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Scriabin's Lisztian-Stravinskian Sonata Forms

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Abstract Responding to Kenneth Smith's recent essay, I theorize that Lisztian two-dimensional sonata form and Stravinskian 'block' structure exhibit a tightly bound relationship in Alexander Scriabin's late sonatas. Such analysis stitches Scriabin both backwards in time towards Liszt, through the latter's disciple Alexander Siloti, and forwards in time towards Stravinsky and the fragmented aesthetic of much twentieth-century musical modernism. Thus Scriabin's late works, often thought to be hermetically sealed from traditions before and after him, are situated in direct contact with two practices. Though of little note in isolation, biographical connections to Liszt and Stravinsky are also compelling from a sonata-specific perspective. I examine not just *how* Scriabin's mature sonatas are Lisztian-Stravinskian, but *why*.

'Scriabin […] where does he come from?'

'For, frankly, is it possible to connect a musician like Scriabin with any tradition whatsoever? Where does he come from? And who are his forebears?' So exclaimed Igor Stravinsky, and the quizzical stance towards his fellow Russian has adhered like an impudent Post-it note to an unknowing classmate's back.[1] Now, 110 years after his untimely death, Scriabin, or 'arrogancy personified', is still readily perceived as a composer who is not quite part of any single tradition whatsoever, even perhaps as one who rejected all that came before for his personalized and narrow world view alone.[2] One could quite easily ask a question of similar tone and content to Stravinsky's exclamation regarding Scriabin's musical descendants, given how few they are in number and how under-told their stories are in mainstream music history.[3] Thus

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[1] Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music: In the Form of Six Lessons*, ed. by Arthur Knodel and Ingolf Dahl (Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 98.

[2] Anthony Pople, *Skryabin and Stravinsky 1908–1914: Studies in Theory and Analysis* (Garland, 1989), p. 1; Richard Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically: Historical and Hermeneutical Essays* (Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 311–13.

[3] See the outline of the only marginal figures who 'maintained a Scriabinistic stance well into the later twentieth century', in Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, 5 vols (Oxford

we confront a figure cordoned off from music history on both sides: an isolated wackadoodle whose inheritance and legacy have been hermetically sealed from the traditions before and after him. The enigmatic late works are those most adduced as evidence of Scriabin's impermeable status.

Perhaps one reason for this airtight position is the steadfast obsession in the literature on matters of harmony, by far the most explored (perhaps over-explored) parameter of the composer's music across the last century. Scriabin's pitch resources have proven idiosyncratic in their basic architecture and in their employment; few other composers' literatures are as awash with discussions of what should be considered structural harmony notes and what should not.[4] With this background in mind, I wish to heed the recent calls of Kenneth Smith and Vasilis Kallis to shift focus; in doing so, I draw Scriabin into firmer contact with both a musical tradition before *and* a musical tradition after him.[5]

To achieve this, scholarly lenses must pivot from harmony to form, at least at first. Specifically, sonata form will be considered, that most venerable of models by the turn of the twentieth century at the very time when Scriabin conceived his single-movement sonatas. My central thread, proceeding from Smith's rousing essay on these works, will be that Scriabin's mature sonatas exhibit two characteristics, which are connected in important ways.[6] Firstly, I will reinforce Smith's notion that Scriabin employs sophisticated notions of 'two-dimensional sonata form', as defined by Steven Vande Moortele and first pioneered by Franz Liszt.[7] Secondly, I will suggest that Scriabin employs, in tandem with this Lisztian inheritance, a distinctly Stravinskian approach: a 'stratification' (after Edward Cone's famous 1962 essay) of his structural components.[8] Smith's work has briefly drawn attention to Scriabin's Lisztian and Stravinskian sonata facets, though their interrelationship as well as the reason(s) behind their uptake and treatment remain far from fully explored.[9] In a sense, this article is itself two-dimensional: an original presentation of research and an extension of and counterpoint to several of Smith's positions. I intend to examine not just *how* Scriabin's mature sonatas are Lisztian-Stravinskian, but *why*.

University Press, 2005), IV, *Music in the Early Twentieth Century*, pp. 228–29. Taruskin neglects to mention Nikolai Roslavets and his system of 'synthetic chords', which borrow much of their Mystic architecture from Scriabin.

[4] See Pople, *Skryabin and Stravinsky*, pp. 43–70, to discussions of chromaticism in Ross Edwards, 'Setting Mystical Forces in Motion: The Dialectics of Scale-Type Integration in Three Late Works', in *Demystifying Scriabin*, ed. by Kenneth M. Smith and Vasilis Kallis (Boydell and Brewer, 2022), pp. 196–222 (p. 220).

[5] Kenneth M. Smith and Vasilis Kallis, 'Introduction: Demystifying Scriabin', in *Demystifying Scriabin*, ed. by Smith and Kallis, pp. 1–10 (pp. 6–7).

[6] Kenneth M. Smith, 'Scriabin's Multi-Dimensional Accelerative Sonata Forms', in *Demystifying Scriabin*, ed. by Smith and Kallis, pp. 178–95.

[7] Steven Vande Moortele, *Two-Dimensional Sonata Form: Form and Cycle in Single-Movement Instrumental Works by Liszt, Strauss, Schoenberg and Zemlinsky* (Leuven University Press, 2009).

[8] Edward T. Cone, 'Stravinsky: The Progress of a Method', *Perspectives of New Music*, 1.1 (1962), pp. 18–26, doi:10.2307/832176.

[9] Smith, 'Scriabin's Multi-Dimensional Accelerative Sonata Forms', p. 190.

By focusing on form, we may draw a connection from Scriabin both backwards in time to the earlier model of Liszt's B-minor Sonata and forwards to Stravinsky's oeuvre more generally (and into the broader aesthetic of montage and fragmentation that pervades twentieth-century music), suturing Scriabin to composers in traditions that both precede and succeed him. Regarding both connections, the findings below are far from solely analytical. Rather, in stitching Scriabin back into mainstream musical history through form, there is evidence to suggest that his connections to Liszt and Stravinsky were notable and concrete, and thus are capable of nurturing contemporary analytical scholarship. Scriabin was closely associated in various capacities with the Liszt disciple Alexander Siloti during his late period. Stravinsky, despite barbed comments in later life, was a Scriabin enthusiast as a young composer who expressed awe at the structure of the Seventh Sonata and heard, with a cheerful reception, the three final sonatas in draft form. Both of these historical threads serve as a prompt and a base for the close readings nested within two subsequent analytical case studies. Thus I aim to dispel the age-old notion of Scriabin's late sonatas as stylistically anomalous, instead returning them to their contexts by forging both biographical and analytical connections to Stravinsky and Liszt.

Scriabin's Sonatas

For Scriabin, sonata form provided the framework for a pursuit of design and redesign lasting more than three decades. The first three sonatas (op. 6, 1892; op. 19, 1892–97; op. 23, 1897–98) are cast in a commonplace harmonic language for the late-nineteenth century and belong to Scriabin's early, Chopin-esque period. Though pre-emptive of many features germane to later works — the *presto* tempos of their final movements notwithstanding — the three early sonatas break little ground in terms of structural innovation.[10] The same can be said of Scriabin's fourth foray into the genre (op. 30, 1903), despite its increasingly Wagnerian harmonic bent.

Twenty-two opus numbers later (an op. 50 was not set due to numerical superstition), the inertia of Scriabin's sonata style was broken with the watershed Fifth Sonata (op. 53, 1908), a work quite clearly conceived as a compositional critique of the Fourth.[11] We will revisit this intertextual idea in due course. Five 'late sonatas' followed the Fifth, each taking various aspects of its structure as a model, and all the while Scriabin's harmonic resources developed from the diatonicism and proto-Mystic Chord nature of the Fifth's P and S zones, respectively, through to his late language. There, particularly in the final trio of concurrently composed sonatas, octatonicism, acousticism, whole-tone schema, hexatonic relations, superscalar 'dances' and interminglings of all these structures occur in tandem with Scriabin's most striking formal experimentation.

[10] 'Vertiginous codas' are a feature of Scriabin's late single-movement sonata designs and have clear precedence in the finales of his Sonatas 1–4. The term is Susanna Garcia's, coined in 'Scriabin's Symbolist Plot Archetype in the Late Piano Sonatas', *19th-Century Music*, 23.3 (2000), pp. 273–300, doi:10.2307/746881.

[11] James M. Baker, *The Music of Alexander Scriabin* (Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 194–201.

Though the present article will touch on all the sonatas from the Fourth to the Tenth, I will dwell particularly on two works. The first is the Fifth Sonata, Scriabin's initial single-movement enterprise in the genre; his second and fourth forays had only reached the status of the duad. I will detail how Scriabin's Lisztian-Stravinskian strategies within the Fifth Sonata serve as a potent self-critique, a recomposition even, of the Fifth's immediate predecessor from 1903, and will substantiate existing set-theoretical and poetic readings by Baker and Hull. The second sonata I shall pay particular attention to is the Eighth (op. 66), for two reasons. Firstly, the Sixth, Seventh, and Tenth Sonatas have each experienced scholarly exposure, in studies by Cheong, Kallis, and Smith.[12] Secondly, the Eighth Sonata exhibits the most sophisticated of Lisztian-Stravinskian strategies grafted onto sonata form within Scriabin's output, dwarfing the (also underexplored) Ninth for quantity of interesting material. The Eighth Sonata also contains a far more abstruse array of pitch resources than the predominantly octatonic and acoustic Ninth.[13] With these pitch resources resistant to explication, formal considerations can shed clearer light on the unusual sound world of op. 66, assisting the subsequent unravelling of its harmonic enigma. By focusing on the first and last single-movement sonatas that Scriabin completed, I hope to show precisely how the composer's Lisztian-Stravinskian structural treatments began in 1908 and reached their exquisite zenith just five years later.

Lisztian? Stravinskian?

For the benefit of readers not closely acquainted with the two disparate branches of literature used below, it is now worth defining precisely what is meant when asserting Lisztian and Stravinskian characteristics in Scriabin's sonata forms. Lisztian characteristics are, in the present article, sonata form-specific, and entail the consolidation of sonata form and (multi-movement) sonata-cycle principles into a single, continuous design. Previously referred to as 'double-function form', Lisztian 'two-dimensional sonata form' was used in the music of Strauss, Schoenberg, Zemlinsky, and several

[12] Wai-Ling Cheong, 'Orthography in Scriabin's Late Works', *Music Analysis*, 12.1 (1993), pp. 47–69, doi:10.2307/854075; Wai-Ling Cheong, 'Scriabin's Octatonic Sonata', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 121.2 (1996), pp. 206–28, doi:10.1093/jrma/121.2.206; Wai-Ling Cheong, 'Scriabin's "White Mass"', *Journal of the American Society of Scriabin*, 5.1 (2001), pp. 69–96; Vasilis Kallis, 'Pitch Organisation in Scriabin's Tenth Sonata', *Music Analysis*, 34.1 (2015), pp. 3–46, doi:10.1111/musa.12039; Kenneth M. Smith, *Desire in Chromatic Harmony: A Psychodynamic Exploration of* Fin de Siècle *Tonality* (Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. 270–320.

