A STYLE ANALYSIS OF THREE REPRESENTATIVE PIANO SONATAS
OF ALEXANDER SCRIABIN

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State College in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF MUSIC

By

Mary Anne Bolster, B. M.

Houston, Texas
January, 1955
The evolution of the style of Alexander Scriabin as a composer is more clearly seen and understood through an examination of his Ten Piano Sonatas than in any other individual work or combinations of works, instrumental or orchestral. The sonatas may be divided into three periods of style, so that a complete analysis of all ten sonatas is not necessary in tracing his style. The purpose of this study, therefore, has been twofold: one, to make a complete stylistic analysis of one sonata from each of the three groups into which the ten sonatas may be divided; and, two, to trace the development of the style of the composer.

The writer has attempted to accomplish this by the following methods: by examination of the influences on Scriabin's style, by studying what others have said about Scriabin and his style and what Scriabin himself said about his style and works, and by analyzing in detail three of his most representative piano sonatas according to their melodic movement, rhythmic development, harmonic style, and musical form.

Rather than state the most obvious facts to be gained from a general examination of the three selected sonatas, the material presented here is intended to discuss those
features of each sonata which are responsible for the creation of Scriabin's own style of composition.

It is hoped that this study may provide new interest in a wealth of piano literature which has previously remained comparatively unnoticed and that it may bring to the admirer of Alexander Scriabin additional information about his style as well as a new approach to certain of the piano sonatas.
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CHAPTER I

BIOGRAPHY

His Life

Alexander Nicolaevitch Scriabin, the musical prophet of the Russian symbolists, was born in Moscow on January 6, 1872. His mother, a talented pianist, died when Scriabin was two years old, so his father entered diplomatic service and left the boy to be raised by an aunt and grandmother. Spoiled and pampered by the two devoted women, Scriabin was given full freedom to learn and to develop himself intellectually.

In spite of his obvious musical talent, Scriabin decided to become a soldier and entered the Moscow Military School in 1882. Completing his course at this school, he decided to return to his musical career and for that purpose entered the Moscow Conservatory in 1888.

While a student at the Conservatory, Scriabin was very successful in his piano studies but was not so fortunate with his lessons in composition. He completely lacked interest in the rigid exercises in harmony textbooks and frequently changed teachers because of his struggle for harmonic independence. As a result of many sharp disagreements with his
instructors, Scriabin left the Conservatory without a diploma in composition but received a gold medal and a diploma in piano playing.¹

Beginning a pianistic career in Russia, Scriabin met with little success until a Russian publisher, Jurgenson, heard some of his compositions for piano and was interested enough to publish them.² The appearance of these early works attracted the attention of a famous publisher and critic, Belaiev, who offered to publish all of the future works of Scriabin. Belaiev also sent Scriabin on an extensive concert tour of Berlin, Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam, and other important European cities. Programs played on this tour consisted entirely of works by the young composer. Belaiev remained a close friend of Scriabin's even after the composer began having his works published by companies other than Belaiev's.³

Following the concert tour arranged by Belaiev, Scriabin spent an uneventful period of five years teaching piano at the Moscow Conservatory. During this time he met and married a gifted pianist, Vera Ivanonvna, with whom he gave a number of joint recitals of his works.⁴

¹Donald Brook, Six Great Russian Composers, p. 177.
⁴Ibid., p. 346.
A wealthy pupil became interested in the composer and set aside an annuity for him which enabled Scriabin and his wife to leave the Conservatory and go to Switzerland. During the years in Switzerland Scriabin produced a number of compositions and gained a new friend in the conductor, Serge Koussevitzky. Koussevitzky was also head of the Russian Music Publishing Society in Berlin and offered Scriabin a generous yearly retainer for works to be published by the Society.5

In 1904 Scriabin was separated from his wife and soon left Switzerland to pursue his interests in Paris and Brussels. It was during the Brussels period that the composer became deeply interested in the studies of a theosophy circle in that city. Strongly influenced by this group, Scriabin became obsessed with the idea of a great "Mystery" with himself as the chief exponent and high priest. This "Mystery" was to be performed by a cast of two thousand people and included in performance every means known to art, including dancing, music, poetry, colors, and scents. The "Mystery" was to be the final purification of the human race, a mystical union of the Spirit and World. A Universal Death and a New Life were to be experienced after a world cataclysm destroying physical life.6 All the best that was in his

5Brook, op. cit., p. 186.
6Alfred Swan, Scriabin, p. 97.
creative mind Scriabin devoted to the "Mystery," so that his compositions, particular the piano sonatas, numbers 4-10, written during this period, were expressions of these ideas.  

His major orchestral work written to express the idea of the "Mystery" was Prometheus, in which he undertook to demonstrate the affinity, scientific and spiritual, that he believed to exist between tone and color. Scriabin for this purpose introduced in the score a "color keyboard" which showed on a screen the colors ostensibly corresponding to the tones produced. Only one performance has ever been given with this instrument, and results of that concert, given in Carnegie Hall in 1914, were far from convincing anyone of the success of the instrument or the relations that Scriabin saw between colors and his music.

When Scriabin arrived at what he considered to be the final stage of his spiritual development from which there seemed to be but one step to the "Mystery," he composed the "Initial Action," a musical score and instructions for the performers, which was to be a type of rehearsal to prepare mankind for the final mysterious rite and worship before the purification. Composition of the final section, "Action," was interrupted by the composer's death on April 14, 1915.

7 Ibid., p. 123.  8 Ibid., p. 125.
9 Swan, Ibid., p. 123.
10 Ibid., p. 164.
Influences on His Style

By 1872, the year of Scriabin's birth, the Moscow Conservatory of Music had become the principal source of Russian musical development, and its traditions had been firmly established. When Scriabin entered the Conservatory in 1888, it was in complete disagreement with all impressionist tendencies and showed this dislike of impressionism in the characteristics of its music: a thickset method of composition, perfect structural design, elaborate treatment of the inner parts, and a severe logic in harmonies and modulations.\(^1\)

The first important figure in Moscow was Tschaikowsky, who evidenced marked hostility toward any signs of nationalism, and set his own course by the classics, Mozart particularly.\(^2\)

Later, Rimsky-Korsakov became the leader of the musical circles in Moscow. It was Rimsky-Korsakov who was the guide for Scriabin as well as other promising young students much as Glazunov, Medtner, and Rachmaninoff. It was under the guidance of Rimsky-Korsakov that this group of young composers was led along the path of staid, painstaking and original, but not outstanding composition.\(^3\)

Scriabin, therefore, was educated musically in an atmosphere filled with certain conservative ideas which had Germanic origins, and they left a strong impression on the

\(^1\)A. E. Hull, *Scriabin*, p. 124.  
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 126.  
\(^3\)Swan, *op. cit.*, p. 168.
composer. It was Scriabin’s ability to retain certain features of his early training while experimenting with his new harmonic devices that made his daring innovations more comprehensible to his contemporaries.

