THE TRANSCENDENTAL ETUDES OF SERGEI LIAPUNOV

THESIS

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

For the Degree of

MASTER OF MUSIC

By

Ellan Louise Smith, B. M.
Denton, Texas
August, 1967
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS** ........................................ iv

Chapter

I. HISTORY OF THE CONCERT ETUDE .................................. 1

II. INFLUENCES ON LIAPUNOV’S KEYBOARD WRITING ............... 7

III. LIAPUNOV’S TWELVE TRANSCENDENTAL ETUDES .............. 14

**BIBLIOGRAPHY** .................................................. 41
### LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Berceuse, meas. 1-3</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Berceuse, meas. 9-11</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Nuit d'été, meas. 34-35</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Nuit d'été, meas. 13-20</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Nuit d'été, meas. 99</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Nuit d'été, meas. 95</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Ronde des fantômes, meas. 24-28</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Ronde des fantômes, meas. 122-124</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Ronde des fantômes, meas. 73-80</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Ronde des fantômes, meas. 220-223</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Harpes éoliennes, meas. 36</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Feux follets, meas. 1</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Ronde des Sylphes, meas. 1</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Ronde des Sylphes, meas. 16-17</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Ronde des Sylphes, meas. 20-21</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Ronde des Sylphes, meas. 129-131</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Chant épique, meas. 77-80</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Chant épique, meas. 121-123</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Térek, meas. 3</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Térek, meas. 5</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Térek, meas. 35-36</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Measurements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Lesghinka</td>
<td>19-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Lesghinka</td>
<td>61-63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Lesghinka</td>
<td>101-102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Lesghinka</td>
<td>105-106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Tempête</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Tempête</td>
<td>13-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Tempête</td>
<td>39-42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td><em>Elégie</em></td>
<td>Liszt, 1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td><em>Elégie</em></td>
<td>Liszt, 8-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td><em>Vision</em></td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td><em>Elégie</em></td>
<td>Liszt, 88-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td><em>Elégie</em></td>
<td>Liszt, 132-133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td><em>Elégie</em></td>
<td>Liszt, 161-162</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

HISTORY OF THE CONCERT ETUDE.

Until about 1825, etudes were mechanical exercises designed to perfect difficult technical passages. The exercises were usually based on one problem of technique, such as scales, arpeggios, octaves, etc. Collections of such etudes for piano were written by Clementi, Cramer, Czerny, and Moscheles.

Muzio Clementi (1752-1832), considered the originator of the piano etude, laid the foundation for later etude writers with his Gradus ad Parnassum of 1817. It contains one hundred studies with various technical problems. Johann Baptist Cramer (1771-1858) was a pupil of Clementi in London and is noted for his Eighty-four Studies. Carl Czerny (1791-1857), who studied with Beethoven and later taught Liszt, owes his fame to his collections of studies, which include The School of Velocity, op. 299, and The Art of Finger Dexterity, op. 740. Ignaz Moscheles (1791-1870) taught Mendelssohn and wrote excellent studies. He is also known in connection with the etudes he persuaded Mendelssohn,

---

Liszt, and Chopin to write for the Méthode des Méthodes, which was compiled by Moscheles and J. Fétis and published in 1842.

During the nineteenth century the etude became more than just a practical or educational piece for technical purposes. The etudes of Schumann, Chopin, and Liszt are valuable not only as technical studies, but also because of their musical expressiveness. The influence of Paganini is shown in Schumann's six Studies on Caprices of Paganini, op. 3, and Six Concert-Studies on Caprices by Paganini, op. 10. The Toccata, op. 7, is actually a brilliant study in sonata-allegro form. His most important studies are the Symphonic Etudes, op. 13, which are actually variations on a theme.