[13] The Ninth Sonata thus bears closest comparison with the Sixth and Seventh Sonatas, which include mostly octatonic writing alongside acoustic and, to a lesser extent, whole-tone inflections. This makes sense as, although the Ninth was completed in 1913 alongside the Eighth and Tenth, most of its composition occurred in Beatenberg alongside the Sixth and Seventh. The Eighth's harmonic structure is several degrees more abstruse in that the octatonic collection, the cornerstone of much anglophone Scriabin analysis, is scantily represented. Instead, near-symmetrical collections dominate, often alongside what can be conceptualized as hexatonic melodic intrusions that provide a discernibly non-octatonic semitone–minor third melodic contour; constant warping between collections generates a thorough sense of harmonic flux.

other composers post-1850.[14] For Vande Moortele, key tenets of a two-dimensional sonata include the ability of formal units to partake in one formal dimension (if in the sonata-form dimension only, these are deemed 'exocyclic'; if in the sonata-cycle dimension only, these are deemed 'interpolated movements') or both dimensions (both sonata cycle and sonata form). A further ability is thus potentialized: sonata forms can themselves be contained within larger sonata forms (a 'local sonata form' versus an 'overarching sonata form').[15] Furthermore, in instances of non-coincidence between units, as regards their position in the two dimensions, there is capacity for a degree of 'integration', often bridged through inter-thematic correspondences. Two-dimensional technologies deliberately avoid a normative system of regulations, a charge sometimes levelled against Hepokoski and Darcy's 'Sonata Theory'.[16] Instead, a thread of flexibility runs through Vande Moortele's monograph, one that builds on the notion of formal hierarchy developed in Caplin's *Classical Form*, eschewing a pronouncement of dictums in favour of a Swiss army knife for analysis of complex post-1850 sonatas.[17]

Quite unlike the Lisztian formal features, Stravinskian characteristics are far from sonata form-specific. Nor are they specific to Stravinsky.[18] Rather, here I invoke the long-held notion that Stravinsky's music, as exemplar, maintains formal constituents that exhibit a high degree of 'consistency, identity and distinction' from one another, an 'insulation' and discreteness that generate a fragmented and discontinuous surface aesthetic.[19] Since Cone theorized a tripartite model of 'stratification, interlock, synthesis', a large literature awash with lively debate on this structural topic has emerged, including but not limited to studies by Somfai, Straus, Van den Toorn, Hasty, Kramer, Taruskin, Cross, Rehding, and Horlacher; scholars from both sides of the Atlantic have established, debated, and re-established the notion that Stravinsky's music is constructed, broadly, in 'block' form.[20]

[14] William S. Newman, *The Sonata since Beethoven: The Third and Final Volume of a History of the Sonata Idea* (University of North Carolina Press, 1969); Vande Moortele, *Two-Dimensional Sonata Form*, p. 7. Although Newman's 1969 account of the sonata since Beethoven terminates around 1915, it sidelines Scriabin's output; see Ray M. Longyear, 'Reviewed Work: *The Sonata since Beethoven* by William S. Newman', *Notes*, 27.2 (1970), pp. 263–65 (p. 264), doi:10.2307/896917.

[15] Vande Moortele, *Two-Dimensional Sonata Form*, pp. 11–33.

[16] James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (Oxford University Press, 2006).

[17] William E. Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (Oxford University Press, 1998). Here I echo Paul Wingfield's critique of 'Sonata Theory', where Caplin's text is presented as a more flexible and less quasi-scientific text than Hepokoski and Darcy's *Elements*; see Paul Wingfield, 'Beyond "Norms and Deformations": Towards a Theory of Sonata Form as Reception History', *Music Analysis*, 27.1 (2008), pp. 137–77, doi:10.1111/j.1468-2249.2008.00283.x.

[18] Given the ubiquity with which a fragmented aesthetic occurs in late nineteenth-, particularly Russian, and twentieth-century music, this article could quite easily have been titled 'Scriabin's Lisztian-Discontinuous Sonata Forms'. This would read poorly, however, and fails to signal the biographical connection between Scriabin and Stravinsky.

[19] Pieter Van den Toorn, *The Music of Igor Stravinsky* (Yale University Press, 1983), p. xv; Richard Taruskin, 'Reviewed Work: *Building Blocks: Repetition and Continuity in the Music of Stravinsky* by Gretchen Horlacher', *Journal of Music Theory*, 56.2 (2012), pp. 285–91 (p. 285), doi:10.1215/00222909-1650424.

[20] See Lázlo Somfai, 'Symphonies of Wind Instruments (1920): Observations of Stravinsky's Organic Construction', *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientarium Hungaricae*, 14.1 (1972), pp. 355–83,

I will not wade into many of the more rarefied wranglings that have played out in this literature over the last six decades. It suffices to say that there is some debate over whether surface impressions of Stravinskian discontinuity mask deeply logical coherence in musical structure, perhaps even in developmental trajectory — do the blocks 'build', as Horlacher's 2011 study suggests?[21] It also bears mentioning that there is great debate regarding Cone's notion of synthesis, particularly with the literature so often focused on the *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* (1920, revised 1947), the concluding chorale of which has caused more theoretical ruckus than perhaps any other Stravinsky passage. With these two debates in mind, we shall see that Scriabin's use of discrete musical blocks exhibits, as might be expected from a harmonic innovator, a unique take on their interplay with development and synthesis, a strategy that never loses sight of Lisztian two-dimensional integration, yet all the while staging a surface aesthetic of Stravinskian disintegration. An understanding of structural depth that marries Vande Moortele's and Cone's approaches will be required, ever with one eye on the novel harmonic approaches Scriabin took from 1908.

Interim Stocktaking

The remainder of this article proceeds in four parts. Firstly, biographical connections are explored, between Liszt and Scriabin and between Scriabin and Stravinsky. Readers may feel that this first section resembles something of an old-fashioned influence study, a neat daisy chain of links between individuals and their life circumstances relevant to our enquiry. Ultimately, such biographical connections lay only a base, and a prompt, for subsequent analytical work; they are not strong enough to sustain an argument for 'influence' alone. Thus two analytical case studies are presented: the Fifth Sonata, using modified Schenkerian tools, germane to Scriabin study since at least the 1980s, and technologies from across the landscape of the 'new *Formenlehre*';[22] and the Eighth Sonata, using a similar range of form-focused gadgetry and some modest scalar transformational work allied to recent Scriabin scholarship. It should be emphasized

doi:10.2307/901875; Joseph Straus, 'A Principle of Voice Leading in the Music of Stravinsky', *Music Theory Spectrum*, 4.1 (1982), pp. 106–24, doi:10.2307/746013; Van den Toorn, *The Music of Igor Stravinsky*; Christopher Hasty, 'On the Problem of Succession and Continuity in Twentieth-Century Music', *Music Theory Spectrum*, 8 (1986), pp. 58–74, doi:10.2307/746070; Jonathan D. Kramer, 'Discontinuity and Proportion in the Music of Stravinsky', in *Confronting Stravinsky: Man, Musician, and Modernist,* ed. by Jann Pasler (University of California Press, 1986), pp. 174–94; Richard Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions: A Biography of the Works through Mavra* (Oxford University Press, 1996); Jonathan Cross, *The Stravinsky Legacy* (Cambridge University Press, 1998); Alexander Rehding, 'Towards a "Logic of Discontinuity" in Stravinsky's *Symphonies of Wind Instruments*: Hasty, Kramer and Straus Reconsidered', *Music Analysis*, 17.1 (1998), pp. 38–65, doi:10.2307/854370; Gretchen Horlacher, *Building Blocks: Repetition and Continuity in the Music of Stravinsky* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

[21] Taruskin, 'Reviewed Work', p. 285.

[22] The term was coined by Nicholas Marston; see 'Reviewed Work(s): William E. Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven*', *Music Analysis*, 20.1 (2001), pp. 143–49 (p. 143), doi:10.1111/1468-2249.00131.

that embrace of these analytical tools does not mean that I prescribe their theoretical superstructures; it is not suggested (or extrapolated) that Scriabin's sonata forms entail a 'deformation' or a 'misprision' of Classical sonata models, for instance.[23] Instead, I favour an eclectic approach, with analytical utility placed before theoretical anxiety. A soundbite from the early writings of Derrick Puffett comes to mind: 'One should be free to borrow any procedure that may be useful, without having to commit oneself to a party line.'[24] In short, in these sections, close reading comes first and foremost. Readers may sense a slight preference for 'bottom-up' approaches to form in the engagement with theory; the 'top-down' language of Sonata Theory is nevertheless used most below, purely because Scriabin's large-scale conformity to the 'Type 3' Mozartian paradigm identified in Hepokoski and Darcy's *Elements* is so prevalent.

Delineation between the three sections outlined above is kept sharp because the material is rather dense; each distinct method demands a certain space. After this intentional polarization between history and analysis, a fourth section unites the streams of the article, drawing together biographical and analytical strands to suggest that the two modes of enquiry nurture and complement one another. While I am mindful that early biographical work falls short of a complete explication of influence, I offer further thoughts on the motivations behind Scriabin's embrace of a Lisztian-Stravinskian sonata fusion, namely a preference for miniaturism, where harmony is deeply affiliated to micro-gesture, and notions of harmonic 'Russianness' likely inherited from Rimsky-Korsakov that lend themselves to 'blocky' formal architecture, also a supposed 'Russian' hallmark. It is not my intention to suggest that Scriabin is a direct way station between Liszt and Stravinsky, but rather that Scriabin's place in the *fin-de-siècle* allowed him to draw on an array of multifaceted collective knowledge. In essence, influence is replaced by a broader, networked, and richer sense of 'inheritance', one shared across generations, compositional proclivities, and national identities.

Biographical Connections: An Old-Fashioned Influence Study?

Liszt's connection to Scriabin and Scriabin's connection to Stravinsky would, at first, seem to be a pair of inter-composer bridges in the realm of the self-explanatory. Scriabin, versed in all the highs of nineteenth-century pianism, knew Liszt's output well. Stravinsky, who as a student moved in similar social circles to Scriabin, must have been as well acquainted with his works as the elder Russian was alienated from everyone else's. Musicological literature has not, however, embraced these connections as much as one might think. There is no sustained study of Liszt's music and its effect on Scriabin.[25] Most enquiries confine themselves to single-sentence mentions of pianistic

[23] The latter term, interpolated from Bloomian theory, is used by Julian Horton in the sonata context; see 'Rethinking Sonata Failure: Mendelssohn's Overture *Zum Märchen von der schönen Melusine*', *Music Theory Spectrum*, 43.2 (2021), pp. 299–319 (p. 316), doi:10.1093/mts/mtaa032.