His earliest works were clearly patterned after those of Chopin, who had long been his idol. After the *First Symphony*, Op. 26, the influence of the Polish master is not seen because Scriabin had already begun experimenting with the styles of Schumann, Brahms, and Liszt. As his search for the "Mystery" proceeded, Scriabin evolved a new style that was completely original. This new style consisted primarily in the creation of new harmonies. In the creation of new harmonic structures Scriabin created a new kind of chord formation. This consisted of chords built on the interval of a fourth rather than by the conventional method of chord construction by thirds. He also introduced large masses of chords which used the upper tones of the overtone series. His use of large chord groups arose from an urge to excel all other composers in the number of notes used in a single chord.

In addition to his daring harmonic innovations, Scriabin also developed original ideas in melodic and rhythmic construction and created interesting departures from conventional musical forms.

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Scriabin's experimentation, which has achieved for him the position of one of the precursors of modern music and which has influenced a number of modern composers, is most apparent in his piano literature. The analysis of the three representative sonatas for piano will show all of these stylistic traits and the manner in which he employed them.
CHAPTER II

A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF THREE REPRESENTATIVE PIANO SONATAS

Introduction

The Ten Piano Sonatas of Alexander Scriabin were composed over a period of twenty years (1893-1913) and provide the best examples for examination of the evolution of his style as a composer. Through no other works of Scriabin, orchestral or instrumental, are we consistently able to trace the development of his style.

This study will include a stylistic analysis of three of the ten sonatas. Since the sonatas may be divided into three distinct stylistic periods, it was felt by the author that a complete analysis of a representative sonata from each of these three groups would avoid needless repetition and at the same time provide the materials necessary for a clear understanding of the styles employed in the ten sonatas.

The first sonata to be analyzed is No. 1, Op. 6, in F minor. This First Sonata was selected as the most completely representative of the first division into which the sonatas may be divided. This group contains the first three sonatas and represents the period of 1893-1903.

The second division of the sonatas comprises the period extending from 1903 to 1907 and contains only one sonata.
This work, Op. 30 in F sharp major, is considered separately because of its transitional character. It serves as a bridge from the three early Chopinesque sonatas to the last six works which are in a style completely original with Scriabin.

The third group, therefore, contains the last six sonatas, composed between 1907 and 1913. The Tenth Sonata, Op. 70, will be analyzed from this group. In this Sonata will be found the polished example of the final period of Scriabin's writing. It is the climax of all he had been building toward since he left his early imitative period.

The First Sonata

The First Piano Sonata of Alexander Scriabin, Op. 6 in F minor, was written in Moscow in 1892, shortly after the termination of his course at the Moscow Conservatory. As he could be expected in a first work, there is considerable outside influence, in this case the influence of Chopin, who had long been idolized by Scriabin.

The First Sonata is in four movements. The first movement is in Sonata Allegro form.¹ It may be expressed as illustrated in Figure 1.

¹Unless otherwise indicated, the various types of musical forms mentioned in this work indicate such forms as defined in the following books: Percy Goetschius, The Homophonic Forms of Musical Composition, The Larger Forms of Musical Composition.
EXPOSITION

<table>
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<tr>
<td>First subj. (1-8)</td>
<td>Second subj. (22-50)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Fm)</td>
<td>(A♭)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge (8-21)</td>
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RECAPITULATION

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<th>RECAPITULATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First subj. (103-123)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Fm)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 1.--Musical form of Scriabin Sonata, Op. 6, first movement.

The second movement is in three part song form (see Fig. 2):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part I (A)</th>
<th>Part II (B)</th>
<th>Part III (A')</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1-16)</td>
<td>(16-32)</td>
<td>(35-54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Cm)</td>
<td>(Gm-Cm)</td>
<td>(Cm)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 2.--Musical form of Scriabin Sonata, Op. 6, second movement.

The third movement is constructed in an irregular form (see Fig. 3):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First subj.</th>
<th>Sec. subj.</th>
<th>First subj. 1st mvt.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1-12)</td>
<td>(13-22)</td>
<td>(23-55) (36-54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Fm)</td>
<td>(Cm-Fm)</td>
<td>(Fm) (A♭-Fm)</td>
</tr>
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</table>
The first three sections of this third movement indicate that it would probably be classified as a song form. Notice, however, the unusual character of the fourth section of the movement. This section is composed of the second subject of the first movement. The reappearance of themes in movements following those in which they were introduced is a characteristic of Scriabin's style. This device will be found in each of the three early sonatas.

The fourth and final movement is, like the second movement, in three part song form (see Fig. 4):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part I (A)</th>
<th>Part II (B)</th>
<th>Part III (A')</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1-19)</td>
<td>(20-29)</td>
<td>(30-51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Fm)</td>
<td>(Cm)</td>
<td>(Fm)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A hint of Scriabin's future treatment of form is found in the relationship of the third and fourth movement. Figure 5 shows the composer's indication that the last two movements of this Sonata are to be played without pause between
movements. Figure 5a shows the last measure of the third movement which is followed by a double bar. Placed after the double bar, however, is a new meter signature. This new meter signature is the one to be used for the fourth movement. Figure 5b shows the first measure of the fourth movement.

Harmony

In Scriabin's music is found so individual a harmonic style that one cannot approximate an imitation "without seeming to be a plagiarist." His texture is harmonic, although his use of complicated figures in the inner parts gives it a feeling of polyphony where no true polyphony exists. He did not break with ideas of a central tonality or key until near the close of his career, although he often used interesting tonal patterns apart from diatonic or modal harmony.

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2 Marion Bauer, Twentieth Century Music, p. 171.
3 Ibid.
In the harmony of the First Sonata, Scriabin does not imitate the style of any other composer. Even in his early works, he hints at his future style with certain characteristic harmonic devices, but at the same time, he obviously does not discard conventional harmonic ideas and progressions.

The harmony of this sonata is characterized by an abundance of augmented sixth chords, especially in the first movement. In that movement there are thirty-six augmented sixth chords, of which twenty-seven are of the Italian type, five are German, and four are French. In the second movement there are seventeen French and one German augmented sixth chords. The third movement contains nineteen German and two French augmented sixth chords, and the last movement contains three German and one French type augmented sixth chords. This makes a total of seventy-nine augmented sixth chords in the complete sonata. While in most instances Scriabin treats these chords in a conventional manner, there are several instances of unusual character.

Characteristic of Scriabin treatment of augmented sixth chords is the delayed resolution of these chords. Often the composer will wait until the end of at least one or two phrases before resolving one of those chords. Figure 6 shows

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4 The use of the three types of augmented sixth chords, Italian, French, and German, is employed in this work as defined in The Contrapuntal Harmonic Technique of the 18th Century by Allen Irvine McHose, p. 274.
a section of the first movement which contains six augmented sixth chords. In this section, however, none of the chords is resolved properly immediately after its use. Instead, the composer resolves all six of the chords in the second measure of a new section of the movement. The repeated use of the augmented sixth chord ($D-F^b-A^b$) in the key of $A^b$ is ultimately resolved on the tonic chord ($A^b-C-E^b$).
Also characteristic are Scriabin's unconventional resolutions of the augmented sixth chord. An example of unconventional resolution is seen in Figure 7 where the augmented sixth chord should eventually resolve to an F-A-C chord in the key of Bb minor, but instead goes to a chord spelled Eb-G-Bb-D♭, which is the dominant chord of A♭ major.

