” mm. 36-37), the oboes sound strident and out of place when playing forte, whereas the piano transcription’s piano dynamic produces a more fitting conclusion to the phrase.

“Pavane” also contains significant changes to articulation, an area in which Prokofiev always observes the utmost care and precision. In Prokofiev’s Piano Sonatas: A Guide for the Listener and Performer, the pianist and pedagogue Boris Berman (b. 1948) writes that, in addition to tempo and dynamics, articulation is “crucial in creating full characterizations of individual themes and passages.”58 Of course, this sentiment applies to all of Prokofiev’s music, regardless of instrumentation. It is surprising, then, to note the major differences in articulation between the ballet’s “Dance of the Courtiers,” and the piano suite’s “Pavane.” In the main theme of the ballet scene (R.133, mm. 7-14), for example, Prokofiev carefully notates a series of slurs for the flute and clarinet, who play the melody in unison (See again Example 9). In the piano transcription, “Pavane,” most of this articulation is omitted (See again Example 10). A similar

57 Morrison, The People’s Artist, 265.
58 Berman, Prokofiev’s Piano Sonatas, 215.
alteration occurs in the second theme, as most of the slurs in the horn part (and subsequently in the upper winds) are omitted from the piano transcription (ballet mm. 15-18; piano mm. 17-20). It is important that one does not simply assume the ballet version’s precise articulation does not appear in the transcription because Prokofiev believed it to be implied based on a general public knowledge of the ballet music. On the contrary, the transcription is still richly adorned with articulation; see, for example, the staccatos in the left hand of the transcription’s opening measures (and similarly throughout), and the slurs in the right hand at m. 6 (beats 3 and 4) and m. 7 (beat 4). Clearly, Prokofiev considered these articulation markings crucial in executing his desired character of phrasing. It is also clear that by discarding the legato markings from the ballet score’s main theme, the transcription assumes its own distinct method of articulation.

As a pianist, Prokofiev was famous for his metallic, steel-like technique, often favouring a non-legato, detached articulation. The New York Times once described him as “a tonal steel trust.”\(^{59}\) This is especially true of his fast passages, which are “based on well-articulated, active fingers, often playing non legato… the resulting sonority is quite dry and transparent.”\(^{60}\) It is only natural that performers undertake a similar technical approach in an effort to convey Prokofiev’s music as the composer would play it himself. As a result, passages without slur-markings in Prokofiev’s music are often played in a detached manner. In the case of “Pavane,” because the right-hand melody of the opening measures does not contain any explicit articulation markings, a non-legato articulation may be duly implied. Furthermore, the articulation in “Dance of the Courtiers” is not intuitive, meaning that even if pianists wished to incorporate some form of legato in the main theme of “Pavane,” they are likely to miss the prescribed notation of the


\(^{60}\) Berman, Prokofiev’s Piano Sonatas, 22.
ballet score unless they consult it directly. Of the famous recordings of this piece, namely those by Vladimir Horowitz, Boris Berman, Lev Vinocour, and Frederic Chiu – each of whom uses some form of hybrid between legato and detached touch in their main theme – no two use the same articulation. This effectively dispels any notion that Prokofiev wanted “Pavane” to follow the ballet’s articulation but did not think its notation was necessary. Ultimately, the piece’s opening measures do not omit the ballet scene’s articulation; rather, by discarding the ballet’s slur markings, they prescribe a wholly unique articulation.

3.3 “Gavotte,” Op. 95 no. 2

“Gavotte,” Op. 95, corresponds with the ballet’s “Gavotte,” Act 1, No. 10. In the ballet, this scene depicts Cinderella dancing alone at home after her stepmother and stepsisters have departed for the ball. Cinderella effortlessly executes a tricky gavotte, the same dance which had embarrassed her stepsisters in an earlier scene, “The Dancing Lesson” (Act 1, No. 7). The musical themes of “Gavotte” appear in fragments in “The Dancing Lesson,” played as a crude duet between two violins, a musical representation of Cinderella’s two clumsy stepsisters. When the themes reappear in “Gavotte,” they are presented in their entirety and with a full orchestration.

Overall, the piano transcription of “Gavotte” is very similar to its orchestral counterpart. After their respective introductions, which are unique despite being motivically related, both the ballet scene and the transcription unfold in ternary form, with their A sections being nearly

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61 Interestingly, Frederic Chiu comes closest to the articulation given in the ballet version of “Dance of the Courtiers.” It is reasonable to assume he used Prokofiev’s ballet score as a reference in shaping his interpretation of “Pavane.” See Frederic Chiu, Prokofiev: Piano Works, Vol. 4, Harmonia Mundi 907150, 1994, compact disc.
identical. The most important change between the two versions lies in the B section, which Prokofiev extends from 18 measures in the ballet scene (mm. 38p-55) to 39 measures in the transcription (mm.39p-77), more than doubling its structural duration (See Figure 5).

Figure 5. Structural organization of Prokofiev’s “Gavotte,” Op. 87 no. 10, and “Gavotte,” Op. 95 no. 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cinderella, Op. 87: No. 10, &quot;Gavotte&quot;</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>mm. 1-6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theme 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>mm. 1-7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theme 1</td>
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The first 18 measures of the piano transcription’s B section correspond directly with the 18-measure B section of the ballet version of “Gavotte;” the remaining 21 measures of the piano
transcription’s B section (mm. 57-77) present new material. This new portion is somewhat dreamlike in character and makes frequent use of parallel octaves (See Example 12). Its lack of thematic assurance gives it an improvisational, searching quality, as if the music is trying to find its way back to the A section, the return of which is still intangible. Ultimately, it is not the material itself, but the very insertion of new musical material, which is of particular importance.