Chopin, with his twenty-seven etudes, was the creator of the concert etude "which is designed not only for study purposes but also for public performance and which combines technical difficulty with high artistic quality." Though Chopin usually dealt with only one technical problem in each etude, his etudes are of fine musical content. He "often created an entire study out of a single well-defined thematic unit which he steered through a whole circle of keys, never letting it deviate from the figuration he had designed for

---

one specific technical purpose."³ Chopin's etudes influenced those of later writers, particularly Liszt, through whom the etude reached the peak of its technical development in the nineteenth century. Liszt took Chopin's idea, developed its dramatic potential, and increased the sonorities to an extreme degree.

Liszt, one of the greatest pianists of the nineteenth century, wrote extremely difficult concert etudes. Unlike those of his predecessors, most of Liszt's etudes have titles and are programmatic.

His concert-studies are essentially concert-pieces. The fact that many of them have titles and are composed in the style of programme or descriptive music suggests that Liszt was more deeply interested in their artistic than in their educative value.⁴

In spite of the preceding statement, many musicians and scholars disagree on the musical value of Liszt's etudes. Some writers feel that they are brilliant, virtuoso-pieces designed only to keep an audience spellbound with their technical difficulties. Others feel that the etudes, though technically difficult, are essentially musical and somewhat orchestral in content. Despite this controversy, Liszt's etudes remain an important contribution to the literature of the piano.

⁴Ibid., p. 196.
Liszt wrote six *Paganini Etudes* of which *La Chasse* and *La Campanella* are the best known. Three *Concert Etudes* in A flat major, F minor, and D flat major are subtitled *Il Lamento*, *La Leggierezza*, and *Un Sospiro*. Two other pieces, *Waldesrauschen* and *Gnome-*. More are also concert etudes.

One of the landmarks of nineteenth-century piano literature is Liszt's set of *Twelve Transcendental Etudes*.

Liszt's *Twelve Transcendental Etudes*, as we know them today, are the result of ideas which had been in him since his childhood.

The earliest version of the Transcendental Studies dates back to Liszt's sixteenth year; it was called, as we have seen, *Etudes on 48 Exercises*—though in fact only twelve were ever written. Liszt, presumably following the example of Bach, intended to write two studies in each major and minor key, and the twelve completed studies are arranged in a definite key sequence—C major, A minor; F major, D minor; B flat major, G minor, etc. These twelve etudes were published at Marseilles in 1827 as his opus 1 and were entitled *Etudes en forme de douze exercices pour piano*. They were dedicated to Mlle Lydia Garella, with whom Liszt played duets.

---


7 Ibid., p. 16.
In 1830, these Etudes on Twelve Exercises were withdrawn, and six of them, rewritten and enlarged, were again issued as opus 1 in 1831. They were dedicated to Liszt's former teacher, Czerny.

At Vienna in 1839, the same etudes, still further revised and increased in number to the original twelve, appeared again, entitled Twelve Grand Etudes, and dedicated to Czerny. This edition, published by Haslinger, showed the etudes fantastically transformed and enlarged. During this time, Liszt was at the height of his career as a virtuoso-performer. And it is this 1839 edition which contains the etudes in their most difficult version.

The final edition, revised and with the difficulties somewhat simplified, appeared in 1852 with the title, Twelve Transcendental Etudes, and was dedicated to Czerny. This is the form in which the etudes are best known today. In the earlier editions no titles had been used. However, in the 1852 edition, only two etudes, the A minor and F minor, were untitled. The following titles were given to the rest of the etudes: Preludio, in C major; Paysage, in F major; Mazeppa, in D minor; Feux follets, in B flat major; Vision, in G minor; Eroica, in E flat major; Wilde Jagd, in C minor; Ricordanza, in A flat major; Harmonies du soir, in D flat major; and Chasse-neige, in B flat minor.
A comparison of the 1827, 1839, and 1852 versions makes an interesting study and shows how Liszt developed as a composer. All three versions are found in Franz Liszt's Complete Works, published in Leipzig by Breitkopf and Härtel.