The second movement contains still another unusual Scriabin treatment of the augmented sixth chord. The
composer begins the movement with an augmented sixth chord. This is the only instance found in any of the ten sonatas where an augmented sixth chord appears in the beginning of a movement. (See Fig. 8).

![Figure 8](image)

Fig. 8.--Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 6; second movement, meas. 1-2.

The augmented sixth is also used as a passing chord. In these instances the chord does nothing more than create a somewhat more interesting chord progression. Figure 9 shows such an example in which the augmented sixth chord is inserted in the passing of the dominant to the tonic chord in the key of F.

![Figure 9](image)

Fig. 9.--Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 6; first movement, meas. 152.
The augmented sixth chord is used, in this as well as other Scriabin sonatas, for modulation. The augmented sixth frequently serves as a pivot chord which helps establish a new key center. In Figure 10, a section of the first movement, three modulations are made through use of the augmented sixth chord. In measure 23 the augmented sixth chord spelled \( A-C^b-E^b \) resolves to the tonic chord in the key of \( F^b \); in measure 24, the augmented sixth chord spelled \( F-A^b^b-C^b \) resolves to the tonic chord in \( C^b \), and in measure 25, the augmented sixth chord spelled \( D-F^b-A^b \) resolves to the dominant chord in \( A^b \). This same pattern of modulation is repeated.

Fig. 10.--Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 6; first movement, meas. 22-25.
in measures 30-34 with a different accompaniment and a more elaborate form of the melody.

Frequently the harmony of this sonata emphasized one particular chord by repetition. This may not seem important, but the chords are always repeated in one of three ways. Figure 11a shows, in the first three chords of the measure, repetition by inversion of ascending chords. Figure 11b indicates a descending line of repetition of an E-C#-B chord, and Figure 11c shows a broken chord figure emphasizing the C-E<sup>b</sup>-G chord.

Fig. 11.---Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 6; a, first movement, meas. 1; b, first movement, meas. 116; and c, third movement, meas. 16.
Dissonances play an important part in the harmonic structure of all of the piano sonatas of Scriabin. It is interesting to note that in the First Sonata, the dissonant effects are of a passing nature and are achieved through the use of non-harmonic tones. Later dissonances will become an

Fig. 12.—Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 6: a, third movement, meas. 1; and b, first movement, meas. 30-34.
accepted part of his harmonic structure, and the composer will give them greater importance. Figure 12a shows the dissonant effect created by a series of passing tones in the bass line. Figure 12b illustrates the composer's use of lower neighboring tones and appoggiaturas as dissonant figures.

Before leaving the discussion of the harmony of the First Sonata, it would be well to note one other harmonic characteristic of Scriabin's style. In this sonata are found frequent enharmonic spellings of chords. While these enharmonic spellings do not seem of great importance in this work, in later sonatas they will be employed in order to facilitate the reading of large masses of chords which the composer uses. Figure 13 shows one of the early uses of enharmonic spelling of a chord by the composer. The augmented sixth chord in the measure shown should be spelled F#-A<sup>b</sup>-C-E<sup>b</sup>. The F# has been enharmonically spelled G<sup>b</sup>.

![Fig. 13.—Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 6; second movement, meas. 3.](image-url)
Tonality

In this Sonata Scriabin does not leave the confines of tonality in the sense of writing without any feeling of key center. He does, however, modulate so frequently in some instances that he merely hints of keys without remaining to establish them for any period of time. Figure 14 illustrates
a passage in which there are several different key centers represented. The key is established as $E^b$ in the first two measures. Modulation to what seems to be $C^b$ occurs in the third measure and then travels to $A^b$ in the fourth measure. The next modulation is to $F$ in the sixth measure and to $D^b$ in the seventh measure. These frequent modulations give a clouded key feeling even though the hint of a definite diatonic key center is present. This device is one of Scriabin's early experiments aimed at getting away from conventional tonality.

Concerning modulation between different sections of a movement Scriabin sought departures from conventional ideas. The first movement of this sonata, as has been mentioned, is in Sonata-Allegro form. The first subject is in the tonic key of the movement, $F$ minor. The second subject would be expected to appear either in $C$ minor or $A^b$ major. Instead, Scriabin begins the second subject, measure 22, in the key of $E^b$ major. Rather than remain too far from convention, however, he begins a series of modulations designed to bring him closer to the conventionally expected keys. He travels through the keys of $E^b$, $C^b$, $A^b$, $F$, $D^b$, and $A^b$ and then repeats the pattern, beginning this time in $A^b$ rather than in $E^b$. Unusual about the repetition of this pattern is the conclusion of the passage after the modulation to $D^b$. In measure 37 the $D^b$ section suddenly travels to the key of $A$ major.
and stops on a cadence in that key in measure 38. In measures 39 and 40 the composer established a bridge, beginning immediately in $D_b$, which leads to the second section of the second subject, cast this time in the conventionally expected key of $A_b$ major.

With the opening tonality of the development section of the first movement Scriabin employs one of his favorite devices, the use of enharmonic key spelling. This development section begins in the enharmonic key of $G#$ minor.

Cadences in the piano sonatas are given special attention by the composer. In this sonata suspended key feelings are found in many cadences. This type of cadence is an early use of what is to be developed into his characteristic treatment of cadences in later sonatas. In later works, in fact, the cadence points will often be difficult to find at all. Figure 15 illustrates the early use of the suspended key feeling type of cadence. This is the last section of the coda to the third movement.

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5"Suspended key feelings are incomplete indications of a definite tonality in a given portion of a composition."
Fig. 15.--Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 6; third movement, meas. 82-86.

Melody

Melodically this sonata is composed of many different elements which combine to create a work of unusual beauty. A great aid to the melodic variety and freedom is the composer's use of a wide range. The range of this sonata is from AAA to D'\''. The two fast movements, first and third, have the greatest variety of range; the second movement contains itself within two octaves and the fourth movement never rises above C'.

Being divided into four different movements, the work has ample opportunity for several types of melody. The principal melodies of the first movement are in phrases of about four measures while the shorter thematic melodic lines are in one or two measure phrases, often connected by a bridge-like ascending figure, either chromatic or arpeggiated.

\[6\] The letters which are used here to indicate the range of tones in the sonata are defined as such by definition 2 in the article "Pitch Names," Harvard Dictionary of Music, p. 586.
The second movement has a folk-song type of principal melody with a diatonically conceived middle section which does not assert itself as being very important melodically. The third movement is very angular in construction with leaping chords in the upper parts, relieved for only eighteen of the eighty-six measures by a diatonic and chromatically conceived line. The fourth movement is composed of a diatonic melody of two measure phrases and a hymn-like middle section.

As could be expected, the most important melodic intervals are major and minor thirds. The first theme of the fourth movement is diatonic except for one leap of a major seventh. This is unusual in that the major seventh is used as a melodic interval only one other time in the entire sonata. The other occurrence is in the first movement, measure eight, where the major seventh is used to create a passing dissonance.