[24] Derrick Puffett, *The Song Cycles of Othmar Schoek* (P. Haupt, 1982), p. 91.

[25] Two small studies do exist, separated by almost four decades: Zsolt Gárdonyi, *Virtuosität und Avantgarde* (Schott, 1988), pp. 9–31; Antonio Grande, 'Liszt e Scriabin: Lettura neo-riemanniana di una continuità artistica', *Quaderni dell'Istituto Liszt*, 16 (2016), pp. 9–46. Both authors focus on

technique,[26] and connections to earlier composers often focus on Scriabin's early-period Chopin imitations and middle-period aesthetic of post-Wagnerian desire, sidestepping the New German influence of Liszt altogether. This occurs despite Stravinsky's relevant recollection that Scriabin continually argued for 'a Chopin-Liszt line as against a German tradition'.[27] Casting Scriabin's late works as oddities altogether closed off from the history of music is a curious situation given that Liszt was amongst the first composers to cultivate the scalar maximal intersections that have become such a feature of recent Scriabin scholarship.[28] The most damning mentions of Liszt in Scriabin study are those that are purely biographical, and often are negative sidenotes at that: Scriabin injured his hand practising the *Réminiscences de Don Juan* and Balakirev's *Islamey*, resulting in a profound artistic crisis and the conception of his First Sonata.[29] Scriabin–Stravinsky connections have seen a little more exploration in the literature, though Pople, Taruskin, Walsh, and Holloway all tell and retell the same story: 'unrequited love — hate with issue only in revenge' on Stravinsky's part.[30]

Let us clear up the threads. First, to the Scriabin and Stravinsky question: this is a relatively transparent connection, though one laden with more than a little of the quotational baggage often encountered in studies of the ageing Stravinsky. Moreover, existing accounts differ in the small details. In this article, I intend to retell, in crystallized form, the story produced by Pople, Taruskin, Walsh, and Holloway, this time highlighting the place of Scriabin's sonatas in the story. Discrepancies between the various existing accounts are also ironed out.

In Stravinsky's *Memories and Commentaries*, Scriabin's character, image, and music receive a dressing-down not unlike those which the established theosophist himself frequently subjected composers to. 'I never wished to cultivate his company […] he had no insight at all […] Scriabin was "morbid" […] an arrogant-looking man with thick blond hair and a blond *barbiche*'; the venom is potent, seeping from Stravinsky's pages and coagulating about the text that surrounds his barbs.[31] Such curdling is a feature of almost all of Stravinsky's late writings and lecturings on Scriabin.

Notwithstanding Scriabin's well-documented dislike of virtually all music associated with Rimsky-Korsakov post-1907, Taruskin notes that it was almost certainly the

oblique harmonic matters and appearances of pitch collections that can be found in composers across the *fin-de-siècle*.

[26] The following sentence is representative: 'nearly every pianist-composer after Liszt was indebted to his prodigious and inventive technique, and Scriabin was not least among these'; Lincoln Ballard, 'Life, Legacy and Music', in *The Alexander Scriabin Companion: History, Performance and Lore*, ed. by Lincoln Ballard, Matthew Bengston, and John Bell Young (Rowman and Littlefield, 2017), pp. 15–32 (p. 17).

[27] Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Memories and Commentaries* (Faber, 1960), p. 64.

[28] See, for instance, Clifton Callender, 'Voice-Leading Parsimony in the Music of Alexander Scriabin', *Journal of Music Theory*, 4.2 (1998), pp. 219–33, doi:10.2307/843875; Vasilis Kallis, 'Principles of Pitch Organisation in Scriabin's Early Post-Tonal Period: The Piano Miniatures', *Music Theory Online*, 14.3 (2008); Edwards, 'Setting Mystical Forces in Motion', etc.

[29] Ballard, 'Life, Legacy and Music', p. 20.

[30] Robin Holloway, *On Music: Essays and Diversions 1963–2003* (Claridge Press, 2003), p. 325.

[31] Stravinsky and Craft, *Memories and Commentaries*, pp. 64–66. See Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, pp. 798–99, for details of such dressings-down.

poisonous tongue of Leonid Sabaneev, specifically the 1925 publication of his *Reminiscences of Scriabin* and its record of Scriabin's snap judgement of the *Rite of Spring*, that swung Stravinsky from youthful devotee to elder grumbler.[32] Indeed, Stravinsky was nothing short of a Scriabin obsessive in his youth. Pople presumes that the pair met at least once during the 1906/07–1907/08 seasons in the Rimsky-Korsakov residence;[33] Faubion Bowers suggests that Stravinsky 'tagged along with his teacher' for the May 1907 expositions of *Le Poème de l'extase* in Paris;[34] Taruskin posits that a meeting had to wait until 1909, a year Pople also regards as a virtual certainty for meeting given that the Russian premiere of *l'extase* coincided with that of Stravinsky's *Chant funèbre* in St Petersburg.[35] The precise date does not matter; we can be sure that the two composers had some interaction in these years and that the general mood was one of admiration from younger to elder *and* that this was unreciprocated. By 1913, after at least four years without contact, and in which a letter to Florent Schmitt gushed that 'only Scriabin attracts my attention', Stravinsky met the elder Russian by chance, at a train station en route to Switzerland. Attempts were made by the younger composer to host Scriabin in Clarens. Scriabin declined, and six days later was subjected to a seven-hour imposition by his devotee as Stravinsky made his own day trip to Ouchy. Scriabin was to complain about the visit's length in a letter to Tatyana Schloezer.[36]

Though Scriabin was either fatigued or annoyed, or both, by the nature and length of Stravinsky's call, the younger composer seemed to have made the very most of his seven hours at the edge of Lake Geneva. He had purchased copies of the Sixth and Seventh Sonatas in transit to Lausanne, and lauded the latter when he invited Scriabin to Clarens, showing a favourable opinion that Pople, Taruskin, and Holloway all note as having lasted into old age. The Ouchy meeting was doubly productive from Stravinsky's perspective. Scriabin's final three sonatas were in proof at the time, and a letter to Maximilian Steinberg makes it clear that Scriabin played them; Stravinsky not only appreciated their contents but wished to examine them further: 'We spoke of many interesting things, and he played excerpts for me from his new sonatas. I like them; one must have a look at them in their entirety.'[37]

Stravinsky's under-discussed fascination with the late sonatas is one of many links between the two composers that help construct a wide web of references. Scholarship has thus far focused on tangible, even explicitly hearable, connections, eschewing the more general structural premises explored below. White, Pople, and Taruskin, for

[32] Ibid., p. 799; Leonid Sabaneev, *Reminiscences of Scriabin* (Muzyka, 1925).
[33] Pople, *Skryabin and Stravinsky*, p. 4.
[34] Faubion Bowers, *Scriabin: A Biography* (Dover Books, 1996), II, p. 165.
[35] Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, p. 791.
[36] Bowers, *Scriabin: A Biography*, II, p. 248.
[37] Robert Craft, *Stravinsky: Chronicle of a Friendship, 1948–71* (Gollancz, 1972), p. 29. Walsh states that only Sonatas 9 and 10 were played to Scriabin, a view that tallies with the lattermost completion date of the Eighth Sonata; see *Stravinsky: A Creative Spring. Russia and France 1882–1934* (Pimlico, 1999), pp. 219–20. It seems most likely that all three sonatas were heard, and that the Eighth was in slightly later-stage draft.

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instance, note the similarities between the *allegro volando* from *Le Poème de l'extase* and the principal theme from the *Danse de l'Oiseau de feu*.[38] For Walsh, Scriabinist ecstasy seems to cut across works; the original version (1908/09) of *The Nightingale*'s first act was 'so redolent of the *Poème*' that Stravinsky crossed out and then reinstated his solo violin part.[39] Pople also identifies concordances between the second of Scriabin's Études, op. 65, and material from the *Rite of Spring* (rehearsal mark 94), whilst Taruskin singles out Stravinsky's 1905 Sonata in F♯ minor, which appears to be modelled, in terms of movement plan and some chromatic bass harmonizations, on Scriabin's Third and Fourth Sonatas, respectively.[40] In short, the links are plentiful, and most in circulation appear to occur in the sonata sphere. For our present enquiry, which is limited by space, it seems reasonable to assume that Stravinsky's love of Scriabin between at least 1907 and 1913 (though almost certainly longer-lived in both directions, and likely until Sabaneev's *Reminiscences*) was rather centred on Scriabin's sonatas, and, to an extent, his final two tone poems. These were the theosophist composer's major and cutting-edge works of the day, after all. Given their close acquaintance, temporally and stylistically, with *Le Poème de l'extase*, it may also be reasonably assumed that all of Scriabin's sonatas from the Fifth (*l'extase*'s companion piece) until the Tenth were in Stravinsky's orbit, both enjoyed and closely considered by the younger Russian. The situation is complicated, however, by the fact that some of the close stylistic links — verging on quotation — noted above emerged in both composers' works independently, perhaps the result of a 'common ancestor' (Rimsky?) or as a still more complex product of 'convergent evolution'.[41] Pople, commenting on the problem of direct composer–composer parallels, resigns himself to the following position: 'Neither historical nor analytical scholarship can conceive of settling such questions beyond all reasonable doubt.'[42] Influence, in such terms, is a 'notoriously slippery business, one whose results are apt to seem arbitrary and impressionistic', as another esteemed music analyst has noted.[43] Craft, however, offers a softer and more circumspect conclusion; although 'influence' is his chosen vocabulary, a more general tone akin to shared 'inheritance' permeates the following: 'My ignorance of Scriabin's music at this time, along with a tendency to take I. S. too much at his own word, are the reasons for my failure to recognise the considerable influence of Scriabin on the early Stravinsky.'[44] Speaking about all of Stravinsky's oeuvre, Craft hits upon the fact that a more *general* stylistic link between the two composers may be salient. Perhaps the most obvious candidates for this are the starkly juxtaposed musical blocks germane to

[38] Eric W. White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and his Works* (Faber, 1966), p. 225; Pople, *Skryabin and Stravinsky*, p. 4; Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, p. 616.
[39] Stephen Walsh, 'Reviewed Work(s): *Skryabin and Stravinsky 1908–14: Studies in Theory and Analysis* by Anthony Pople; *The Apollonian Clockwork: On Stravinsky* by Louis Andriessen, Elmer Schönberger and Jeff Hamburg', *Music Analysis*, 9.3 (1990), pp. 339–44 (p. 342), doi:10.2307/853983.
[40] Pople, *Skryabin and Stravinsky*, p. 9; Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, p. 116.
[41] Pople, *Skryabin and Stravinsky*, p. 11.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Derrick Puffett, *Derrick Puffett on Music*, ed. by Kathryn Bailey Puffett (Ashgate, 2001), p. 488.
[44] Craft, *Stravinsky: Chronicle of a Friendship*, p. 191.