Following the 1917 Revolution, Russians began to seriously question the value of ballet in the newly established Soviet Union. Ballet in Russia had been, historically, the most elite of any art form, controlled by the tsars and accessible only to the highest echelon of Russian society. As Yuriy Slonimsky writes, “Of all stage arts inherited from the past, ballet bore the largest quantity of ‘birth-marks’ of the exploitative society… Ballet performances of the past were given only at the imperial theatres and they were held in the highest esteem by the tsar’s family, by high officials, by the apex of the exploitative society.”62 Furthermore, many Soviet critics argued that classical dance was unable to express complex ideas on its own, making it a purely formalist genre of art. Despite these criticisms, the newly-formed People’s Commissariat of Enlightenment (Narkompros) decided against abolishing ballet altogether, instead favouring an overhaul of the ballet system, such that it became comprehensible and accessible to the Soviet masses. This, they believed, would represent the ultimate victory for the Soviet cultural project.

As a result, ballet in the Soviet Union underwent significant changes in the 1920s and 1930s, the main objective being to mold it into an a more accessible art form. Like music and literature, Soviet ballet was expected to follow the doctrine of Soviet Realism, depicting life “as it ought to be – a happy, Socialist utopia, where workers, peasants, and different nationalities

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62 Iurii Slonimskii, Sovetskii balet: Materialy k istorii sovetskogo baletnogo teatra (Moscow, Leningrad: Iskusstvo, 1950), 44.
were united in brotherly comradeship, successfully constructing socialism and celebrating the fruits of their labour in a land of plenty.”

Virtuoso dance, the merits of which remained under continual scrutiny, could only be employed if it worked within the ballet’s narrative. This resulted in a number of Soviet ballets featuring stories with dance scenes (e.g., *Romeo and Juliet* and *Cinderella*), which offered choreographers and dancers the opportunity to fully display their range of skills without falling into the trap of formalism. In general, however, ballet choreography shifted drastically away from classical dance toward a more realistic “pantomime” depiction of the action. The 1930s saw the rise of drambalet, in which dance served virtually no other purpose than to depict the unfolding narrative. With antiformalist sentiments rising, any work of art that exploited its formal or technical elements at the expense of narrative or social value was at risk of condemnation. By early 1936, the campaign against formalism ensured that “drambalet became the only model for new ballets permitted in the Soviet age.”

For Prokofiev, this shift in artistic allowance had profound implications. Firstly, he had to tread carefully: many of his colleagues’ careers, and indeed their lives, had been ruined overnight due to apparent breaches of Soviet artistic values. Shostakovich lost most of his commissions and concert engagements, causing his earnings to drop from 12,000 rubles per month to 2,000-3,000, forcing him into debt. Adrian Piotrovsky, scenarist for both *Romeo and Juliet* and Shostakovich’s *The Limpid Stream*, was sent to the gulag, where he was eventually executed.

Prokofiev had no choice but to proceed with the utmost care and sensitivity. Unfortunately, the recent upheaval of the Soviet theatre system also meant that musical vision moved into a secondary role, bound to a work’s narrative. Despite Prokofiev’s self-proclaimed love for writing

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64 Ibid., 31.
65 Ibid., 48.
for the theatre, he was also uncompromising in his own artistic vision. Entering this new phase in Soviet ballet, he became compelled by the action on stage more than ever before; consequently, his music’s structural organization was determined not by his own artistic wishes, but by the choreography of the scene. Prokofiev once wrote, “I want nothing better, nothing more flexible or more complete than sonata form, which contains everything necessary to my structural purpose.” He now was deprived of the freedom to write divertissements or recapitulatory material unless they somehow aligned with the ballet’s narrative. Where composers once held control over the structure of their works, the structure now controlled them.

Considering these new developments and the restrictions they entailed, it is no surprise that Prokofiev, in his piano transcriptions of his ballet and opera works, capitalized on the opportunity to develop and expand on musical ideas by adding new material. In “Gavotte,” Op. 95, the piano transcription’s extended B section offers more opportunity for the thematic material to be fully developed. In the ballet scene, by contrast, the B section is at the mercy of the narrative on stage. It is clear, then, that the piano transcription of “Gavotte” contains a part of Prokofiev’s artistic voice that is absent from the ballet.

Other similar cases include the “Pavane” Op. 95, as discussed in Chapter 3.2, which contains several variations that enrich previous thematic material. The most notable instance of added material is “Folk Dance,” from Ten Pieces from Romeo and Juliet Op. 75, which contains a significant extension of new, non-ballet material (mm. 178-265). At 79 measures, this new section lengthens the piece by nearly 50%. It is noteworthy that Prokofiev modulates at a much quicker rate in the extended 79 measures than in the rest of the piece, and incorporates a richly

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woven *stretto* – the overlapping of independent melodic voices in close succession – which surpasses the previous treatment of melodic material. In each of “Pavane” and “Gavotte” from *Cinderella* Op. 95 and “Folk Dance” from Romeo and Juliet, the additions to the piano versions highlight the idiosyncrasies of Prokofiev’s style.

### 3.4 Ten Pieces from Cinderella, Op. 97

An array of short character pieces, the second *Cinderella* set, Op. 97, is the most pianistically simple of the three. Prokofiev likely designed the set for young or intermediate pianists, with the fantastic subject matter and evocative titles being quickly accessible to young people. Choah Kim appropriately compares this set to Robert Schumann’s *Carnaval* Op. 9, another solo piano collection which depicts individual characters in an extravagant setting. Each piece is short – most are under two minutes in length – and they are written in a simple style. In terms of pianistic facility, Op. 97 is the only transcription set Prokofiev wrote which departs so glaringly from Atovmian’s reductions. Prokofiev frequently avoids octaves, particularly in the right hand; see, for example, the right-hand parts in “Grasshoppers and Dragonflies” (Op. 97 no. 5; ballet No. 14; see Examples 13 and 14) and “Passepied” (Op. 97 no. 7; ballet No. 21), compared with Atovmian’s piano reductions. In general, Atovmian’s arrangements are far more difficult to perform than Prokofiev’s transcriptions. In “Bourrée” (Op. 97 no. 9), Prokofiev chose an altogether new key, rewriting the ballet’s A♭ Major episode (Act 2 No. 22) a semi-tone lower in the “easier” key of G Major. In the same piece, Prokofiev reduces the number of accidentals by assigning a new key signature for the modulatory middle section.