The important original feature of Scriabin's melodic treatment of this sonata is seen in the use of one motive as the basis for themes in several movements. This device is introduced in the First Sonata and retained as an important melodic feature of all of the remaining sonatas. In the First Sonata the first theme of the first movement, the second theme of the second movement, and the first theme of the fourth movement contain the same motival idea. The
bracketed sections of Figure 16 show the use of that motive in the first, second, and fourth movements, respectively.

![Musical notation for Figure 16]

**Fig. 16.**--Scriabin, *Sonata*, Op. 6; a, first movement, meas. 1; b, second movement, meas. 17; c, fourth movement, meas. 2.

In every other phase of melodic construction, however, little indication is found of a style other than one patterned after the works of Chopin. Figure 17a shows the principal melody of the first movement. It has a lyrical, gentle swaying movement which is very similar to the first principal melody of the *Barcarolle*, Op. 60 by Frederic Chopin (see Fig. 17b).
Fig. 17.--Comparison of similarity of melodies of Scriabin and Chopin; a, Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 6, first movement, meas. 22-25; and b, Chopin, Barcarolle, Op. 60, meas. 6-9.

Even though the Scriabin melody is in 9/8 meter and the Barcarolle is in 12/8 meter, it is possible to recognize the same effect from each melody. Both composers employ the same basic rhythmic pattern (see Fig. 18).

Fig. 18.--Basic rhythmic pattern from Scriabin Sonata, Op. 6 (principal melody of first movement); and Chopin, Barcarolle, Op. 60 (principal melody).

While the rhythmic pattern seen in Fig. 18 is not an uncommon pattern, it is used specifically here to create a rocking, boat-like motion in the melodic line. The figure is repeated in consecutive measures of the Scriabin melody,
but Chopin repeated the figure in the first of two-measure phrase groups.

The treatment of a melody in reappearances after its first statement is also a point of similarity between the melodic styles of Chopin and Scriabin. Scriabin followed the Chopin manner of treating the return of the melody with a thicker melodic texture which makes the melodic line seem more impressive. Figure 19a shows a section of the principal melody of the first movement of the Scriabin sonata, and Figure 19b shows the reappearance of that same theme, this time with the melody note doubled an octave higher and inner parts added. Figure 19c shows a section of the Chopin Scherzo, Op. 31, and Figure 19d shows the return of that theme with the melody doubled at the octave and inner parts added.
Another type of melodic treatment in this sonata which is patterned after the style of Chopin is that of elaboration of the melodic line by the use of non-harmonic tones. Again the principal melody of the first movement serves as an illustration. Figure 20a shows the original presentation of the melody and Figure 20b shows the elaboration devised by Scriabin on that melody. Figure 20c shows a portion of the melody of a Chopin Nocturne, Op. 9, No. 2, and Figure 20d shows the elaboration of that melody.

Even the seemingly unusual middle section of the fourth movement may be attributed to the influence of the Polish master. Beginning with measure twenty of the fourth movement Scriabin has created a forty-nine measure section composed of a hymn-like setting of a very simple melody. At first
glance this seems to be an unusual feature of this work, but further study shows a similar passage in a work of Chopin.

Fig. 20.--Comparison of melodic styles of Chopin and Scriabin; a, Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 6; first movement, meas. 22-23; b, Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 6; meas. 30-31; Chopin, Nocturne, Op. 9, No. 2, meas. 1-2; d, Chopin, Nocturne, Op. 9, No. 2, meas. 13-14.

Figure 21a shows a portion of the above mentioned section of the Scriabin sonata. Figure 21b shows a portion of the Scherzo, Op. 39, of Chopin. The Chopin example is from the middle section of the Scherzo.
Fig. 21.--Comparison of melodies of Scriabin and Chopin; a, Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 6, fourth movement, meas. 20-27; b, Chopin, Scherzo, Op. 39, meas. 200-203.

Scriabin uses counter melodies in all four movements of this sonata. In later sonatas one can observe the development of the counter melody into an important characteristic melodic feature. Figure 22 shows a section of the second movement in which a counter melody is found in the upper part of the bass staff.

Fig. 22.--Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 6; second movement, meas. 37-40.
The tempo markings indicate a general scheme of fast-slow-fast-slow for the four movements. In order to achieve exact interpretation of his tempi, Scriabin indicated the tempo of each movement by metronome markings. The metronome indication of each movement, except the second, is preceded by Italian tempo marks such as the "Allegro con fuoco" found at the beginning of the first movement. Later these precise, detailed tempo markings will give way to vague, imaginative French phrases which serve as the principal interpretative guides in the later sonatas.

Rhythm

Certain rhythmic ideas used by Scriabin in this Sonata are definitely similar to rhythmic elements of works by Frederic Chopin. An example of this similarity of rhythmic figures is seen in Figure 23. Figure 23a shows the first measure of the fourth movement of the Scriabin sonata. Figure 23b shows the first measure of the third movement of the Chopin Sonata, Op. 35. Note that a rhythmic bass figure of
Fig. 23.--Comparison of similarity of rhythmic figures used by Scriabin and Chopin; a, Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 6, fourth movement, meas. 1; b, Chopin, Sonata, Op. 35, third movement, meas. 1.

Quarter notes in a 4/4 meter is used in both examples. This figure forms the basic rhythmic pattern found in the bass of both the Chopin and Scriabin movements.

Outstanding in the rhythmic content of the first movement is Scriabin's repeated use of the rhythmic figure which is seen in the bass line of the first theme (see Fig. 24).

Fig. 24.--Rhythmic pattern of bass line of Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 6, first movement, meas. 1.

This figure is seen in the bass line of the first and third measures and then is used in the soprano line in measures five, nine, and eleven. In the complete movement this figure
is used seventeen times in its complete form. The composer also makes frequent use of a section of the rhythmic pattern seen in Figure 24 (see Fig. 25).

![Fig. 25.--Section of rhythmic pattern of bass line of Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 6, first movement, meas. 1.]

This figure is used twelve times in the first movement. The manner in which Scriabin uses this figure is typical of his ability to create variety from one simple idea. There are three principal ways in which this figure is used in the first movement. Figure 25 illustrates the first of three ways the figure appears in the first movement. After the two upbeat notes, all the notes on the treble staff with the stems turned down constitute the principal melody in that section. Note

![Fig. 26.--Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 6; first movement, meas. 9.]
that the rhythmic pattern of these notes is the same as that of the first theme except for the third, fourth, and fifth notes in the measure. Compare these with the notes in the measure with the stems turned up. They make up the smaller rhythmic motive of three notes. By combining these elements the rhythm of the first bass theme is produced. The notes which are circled in the diagram indicate that first theme.

The second use of the three-note rhythmic figure is seen in Figure 27. Here the third note of the pattern is altered slightly in value, now being an eighth note rather than a quarter note (\(\text{\texttimes}\)).

![Musical notation]

Fig. 27.--Scriabin, *Sonata*, Op. 6; first movement, meas. 13.