Scriabin's sonatas (though rather less relevant to his miniature output; those pieces have less duration to play with) and their potential bleed through into Stravinsky's output through the latter's own unique prism. Perhaps Stravinsky acquired some of his hallmark discontinuity from the sole Russian Wagnerian, a curious thought sure to throw assertions of the differing degrees of 'Russianness' in both composers back up into the air.[45] The subsequent analyses will demonstrate just how Stravinskian Scriabin's sonatas truly are.

Before any analysis, though: to the Liszt–Scriabin connection, which merits a bulkier historical enquiry and an embrace of novel sources. During the composition of all of the mature sonatas excluding the Fifth, Scriabin was closely connected to Liszt's greatest active disciple in early twentieth-century Russia, Alexander Siloti. James Baker traced this potential lineage in a tantalizing postlude to his article on the limits of tonality in Liszt's late music:

> Among these [Liszt's] disciples was the pianist Alexander Siloti, who returned to Russia after Liszt's death to teach at the Moscow Conservatory. There he met Alexander Scriabin, then a student at the Conservatory, who was nine years his junior and who, like Siloti before him, had studied piano with Nikolai Zverev […] It is thus perhaps more than coincidental that Scriabin's music exhibits many of the structural features of Liszt's experimental works […] Of all the early atonalists, Scriabin has the strongest claim as heir to Liszt's innovations.[46]

Let us retrace our steps to the mid-1880s, to the Hofgärtnerei hotel in Weimar, Liszt's part-time residence and base of operations for his world-famous masterclasses and salon.[47] Amongst the revolving entourage of hopeful young pianists passing through Liszt's doors, the still-teenage Siloti, a student of Nikolai Rubinstein, arrived in 1883. Siloti almost immediately acquired status as one of Liszt's favoured disciples, swiftly progressing to the 'second level' of the salon, where the master gave individual lessons to gifted pupils, alone, in casual dress, and for strictly no fee.[48] By late 1883, Liszt had provided Siloti with a letter of recommendation, something he seldom afforded to even his favourite students. By 1884, Siloti had founded the Leipzig Liszt Society and was mentored through the launch of his conducting career — with Liszt's A-major Piano

[45] Stravinsky once commented of Scriabin that he was an individual 'without a passport'; see Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically*, p. 312. Taruskin (p. 107) also outlines Scriabin's frequent presentation as a 'freak cosmopolite' of little to no nationalist orientation in studies by Robert Morgan, Elliot Antokoletz, and David Fanning, all from 1991. Alfred J. Swan provides the most damning account of Scriabin's Russianness: 'Scriabin alone stood in complete isolation from the national heritage'; '[Scriabin] could scarcely be called a Russian composer at all'; *Russian Music and its Sources in Chant and Folk-Song* (John Baker, 1973), pp. 170 and 203.

[46] James M. Baker, 'The Limits of Tonality in the Late Music of Franz Liszt', *Journal of Music Theory*, 34.2 (1990), pp. 145–73 (p. 171), doi:10.2307/843836.

[47] For a detailed account of Liszt's late pedagogy and salon/masterclass culture, see Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years, 1861–1886* (Faber, 1997); Alan Walker, *Reflections on Liszt* (Cornell University Press, 2005).

[48] Charles Barber, *Lost in the Stars: The Forgotten Musical Life of Alexander Siloti* (Scarecrow Press, 2002), p. 13.

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Concerto, no less, at his podium debut.[49] By 1885, Siloti was preparing editions of Liszt's works, suggesting his own edits to the fourteenth Hungarian Rhapsody, and had been affectionately nicknamed 'Silotissimus' by Liszt, such was the strength of both the social and the professional relationship between student and teacher.[50] Siloti's time with Liszt was intense but brief; in July 1886, pneumonia claimed the already ailing elder composer. Nonetheless, Siloti left Weimar a thoroughly established conductor and pianist. He would not forget Liszt's mentorship.

The year 1886 was also when Siloti first met Scriabin. Upon return to Russia, Siloti encountered Scriabin through the fearsome pedagogue Zverev, and recalled the moment in considerable detail: 'A little cadet, very modest, cute, a face resembling a frog. This was Sasha, Scriabin, aged fourteen. He played us a scherzo, Chopin's B minor and then his own C minor etude, op. 2, no. 1.'[51] This fleeting meeting marked the beginning of the extended Scriabin–Siloti relationship. From 1888 to 1891, Siloti held positions in the Moscow Conservatory piano faculty, during the same period in which Scriabin was a piano and composition student. Both pianists furthered their international performance careers throughout the 1890s before returning to Russia: Siloti to St Petersburg in 1900 and Scriabin to Moscow in 1898, then travelling intermittently to Paris, Switzerland, and the United States before joining Siloti semi-permanently in St Petersburg by 1909. From this point onwards, the Scriabin–Siloti alliance reached its zenith through two primary dimensions: the close social interactions between the Scriabin and Siloti families and the role that Scriabin's music was afforded in the groundbreaking St Petersburg 'Siloti Concerts' that Siloti and his family conceived, curated, and — crucially — financed.[52]

Though the Siloti Concerts spanned some fourteen years, from 1903 to 1917, Scriabin's music featured in fourteen evenings across four concert seasons, from 1911 until 1916.[53] Even with the exclusion of four Scriabin memorial concerts in Season 13, no composer trumped Scriabin for soloistic or repertorial primacy; 80 per cent of the concerts his music appeared in either featured the composer himself as a soloist or were concerts exclusively of his music. The esteem in which Siloti held Scriabin was undoubtedly in part due to Scriabin's business value as a defector from Serge Koussevitzky's rival Moscow series some 420 miles south.[54] Indeed, Scriabin's cutting-edge

[49] Ibid., pp. 9–21.

[50] Ibid., p. xvii. Though Liszt was known for his witty, often barbed commentary when teaching, it is remarkable that August Göllerich's diary notes, which detail masterclasses from 1884 to 1886, contain not a single disparaging remark directed from Liszt towards Siloti; *The Piano Master Classes of Franz Liszt, 1884–1886: Diary Notes of August Göllerich*, ed. by Wilhelm Jerger and Richard L. Zimdars (Indiana University Press, 1996).

[51] Alexander Siloti, *Alexander Ilitch Siloti: Memoirs and Letters*, ed. by Lev Raaben (Gosudarstvennoe Muzykal'noye Izdatel'stvo, 1963), p. 329.

[52] The impact of Vera Siloti regarding the financing of Siloti's concerts cannot be overstated; as the daughter of textiles businessman Pavel Tretyakov, her familial financial backing was considerable.

[53] Scriabin was legally tied to Koussevitzky through a five-year publishing agreement signed in 1908, before terminating his contract in July 1911 following positive correspondence with Siloti. Siloti's twelfth concert season (1914/15) consisted of no concerts due to the outbreak of World War I.

[54] Barber, *Lost in the Stars*, p. 129.

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works were those Siloti most often programmed; *Prometheus* (complete with *clavier à lumières*) represented a personal favourite, as did the *Poème de l'extase* and the striking late piano sonatas.[55]

The concerts also offered Scriabin a place within Siloti's broader dual mission of innovation and education. The inspiration for the series was almost certainly the curatorial work of Siloti's old mentor Liszt, who, within his Weimar period and beyond, had sought to present undiscovered classics alongside the cutting-edge new music of the day.[56] Siloti's ambitions were strikingly similar. Liszt's music almost always played a dominant role within every season; the very first work programmed was, in fact, the *Faust Symphony*, a declaration of allegiance to his old teacher and cementing him within the canon.[57] Siloti also made a point of encouraging St Petersburg's composition students to attend his events, brokering countless introductions between the youngsters and several visiting artists (including figures then world-renowned, from Fauré to Grainger). Regarding new music, the concerts gave Russian or local premieres of swathes of composers: Rachmaninov, Debussy, Franck, Grieg, Prokofiev, and many more. Scriabin himself received eleven St Petersburg premieres.[58]

For Scriabin, the significance of Siloti's concerts cannot be overstated. These events immersed him in an intellectual climate orientated towards the music of Liszt and other canonized composers whilst simultaneously functioning as a vehicle for Silver Age Russia's most cutting-edge musical offerings. Most importantly, though, in addition to providing Scriabin with a creative vessel saturated with surroundings sure to stimulate innovation, Siloti afforded his composer colleague the financial stability to write freely following the success of the 1911 recitals, brokering a publishing agreement with Boris Jurgenson by 1912. The deal would be sweetened further; Siloti appointed Willem Mengelberg as conductor of the Royal Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, and stipulated that he commission several Scriabin works.[59]

This generosity filtered into a social dimension between the two families. Scriabin and Tatyana were frequent guests at the Siloti salon in St Petersburg, from 1911 at No. 9, 12th Line, Vasily Island, and from 1913 in the new Siloti household at

[55] Ibid., p. 130. Scriabin's extensive memorial series and consistent reappearances within solo recitals indicate Siloti's vocational attitude towards his work. It was Siloti, before a 'Popular-Priced Concert' in 1913, who suggested that *Prometheus* be performed twice to allow for audience appreciation, once with *clavier à lumières* and once without. Just as A. B. Marx had once encouraged the idea that Beethoven's symphonies could not be grasped on first hearing but had to be attentively reheard to be fully understood, or as Ignaz Schuppanzigh had provided repeat performances of the late quartets, Siloti resolved to curate a reverential view of Scriabin's art. Bowers further draws attention to Siloti's rigorous defences of Scriabin from St Petersburg's critical establishment, most notably from Michel Dmitri Calvocoressi backstage at the eighth 'Subscription Concert' of 9 February 1912; see Bowers, *Scriabin: A Biography*, II, p. 221.

[56] See the study of Liszt's consciously crafted public personae, particularly that of an 'elder musical statesman', developed in Dolores Pesce, *Liszt's Final Decade* (University of Rochester Press, 2014).

[57] Barber, *Lost in the Stars*, p. 329. A similar situation arose through the treatment of J. S. Bach's works, which Siloti aspired to present in a vast series entitled 'Bach's Legacy'; this plan materialized only fragmentarily due to financial constraints; see ibid., p. 118.

[58] Ibid., pp. 261–328.

[59] Ibid., p. 130.