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(mm. 23-41), in contrast to the ballet score which maintains its original key signature (Ab Major) throughout. Many of the topics and evocations of Op. 97, such as fairies and grasshoppers, are also present in Prokofiev’s *Music for Children*, Op. 65, Op. 97, leaving little doubt that Prokofiev intended this set for a young audience.


### 3.5 *Six Pieces from Cinderella*, Op. 102

*Six Pieces from Cinderella* Op. 102 is the most richly developed and pianistically challenging of the three piano suites from *Cinderella*. A performance takes approximately twenty-one minutes, which is longer than the entirety of the *Ten Pieces from Cinderella* Op. 97. The overall atmosphere of each piece in Op. 102 is often darker in character than those of the
other two *Cinderella* piano suites; moreover, each individual piece contains its own variety and contrast of moods, characters, and musical ideas, often integrating material from several different ballet scenes into a single piece. The first two entries, (1) “Waltz: Cinderella and Prince,” and (2) “Cinderella’s Dance,” are the only pieces in the set which correspond directly with a single ballet scene (No. 30, “Grand Waltz,” and No. 32, “Cinderella’s Variation,” respectively). Nevertheless, they both contain a variety of thematic and emotional ideas. At over six minutes in duration, “Waltz: Cinderella and Prince” is particularly wide in scope: after a dreamlike introduction, the piece unfolds as a constantly-evolving waltz consisting of several distinct themes. The ballet source material depicts Cinderella’s first dance at ball, shortly after her mysterious and eye-turning entrance, and during which she has drawn the curiosity of her fellow dancers, most notably the prince. Covering the variety of emotions in the air during this scene, felt both by Cinderella and those around her (curiosity, passion, jealousy, love, nervous excitement), the piece navigates through seven key changes to depict the variety of feelings and characters present.

The third piece in Op. 102, “The Quarrel,” incorporates material from five different ballet scenes: No. 2: “Shawl Dance,” No. 4: “The Father,” No. 7: The Dancing Lesson,” No. 46: “The Morning After the Ball,” and No. 47: “The Prince’s Visit.” These scenes span the entire ballet, from the early portions of the First Act all the way to the late stages of the Third Act, and are not narratively cohesive; however, they are united in their shared chaotic energy, which Prokofiev uses to combine them seamlessly into a single piece. “The Quarrel” is highly virtuosic and arguably the most pianistically demanding of any of the nineteen *Cinderella* transcriptions: it features wide, rapid leaps in both hands, often simultaneously (especially mm. 108-135), fast scale-work and arpeggios in both hands, and a highly specific array of accents and syncopations
requiring careful coordination, especially in the secco e ben ritmico section at mm. 76-140. Sviatoslav Richter frequently performed “The Quarrel” as an encore piece, or in a set alongside his other preferred Cinderella transcriptions.69

3.6 “Amoroso,” Op. 102

In “Amoroso,” the sixth and final piece in Op. 102, Prokofiev reinterprets the ballet scene’s thematic material into something entirely different by employing significant harmonic and structural alterations. “Amoroso” (Op. 102) consists of three sections, each of which is drawn from a separate scene in the ballet. The opening theme (Example 15, mm. 1-9) is a highly expressive bel canto melody in A♭ Major. This melodic material recurs throughout the ballet, first as a representation of Cinderella’s longing for a life full of love, freedom, and happiness (i.e., one beyond the torments of her current home-life), and eventually as a representation of her love for the Prince. It appears prominently in the ballet’s First Act while Cinderella dreams about attending the ball (No. 9: “Cinderella Dreams of the Ball”), a fantasy which she assumes can never come true. After a harmonically startling E Major chord (m. 10), Prokofiev then transitions into C Major for the second theme (Example 15, mm. 13-17), which recalls the moment in the ballet’s Second Act when Cinderella enters the ball and is greeted by amazed, staring eyes (No. 29: “Cinderella’s Arrival at the Ball”).

The third section, beginning *Andante dolcissimo* at m. 34, is thematically similar to the first section, and corresponds directly with the ballet’s final number, also titled “Amoroso” (No. 50). This section builds in dynamic and emotional intensity from a ghostly *pianissimo* to its passionate culmination in the key of C Major at mm. 57-63. Although both versions employ the same melodic material and bass line, Prokofiev’s harmonic bravado pushes further in the piano
transcription, resulting in two thoroughly distinct interpretations. The ballet version is conservative in its harmonic palette, with a rate of harmonic change of roughly once per measure, while the piano transcription changes harmonies four times per measure (every quarter-note) (See Examples 16 and 17). Prokofiev also introduces a highly chromatic middle voice consisting of thirty-second notes which adds a darker hue to the melody. In the transcription, judicious use of the pedal is necessary to sustain the long melodic and bass notes while the hands shift to playing inner voice. As a result, the non-chord tones of the inner voice become blurred by the pedal, creating an Impressionist-like cloud of harmonies absent in the orchestral version. The ensuing character is less pure than its ballet counterpart, obfuscating the lovers’ triumph rather than celebrating it. It seems that with the piano version of “Amoroso,” Prokofiev finally escapes Perrault’s child-like vision of the fairy tale, instead capturing the darker hues of Alexander Afanasyev’s Russian version of Cinderella.