Figure 28 shows the third type of treatment given this figure by Scriabin. Here it appears before and after passages containing the rhythm found in the bass line of the first theme.
This sonata achieves syncopated effects by tied notes, either in the measure or over the bar line. The eighth note tied over the bar line to a quarter note or another eighth note is the most frequently used kind of syncopation. In the first movement syncopated figures of this type occur twenty-four times. The most commonly used figures are illustrated in Figure 29.
The main type of syncopated figure found in the second movement is not achieved by use of tied notes, but in the manner illustrated in Figure 30.

Fig. 30.--Main type of syncopated rhythmic figure found in Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 6, second movement.

This figure is found in the first theme of the second movement and occurs twenty-five times in the fifty-four measure movement. This figure is cleverly employed as the rhythmic pattern for the counter melody placed under the moving second theme.

The rhythmic pattern shown in Figure 30 is also prominent in the fourth movement. It is used fifteen times in that movement and illustrates the composer's desire to bind his movements closely together by every possible means.

The third movement utilizes one particular rhythmic pattern. The pattern consists of an eighth note tied to a quarter note (12/8) and occurs forty-eight times in the third movement.

This completes the examination of the most representative of the early piano sonatas of Alexander Scriabin. Next to be considered is the Fourth Sonata, a transitional work
which will reveal a number of new stylistic features as well as the further development of several ideas found in the First Sonata.

The Fourth Sonata

Form

The Fourth Sonata, Op. 30, is in F sharp minor and belongs to the transitional period of Scriabin's stylistic development. This work was composed during the summer of 1903, a period of great creative activity with Scriabin. Besides this sonata, he composed about forty other pieces during that summer.

This sonata is in two movements which are closely related by both key and melodic content. The first movement is in F sharp major and is based on two melodic ideas. Figures 31a and 31b illustrate the first and second themes.
Although it is important to remember that Scriabin, like Beethoven, gives no clue more definite than the musical notes themselves concerning the real significance of his works, it is interesting to know that Scriabin described to a friend the bi-partite nature of the themes in this manner: "The striving upwards towards the Ideal Creative Power in the first motive, and the second motive of resultant Languor or Exhaustion after effort."7

By this means Scriabin depicts in this sonata a number of soul-states in evolution, undergoing, almost from bar to bar, various prismatic spiritual experiences which spring from the one generic idea.8

Immediately after the first statement of these two principal themes, both are repeated, the second motive being developed for nineteen measures. Further development of the first motive begins in measure thirty-five and extends

7A. E. Hull, Scriabin, p. 134. 8Ibid.
through measure fifty. A coda of seventeen measures concludes the movement. Although a double bar is placed at the end of the first movement, the word "attaca" shows that the composer intended to have the two movements played without pause between. This is the last sonata in which there will be any division of movement. Sonatas Nos. 5-10 will be cast in the form of one continuous movement. No diagram of the first movement is included because that movement does not fit the pattern of a standard sonata form.

The second movement is in Sonata-Allegro form as illustrated in Figure 32.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPOSITION</th>
<th>DEVELOPMENT</th>
<th>RECAPITULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First subj.</td>
<td>Sec. subj.</td>
<td>First subj.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1-12)</td>
<td>(21-47)</td>
<td>(48-81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F#</td>
<td>C#</td>
<td>F#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td>Bridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(13-20)</td>
<td>(13-20)</td>
<td>(13-20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 32.--Diagram of form of second movement of Scriabin Sonata, Op. 30.

An important feature in the development section of the second movement is the use of the first motive of the first movement in measures 66-69. The Coda, measures 144-169, is

composed entirely of material derived from the first motive of the first movement. Since its introduction in the First Sonata, the use of subjects and motives in movements other than the ones in which they were introduced has been used in each succeeding sonata and has become an established feature of Scriabin's style.

Harmony

Beginning with this Fourth Sonata, Scriabin created his harmonies around his new concepts. Within this sonata he places emphasis on the augmented sixth chord and chords with added sevenths, ninths and other added notes. Major and minor triads are rarely used in this work while the augmented triad is frequently placed in important positions. These are specific features of this work which create the composer's individual style.

Outstanding are the chords chosen to be important. It has already been mentioned that major and minor triads are not frequently found in this sonata. Specifically they still appear at the end of the composition and at elaborate cadences, but rarely are they seen in the early sections of the sonata. The sixty-six measures of the first movement have only five major triads and one minor triad. Beginning with measure thirty-five, there is a sixteen-measure section written on three staves. The highest of the three staves contains accompaniment-type chords which could possibly be considered
major chords with some chord members omitted if considered apart from the harmonic implications of the two lower staves. Another example of the rarity of the major and minor triad is seen in sections such as measures 144-155 of the second movement. In this particular section there are one hundred and forty chords, but of these chords only twenty-one are major or minor triads. The remainder of the chords are Scriabinistic forms of seventh and ninth chords, which will be discussed later.

Scriabin uses the augmented triad instead of the augmented sixth chord in the harmonic structure of this sonata. In the last eight measures of the second movement he achieves a very unusual effect with the augmented triad. Figure 33 shows the last eight measures of the second movement which form the last section of the Coda. In the first of these eight measures the composer emphasizes the use of the augmented triad spelled D-F#-A# by descending positions of the inversion of the chord. In the second measure, however, the same type of descending figure is used, but the chord has changed to the tonic chord, F#-A#-C#. Measures three and four return to the D-F#-A# augmented triad and establish that augmented harmony in a descending line only to be interrupted by an impressive four-measure conclusion composed of the tonic F#-A#-C# chord.
The harmony of this sonata is characterized by the composer's use of several types of seventh chords. Often these seventh chords are used as the sole harmonic content for a passage of several measures' length. Scriabin creates new seventh chords through the use of the augmented and diminished
fifths. Figure 34 illustrates a passage composed of seventh chords. In measure one of the example there is a major seventh spelled B-D#-F#-A#. The first chord in measure two becomes a seventh chord with a lowered seventh and a lowered fifth and is enharmonically spelled B-D#-E#-A rather than B-D#-F-A. The last chord in the second measure is a seventh chord with a lowered fifth and is spelled E#-G#-B-D#. The third measure begins with a seventh chord enharmonically spelled E#-G-A-(Bb)-D# and moves to a seventh chord with a lowered seventh on the third beat, again with the enharmonic sharp written in place of Bb. The last chord of that measure is a seventh chord with an augmented fifth between the root and the fifth. The second chord in the fourth measure is a seventh chord with an augmented fifth and a lowered seventh. This travels to an F#-A#-C# major triad and then immediately to a seventh chord with a raised fifth.

Fig. 34.—Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 30; first movement, meas. 1-5.
Unusual in this work which appears to be striving toward new harmonic concepts is the composer's use of scales. Considering the new types of chords and treatment of the chords, one would expect possibly some new scale concepts. That is not the case in this sonata. Most frequently used is the conventional major scale. There are seventeen instances in this sonata in which a portion of a definite major scale is indicated. To be sure, often the scales are presented in groups of only a few consecutive notes, but examination of the remainder of the measure containing the scale fragment furnishes the remaining scale tones. Figure 35 shows a portion of the F# major scale as contained in the second movement of this sonata. Note that the other notes in the measure provide the remainder of the tones in that scale except for the seventh tone, E#. In each of the other instances where a major scale is indicated either the fifth or seventh tone, two of the most important in determining tonality, are omitted. From this it may be concluded that the

Fig. 35.—Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 30; second movement, meas. 1.
use of major scales is not so conventional as would be assumed since Scriabin very carefully avoids positive establishment of tonality through use of these kinds of scales.