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No. 14, Kryukov Canal.[60] In 1986, Kyriena Siloti recalled these interactions favourably; Scriabin was 'father's friend', and recollections abound of 'tennis with Casals, chess with Lyadov, Theosophy with Scriabin […] boating with Glazunov in the summer balanced by tobogganing with Schoenberg in a wintry December'. Evidently, the Siloti salon was a seedbed for close relationships in which intellectual conversation interwove with the social activity of the city's musical intelligentsia. Indeed, Vera Siloti's letter of 12 November 1911 affirms what a congruous fit the two families proved to be for each other in this social dimension, a fact realized by her husband midway through their first joint holiday:

> A very close relationship quickly formed between me and the Scriabins; there has never been a time that we weren't together and friends. On the second day, he [Siloti] said to me at the table […] 'Why hadn't this happened before?'[61]

Two further letters exchanged between Tatyana and the Silotis affirm the strength of the Scriabin–Siloti connection. Firstly, Tatyana's letter to Vera from March 1912 outlines the completion and performance of Scriabin's Seventh Piano Sonata, before expressing a yearning that the Silotis might hear the work and see them soon:

> We are terribly happy that it means we will be visiting your area and be able to spend a few happy hours together […] We will have a few musicians gathering at ours today to listen to the Seventh Sonata; it is a great shame that you aren't with us. You cannot imagine how much we fondly remember and reminisce about you! […] It's great that St Petersburg is yet to come.[62]

Secondly, Tatyana's letter of 1 March 1915 outlines an extensive forthcoming family holiday plan: 'A trip along the Volga — starting on 17 April in Rybinsk and ending on 2 May in Astrakhan, hopefully skipping a stop at Volsk.'[63]

Blood poisoning claimed Scriabin less than one week before such a venture was due to begin. Nonetheless, these letters serve as a clear indication of just how close the Scriabin–Siloti family ties ran, so candid was Tatyana's desire to see her friends and to divulge such precise details of their vacation. This relationship stretched far beyond Scriabin being a mere Siloti business asset. Importantly for the present study, it seems inconceivable that the topic of Liszt would not have arisen in conversation during such close interactions. The Silotis always set their dinner table with one extra seat for Liszt, a tradition that daughter Kyriena continued to abide by as late as her 1986 interviews

[60] This article draws on two main source types to examine the Scriabin–Siloti social relationship, firstly testimonies by Kyriena Siloti, collected by Charles Barber in 1986; I am grateful to staff in the Stanford University Special Collections department for granting me access to these sources from their Siloti Archive. Secondly are several letters, both exchanged between the Scriabin–Siloti households and sent by Vera Siloti to her younger sister, Alexandra, drawn from Siloti's *Memoirs and Letters*, though there published in Russian. The Appendix provides complete translations of four such letters, the first time they have been made available to scholars in English. I am grateful to Maxim Meshkvichev for his assistance translating these materials.

[61] Siloti, *Memoirs and Letters*, pp. 388–40; see Appendix, Letter 2.

[62] Ibid., pp. 285–86; see Appendix, Letter 3.

[63] Ibid., pp. 302–03; see Appendix, Letter 4.

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with Barber.[64] Furthermore, the year that Scriabin and Siloti began their concertizing relationship, 1911, was when Siloti first compiled the original version of *My Memories of Liszt*, a laudatory set of memoirs recounting his three formative years in Weimar.[65]

As there so often is with written sources and questions of influence, there is an absence of explicit evidence within Siloti's letters and memoirs pertaining to conversations about Liszt with Scriabin. However, no Liszt disciple was deeper in the elder composer's counsel than Siloti in the 1880s and thus most privy to many of Liszt's private compositional and artistic outpourings. Similarly, no individual within *fin-de-siècle* Russia was more devoted to furthering Liszt's legacy than Siloti, and arguably no one was so commercially and socially intertwined with Scriabin (by 1910 particularly, his delusions of grandeur and a prickly personality had exerted their toll on many of Scriabin's friendships).[66] It seems implausible that Siloti would not have discussed both Liszt and his music with one of his closest compatriots.

It also seems likely that Scriabin would have been amenable to such discussions, a quite remarkable supposition given his dislike of virtually every composer that came before him (not even Chopin escaped such treatment by the end). As a student and a professor, Scriabin had long admired Liszt, even professing enthrallment by his 'magical sonorities'.[67] Maria Nemenova-Luntz, Scriabin's student, also recalls her teacher's strong preference for Liszt over Beethoven — 'No Beethoven, I can't face it today. Give me Liszt!' — whilst Scriabin was frequently deemed amongst the most noteworthy of Liszt interpreters at the keyboard: 'He could make all that was *real* flower from that music […] I think few have ever heard such Liszt.'[68]

One final source provides a tantalizing insight into Siloti's attitude towards Scriabin's music. Sent by Vera Siloti to her sister Alexandra on 23 June 1911, the letter provides an account of Siloti's reacquaintance with Liszt's A-major Piano Concerto, the same piece that had launched his conducting career twenty-seven years prior.[69] However, Vera also notes her husband's programming considerations for the concerto, potentially casting his performance alongside Scriabin's *Prometheus.* One might note the similarities between the Liszt concerto, where all constituent 'movements' are played *attacca*, and the continuous design of Scriabin's 1910 tone poem and its earlier cousin *Le Poème de l'extase.*[70] Though fleeting, perhaps this lone epistolary mention of Liszt's

64 Barber, *Lost in the Stars*, p. 118.
65 Alexander Siloti, *My Memories of Liszt* (Methuen Simpson, 1911).
66 Both Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazunov derided Scriabin as 'getting near the crazy house' as early as 1907; see Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically*, p. 792. By 1913, Scriabin was engaged in a period of the utmost social insularity; see Bowers, *Scriabin: A Biography*, II, p. 243.
67 Marilyn Nonken, *The Spectral Piano: From Liszt, Scriabin and Debussy to the Digital Age* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 34.
68 Bowers, *Scriabin: A Biography*, II, pp. 291–92. As well as performing Liszt in his own 1892 graduation recital, Scriabin frequently programmed Liszt for his students during his teaching tenure. Scriabin wrote a notable ten-page letter in 1902 that rhapsodizes over one of his students' performances of Liszt's two concertos, a far cry from the negative take scholarship has often extrapolated from the *Réminiscences de Don Juan* injury.
69 Siloti, *Memoirs and Letters*, p. 397; see Appendix, Letter 1.
70 *Prometheus* is absent from Smith's essay on Scriabin's sonata forms, probably because it is not nearly as neat a fit for the two-dimensional perspective as *Le Poème de l'extase* or several of the late sonatas.

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and Scriabin's music side by side displays Siloti's awareness of a kinship between the oeuvre of his old mentor and his younger eccentric colleague. Was Siloti correct in this brief consideration of Liszt and Scriabin as two sides of the same coin? The two analyses below indicate what similarities Siloti's musical intuition might have detected in Scriabin's treatment of form.

To summarize the historical portion of this article, Stravinsky knew Scriabin and his sonatas well, not only hearing them first hand but expressing his particular aural preference for them. Though Stravinsky's youthful love of Scriabin would later be replaced by malice, it is particularly noteworthy that his positivity is specific to Scriabin's sonatas, a feature that, regarding the Seventh Sonata, held sway even in old age. As for Liszt, not only did Scriabin know the Hungarian's work well as a pianist, but he was profoundly intertwined with the closest living person to the former virtuoso in Russia, during the very period in which the Sixth to Tenth Sonatas were composed. The 1908 completion date of the Fifth Sonata means that this work falls just short of any close tie to the Liszt–Siloti–Scriabin lineage. This may explain why its two-dimensional strategy is rather more haphazard than the Eighth Sonata (more on this comparison to follow), the latter composed at the zenith of the Siloti–Scriabin friendship. Nevertheless, historical enquiry can only take us so far towards richer and richer speculation; analysis is now required.

The Fifth Sonata as Compositional Self-Critique

For Hull and Baker, Scriabin's Fifth Sonata holds the closest of kinships with his Fourth. Both scholars note that these adjacent sonatas are the sole pair to share an opening key signature, whilst Hull declares that the poetic description Scriabin afforded for the Fourth's opening is mappable onto the *languido* theme of the Fifth.[71] Baker pursues a similarity thesis founded in set-theoretical tenets; both sonatas contain slow material centred on at-pitch forms of set-class 6–32, the diatonic hexachord, segmented into three of its subsets 4–20, 4–22, and 5–27, with certain Scriabin transitional-period whole-tone flavours (4–21 and 4–25) often cast into the mix.[72] The Fifth Sonata seems, at least in some part, to be a recomposition of the Fourth. Structural considerations reinforce this view. Both sonatas stage a hastened apotheosis of their slow themes in their closing stages, the Fourth reprising its first-movement

Prometheus is a complex case because it is a piano concerto/tone poem hybrid; its virtuosic piano part shares many figures with the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Sonatas.

71 Arthur E. Hull, *A Great Russian Tone Poet: Scriabin* (Kegan Paul, 1921), pp. 133–38. The poetic description Scriabin often affixed to the Fourth reads: 'The striving upwards towards the Ideal Creative Power and the motive of resultant Languor or Exhaustion after effort'; see Bowers, *Scriabin: A Biography*, II, p. 131. In the Fifth Sonata, bars 13–28 of the *languido* theme strive upwards towards some unattainable melodic apex, before bars 29–33 provide an exhausted chromatic descent marked *molto languido.* The two sonatas also share a kinship in that both contain slow material that employs a sighing minor-seventh gesture which gradually evaporates into an extended dominant chord (see movement 1, bar 3 of the Fourth Sonata versus bar 13 of the Fifth). In the Fifth, this gesture is atomized across two voices and two motifs, though retains the same net sonic experience.

72 Baker, *The Music of Alexander Scriabin*, pp. 200–01.

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theme within its second movement's climax (bars 144–61), the Fifth as a sole outlier appearance of its *languido* material in E♭ major (bars 433–40).[73] Moreover, although there are at least four independent structural units to the Fifth Sonata, its most prominent two components entail the slow *languido* theme (modelled on the first movement of the Fourth) and a principal sonata form (modelled on the sonata-form second movement of the Fourth), which alternate in a striking Lisztian-Stravinskian strategy. Patently, op. 53 is a reconstitution of the shards of op. 30; the Fifth fragments the two-movement slow–fast structure of the Fourth and then reassembles these fragments into an alternating structure in which the *languido* theme surfaces at choice structural moments. Each time this surfacing occurs, the sonata-form dimension is suspended and a slow movement, or rather, a miniature of a slow movement, is interpolated. Factoring in the E♭-major apotheosis, this happens four times in total.