Stephen Fiess describes Prokofiev’s transcription of “Amoroso,” writing, “the rather Lisztian climax gives the impression, however, that Prokofiev is perhaps attempting to reproduce an orchestral grandeur and sonority beyond the limits of the piano.” Considering the challenges facing the original ballet version, it seems more likely that Prokofiev’s original wish, with his ballet, was to produce an orchestral grandeur and sonority beyond the limits of what was culturally permitted and logistically practical at the time, and turned to the piano – his preferred instrument – to realize this goal. Fiess’s suggestion that Prokofiev sought to imitate orchestral sonorities with the piano transcription is somewhat misunderstood; on the contrary, the sonorities of the piano transcription are so distinct as to virtually eclipse those of their ballet counterpart, and successfully capture the darker version of the fairy tale which Prokofiev originally hoped to explore. Prokofiev embraces the piano’s vast possibilities and allows his harmonic language to speak freely. It is surely no coincidence that, after the Kirov Theatre demanded a traditional

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ballet in the style of Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev produced two wholly unique versions of the same thematic material: the ballet version, a victim of considerable tampering, regulation, and managerial expectations, is undoubtedly masterful and beautiful in its own right; and the piano transcription, utilizing an inconspicuous medium of minimal cultural significance or attention, results in something far more harmonically daring and idiomatic.

While one cannot expect the Cinderella piano transcriptions to achieve the same attention and performing regularity as the ballet, itself a favourite on the modern ballet stage, it is nevertheless clear that these short solo pieces are imbued with genuine, artistic intention beyond the expectations of their medium. The “Pavane,” Op. 95, reflects both the scale and variety of musical changes that Prokofiev explored when reworking his ballet for the piano. Structure, dynamics, and articulation are each altered in significant ways, the result of which creates an artistic product unique from the ballet version. The rise of draambalet in the Soviet Union limited the structural and narrative frameworks under which composers operated; this provides a possible explanation for the structural changes Prokofiev made in both “Pavane” and “Gavotte,” Op. 95. Prokofiev explored harmonic changes in several of his Cinderella transcriptions, but never more drastically than in “Amoroso,” Op. 102. The last of the nineteen transcriptions from Cinderella, “Amoroso” is far more chromatic and mysterious than the ballet version and represents a more Prokofievian harmonic palette than the Tchaikovsky-like impression of the ballet. While these three transcriptions contain some of the most drastic changes from their ballet originals, nearly all of the nineteen Cinderella transcriptions exhibit notable distinctions of some degree. Considering all of the frustrations and limitations Prokofiev faced during the composition of Cinderella, and the unique properties of the Cinderella piano transcriptions, it is
clear that the transcriptions are important inclusions in the composer’s late oeuvre and are worthy of further musicological study.
CHAPTER 4

MUSICOLOGICAL FINDINGS

Sergei Prokofiev was a gifted and prolific writer who kept meticulous journals from a young age well into adulthood. His memoir, *Prokofiev by Prokofiev: A Composer’s Memoir*,\(^7\) illuminates the period of his youth with tremendous humour, honesty and clarity. His diaries, compiled and translated into English by Anthony Phillips,\(^7\) provide insight into how the composer navigated every aspect of his life, from his career as a musician to his personal and romantic relationships. However, when he relocated to the Soviet Union in 1936, Prokofiev ceased his habit of journal-keeping altogether, fearing that his private thoughts could put himself or those that he cared about in danger if they fell into the wrong hands.\(^3\) Unfortunately, this means that Prokofiev wrote very little about his compositional process over the years during which he wrote the majority of his piano transcriptions, namely *Romeo and Juliet* and *Cinderella*. However, by viewing what has already been established about Prokofiev’s compositional process reflected against the philosophies of other prominent piano transcribers, we may deduce some facets of Prokofiev’s use of the piano transcription genre.

4.1 Perspectives on the Art of Transcription

The practice of arranging existing works for the keyboard predates the modern piano, and was an important means of musical dissemination in the Baroque and Classical eras. Johann

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\(^7\) Prokofiev, *Diaries*.

\(^3\) McAllister and Guillaumier, *Rethinking Prokofiev*, xxxii, footnote 14.
Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) was one of the most prolific arrangers of his era, not only for the keyboard but for a wide array of instrumentations. As Sir Donald Tovey wrote, Bach was “the master who achieved the most astonishing translations from one medium to the other, transcribing Concerto movements into great choruses, and conversely turning arias into slow movements of Concertos.” Indeed, many of Bach’s greatest achievements, including the harpsichord concertos and the Great Eighteen Chorale Preludes, are transcriptions of his own earlier works or works by other composers. In Tovey’s words, “Bach wrote on the principle, not that music is written for instruments but that instruments (including the human voice) are made for music,” a philosophical approach which can be traced through generations of transcribers well into the modern era.

In the nineteenth century, composer-pianists used the piano as a tool to showcase their virtuosity while simultaneously connecting with, or reviving, the music of their predecessors. Perhaps the most famous of all composer-pianists, Franz Liszt (1811-1886) wrote approximately 700 piano transcriptions and claimed to have “basically invented” the art of transcription. Liszt’s piano adaptations range from faithful, note-for-note reproductions, typically referred to as arrangements or transcriptions (e.g., his piano arrangements of Beethoven’s symphonies), to works of great virtuosity and freedom with little fidelity to their source material, often referred to as paraphrases (e.g., the Overtüre zu Tannhäuser: Konzertparaphrase S. 442). For Liszt, transcriptions offered an accessible and exciting way to engage with music of the past by making it “comprehensible to the new spectator public… [and] making sense of tradition within the

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75 Quoted in ibid., 306.
77 For a more comprehensive discussion on the various types of piano arrangements and the associated terminology, see Carruthers, “Bach and the Piano,” 107-167.
changing aesthetic criteria of the early nineteenth century.” As such, his frequent integration of hyper-virtuosity can be excused as an attractive ploy to draw and engage audiences. Regardless of the liberties taken, Liszt’s admiration for music of the past and his desire to share it with new audiences were fundamental to his role as a transcriber.