At this point there should be some comment on the term, "transcendental," in connection with Liszt's etudes. Liszt evidently used this term because he composed music which was technically more difficult than any written before him. For that reason, he has been called the "creator of the transcendental style of piano playing." However, it should be noted that

Liszt did not invent his transcendental technique merely in order to dazzle his hearers and show that he was a better pianist than his rivals; he did it because he was thereby able to draw new and almost orchestral effects from the piano, which incomparably widened its range of expression—and all subsequent composers for the piano are grateful to him.

One such composer who was greatly influenced by Liszt was the Russian pianist, Sergei Liapunov, born in 1859. To what extent Liszt and others influenced Liapunov's keyboard writing will be discussed in the following chapter.

---


9Searle, op. cit., p. 16.
CHAPTER II

INFLUENCES ON LIAPUNOV'S KEYBOARD WRITING

Though a minor composer, Sergei Liapunov wrote very effectively for the piano. Of his seventy-one works having opus numbers, thirty-five are for piano solo. The piano is also involved in a number of song accompaniments, two piano concertos, and a rhapsody for piano and orchestra.

Trained as a concert pianist, Liapunov wrote some brilliant and difficult piano music. It "demands a high degree of digital skill, but is--with few exceptions--redeemed from empty virtuosity by the poetical lyricism which suffuses it and penetrates the hard surface of technical polish."¹ Liapunov, an eclectic, relied on ideas of composers who had preceded him; in general, his music shows the influence of Glinka and Liszt, as well as that of Balakirev. However, to fully understand Liapunov's music and his reasons for writing as he did, one should be familiar with the historical background of Russian music and, more specifically, the significance of Russian piano music.

Russia did not become important in the field of music until the time of Glinka (1804–1857), who is considered the

father of Russian music. Until his time, composers had written mostly for the church and in imitation of Italian composers. With Glinka, however, Russian nationalism began. The Russian nationalist composers endeavored to write music which was wholly Russian; thus they found inspiration in the folk songs of their native country. They also preferred to write orchestral and vocal music rather than chamber music and music for the piano.

This surprising neglect of the instrument [piano] at a time when its repertoire was being notably enriched in the rest of Europe is in part explained by the Russian predilection for the potential bright colours and strong rhythms of the orchestra. This is illustrated by their treatment of folk-song, a dominant influence on their music, which relied largely on the simple but effective device of presenting a constant theme against varied backgrounds, for since their harmonic idiom was comparatively restricted the variety offered by orchestral colour proved attractive to the detriment of the piano. An important subsidiary reason is to be found in the amateur and dilettante status of these pioneers, some of whom, Borodin and Rimsky-Korsakov for instance, were indifferent pianists.²

Consequently the music of this period which is reasonably well-known consists of orchestral music such as the symphonies of Tchaikovsky (1840-1893), Rimsky-Korsakov's Scheherezade (1883), and a few operas such as Glinka's Russian and Ludmilla (1842), Moussorgsky's Boris Godunov (1872), and Borodin's Prince Igor.

²David Lloyd-Jones, "Piano Music from Russia," The Listener, LXI (April 2, 1959), 611.
With the emphasis on orchestral music, the music written for piano was less significant. Much of the piano music consisted of "slight salon pieces, pot-pourris or studies, designed for popular consumption." For this reason, the piano works of composers such as Glinka, Cui, and Borodin are rarely programmed today. Piano works of Balakirev and Moussorgsky have fared somewhat better, particularly Moussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* and Balakirev's *Islamey*, one of the most difficult keyboard pieces ever written. It is probably significant that both composers were pianists.

Balakirev (1837-1910), disciple of Glinka, was the leader of the Russian nationalist group, the "Mighty Five" or "Mighty Handful," and was its most dominating member. The group included Borodin (1833-87), Cui (1835-1918), Moussorgsky (1839-81), and Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908). Balakirev, a fine pianist and the only trained musician of the group, taught and guided these young composers who gathered around him. He believed that one learned the technique of composition by studying great works rather than from text-book instruction in harmony and counterpoint. Devoted to his pupils and eager to advise, Balakirev often tried to impose his own ideas on his students' compositions, thus limiting their creative potential. He gradually became less influential with the "Mighty Five," and they began to go

---

Ibid.
their separate ways. After an almost complete withdrawal from public life, Balakirev began to gather a new generation of composers around him, among whom one of the most important was Liapunov.