But the situation in the Fifth Sonata is not as simple as a two-dimensional alternating montage of slow-movement and sonata-form principles. Figure 1a–c offers structural overviews for the Fifth's introduction–exposition–introduction repeat, development, and recapitulation–coda respectively; sonata-form and sonata-cycle structural dimensions frame an inner three rows that call to mind the stratification adduced by Cone in his *Symphonies* analysis.[74] The central of these three rows outlines the appearances of the *languido* material; on either side of this slow-movement structural stratum, the *allegro impetuoso* opening material (bars 1–12) and *allegro fantastico* scherzo-like material are indicated (first appearing in bars 140–42). Just like the *languido* material, these two *allegro* 'blocks' seem to exist rather outside of the sonata-form dimension, though are probably perceived by most as a degree more disjunct due to their brevity. I take the view that these blocks represent the fragment of a third scherzo movement in the *fantastico* instance, and something entirely different in the *impetuoso.* Neither appears to have explicit origin in the Fourth Sonata, harmonically or thematically; these are new materials for Scriabin in 1908, engaging in a similar intrusion and suspension

[73] The transformative apotheosis technique and accompanying change of key is germane to Liszt's forms; similar techniques manifest in *Die Ideale* and two operatic paraphrases, the *Réminscences de Norma* and *Réminiscences de Lucia di Lammermoor*; see Alexander Rehding, 'Liszt's Musical Monuments', *19th-Century Music*, 26.1 (2002), pp. 52–72 (pp. 55–58 and 68–70), doi:10.1525/ncm.2002.26.1.52.

[74] In addition to the inclusion of separate structural strata for the *allegro fantastico*, *allegro impetuoso*, and *languido* materials, the reading of the Fifth Sonata expounded in Figure 1a–c differs from Smith's interpretation ('Scriabin's Multi-Dimensional Accelerative Sonata Forms', p. 194) in several respects. The analysis offered here balances both intra- and inter-textural considerations in that it acknowledges the potential assemblage of elements in op. 53 relative to the Fourth Sonata, after Hull and Baker. Smith's diagram indicates the *languido* material as P, whereas I pursue a view that this is an interpolated slow movement and that bar 47 is the outset of P material; to Smith, the latter is marked as the first component of a transition. To Smith, my designated S material is a slow movement in the sonata-cycle dimension. None of Smith's choices align well with the tonal planning explored later in this article, and it seems curious to regard the *languido* material as of thematic primacy in the sonata-form dimension given that its upwards transpositional journey mirrors that of the two *allegro* blocks. My interpretation is close to that of Filip Blachnio, though factors in two-dimensional aspects; see Blachnio, 'The Evolution of Musical Language and Sonata Form in the Piano Sonatas of Alexander Scriabin' (unpublished DMA dissertation, Rice University Texas, 2017), p. 54.

of the sonata-form dimension to the *languido* material each time they occur. None of the three materials extraneous to the sonata-form dimension can be said to play out much considerable sense of development. However, all do partake in an upwards transpositional scheme, which is applied rigorously throughout the piece, excepting only the work's conclusion. This plan appears opposed to the Schubertian subdominant recapitulatory strategy of the sonata-form dimension more broadly, a feature noted by Smith and Edwards as peculiar to Scriabin, which actually descends in register if we compare the right-hand writing of the exposition outset (bar 47) to that of the recapitulation outset (bar 329).

But the situation is not as simple as a two-dimensional potpourri of materials referable to sonata-cycle models intruding upon one single sonata form. For certain structural units in certain positions, Newman's double-function moniker, though now often viewed as a mere precursor to Vande Moortele's two-dimensional technology, seems an apt description of the formal functions certain sections acquire. Figure 1a–c provides a dotted outline for one particular musical unit, which is generated by suturing together the *allegro impetuoso* and *languido* materials. These two blocks (not in a sonata-form dimension) exhibit a kinship by repeated adjacency, with the *allegro impetuoso* always preceding the *languido* right up until their fourth and final appearances. In that apotheosized final appearance, the *languido* theme comes first, P-based coda material is interpolated in between, and the *allegro impetuoso* arises at its original transpositional level to conclude the sonata (compare bars 1–12 to bars 451–55), a strategy Scriabin employed often in later works with their great focus on cyclicity.[75]

If we imagine a real-time listening to, rather than a bird's-eye view of, the Fifth Sonata, the sutured-together *allegro impetuoso–languido* block also partakes in the trappings of a Hepokoskian/Darcian rotational structure; across bars 1–156 and bars 157–328, the exposition and development exhibit a remarkably similar ordered succession of themes (*allegro impetuoso*, *languido*, P, TR, S). However, the situation is complicated, in small part, by the intrusion of little fragments of *allegro fantastico* material (the scherzo block) and complicated in much larger part by the *allegro impetuoso–languido* appearance of bars 247–70, where this larger structural unit alters in character and threatens to interrupt the whole structure. Though the exposition and development perform relatively well from a rotational perspective, it appears best to invoke Wingfield's preferred notion of 'periodicity' for the recapitulation, i.e. a more flexible concept that 'can undergo permutation'.[76] The notion of a 'reversed recapitulation', a concept eschewed by Sonata Theory though germane to the writing of Schumann, Cone, Rosen, and Jackson, amongst others, finds a distant cousin in the

[75] See the conclusions of the Ninth and Tenth Sonatas, where abridged versions of opening material engender a sense of relaxation based on a bare Mystic Chord, after frenetic, scherzo-like codas. In the Fifth Sonata, the cyclical conclusion provides a spiralling 'motive of flight', rather than a relaxed postlude, probably because the Mystic Chord is only an incidental, not a structural, pitch resource for Scriabin in 1908; see Garcia, 'Scriabin's Symbolist Plot Archetype', pp. 277 and 284.

[76] Wingfield, 'Beyond "Norms and Deformations"', p. 150.

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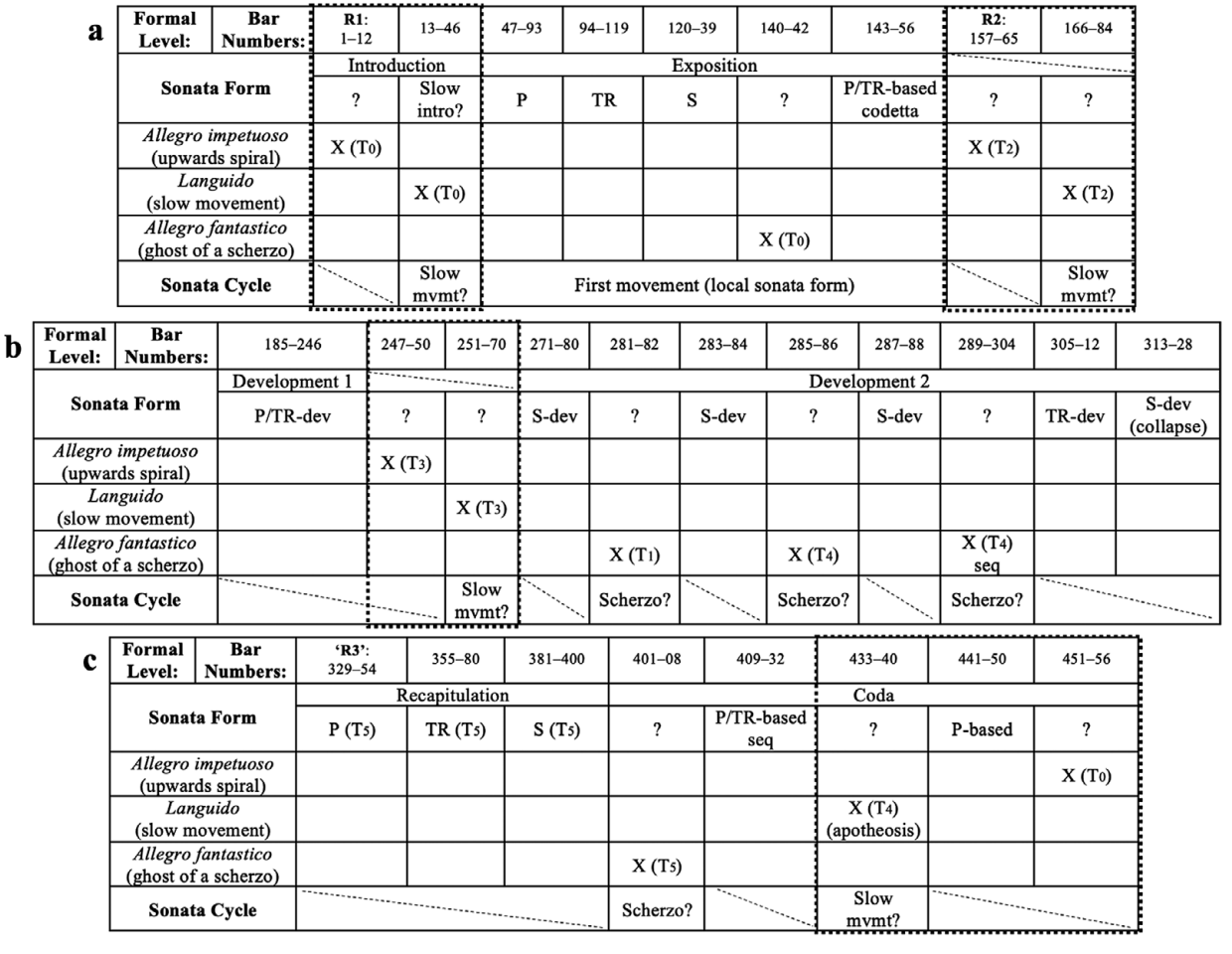

Figure 1. Scriabin, Fifth Sonata, formal summary: a) introduction–exposition–introduction repeat, b) development, c) recapitulation–coda.

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Fifth Sonata:[77] the *allegro impetuoso–languido* adjoined-block reprises after the sonata-form dimension has fully recapitulated and reached its ESC, so the rotational structure, if we may deem it so, is topsy-turvy, not a precise rerun of the thematic layout espoused by the exposition and development. Both Smith and Edwards note topsy-turvy features in Scriabin's later sonata forays, tonally and thematically; we will soon see this preference for an unusual kind of symmetry play out in both these regards in the Eighth.[78]

Appearance 4 of the *allegro impetuoso–languido* block doubles as a coda, whilst appearance 1 can be rationalized without issue as a slow introduction with initial flourish. Neither explicitly suspends the sonata-form dimension of the piece because of the potential interpretative multiplicity of parageneric spaces.[79] Appearance 2 of the *allegro impetuoso–languido* block serves two potential functions. Firstly, it engenders the quasi-rotational reading briefly entertained above; secondly, it acts as something akin to a pre-core to the development, a 'generally more relaxed' state of suspension prior to the P/TR interminglings of quite incredible technical demand soon to ensue.[80] A reading of bars 157–84 as suspending the sonata-form dimension is not incompatible, though, and they may even be heard as an introduction repeat rather than as a development component; such a hearing renders the content summarized in Figure 1a ternary-like in its construction. Figure 1a acknowledges that the pre-core reading of bars 157–84 is at best at the periphery of a sonata-form interpretation given its lack of thematic integration (note the dashed lines, borrowed from Vande Moortele's monograph).[81]

Appearance 3, which carries an outlier designation in its explicit suspension of the sonata-form dimension (note the dashed line in Figure 1b, bars 247–70), serves to partition the development into two almost equally weighted halves (bar 256 is the central point). In the development's first half, imbrication of P and TR material is rife, whilst in the development's second portion, S and *allegro fantastico* materials alternate in a more discrete fashion. It is in this second half of the development that we see Scriabin's fragment of a scherzo reach its most potent status, mirroring the placement of the scherzo 'movement' in Liszt's Sonata (just prior to the

[77] Ibid., p. 149. See also discussion of the distinction between 'recomposed' and 'reversed' recapitulations in Steven Vande Moortele, *The Romantic Overture and Musical Form from Rossini to Wagner* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 236–40, and discussions of 'main-theme deletion' and 'development recapitulation fusion' in Steven Vande Moortele, 'Apparent Type 2 Sonatas and Reversed Recapitulations in the Nineteenth Century', *Music Analysis*, 40.3 (2021), pp. 502–33, doi:10.1111/musa.12179.