The concert pianist Frederic Chiu (b. 1964) notes another important function of Liszt’s transcriptions, particularly those of Beethoven’s symphonies. Speaking about Liszt’s transcription of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 7, Chiu notes that, while there are many brilliant recordings of Beethoven’s Seventh Symphony made in the twentieth century, there are no recordings from the early nineteenth century, when Beethoven was still alive, because the technology simply did not exist. However, Chiu claims that Liszt’s transcription serves many of the same functions as a recording, offering a unique glimpse into the performance practice of Beethoven’s time. Liszt was one of the most important musical figures in all of Europe; he met Beethoven as a child, and was profoundly influenced by the older composer; Liszt knew most of the great performers in Europe, many of whom had performed Beethoven’s works while he was still alive, and even with Beethoven himself conducting. In short, Liszt understood the performing traditions of Beethoven’s symphonies better than any conductor of the twentieth century could ever hope to, and the extreme detail in his transcriptions provides an informed interpretation of how Beethoven’s symphony would have been performed in Beethoven’s presence.

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80 Ibid., 4:06-7:54.
Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924) was a prolific composer, editor, and transcriber, known primarily for his arrangements of music by J.S. Bach. He was an ardent defender of the transcription genre throughout his life, positing that all musical works – even entirely new creations – constitute some kind of transcription. In his *Sketch of a New Esthetic of Music*, he wrote, “every notation is, in itself, the transcription of an abstract idea. The instant the pen seizes it, the idea loses its original form. The very intention to write down the idea compels a choice of measure and key.” Transcriptions, performances, even the first notations of original works, can therefore all be interpreted as illustrations of pre-existing ideas. Busoni saw little distinction between composition and transcription, focusing instead on the universality of music as an experience. In Busoni’s view, therefore, there should be no reason to view transcription as an inferior form of artistic expression since all musical expression represents some form of transcription.

Like Busoni, Leopold Godowsky (1870-1938) garnered as much fame for his engagement with the works of other composers as he did for his original works. His transcriptions are notable for their creativity, virtuosity, and their distinctiveness from their original sources. As Jeremy Nicholas writes, “Godowsky’s transcriptions, by which he is chiefly remembered today, are more than the term implies: they are nothing less than new compositions. Godowsky takes an Olympian view, enhancing the genre by means of the pianistic devices he had developed, achieving on the keyboard an orchestral complexity and sonority.” Indeed, he earned a reputation for adding or enriching harmonies in unexpected ways, often giving works of the Baroque and Classical eras the harmonic guise of the early twentieth century. In a Godowsky

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transcription, the focus is typically drawn away from the original work; instead, it is the changes themselves which are so often the point of focus. Godowsky’s assertion that “there are few things so perfect they cannot be improved”\textsuperscript{83} is surely asserted in the significant originality with which his transcriptions are imbued.

Despite his substantial contribution to the piano transcription genre, Sergei Prokofiev is rarely mentioned among the great transcribers of the twentieth century. The most clear distinction between Prokofiev and Busoni or Godowsky, for example, is their source material; while the two latter composer-pianists drew primarily from works by other composers, Prokofiev’s transcriptions are derived almost exclusively from his own music. Nevertheless, the questions of artistic autonomy, ontology, and originality raised by Busoni and Godowsky (as well as Bach and Liszt, among others) can be appropriately tied to the works of Prokofiev, no matter their origin. For Liszt, piano transcriptions were crucial in reviving works of the past to ensure audiences could experience and appreciate them. Prokofiev’s \textit{Cinderella} transcriptions accomplish a similar goal: as the premieres of \textit{Romeo and Juliet} and \textit{Cinderella} were continually delayed, Prokofiev wrote piano transcriptions as an alternate means of dissemination. Although most of Prokofiev’s transcriptions are based on music he composed himself, they still function in a similar way to those by Liszt, Busoni, and other noted transcribers.

While Prokofiev earned a reputation for being proud and artistically uncompromising, his compositional process was in fact rather malleable and rarely fixed to one specific medium or genre. Any time an idea came to him, he would write it down in his notebook, usually without knowing what sort of work or instrument would come out of it. When working on something

new, he referred to these notebooks, drawing themes and ideas which seemed to fit his current project. In many cases, ideas written in his notebook took years before they appeared in a completed work. For his Second Piano Sonata, Op. 14, composed in 1912, Prokofiev used a scherzo he had written years earlier in Lyadov’s class at the St. Petersburg Conservatory as the sonata’s second movement.84 In the end, Prokofiev manages to achieve a sense of cohesion in the completed sonata despite the unrelated origins of its material. Likewise, his Fourth Piano Sonata is comprised of “outer movements reworked from an early, unpublished piano sonata (1908) framing a slow movement lifted from an unpublished symphony.”85 This type of flexibility permeates Prokofiev’s compositional process. In 1928, when it became clear that his opera The Flaming Angel would not be produced, he used the music as the basis for his Third Symphony. He vehemently protested against the tendency to regard this symphony as a program work, pointing out that “the principal themes of the opera were originally conceived as instrumental themes and that the symphony only returned them, as it were, to the domain of pure instrumental music.”86 We might consider the Third Symphony, then, as both an original composition and an arrangement of The Flaming Angel. This blurring of the lines between composition and arrangement reflects Busoni’s view that all composition constitutes a form of transcription. Prokofiev’s attitude towards his own musical ideas endured through his mature years. After he was commissioned to write a piano concerto for the left hand by the one-armed pianist Paul Wittgenstein (Piano Concerto No. 4, Op. 53), Prokofiev made the “unprecedented request that after four years he might re-use the material for other works.”87 In general, Prokofiev’s compositional process meant that he was rarely sure what medium or instrumentation his themes

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84 Nestyev, Prokofiev, 27 and 68.
86 Nestyev, Prokofiev, 226.
87 David Nice, Prokofiev: From Russia to the West, 1891-1935 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 278.
would eventually inhabit. Therefore, his use of the piano transcription as a new medium for his own works fits naturally into his general artistic outlook.