Liapunov, who had been studying composition with Tchaikovsky at the Moscow Conservatory, went to St. Petersburg in 1884 and came under the influence of Balakirev's magnetic personality. Balakirev became both friend and teacher of Liapunov, and their friendship lasted continuously until Balakirev's death in 1910. The friendship meant as much to the teacher as to the pupil, as evidenced by the fact that Balakirev dedicated his B flat minor Piano Sonata to Liapunov.

Liapunov was strongly influenced by Balakirev, particularly with regard to idiom and technique. However, Liapunov's music is "more purely lyrical, less vehement, fundamentally contemplative. He was endowed with a keen sense of colour and poetry, but not with the burning energy (and attendant restlessness of imagination) that characterises Balakiref." Being a truly pianistic composer, Balakirev was influenced by Chopin, Schumann, and particularly Liszt. In like manner, Liapunov followed the ideas and techniques of these same composers.

\[\textsuperscript{1}\] M. D. Calvocoressi and Gerald Abraham, Masters of Russian Music (New York, 1936), p. 437.
Noted more for his importance as a teacher than for his musical compositions, Balakirev was the transmitter of the Russian idiom of his day. He followed many of the practices which Glinka had begun, such as the tendency to build chords around a harmonic pivot or to sustain pedal points in one part or another. Other characteristics of Russian harmony, including the use of the flattened fifth and flattened seventh, and the tendency to veer towards the relative minor, are found in Balakirev's music and in that of his pupil, Liapunov.

Indissolubly linked with these harmonic effects went Balakirev's well-known addiction to the major keys of D flat and D with their relative minors, which also had its effect on Lyapunov who evidently openly admitted the fact.5

Liapunov's Leszhinka shows his use of these keys. In ternary form, it begins in B minor, modulates to D flat major for the middle theme, returns to the original theme in B minor, and repeats the middle theme, but in the key of D major.

Liapunov's music also shows the influence of his own interest in the folk music of Russia. In 1893, as a member of the Imperial Geographic Society, he made an expedition to collect folk songs in the provinces of Vologda, Viatka,

and Kostroma. "The result was the publication of nearly 300 folksongs with pianoforte accompaniment in 1897, thirty of which were arranged by Liapunov."

Liapunov's piano compositions using folk songs include the Divertissements, op. 35, the piano suite Fetes de Noel, op. 41, and the Rhapsody on Ukrainian Themes for piano and orchestra, op. 28. One of his most important works for piano is the Variations on a Russian Theme, op. 49. "The theme itself, only four bars long and 5/4 time, is that of the Russian folk song "A Little Wine", presented in the stern key of D sharp minor, Lento assai."

The theme is followed by fourteen unnumbered variations and a fugue, which shows the influence of the fugue in Brahms' Variations on a Theme by Handel. Though influenced by works of other composers, Liapunov used Russian material frequently. His interest in the folk music of Russia is comparable to the interest in Hungarian folk music felt by Liszt.

That Liapunov admired and respected Liszt and his music is apparent in Liapunov's piano music. Liapunov's only piano sonata, op. 27, is similar in structure to Liszt's Sonata in B minor. Liapunov's work, in one extended movement, is divided into the following five sections:

---


7Davis, op. cit., p. 200.
Section 1 movement in sonata form--exposition and development
2 slow movement--ternary form
3 scherzo
4 movement in sonata form--recapitulation
5 coda (based on material from section 2).

Liapunov used Liszt's principles of cyclic construction and thematic metamorphosis in this sonata. He also used the one movement idea for his two piano concertos, the first of which is still performed by Russian pianists.