[78] Smith, 'Scriabin's Multi-Dimensional Accelerative Sonata Forms', p. 187; Edwards, 'Setting Mystical Forces in Motion', p. 216.

[79] Hepokoski and Darcy note that it is 'difficult to generalize about what can happen in slow introductions' and that 'each discursive coda has its own role to play in the larger argument of the movement', leaving the door open to case-by-case interpretation; see *Elements of Sonata Theory*, pp. 287 and 297.

[80] Caplin, *Classical Form*, p. 147.

[81] See also the earlier publication of this tabular notation in Steven Vande Moortele, 'Beyond Sonata Deformation: Liszt's Symphonic Poem *Tasso* and the Concept of Two-Dimensional Sonata Form', *Current Musicology*, 86 (2008), pp. 41–62, doi:10.7916/cm.v0i86.5141.

recapitulation).[82] This material is, however, far from assertive of its own structural autonomy. Instead, *allegro fantastico* material is handled utterly discretely with regard to the S material stratified from it, as if Stravinsky's well-documented compositional methods have cut and pasted Scriabin's two blocks, one part of the sonata form and one not, with scissors and glue.[83] The breakneck motion and suspension of the sonata-form and sonata-cycle dimensions is a feature that differentiates Scriabin's Fifth Sonata from all the two-dimensional models examined in Vande Moortele's text; sonata-cycle fragments do not demonstrate formal integrity other than in miniature, topical terms.

The structure of the Fifth Sonata that we have rationalized so far can be distilled into a few sentences. There are two formal dimensions, one sonata-form and one sonata-cycle. The situation is complicated substantially by the fact that the sonata-cycle dimension is not linear in its presentation of material. Rather, musical units referable to a slow movement and to a scherzo intrude into the sonata form at various points. The *allegro impetuoso* material, which is quite unlike anything in the pre-1908 music, seems to exist in a sphere of its own, though it almost always occurs as a preparatory flourish for the *languido.* The blocks of the piece not in the sonata-form dimension ascend upwards in transposition, until their final appearances reprise the harmony of the work's opening.

In its coda apotheosis, the Fifth Sonata reaches something akin to a synthesis, though far from the kind that Cone outlines in his reading of Stravinsky; there is no simultaneous statement or superimposition of musical blocks, not even of two at once. Rather, Scriabin stages a remarkably sophisticated tonal scheme that reconciles his two primary structural components: the sonata-form dimension and the slow-movement element of the sonata-cycle dimension. In this reconciliation, the *allegro impetuoso* and *allegro fantastico* materials are present, but only as frames to the apotheosis. Thus *allegro fantastico* material engenders the start of the coda and the great crescendo towards bar 433 (a vital moment of fusion to be discussed shortly), whilst *allegro impetuoso* material terminates the whole work's structure, with a little assistance from P material, after the dynamic and registral apex of the apotheosis section (bar 440).

Let us unpack the sonata's reconciliation between its two structural dimensions through a visual aid. Example 1 proposes a two-dimensional voice-leading sketch, where the upper staves refer to the sonata-form dimension and the lower staves refer to the four *languido* appearances; this graphic sidelines the two *allegro* blocks, though it captures their spiralling transpositional ascent through the similar treatment the rising

[82] See the placement of the scherzo fugato in Liszt's Sonata, and other examples including *Tasso* and Zemlinsky's Second String Quartet; all three works have scherzo movements interpolated directly before the sonata-form dimension recapitulation.

[83] This compositional method is documented in Joseph Straus, *Stravinsky's Late Music* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 61–64. Smith believes there to be a Scherzo and Trio interplay in this part of the development, a reading that squares well with the alternation of *allegro fantastico* and S material, the latter of which is more relaxed. This Scherzo and Trio must be considered one that engages in yet another Stravinskian intercut relationship.

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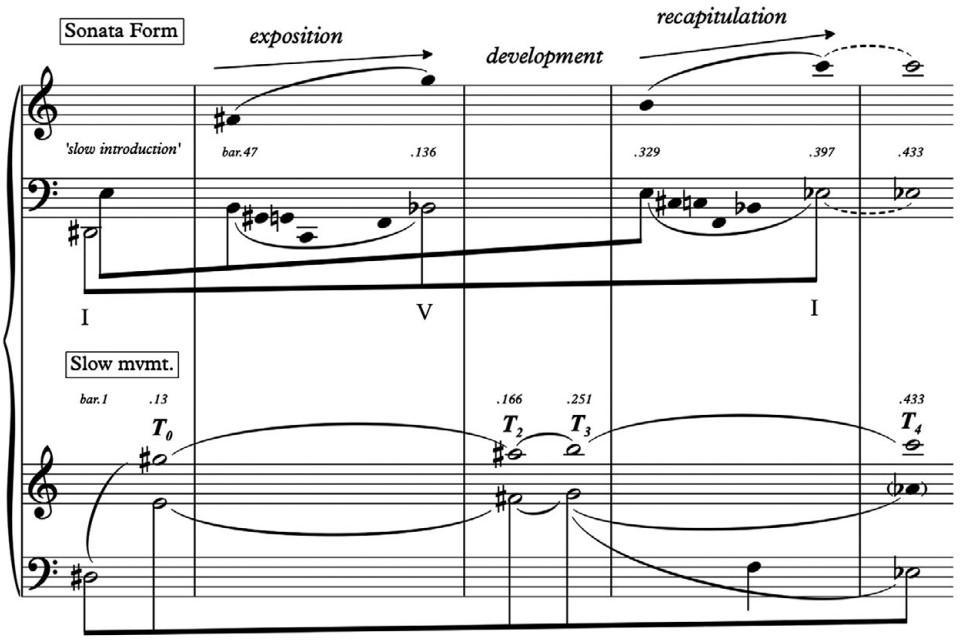
Example 1. Scriabin, Fifth Sonata, voice-leading sketch: interspersion of two structural I–V–I progressions with two-dimensional sonata form.



languido material receives.[84] However, the opening *allegro impetuoso* appearance (bars 1–12) is factored into Example 1 for two key reasons, namely that the harmonic contents of this initial flourish entail an E_{dia} macroharmonic profile scored with the bass note D♯. We are dealing with D♯ Locrian here, perhaps. This allows for the interpretation of the sonata's sonata-form dimension as playing out two staggered *Ursätze*, one through E–B–E and another through D♯–B♭–E♭.[85] Both fundamental structures begin in bars 1–12, the first with E (I) implicated through E_{dia}, before travelling, with temporal disconnect (generated by the intervening *languido* theme, which provides a secondary-dominant F♯ tonality), to B (V) through the B_{dia} profile of the exposition's outset. Then, once the rest of the exposition and development have elapsed, a return to E (I) is achieved through the E_{dia} profile of the recapitulation's outset, the sonata's 'subdominant recapitulation'. This I–V–I motion is beamed in

[84] Example 1 is thus a multi-level graph, not one that deals with Schenkerian structural levels but one that deals with formal dimensions; the two should not be confused.

[85] This reading differs substantially from existing attempts at voice-leading reduction of the Fifth Sonata, which rely on whole-tone and whole-tone-plus-octatonic deep-level structures, respectively; see James M. Baker, 'Scriabin's Music as Prism for Mystical Philosophy', in *Music Theory in Concept and Practice*, ed. by James M. Baker, David Beach, and Jonathan W. Bernard (University of Rochester Press, 1997), pp. 53–96 (p. 84); Jason Stell, 'Music as Metaphysics: Structure and Meaning in Skryabin's Fifth Piano Sonata', *Journal of Musicological Research*, 23.1 (2004), pp. 1–37 (pp. 16–17), doi:10.1080/01411890490277007.

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Example 1, though not marked with Roman numerals beneath it because it is the theoretically weaker of the sonata's two *Ursätze*. The second I–V–I motion present in the sonata is inaugurated by the D♯ bass note of the work's opening, subsequently moving to the chromaticized B♭ tonality of the S group in the exposition and then onto the chromaticized E♭ tonality of the S group in the recapitulation, a stronger motion (thus beamed with Roman numerals in Example 1) in that it aligns with where the EEC (bar 136) and ESC (bar 397) are most easily identified.

We can say two things about the Fifth Sonata in the above terms. Firstly, the opening *allegro impetuoso* material provides considerable utility from an extended Schenkerian perspective, containing the bass note required to generate the D♯–B♭–E♭ structural progression and the E_{dia} macroharmonic identity required to generate a weaker E–B–E structural progression. This discontinuous Stravinskian block is, in just its first appearance, a key player in the tonal argument of the sonata before it spirals off into its own transpositional scheme that 'operates simultaneously with the sonata process but does not invariably coincide with it'.[86] Secondly, the sonata-form dimension of the Fifth Sonata is itself constructed in two competing tonal structures of its own; it is clear that E♭ major is the principal goal of the two only at the outset of the apotheosis in bar 433. Related to the late clarification of the work's tonal goal is that the first *allegro impetuoso* appearance in the sonata engages in a sense of 'becoming' (Janet Schmalfeldt's term), though the formal function it acquires is dual in those very terms in that we only realize a) its placement and vital role in the sonata-form dimension's two *Ursätze* once the recapitulation and coda have affirmed E♭ major so strongly, and b) its placement in the spiralling registral ascent of its own block once three further appearances of this material have occurred.[87]

Turning to the lower pair of staves in Example 1, using the opening bass and melody notes of the *languido* theme appearances and charting these four appearances by upwards transposition generates an intriguing design that intercuts with the main sonata form. The original *languido* appearance at T_0 and the second and third appearances at T_2 and T_3 generate an ascending stepwise progression in compound major thirds, utterly distinct from the tonal argument within the sonata-form dimension. However, the apotheosized iteration of the *languido* theme (bar 433) only continues this upward motion to T_4 in the very top voice (see the right-hand C6 of bar 433, which connects to the arcing melody that concludes the S material in bar 397); bass support in this instance is instead derived from the E♭ pedal omnipresent until the work's conclusion from bar 397 onwards (the recapitulation ESC). The expected pitch that previously offered bass support to the *languido* theme is thus relegated to a middle-voice A♭ in bar 433, with little to no structural significance beyond the generation of an extended dominant-quality chord in E♭ major atop a 'tonic' pedal. Scriabin could not

[86] Simon Nicholls, 'Scriabin's Fifth Sonata: A New Aspect of Sonata Form', *Scriabin Association*, 2 January 2017 <http://www.scriabin-association.com/scriabins-fifth-sonata-new-aspect-sonata-form> [accessed 20 April 2024].