4.2 Prokofiev the Composer-Pianist

Unlike Liszt or Busoni, Prokofiev wrote surprisingly little about the art and practice of transcription, partially due to his deliberate restriction of his own writing during the Soviet Period. Perhaps most notably, he wrote that “he objected to experimenting with foreign compositional material,”\(^{88}\) which partially explains the small number of arrangements he made of works by other composers. This bestows a certain prestige to the few works that he did borrow from other composers, namely the Schubert Waltzes and Buxtehude’s Fugue in D minor. Ultimately, it seems that Prokofiev was less interested in the music of the past, and saw himself, first and foremost, as a composer. He embraced a reputation as a titan of the keyboard, if only as a useful means of sharing his own music as widely as possible. While living in the United States, he was often frustrated in his efforts to earn notoriety as a composer, and was sorely displeased with the caption of a photo of himself alongside Igor Stravinsky in *Musical America* which read, “Composer Stravinsky and Pianist Prokofiev.”\(^{89}\) For this reason, he preferred programming and performing his own compositions whenever possible. He famously won the concerto competition during his final year at the St. Petersburg Conservatory by performing his own First Concerto, and maintained a similar cavalier attitude for years thereafter (though less so after settling in the Soviet Union). Undoubtedly a superb performer, it seems that the genius of Prokofiev-the-pianist


\(^{89}\) Berman, *Prokofiev’s Piano Sonatas*, 36.
could only be fully appreciated when he was performing works by Prokofiev-the-composer. Likewise, his compositions were best understood when he was the pianist performing them. After performing his Third Piano Concerto in Britain in 1922, *The Times* wrote, “We must honestly confess we never understood Mr. Prokofiev’s music until he played it himself. As he plays it, the orchestra is like a vast resonator applied to the piano… The thing must look very weird on paper, and is certainly amazingly difficult to play, but it was all put before us with complete clarity and proportion.” Fellow pianists also remarked on Prokofiev’s unique ability to bring his works into focus; as Lina Prokofieva wrote: “Many pianists got interested in his music only after they heard the composer’s performance – such as Borovsky, Horowitz, Gieseking, Rubinstein and many others.” Prokofiev’s compositional vision was inextricably linked with his powers as a pianist, and it is therefore not surprising that he would refashion his stage works – which, as discussed previously, were routinely marred by third parties – for the piano. Moreover, because he typically composed his music at the keyboard, the piano was, in a manner of speaking, the original instrumentation of nearly all of his works; his pianism permeates his entire oeuvre, no matter the final instrumentation. In fact, the qualities of Prokofiev’s piano playing – energy, simplicity, drive, brilliancy of accents, and sheer physical power – are all manifest in his compositional style. As Christina Guillaumier writes: “it seems that for no other composer-pianist (except perhaps for Liszt and Bartók), was playing technique

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92 Guillaumier, “From Piano to Stage, 234.
so closely intertwined with compositional technique.” From this perspective, it seems that by transcribing his works for the piano, Prokofiev was returning them to their natural state of being.

### 4.3 Prokofiev’s Piano Transcriptions as Revised Editions

In the examination of Prokofiev’s piano transcriptions as authoritative versions, it is crucial to consider the composer’s longstanding relationship with revision. Prokofiev revised many of his works throughout his life, even assigning these revised versions with new opus numbers on several occasions, including the *Sinfonietta* (Op. 5 and Op. 48), the Fifth Piano Sonata (Op. 38 and Op. 135) and the Fourth Symphony (Op. 47 and Op. 112). Other works retain their original opus numbers despite heavy revision, such as the first two piano concertos (Op. 10 and Op. 16), both of which were revised years after their respective premieres. Prokofiev revised works for a variety of reasons, ranging from personal growth and preference to cultural pressure and censorship. During his struggle to see *Cinderella* performed, he was also attempting to complete a version of his opera *War and Peace* (Op. 91) which would be approved by the Soviet Committee on Art Affairs. Between 1942 and 1952, he proposed five separate versions of *War and Peace*, the final two of which were made after the opera had made its initial premiere in 1946. Only the final version of *War and Peace* is performed today. It is odd that many of the works for which he was forced to complete revisions, such as *Romeo and Juliet* and *War and Peace*, are heard today almost exclusively in their final, revised form. By contrast, works for which Prokofiev willingly sought out revisions for artistic reasons, such as the Fifth Piano

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Sonata, are often performed in their original form. Likewise, the ballet Cinderella has become one of the staples of the modern ballet repertory (and deservedly so), while the three sets of Cinderella piano transcriptions are rarely performed or mentioned in scholarship despite the fact that they contain many of the defining elements of revised editions.

As established previously, Prokofiev’s creation of Cinderella was riddled with challenges. The pedestal atop which ballet sat in the early Soviet Union meant that all composers were limited in what they could attempt, and the elevated role of narrative forced musical ingenuity into a secondary position. Moreover, the Kirov Theatre’s demands that Prokofiev produce a ballet in the style of Tchaikovsky resulted in limitations on style and harmony. The Kirov also endorsed changes to Prokofiev’s original orchestration which resulted in dramatic changes to his intended instrumentation and timbral colours. Considering these challenges and frustrations, the turn toward piano transcriptions was surely a relief for Prokofiev. Piano transcriptions did not undergo the same institutional scrutiny as large-scale theatre works such as ballets or operas, and, although their publication was dependent on the state publishing house, their status as “arrangements” kept them from attracting much attention. They opened a place of solace for a frustrated composer by allowing him to return his musical ideas to their original state. It is quite natural, then, to recognize the changes from the ballet to the piano transcriptions as more than mere shifts in instrumental possibilities or “pianism,” but as direct, calculated revisions from a composer whose “originals” were created under restrictive circumstances.