Also frequently used in this sonata are minor scales. There are eight instances in which a portion of a minor scale is indicated. Figure 36 illustrates one such appearance of a minor scale.

Fig. 36.---Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 30; first movement, meas. 18.

Beginning with this sonata, dissonances are no longer considered as passing harmonies. Previously they were created by non-harmonic tones and did not stand out as important features of the harmony in the works containing them. Now, the use of dissonance has increased and dissonances are considered an accepted and important part of the harmony of Scriabin. Dissonances in this work are most often created through the alteration and treatment of seventh chords.
Tonality

This is the last piano sonata in which Scriabin uses a key signature at the beginning of the work. Beginning with the Fifth Sonata the composer removes this last conventional feature which has bound him to definite tonality. First his unusual chord progressions, unusual cadences, and frequent modulations were noted. Then the choice of chords became more unusual and the use of major and minor triads became increasingly less frequent. New harmonic dissonances were created by the use of chords with added sevenths, ninths, and elevenths. Now the composer is preparing for the last step, the removal of key signature, which will free him completely in the matter of harmony.

Modulation in this sonata is frequent, as was the case in the three earlier sonatas. Different from the earlier sonatas, however, is the method of modulation. In the three early works, modulation was achieved principally through the use of the augmented sixth chord. Another type of modulation is found in this sonata, as is illustrated in Figure 37. The passage shown in this illustration begins in F# major and in the third measure becomes B major. Then the modulation progresses back to F# through G. This modulation from G to F# is done suddenly through the use of the altered II chord. Measures seven and eight lead into the return of the first section in F sharp major.
Fig. 37.—Scriabin, *Sonata*, Op. 30; second movement, meas. 1-8.
Cadence points within this sonata are more difficult to establish than they were in the earlier works. In Fig. 38, the seventh chord which is found in the first complete measure does not seem to resolve. It does not come from or lead to anything and gives the feeling of an incomplete cadence.

![Fig. 38. — Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 30; first movement, meas. 8-9.](image)

Also to be considered is the cadence at the conclusion of the first movement. In Figure 39 there are a series of seventh chords which reach their climax on an augmented seventh chord built on F#. This augmented seventh chord is followed by a G# seventh chord, after one measure of rest. The last two chords of the movement are eleventh chords built on C#, the dominant of the original key of the movement, F#.

Beginning with the pick-up to measure 59, an interesting progression is seen. The eighth note pick-up to measure 59 is the root of the seventh chord spelled B-D#-F#-A#, which
is found in measure 59. The eighth note to measure 60 is the root of the augmented sixth chord spelled D-F#-A#-B#, which is found in measure 60. The eighth note pick-up to measure 61 is the seventh of the seventh chord spelled D-F#-A#-C#, which is found in measure 61; and the enharmonically spelled pick-up to measure 62 (spelled Cx instead of D natural) is the root of the seventh chord, also spelled D (Cx)-F#-A#-C#, which is found in measure 62.

Fig. 39.—Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 30; first movement, meas. 59-66.

Melody

Melodically, this sonata presents evidence of the influence of Wagner as well as certain melodic features original
with Scriabin. In the three earlier sonatas the melodic content was principally based on the melodic style of Frederic Chopin. Scriabin turned in his Fourth Sonata from the style of Chopin to the style of Wagner. The first three measures of the Fourth Sonata are definitely patterned after the Prelude to Tristan and Isolde by Richard Wagner. The first performance of Tristan and Isolde was in 1865 and the Scriabin sonata was composed in 1903. This indicates a weakness in the Scriabin work because the composer chose to copy a melodic style which was already thirty-eight years old.

The most noticeable of Scriabin's original treatment of melody is his use of short melodic phrases. This is in direct contrast to the long, sweeping Chopinesque melodic phrases of the first three sonatas. Figure 39 shows the first theme of the Fourth Sonata. Although the editor, Harold Sheldon, has placed a long phrase bow over the first seven measures, closer examination will show a different interpretation. The notes themselves indicate short ascending phrases in the first four measures and a slightly longer descending phrase in the fifth and sixth measures (see phrase marks, Fig. 40).

The first theme of the first movement is the predominate melody of the whole sonata. This theme, in its complete form, is used eight times in the sonata. In altered and shortened form it is used ten times. The frequent use of
this theme in both movements draws them together and helps create the feeling of one movement. Note that in all features of style thus far discussed, (form, harmony, and tonality), the composer is working toward the idea of a one movement form. This sonata is the culmination of his experimentation along these lines.

Fig. 40.—Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 30; first movement, meas. 1-7.

The most important new melodic innovation is the introduction of the third staff, placed above the usual two stave arrangement. In each of the remaining sonatas the third staff will be employed by the composer. In this work the added staff contains an accompaniment figure which lies above the melody.

Another new melodic feature of this sonata is the use of the trill. Trills appear in this work for the first time in any of the piano sonatas of Scriabin. There are only two trills in the Fourth Sonata, but they are precursors,
nevertheless, of an important Scriabinistic feature. In this sonata the two trills occur in the first movement and both serve as bridge passages in the development of the second theme (see Fig. 41). The composer will gradually, in each succeeding sonata, make greater use of trills for both melodic and harmonic purposes.

![Fig. 41. --Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 30; first movement, meas. 18-22.](image)

Counter melodies appear frequently in this sonata, even in opposition to the most prominent themes. The bracketed section of Figure 42 illustrates a counter melody placed against the principal melody of the sonata.

![Fig. 42. --Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 30; first movement, meas. 1-4.](image)
Other examples of counter melodies are seen in Figure 43. Note the chromatic quality of all three of the illustrated counter melodies. The use of chromaticism in this type of melody is a trait of Scriabin's melodic style which will be encountered in the later sonatas also.

Before leaving the discussion of the melodic style found in the *Fourth Sonata*, it is necessary to mention Scriabin's ability to devise a variety of settings for a melody which seem to alter the character of the melody in each instance and create new interest with each repetition. Figures 44 and 45 illustrate two of the settings created by the composer for the complete form of the first theme of the first movement.

The composer's use of the principal melody in two distinctly different abbreviated forms is shown in Figures 46 and 47.
Fig. 44. — Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 30; first movement, meas. 35-37.

Fig. 45. — Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 30; second movement, meas. 148-149.

Fig. 46. — Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 30; second movement, meas. 66-68.
In this sonata Scriabin frequently employs unusual rhythmic patterns which have been only briefly used in previous sonatas. These unconventional patterns consist primarily of bracketed eighth note figures. The rhythmic figure occurs thirty times in the first movement, and the slightly altered form of that figure is found sixty-four times in the second movement. Frequently the composer combines these unconventional patterns with other unconventional rhythmic figures. Such combinations are illustrated in Figure 48.
Syncopation is a rhythmic device which is frequently employed in this sonata. Figure 49 illustrates one passage from the first movement in which one rhythmic figure is used for a twelve measure syncopated passage.