The influence of Liszt is perhaps most clearly shown in Liapunov's Twelve Transcendental Etudes, op. 11, which will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.
Chapter III

Liapunov's Twelve Transcendental Etudes

Liapunov's Twelve Transcendental Etudes, op. 11, are some of his best works for piano, although they are not widely performed in this country. These pieces are a set of twelve extremely difficult concert studies, frequently planned on a large scale and occasionally making effective use of Russian folk songs and liturgical melodies. There is an obvious debt to Liszt in the title of these etudes and in the style of keyboard writing in general. In spite of their somewhat derivative nature, Liapunov's etudes are a significant contribution to the literature of the piano.

Composed between 1897 and 1905, the etudes are dedicated "A la mémoire vénéré de Francois Liszt--Hommage de l'auteur..." They are entitled in the following manner:

Berceuse, F sharp major; Ronde des fantômes, D sharp minor; Carillon, B major; Térek, G sharp minor; Nuit d'été, E major; Tempête, C sharp minor; Idylle, A major; Chant épique, F sharp minor; Harpes éoliennes, D major; Lesghinka, B minor; Ronde des Sylphes, G major; and Élégie en mémoire de Francois Liszt, E minor.

Liapunov's etudes complete the circle of twenty-four studies in all the major and minor keys which was begun by Liszt. Whereas Liszt began in C major and proceeded by flat keys to B flat minor, Liapunov, beginning enharmonically where Liszt had stopped, continued by sharp keys, his first etude being in F sharp major, the second in its relative minor, and so on, until the last etude in E minor.

Each of Liapunov's etudes may be classified as capricious and delicate, brilliant and dramatic, or lyrical. Although the music of Liapunov was fundamentally lyrical and contemplative in nature, only three etudes, entitled Berceuse, Nuit d'été, and Idylle, can be placed in this group.

The charming Berceuse, the first and also shortest of the set, is in 2/4 meter and A-B-A form. The main technical problem is the maintainence of a legato right-hand melody, particularly in the recapitulation, where a chromatic figure of three sixteenth notes encompassing the interval of a tenth or larger characterizes the left-hand part. The slow-shifting harmony is characterized by pedal points.

The etude is based on two small fragments of melody. One melodic fragment, as shown in Figure 1, is used in the six-measure introduction, in section B, and in the coda.
The other fragment, as shown in Figure 2, is used in section A (measures 7-25) and in its restatement.

These two fragments are not developed as such, but are merely repeated throughout the etude.

_Nuit d'été_, in E major and 6/8 meter, is one of the most beautiful of the group and requires control in maintaining a legato melody with simultaneous figuration in the same hand. An example is found in Figure 3, showing one of the two themes on which the entire piece is based.
This theme is preceded by a long introduction which contains the second theme. An example of the use of the latter theme in the introduction is shown in Figure 4.

The two themes do not develop as such, but are repeated sequentially, often overlapping in such a way as to avoid definite cadences.
The influence of Liszt is revealed by comparing Nuit d'été with Liszt's Ricordanza. Both begin with a single melodic line and have the following sections: introduction, first theme, second theme, return to first theme, first theme, second theme, and coda. In Nuit d'été, the first theme is in E major, second theme in A flat, and the restatements of each are in E major. In Ricordanza, the first theme is in A flat, second theme in D flat, and the restatements of each are in A flat.

An additional example of Liszt's influence is seen in Liapunov's use of a fragment of melody in imitation. Liszt used the device in Chasse-neige. Liapunov uses a part of the first theme in this manner in measure 99, as shown in Figure 5.

![Figure 5](image)

**Fig. 5—Nuit d'été, meas. 99**
In *Nuit d'été* and several other etudes, Liapunov uses a technique which had been used extensively by Thalberg. The thumb of the left hand plays the melody while the other hand deals with trills, arpeggios, or other passage work. Figure 6 shows Liapunov's use of this technique.