The media and genres through which Prokofiev expresses artistic ideas are rarely concrete, often making it difficult to distinguish between absolute and program music. His

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96 The Fifth Piano Sonata, Op. 38 (original) and Op. 135 (revised version), is performed regularly in both versions. Although the revised version is slightly more popular, the original version still receives considerable attention.
creative processes also blur the lines between composition and transcription, a concept endorsed and upheld by Ferruccio Busoni. Also like Busoni, as well as Liszt and Godowsky, Prokofiev makes it difficult to distinguish between the dual identities of composer and pianist. The piano, upon which Prokofiev was internationally recognized for his staggering virtuosity, is always connected with his compositional process at some level, whether it is in the early compositional sketches or as the final instrument at publication, and anything in between. These two identities, composer and pianist, cannot be properly isolated but must be understood as fully intertwined and mutually dependent. Prokofiev is no more or less a pianist than he is a composer: he is a true composer-pianist.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Sergei Prokofiev’s relocation to the Soviet Union in 1936 represents one of the defining moments of his life and career. What initially appeared to be an opportunity quickly materialized as an array of challenging artistic circumstances. To be sure, Prokofiev’s Soviet Period (1936-1953) was hugely successful in terms of musical output and artistic recognition, and bore some of the composer’s greatest achievements, including *Romeo and Juliet*, *Cinderella*, the so-called “War Sonatas” (Piano Sonatas 6, 7, and 8), *War and Peace*, and the Fifth Symphony. However, for an artist who had spent the preceding two decades in the West, working in the Soviet Union proved both limiting and frustrating.

The first step in this monograph was to establish and explore the artistic challenges Prokofiev faced upon entering the Soviet cultural arena, particularly while writing *Romeo and Juliet* and *Cinderella*. As discussed in Chapter 2, *Romeo and Juliet* arrived in the midst of the Soviet Union’s massive anti-formalism campaign of 1936, of which Dmitri Shostakovich was a major target. Prokofiev, the new composer on the scene, was placed under an ideological microscope and forced to tread carefully. The re-imagined happy ending he envisioned for Shakespeare’s play was rigorously debated and ultimately condemned due to its portrayal of rebellious youths winning over the establishment, and the ballet became associated with controversy. Even after Prokofiev rewrote the ballet with an entirely new ending, reinstating Shakespeare’s tragic conclusion, the Bolshoi Theatre saw too much risk in the work and cancelled its production.
While *Romeo and Juliet* was an example of blatant cultural interference on the part of the Soviet Committee on Arts Affairs, Prokofiev’s next ballet, *Cinderella*, faced more practical challenges. First and foremost, the Soviet Union’s entry into the Second World War caused major delays and cancellations nationwide, and *Cinderella* was no exception. Other factors hindered Prokofiev’s artistic vision for *Cinderella*, including the Kirov Theatre’s demands for a ballet in the style of Tchaikovsky, an unsolicited and second-rate re-orchestration by the theatre’s percussionist, and the shifting cultural standards for Soviet ballet in the early 1940s. It took several years after its completion before *Cinderella* saw the stage. There is surely no doubt that *Romeo and Juliet* and *Cinderella* were two exceptionally challenging and frustrating projects for Prokofiev, regardless of the success they both eventually achieved.

The second goal of this monograph was to establish a causal link between the problematic creations of these two major ballets and the composer’s ensuing turn to orchestral and piano suites. Prokofiev had previous experience arranging large-scale works into orchestral suites; these include the *Scythian Suite* Op. 20 (1914-15), a suite from *The Love for Three Oranges*, Op. 33bis (1919, rev. 1924), and a suite from *Lieutenant Kijé*, Op. 60 (1934) to name a few. However, no work had ever prompted more than a single orchestral suite, whereas *Romeo and Juliet* and *Cinderella* each prompted three. Similarly, Prokofiev had experimented with piano transcriptions prior to his Soviet period, including his *March and Scherzo from The Love for Three Oranges* Op. 33ter (1922), and *Six Pieces for Piano* Op. 52 (1931). Once again, however, Prokofiev’s Soviet period yielded an unprecedented proliferation of transcriptions, including ten pieces from *Romeo and Juliet* and nineteen from *Cinderella*. With the exception of the final four piano sonatas (Nos. 6, 7, 8, and 9), piano transcriptions make up the entirety of Prokofiev’s piano output in the Soviet period. His piano transcriptions, nearly all of which were
from the Soviet period, were clearly seen as valued inclusions in the composer’s oeuvre considering that in 1952 he dedicated an entire volume to them in a three-volume edition of his collected piano works.97

The orchestral and piano suites are, of course, based on music from the ballets from which they take their name. There are, however, important musical distinctions between the ballets and their orchestral-suite and piano versions, and one of the main objectives of Chapters 2 and 3 of this monograph was to assess the differences between the ballet and piano versions. Without failing to acknowledge the full scope of the four piano suites (one suite from Romeo and Juliet and three suites from Cinderella), I chose four specific transcriptions to analyse in greater detail. “Romeo and Juliet Before Parting,” from Ten Pieces from Romeo and Juliet Op. 75, was chosen because of how it relates to the ballet narrative; while the piece is certainly dark in its mood, especially in its final pages, it does not contain the musical themes which depict the “real” deaths of Romeo and Juliet in the ballet. Instead, Prokofiev finishes the piano suite with the music associated with Juliet’s staged death, thus retaining the possibility that the two star-crossed lovers can still survive Shakespeare’s tragic fate and be united in happiness, as the composer originally desired.

“Pavane,” from Three Pieces from Cinderella Op. 95, demonstrates the wide variety of changes Prokofiev employed in his practice of transcription: the piano version’s structure, dynamics, and articulation are all significantly different than their ballet counterpart. “Gavotte,” from Three Pieces from Cinderella Op. 95, is also structurally unique from its ballet version. Prokofiev was limited in his freedom to expand and develop thematic content due to changes in

Soviet ballet in the 1940s, precluding repetition or any material which did not advance the ballet’s narrative. As such, it is interesting to note Prokofiev’s expansion and development of the B section in “Gavotte,” as he more than doubles its structural duration. “Amoroso,” from *Six Pieces from Cinderella* Op. 102, showcases Prokofiev’s most daring and unique harmonic change from ballet to piano in any of his transcriptions. The transcription’s sixteenth-note figurations add a new level of chromaticism not seen in the original ballet version, shrouding the lovers’ happiness with a tinge of uncertainty. It is this change in harmonic colour, and indeed all of the changes Prokofiev made throughout the piano transcriptions, which make them idiomatic and distinctly Prokofievian in character. As discussed in Chapter 3, the unique properties of the piano transcriptions make them, in some respects, more artistically revealing than their ballet counterparts.