Fig. 49.--Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 30; first movement, meas. 51-62.
A slightly more complicated and varied syncopated passage is illustrated in Figure 50.

Fig. 50.—Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 30; second movement, meas. 2.

A representative sonata from each of the first two divisions of Scriabin sonatas has been examined. This leaves but one period, the last division, to be considered. The last of the Ten Piano Sonatas will complete the representative analysis.

The Tenth Sonata

Introduction

The last of Scriabin's piano sonatas, Opus 79, was written in Moscow in 1913. In contrast to the early and transitional sonatas, this is a different kind of work, a piano counterpart of the orchestral Prometheus.

Before discussing the various stylistic features of this work, the ideas of the composer concerning factors absolutely necessary for comprehension of the sonata must be considered.
Scriabin felt that the emotional color scheme was the most important factor to be studied by the scholar or performer. He expressed the idea behind the sonata in these words:

The dreamer lies on the hillside in that dim mysterious twilight which precedes sunrise on the mountaintops. The veil of mist gradually disappears. Things become more defined and vibrant. The first subject enters with stirring warmth until finally the Ego Theme, the second subject, comes to full birth. Ravishment, tenderness, joy, warmth, and color all spring from the sun, increase with the growth of the Ego. More and more rays, themselves purified by fire, itself a sun, dance the cosmic dance of the Coda—a veritable palpitating Paean of scintillating molecules. Finally, the dream becomes paler, and gradually passes away into the thin ether across which sound cannot travel, but only light. The dreamer awakes and finds himself on the cold hillside—still in the crepuscular light of the Prologue, the music which is again used as an Epilogue.  

In these unusual ideas concerning the composer's feelings for the sonata, are found the first of the major innovations of the later sonatas. In each of the last six sonatas, Scriabin worked out just such an emotional outline to accompany the music.

Form

This sonata begins with a Prologue the key center of which is A flat. The work contains two important motives which are illustrated in Figures 51 and 52.

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11 The Hindemith system of chord classification and method for establishing tonality is used as a basis for all references to harmony and tonality in the discussion of this sonata and is defined and explained in the following book: Hindemith, *Craft of Musical Composition*, Vol. I.
These motives interchange and lead into the main Sonata-Allegro section which has $D^b$ as a key center. This section begins in measure thirty-nine. This use of key center is unusual in that the section begins in a tonal area other than the principal one of the sonata.

The second subject enters with a key center around C and, as in the Ninth Sonata, forms the chief theme of the work. The second subject begins in measure 73. After the exposition is completed in a further twenty-seven measures,
still centered around a tonal center of C, the development section begins with the motive of the Prologue in a larger form. The climax of this section is reached in the part marked "Pussant Radieux," which consists of a three-stave arrangement of chords ending with a tonal center of Db.

Two transitory measures connect this section with the Recapitulation, where the first subject is again used around the original key center, Db. The Recapitulation begins in measure 223. The second subject is also used in the Recapitulation, this time a third lower.

The Recapitulation is concluded with one of those unusual frenzied dances for which Scriabin became noted in his later sonatas. The Prologue themes are used as an Epilogue, and the sonata closes with a cadence in F, reinforced with upper harmonic tones.

A diagram of the form of this sonata is not included because of the unusual nature of its internal structure.

Harmony

Harmonically this sonata will best be understood if analyzed according to the Hindemith system of chord classification and method for determining tonality.

This sonata uses a limited number of chord classifications but contains a variety of chord structures. First to be considered is the use of the Hindemith system of chord classification. There are, in the Hindemith system, six classifications of chords. (See Table 1).
### TABLE 1

**SIX CLASSIFICATIONS OF CHORDS**  
**DEvised BY PAUL HINDEMITH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. CHORDS WITHOUT TRITONE</th>
<th>B. CHORDS WITH TRITONE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Without seconds or sevenths</td>
<td>II. Without minor seconds or major sevenths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Containing seconds or sevenths or both</td>
<td>IV. Containing minor seconds or major sevenths or both—one or more tritones subordinate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Indeterminate</td>
<td>VI. Indeterminate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tritone predominating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of these six classifications of chords, Scriabin used chords which met the requirements of chords of the first, second, third, and fourth classifications. This choice of chords, of course, determines the harmonic fluctuation design of his music. Because the composer created this work around these four classifications of chords, there will be no greater tension than that of a fourth class chord. It is interesting to note that he does not often use a chord out of its normal order in classification. When a classification in the sequence (i.e., I, II, III, IV, or IV, III, II, I) is omitted, however, the omission is emphasized. In measures 52-72, the first and third classifications of chords are used, Class Two being omitted. The omission of a chord from Class Two is emphasized by the changing from first to third class chords six times in that passage.
Specifically this sonata frequently uses the augmented triad, and chords of the seventh, ninth, and eleventh. These chords are, with the exception of measures 152-156 and measures 213-220, spelled horizontally rather than vertically. This is a feature of the later sonatas which is in direct contrast to the consistent vertical chord spelling of the earlier works. A more specific example of this is seen in Figure 53. Here, also, is a characteristic use of the augmented triad. The $G^\flat-B^\flat-D$ augmented triad is spelled horizontally over the whole measure rather than in one vertical chord. The same horizontal idea is seen in the augmented chord found in the second measure of the same example.

![Figure 53](image_url)

Seventh chords are often used as the harmonic basis for a whole passage. In these passages there is usually a different seventh chord as the basis for each measure. These chords are also spelled horizontally rather than vertically. An example of such a passage is seen in Figure 54.
Fig. 54. -- Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 70; meas. 161-164

Treatment of cadences is even less conventional in this sonata than it was in the transitional Fourth Sonata. In fact, it is often difficult to locate a definite cadence point in certain sections of this work. Since the composer has left the confines of conventional tonality, as well as conventional chord progressions, the best guides to cadence points are the changes of tempo and the interpretative, often elaborate, French phrases. Figure 55 illustrates a cadence in what seems to be A♭. Note the lack of conclusive cadence material preceding the last chord.
The tonalities of this sonata were defined in the discussion of form. The author arrived at these conclusions as to tonality through the Hindemith method for determining tonality. This method, in brief, consists of the extraction of chord roots according to the "best" interval in each chord. According to Hindemith, the intervals, in descending order from the "best" choice are: perfect fifth, perfect fourth, major third, minor sixth, minor third, major sixth, major second, minor seventh, minor second, and major seventh. After the roots had been selected from the chord harmonies of this sonata, the results were checked to see if any successive groups of roots spelled a chord which could serve as a tonic tonality for a specified passage. If a chord
could not be drawn from a group of roots, then the tone most frequently repeated served as the determining factor in the tonality of each passage.

After the extraction of all roots and the roots of the roots, ten different and distinct tonalities were found in the sonata. They are, in order of appearance: $A^b$, $G^b$, $D^b$, $C$, $A$, $E^b$, $B^b$, $E$, $B$, and $F$.