![Musical notation](image_url)

**Fig. 6--Nuit d'été, meas. 95**

The *Idylle*, in A major and 6/8 meter, is less difficult than the rest and is less interesting melodically and harmonically. It requires smooth double-note legato technique. The melody contains many repetitions of the notes C sharp and F sharp, and the harmony remains stationary much of the time. In spite of these weaknesses, this etude performs a function similar to that of the *Berceuse* at the beginning, both serving as short, quiet pieces preceding the brilliant and more exciting etudes.
Three etudes may be considered capricious and delicate: Ronde des fantômes, Harpes éoliennes, and Ronde des Sylphes. Ronde des fantômes, in D sharp minor, is an exciting presto in 6/8 meter, characterized by large stretches in both hands and requiring a good rotation technique. It begins and ends with a single melodic line and is based on two themes. The first theme, the beginning of which is shown in Figure 7, is more harmonic than melodic and is built on the tonic and dominant triads.

![Fig. 7--Ronde des fantômes, meas. 24-28](image)

After the restatement of theme two, theme one recurs in measure 122, as shown in Figure 8. The harmony is the same, but the pattern involves greater extension of the hands.
The second theme, consisting of a treble melody over a pedal point on E, seems to dominate this etude. It is shown in its entirety in Figure 9.

Fig. 9--Ronde des fantômes, meas. 73-80
In measure 80 the second theme begins in the left hand. It is followed by the restatement of the first theme, which was shown in Figure 8. The entire second theme is then stated in a new key, but it does not reach its climax until measure 220, where it is played in octaves in the original key of D sharp minor. (See Figure 10.)

Fig. 10--Ronde des fantômes, meas. 220-223

Harps éoliennes, marked adagio non tanto, is in D major and 9/8 meter. It is characterized by a tremolo effect which is maintained throughout the piece. This effect had been used by Liszt in Chasse-neige and by Balakirev in his Fantasy on A Life for the Tsar.

The main theme of Liapunov's etude begins in measure 8 and uses the interval of an ascending diminished fifth. A portion of the melody is used in imitation here extensively. This device, as shown in Figure 11, is particularly effective in measure 36, where it begins a three-measure sequence.
Fig. 11—Harpes éoliennes, meas. 36

The G major Ronde des Sylphes, in 2/4 meter, is marked allegretto scherzando and resembles Liszt’s Feux follets. Both require legato in the double-note passages of the right hand. Feux follets begins with an ascending chromatic figure in the right hand, consisting of the repetition of a four-note pattern. This figure is shown in Figure 12.

Fig. 12—Feux follets, meas. 1
Ronde des Sylphes also begins with an ascending chromatic figure in the right hand, based on the repetition of a three-note pattern. The opening measure is shown in Figure 13.

Allegretto scherzando. M.M. \( \frac{3}{4} \).

![Allegretto scherzando. M.M. \( \frac{3}{4} \).](image)

Fig. 13—Ronde des Sylphes, meas. 1

Both this pattern and the one by Liszt, though not identical, have in common their ascent by a minor third, although in Liapunov's etude the hand position of the three-note pattern and the rhythm pattern of the measure do not coincide.

The etude is based on a theme consisting of two motives, the first of which contains a double-note passage in the right hand, as shown in Figure 14. Again there is the use of a three-note figure with a four-note rhythm pattern.
The second motive, in measure 20, is more melodic than the first, and begins with three descending notes outlining a minor third, followed by an accented lower neighboring tone. This motive is shown in Figure 15.

This figure, repeated in various keys throughout the etude, tends to become somewhat monotonous. However, the piece ends delightfully with a pattern in which the two hands
alternate and seem to chase each other off the keyboard. The last three measures are shown in Figure 16.

Fig. 16--Ronde des Sylphes, meas. 129-131

The rest of the etudes are brilliant concert pieces. In general, they are on a larger scale than the ones mentioned previously; they require big tone and powerful octave technique.

Carillon, in B major and common time, is prefaced by the following statement:

In the distance is heard the ringing of a bell, across the measured strokes of which come the sounds of a hymn. The ringing grows louder and louder and the church-chimes blend with the sounds of the principal bell. The solemn tones of the hymn alternate with the sounds of the bells, ending in a general majestic choral effect interspersed with the deep sounds of the great bell.