The final goal of this monograph, as discussed in Chapter 4, was to reflect on different perspectives on the art of transcription, and how these relate to Sergei Prokofiev. It is clear that Prokofiev’s compositional style and identity cannot be fully understood without acknowledging and appreciating his status as an exceptional pianist. Likewise, his pianistic identity is uniquely bound up with his compositional approach. Such an interplay between composer and pianist is reminiscent of both Liszt and Busoni. Furthermore, the ways in which Prokofiev blurs the lines between composition and transcription are reflective of Busoni’s views that the act of composition is simply another form of transcription, rather than a distinct creative act.

Prokofiev frequently revisited his earlier works, creating revised editions which are now seen as definitive versions, surpassing their original versions in both performing popularity and musicological attention. Considering the challenges he faced while composing *Romeo and Juliet* and *Cinderella*, and the subsequent proliferation of orchestral suites and piano transcriptions that
followed, it is only natural to view these suites as a category among Prokofiev’s revised editions. The musical differences separating the piano transcriptions from their ballet originals elevate them beyond mere arrangements, and may be viewed as a unique form of Urtext, or authoritative text.

For performers, this monograph offers a new and unexpected perspective on one of Prokofiev’s most richly explored genres for the piano: the transcription. Ironically, of course, the piano transcription is also a genre of minimal musicological study among Prokofiev scholars and pianists, making this monograph one of special merit. A popular approach when performing piano transcriptions has been, historically, to try to imitate the instrumentation of the original version. For example, performers of Busoni’s Chorale Preludes (after J.S. Bach) often make great efforts to create an organ-like sound on the piano through the use of careful pedaling, articulation, and tone colours. Transcriptions of orchestral works are no different; pianists interpreting Prokofiev’s piano transcriptions typically adopt this approach by trying to emulate orchestral textures and colours at the piano. However, this monograph calls into question the robustness and consequences of such an approach. As discussed in Chapter 4, Prokofiev wrote most of his works at the keyboard, so it is reasonable to consider the piano among the first instrumentations by which his pieces were shaped; in a sense, the piano is the original instrument for the majority of Prokofiev’s works. Furthermore, Prokofiev’s compositional style is so intertwined with his pianistic approach that it is virtually impossible to consider one without the other. It has also been noted that Prokofiev, though generally uncompromising in his artistic process, felt comfortable re-assigning his musical ideas to different instruments and media.

98 Chiu, “Liszt/Beethoven Symphony.”
Prokofiev constantly jotted ideas into his notebooks, often without any idea of what they may become. Even when he did have an idea in mind, it often changed; a theme which was originally conceived for flute might end up as a second theme in a piano sonata, and a work conceived for piano might find its place in an operatic vocal line. Ultimately, one should avoid treating the “final” instrumentation of Prokofiev’s works in concrete terms.

If Prokofiev’s instrumentation should be considered tentatively, it is in the music itself where his intentions spring forth more clearly. A self-proclaimed stubborn artist, Prokofiev was immensely frustrated with the restrictions he faced working in the Soviet Union and in particular on the ballets *Romeo and Juliet* and *Cinderella*. A historical analysis reveals that neither ballet could be fully realized as the composer desired. It is surely no coincidence why Prokofiev wrote so extensively in the piano transcription genre as extensions of these two ill-fated ballets. Piano transcriptions did not face the same cultural scrutiny as large-scale stage works, especially transcriptions of works which had already undergone close examination by the Soviet cultural authorities. In the letters between Prokofiev and his editor Levon Atovmian, many of the composer’s works are discussed with respect to revisions and omissions; piano transcriptions, however, are not mentioned under such terms.100 Because the piano transcriptions bear so many changes from their ballet counterparts, discussed in detail in Chapters 2 and 3 of this monograph, it is only natural to consider them as “revised editions,” a practice with which Prokofiev was well acquainted, and that their move to the piano may be seen as much as a return as a change. Ultimately, pianists should treat the piano transcriptions, first and foremost, as piano works, and

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their ballet originals should be referenced as resources to *enhance* their interpretations of the piano pieces, rather than instructions which dictate them.

There are several avenues along which this research can progress. A full-length analysis of all twenty-nine of the *Romeo and Juliet* and *Cinderella* piano transcriptions would provide a more comprehensive understanding of their value and Prokofiev’s transcribing techniques. Beyond this, I recommend a study of Prokofiev’s other transcriptions from the Soviet period, namely the *Gavotte from Hamlet*, Op. 77bis and *Three Pieces from War and Piece and Lermontov*, Op. 96, which would necessarily be accompanied by a historical analysis of the larger works at play, *Hamlet* Op. 77, *War and Peace* Op. 91, and *Lermontov* (without opus number). A comprehensive study of Prokofiev’s piano transcriptions in the vein of Jonathan Kregor’s *Liszt as Transcriber*\(^1\) would represent an invaluable resource for both pianists and musicologists alike. A study of this type would consider all of Prokofiev’s transcriptions and arrangements, including those written before his 1936 return to the Soviet Union, his transcriptions of works by other composers, and those arrangements of his own works – typically designed for rehearsal purposes – which did not receive opus numbers. Although a few studies on Prokofiev’s piano transcriptions already exist,\(^2\) none consider the transcriptions through the lens of the wider socio-artistic struggle described in this monograph. In this respect, this monograph has broken new ground. However, this monograph only represents one part of a bigger picture, one which covers the full scope of Prokofiev’s piano arrangements in the context

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put forth by this monograph, and one which would ultimately result in a more complete and nuanced understanding of one of the most important composers of the twentieth century.
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