Modulations are often achieved through the use of trills. Figure 56 illustrates a passage which begins around a key center of $G^b$ and modulates to a key center of $A$ through the use of trills, which also serve to emphasize a change of tonality.
The melodies of this sonata are predominately chromatic in character. Previously the counter melodies have been the only encounter with chromaticism, but now the principal melodies have become chromatic as well. Figure 57 illustrates this point with the first subject of the Sonata-Allegro section.
The melodies are in longer phrases where chromaticism is their main feature, but sections like the first theme of the Prologue retain the short, motive-like phrases seen in earlier sonatas. In melodic sections employing three staves, the melodies placed on the added staff confine themselves to short two and three note phrases (see Fig. 58).

![Fig. 58. --Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 70; meas. 117-118](image)

Counter melodies remain chromatic and appear frequently, providing tasteful contrast to the melodies which are placed above them. An example of the composer's use of counter melodies in this work is seen in Figure 59.
Frequent and unusual metrical combinations are characteristic of Scriabin's style in this sonata. In a section of seventeen measures, 99-115, the meter changes four times. Another interesting metrical treatment is seen in measure 123, where the lowest staff has a meter signature of 9/16; the middle staff has a signature of 3/8; and the upper staff has a signature of 9/16. A uniform signature, 3/8, is finally established in all three staves four measures later.

A diversity of rhythmic patterns are to be found outstanding in this sonata. Examples of the composer's ability to devise and combine unusual patterns without creating crude and unmusical passages are illustrated in Figures 60 and 61.
Fig. 60.—Example of unusual rhythmic pattern to be found in Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 70.

Fig. 61.—Example of rhythmic combinations found in Scriabin, Sonata, Op. 70.
CHAPTER III

CONCLUSIONS

From the analysis of three sonatas, each one representative of a certain period of style, it is possible to draw certain conclusions concerning the evolution of Scriabin's musical style.

First to be considered is his treatment of musical form. In the three early sonatas the composer remained close to conventional kinds of form such as Sonata-Allegro and Three Part Song form. In these early works there were only two deviations from standard musical forms. The first departure appeared in the third movement of the First Sonata. In this movement the composer used a theme from the first movement as a distinct section of the movement which had appeared to follow the form of an extended five-part song form. The second departure from conventional form was also present in the First Sonata, between the second and third movements. By placing the meter signature for the fourth movement immediately after the double bar which marked the end of the third movement, Scriabin indicated that the third and fourth movements were to be played without pause.

This desire on the part of the composer to have two movements played without pause was also found in the Fourth
Sonata. In this work the word "attacca" was placed at the end of the first movement and showed that there was to be no pause before beginning the second movement. This was the last sonata to contain any division of movement. Also new in the transitional **Fourth Sonata** was the form of the first movement. Two melodies were introduced in the first nine measures and served as the thematic material for the whole movement. Rather than follow Sonata-Allegro form and develop these melodies according to that form, the composer chose to present alternately the melodies without extensive development, merely creating a different type of setting for each reappearance of one of the melodies.

The **Tenth Sonata** is a combination of conventional and unconventional form and illustrates what the composer considered to be his best ideas regarding musical form. This work is cast in one continuous movement, as were all of the later sonatas beginning with the **Fifth Sonata**. It is basically in Sonata-Allegro form, but there is a thirty-eight measure section at the beginning which does not comply with the requirements for any of the conventional musical forms. The composer called this section a Prologue and used the themes found in these early measures as an Epilogue at the end of the Sonata.

Harmonically the early sonatas remained close to conventional chord progressions. The most unusual treatment was given the augmented sixth chord. The use of this chord
for purposes of modulation, and in manner of resolution was
given special attention. The repetition of a chord was
achieved by three methods which were to be associated with
chord repetition in each of the later sonatas. Dissonance
was treated through the use of non-harmonic tones and treated
as a passing feature of the harmony. Enharmonic spellings
of chords were frequent in the three early sonatas.

With the second, or transitional period of Scriabin's
writing came new harmonic freedom. This was particularly
evidenced in the chord choice. Fewer and fewer major and
minor triads were used and seventh, ninth, and augmented
chords became prominent in the harmony of this period. Sev-
enth chords were frequently the basis for long passages and
seemed to flow from one seventh chord to another without ob-
vious labor. Chord repetition was still achieved by methods
established in the early sonatas and the enharmonic spelling
of chords was frequent. Dissonances became less of a passing
type of harmony, and it was hinted that they might become a
definite, acceptable feature of his harmonic structure.

The last period of composition boasted complete harmonic
freedom. The harmonies became predominately horizontal
rather than vertical. Often one chord would be the basis
for a whole measure and be spelled, in part, by each musical
line in the measure. Seventh, ninth, and eleventh chords
were abundantly used by the composer as were augmented triads
and augmented sixth chords. Dissonance became an accepted part of the harmony and cadence points were often hard to locate.

Conventional, also, were the relations of tonalities in the early sonatas. The close adherence to normal key relations was probably due to the strict observance of conventional musical forms. The modulations were often numerous and in such cases of frequent modulations within one passage, the key feeling was clouded and not clearly defined. The composer carried his ideas of enharmonic spellings into tonality and often spelled a new tonality within a movement in its enharmonic form.

The second period of style revealed a less conventional approach toward tonality. The new harmonic concepts led the composer to modulate quite frequently and hint at tonalities rather than define them clearly as they occur. Suspended key feelings became prominent over definitely established rules of key relationships.

The last period was a culmination of all the features of the middle period. The tonalities became less and less well defined and conventional key relationships were considered archaic. Tonalities seemed to blend into each other as a result of smooth and frequent modulation.

Melodically the early sonatas were very clearly under the influence of Chopin. The long sweeping melodic lines
and varied and elaborate treatment of these melodies were definitely patterned after the works of the Polish pianist. Counter melodies appeared and were among the few indications of an original style. Hints of future melodic treatment were seen in the frequent use of one small motive-like idea throughout a complete work.

The transitional period showed immaturity on the part of the composer through his very definite use of melodic ideas introduced by Wagner about thirty-eight years previous to this period of Scriabin's composition. The use of a motive as a type of melody was similar to the motival devices of Wagner, and were established, during this period, as a characteristic trait of Scriabin's melodic style. The counter melodies became much more prominent than they had appeared in earlier works and occasionally rivaled the principal melodies for prominence in a phrase. The number of principal melodies was greatly diminished and the stress was placed on the interesting treatment of a few important themes.

The last stylistic period showed still further emphasis on the short melodic idea as a principal melody. The principal melodies, like the counter melodies, became increasingly more chromatic in character. Melodies in the works of this last period were occasionally overshadowed by complex inner parts and thick harmonies.
The rhythm of the early works was not unusually complex or complicated. It had a few unconventional patterns, but for the most part was assigned the role of accompaniment figure. The major function of the rhythmic patterns in all of the early works was to set off, in the best possible manner, the various kinds of melodies. Meter signatures remained static throughout complete movements and tempo indications were very specific.

The middle period released rhythm from some of its shackles and brought forth the composer's ability to weave unusual and interesting rhythmic patterns. This freedom of rhythm was developed further in the last period where it became an independent and important part of the compositions. Metric patterns were diverse and often mixed, and rhythmic patterns became very complex.
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