A long introduction contains segments of the two principal themes. The hymn theme is stated in the tonic key, beginning in measure 38, and after a transition to E flat major,
it is used canonically at the octave. The climax is reached with the statement of the hymn theme in octaves, accompanied by a bell-like, descending figure in octaves.

The mood changes abruptly when the hymn is heard in four-part chorale style in C major. A return to Tempo I at the coda, which is written so thickly that it requires four staves, brings the etude to an exciting close in B major.

The F sharp minor Chant épique, the longest and most difficult of the group, owes its orchestral effects to Liszt's Eróica. An allegro maestoso in alla breve time, Liapunov's work demands octave and arpeggio technique. It is based on two themes, one a melody from the Orthodox church, and the other a Russian folk song, "From out of the wood, the dark wood," which appears as number twenty-seven of Liapunov's Thirty Russian Folk Songs, op. 10.²

The church melody, six measures long, is treated with various rhythm patterns throughout the etude. The example in Figure 17 shows the theme in octaves above a broken chord pattern.

The folk melody appears first in measure 121 and illustrates one of the characteristics of Russian music, the use of modes. The melody, a portion of which is shown in Figure 18, is in the Mixolydian mode on E flat.
The coda, marked allegro vivo and later presto, also uses the Mixolydian mode, and brings the etude to a brilliant, orchestral-like conclusion.

Térek, in G sharp minor and marked allegro impetuoso, is a wild, virtuoso etude. The title is from the name of a character in a poem by Lermontov which precedes the music. The etude requires a relaxed wrist and good rotation technique. The opening measures are characterized by intervals of a tenth or more, as shown in Figures 19 and 20.

Fig. 19—Térek, meas. 3

Fig. 20—Térek, meas. 5
A contrasting melody in B flat major, using a lowered sixth scale degree, begins in the treble in measure 35. Figure 21 illustrates this theme, the left-hand pattern of which is a condensation of a similar pattern in measure 3, which was shown in Figure 19.

Fig. 21--Terek, meas. 35-36

The second theme is treated sequentially, and after a deceptive cadence to E major, the piece ends in the original key with a rush of descending octaves using alternate hands.

Lesghinka, in B minor, is an exciting etude inspired by the folk music of Russia. The title is from the name of a dance (lezginka) of the Mohammedan tribe, the Lezghins, on the Persian border of Russia. There is an example of the lezginka in Glinka's opera *Russlan and Ludmilla*.

Lesghinka, in 12/16 meter and A-B-A form, is subtitled "Style Balakirev" and was perhaps inspired by Balakirev's Oriental fantasy, *Islamey*, which is also in 12/16 meter.
Both use themes composed principally of whole steps and half steps. Each is characterized by the repetition of short figures, pedal points, and a driving rhythm. The first section of Liapunov's work is built on two themes, both based on scale-wise motives and pedal points. The first four measures of the first theme, which is eight measures long, are shown in Figure 22.

The second theme, two measures long, uses all the notes of the Dorian mode on E except the fourth degree, A. This theme, as shown in Figure 23, is repeated with various accompaniment figures and in harmonic sequence.
The lyrical and somewhat slower second section in D flat major contains one of Liapunov's most beautiful melodies, though it suggests Borodin's "Polovtzian Dances." The melody consists of two four-measure phrases. The first phrase is made up of the repetition of the two measures shown in Figure 24.

Fig. 23—Lesghinka, meas. 61-63

Fig. 24—Lesghinka, meas. 101-102
The second phrase of the melody is developed in the same manner from the two measures shown in Figure 25.

![Figure 25--Lesghinka, meas. 105-106](image)

In the recapitulation, only the first theme from section A is used. Of more importance is the melody from the lyrical section which is heard in D major and in B minor. A brilliant coda of loud octaves and full chords ending in major makes this one of the most exciting etudes of the whole set.

*Tempête*, in C sharp minor and 2/4 meter, is marked *allegro agitato molto* and is based on broken chords and octaves. The first theme, as shown in Figure 26, is a broken chord pattern of triplet sixteenth notes in the right hand above a pedal point.
A four-measure subordinate theme, beginning in measure 13, is combined with duplet sixteenth notes, as shown in Figure 27.

The excitement grows and breaks into a broad, appassionato melody beginning in measure 39, as shown in Figure 28.
This melody is later played by the left-hand thumb and reaches its climax with full chords and octaves while the right hand provides an arpeggio accompaniment. After a restatement of the three themes, the etude ends in a noisy, impetuous manner.

The last etude, Elégie en mémoire de François Liszt, is in E minor and 3/4 meter and pays final tribute to the hero of Liapunov. Conceived on a large scale, it is based on three themes. A six-measure introductory recitative, which we may call theme one, is marked All'ungarese, in modo funebre.
Figure 29 illustrates this theme stated in pompous octaves.

The second theme follows immediately and is a rhapsodic, two-measure phrase, employing the flattened supertonic of E minor, as shown in Figure 30.

The left-hand arpeggio figure in measure 8 is used considerably in the etude and was probably suggested by a similar figure in Liszt's Vision, the opening measures of which are shown in Figure 31.
The third theme, in D flat with a change of meter to 6/8, is marked \textit{l'istesso tempo, molto tranquillo}. Figure 32 shows the beginning of this beautiful barcarolle-like melody, which is sixteen measures long.
This melody is treated in a grand manner and leads to the return of the second theme at measure 131, as shown in Figure 33.

Fig. 33—Elégie en mémoire de François Liszt, meas. 132-133

This theme is repeated successively a minor third higher and reaches a climax with a brilliant octave cadenza leading to the return of the third theme in E major, as shown in Figure 34.

Fig. 34—Elégie en mémoire de François Liszt, meas. 161-162
A coda, combining themes one and two and ending in E major, brings this etude and the entire set to a magnificent conclusion.

Liapunov's Twelve Transcendental Etudes, although derivative in nature, have significant musical and technical value, and are sometimes strengthened by the inspiration of other composers' works. Neither highly creative nor original, Liapunov drew on forms and techniques supplied by the great pianist-composers of Western Europe, such as Schumann, Chopin, and Liszt. Not to be overlooked is the influence of his teacher and friend, Balakirev.

Liapunov's treatment of melody was governed by his interest in folk music and the peculiarities of modal scales. Folk songs, being complete in themselves, can be repeated, but cannot be developed by normal procedures. Like Liszt, Liapunov constructed his music sectionally by repeating melodies or motives either note-for-note in different keys, in sequence, or with changing styles of accompanying figures. The sequential repetition, characteristic of much of Liapunov's music, is satisfactory in short works, but is a weakness in his larger works, such as his piano sonata.

The Twelve Transcendental Etudes are technically valuable because the problems are similar to those in the etudes of Liapunov's predecessors. In some instances, the technical difficulties in Liapunov's music exceed those of earlier composers. Some of the difficulties suggest that he, like
Liszt, tried to transfer orchestral effects to the piano keyboard. This seems logical when one recalls that orchestral music was the most important medium of Liapunov's day.

In spite of certain weaknesses, Liapunov's Twelve Transcendental Etudes are a definite and valuable contribution to piano literature. The etudes are extremely pianistic, are worthy companions of Liszt's Twelve Transcendental Etudes, and deserve the attention of the inquisitive pianist who wishes to enlarge his repertoire.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


Articles


Lloyd-Jones, David, "Piano Music from Russia," The Listener, LXI (April 2, 1959), 611.


Encyclopedia Articles


Musical Compositions


Liapounov, S., Etudes d'Execution transcendante, (4 volumes), New York, C. F. Peters Corporation, no date.

Liapunov, Sergei, Selected Piano Works, (2 volumes), New York, C. F. Peters Corporation, no date.