[87] Janet Schmalfeldt, *In the Process of Becoming: Analytic and Philosophical Perspectives on Form in Early Nineteenth-Century Music* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

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have rendered his structural voice-leading more clearly in regard to bar 433 as the moment when sonata principles and slow-movement principles unite: a consolidation of sonata-form and slow-movement principles together under the resounding umbrella of E♭ major. By the apotheosis, we come to realize that Scriabin's Stravinskian discontinuity was but a prelude all along, as the final presentation of slow-movement material is both transformed and assimilated into the design of the sonata-form dimension's emergent tonal goal. Characteristic of Scriabin's eschewal of cadential closure, E♭ major is never affirmatively cadenced in, despite the imposing three-stave texture and prolonged and extended dominant harmonies in this key. Instead, a relaunch into P and then *allegro impetuoso* material occurs, as if to wink at the rotational structure, now reversed, that the apotheosis has itself worked so hard to denature. The Fourth Sonata is a distant memory once the apotheosis of the Fifth has collapsed in on itself, though the two works do retain a kinship in that their respective movements (or 'movements') unite under one tonal umbrella in their closing stages.

The Enigmatic Eighth Sonata

By the composition date of the final three sonatas, of which the Eighth is the last, the most 'extended in scope', and has the 'most comprehensive two-dimensional form',[88] Scriabin had long departed harmony where extended Schenkerian tools can evince tonal forces as arbiters of coherence between structural dimensions (see notions of 'implicit tonality' in Baker's work).[89] Within the Eighth Sonata, Scriabin also stages a remarkable evolution from the Fifth in terms of his Lisztian-Stravinskian strategy, breaking ground from even the Ninth and the Tenth Sonatas, with which the Eighth was concurrently completed.

To understand the Eighth Sonata's formal argument, we must briefly grapple with two concepts: 'neofunction' and 'octatonic neighbourhoods'.[90] In the sonata, the three octatonic collections expand in scope to encompass their acoustic, harmonic minor, and harmonic major cognates, that is, the three asymmetrical collections that maximally intersect one parent octatonic collection.[91] The result of this fertile linkage is that Scriabin constructs vast scalar 'neighbourhoods' where each octatonic collection provides a nexus for four acoustic collections, four harmonic minor collections, and four

[88] Jeffrey S. Ritter, 'Between Harmony and Geometry: Structure and Form in the Music of Scriabin' (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Missouri, 2001), p. 113; Smith, 'Scriabin's Multi-Dimensional Accelerative Sonata Forms', p. 192.

[89] James M. Baker, 'Scriabin's Implicit Tonality', *Music Theory Spectrum*, 2.1 (1980), pp. 1–18, doi:10.2307/746177; *The Music of Alexander Scriabin*, p. 202; 'The Limits of Tonality', etc.

[90] I shall explain 'octatonic neighbourhood' below. For a detailed insight into 'neofunction', see Kenneth M. Smith, 'Skryabin's Revolving Harmonies, Lacanian Desire and Riemannian *Funktionstheorie*', *Twentieth Century Music*, 7.2 (2010), pp. 167–94; *Desire in Chromatic Harmony*, pp. 2–89; 'Scriabin's Multi-Dimensional Accelerative Sonata Forms', p. 182. Broadly, neofunction refers to the theory that the three octatonic collections can assume status as **T**-, **D**-, and **S**-positioned macro-structural harmonic areas.

[91] For a generalized theory of such transformations, see Dmitri Tymockzo, *A Geometry of Music: Harmony and Counterpoint in the Extended Common Practice* (Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 135.

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harmonic major collections.[92] Hereinafter, these expansive networks are designated $OctN_{x,y}$, where 'x,y' refers to the parent octatonic collection. Harmonic minor, harmonic major, and acoustic collections within neighbourhoods all maximally intersect one another too, so within and between neighbourhoods there is great opportunity for flux and variation based on minute voice-leading change; in these terms, the Eighth differs sonically by several degrees from the 'musical monochrome' of pure octatonicism in the Sixth and Seventh Sonatas.[93] As both Smith and Edwards note, octatonic neighbourhoods, expansive as they are, acquire a sense of extended functional status within the Eighth Sonata, just as the three octatonic collections had, in much purer states, functioned as ersatz 'keys' in earlier works.[94] Based on thematic correspondences and the sense of harmonic cyclicity that had become a requirement in sonata structure for Scriabin by 1913, we can deduce that $OctN_{0,1}$ holds a **T** neofunction in op. 66, $OctN_{1,2}$ a **D** neofunction, and $OctN_{0,2}$ an **S** neofunction. These neofunctional mappings mirror the ubiquity with which Scriabin employed the three parent octatonic collections as stand-in tonics, dominants, and subdominants throughout his late oeuvre.[95]

Just like our Fifth Sonata analysis, we shall now see how the Eighth Sonata's structure employs a Lisztian-Stravinskian argument through the interaction of its formal dimensions. Figure 2 provides a diagram with similar data to Figure 1a–c. However, because almost all of the Eighth Sonata is referable to its sonata-form dimension (little to no material is viewable as an interpolated movement), Figure 2 is rather more compact than its predecessor.[96] The Eighth Sonata reaches a level of integration between its two formal dimensions that is quite close to Liszt's Sonata. Neofunctional designations and

[92] Edwards, 'Setting Mystical Forces in Motion', p. 215.

[93] In fact, only the bridge material that sutures together the two sections of P material in the exposition and recapitulation is purely octatonic for a span of bars comparable to that found within the Sixth and Seventh Sonatas. For a discussion of the 'musical monochrome' created by various symmetrical pitch collections including the octatonic, see Vasilis Kallis, 'Modes of Cross-Collectional Interaction: A Study of Four Collections in Music by Debussy, Ravel and Scriabin' (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Nottingham, 2003), pp. 46 and 139.

[94] Smith, 'Scriabin's Multi-Dimensional Accelerative Sonata Forms', p. 183; Edwards, 'Setting Mystical Forces in Motion', p. 216. On octatonic 'keys', see Richard Taruskin, 'Chernomor to Kashchei: Harmonic Sorcery; or, Stravinsky's "Angle"', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 38.1 (1985), pp. 72–142 (p. 99), doi:10.2307/831550; 'Reviewed Work(s): *The Music of Alexander Scriabin* by James M. Baker and *Scriabin: Artist and Mystic* by Boris de Schloezer and Nicholas Slonimsky', *Music Theory Spectrum*, 10 (1988), pp. 143–69 (p. 160), doi:10.1525/mts.1988.10.1.02a00100; and *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, p. 811, which refer to the Sixth and opening of the Seventh Sonatas.

[95] Including op. 58 and the works after it, Scriabin started and ended sixteen out of twenty-eight works with $OctN_{0,1}$ material, eight works with $OctN_{1,2}$ material, and four with $OctN_{0,2}$ material.

[96] Notably, the boundaries between P^2 and TR in the sonata are hazy. We probably only rationalize bars 82–87 as entailing the start of the transition retroactively (given the continued presence of unaltered P material) once we hear the *tragique* transition proper of bars 88–95 (so deemed because Scriabin uses the fanfare motif in typical sonata transitions as a substitute for the MC; see the Fifth Sonata, bars 114–16, which serve such a formal function) and the thematically stable S material of bars 96–117. Figure 2 thus utilizes arrows not unlike those employed to indicate 'becoming' in Schmalfeldt's *In the Process of Becoming.*

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Bar Numbers	Global Section	Length	Section Details	Scalar/Harmonic Overview	Sonata Cycle Level	Neofunctions
0–21	Slow introduction	21	Slow introduction	$OctN_{0,1}$/6–Z44	Interpolated slow movement	**T**
22–51	Exposition	100	$P^{1.1}$ material	$OctN_{0,1}$	Sonata movement (Type 1)	
52–57			Bridge material	$Oct_{0,1}$		
58–87			$P^{1.2}$ material → Transition	$OctN_{0,1} – OctN_{1,2} – (Oct_{0,1}) – OctN_{0,2}$		**T – D – (T) – S**
88–95			Transition proper	$OctN_{0,2}$ + 6–Z44/A_b	Inactive? Slow movement?	**S**
96–117			S material	$OctN_{0,2}$ + Hex?		
118–21			Closing material	6–Z44/A_b		
122–85	Development	197	Developmental rotation 1	$OctN_{0,2} – OctN_{0,1} – OctN_{1,2} – OctN_{0,2}$	Two nested local sonata forms (Type 1)	**S – T – D – S**
186–263			Developmental rotation 2	$OctN_{1,2} – OctN_{0,2}$		**D – S**
264–319			Developmental rotation 3	$OctN_{1,2}$		**D**
320–49	Recapitulation	108	$P^{1.1}$ material	$OctN_{1,2}$	Sonata movement (Type 1)	
350–55			Bridge material	$Oct_{1,2}$		
356–85			$P^{1.2}$ material → transition	$OctN_{1,2} – OctN_{0,2} – (Oct_{1,2}) – OctN_{0,1}$		**D – S – (D) – T**
386–91			Transition proper	$OctN_{0,1}$ + 6–Z44/C	Inactive? Slow movement?	**T**
392–415			S material	$OctN_{0,1}$ + Hex?		
416–28			Closing material	$OctN_{0,1}$ + 6–Z44/C		
429–48	Coda	70	Coda[1]	$OctN_{0,1}$	Scherzo finale	
449–99			Coda[2]	$OctN_{0,1}$		

Where $OctN_{0,1}/Oct_{0,1}$ = **T**, $OctN_{1,2}/Oct_{1,2}$ = **D**, and $OctN_{0,2}/Oct_{0,2}$ = **S**

Figure 2. Scriabin, Eighth Sonata, formal/harmonic summary.

harmonic summaries for each of the sections are also provided in Figure 2, drawing on the two frameworks outlined above.

The Fifth and Eighth Sonatas are similar in some non-trivial ways. Firstly, both include a slow introduction in the sonata-form dimension that can also be conceptualized as a slow movement, though placed in an 'incorrect' first position in both instances. The Fifth Sonata's *languido* was but one agent of montage in its broader structure. The treatment of slow-movement materials in the Eighth Sonata is altogether more remarkable: the S material of the sonata-form dimension seems to be only a slight recomposition of the opening 21-bar slow introduction; both sections are identical in length, use three staves at various points, employ interlacing of the very same array of motifs, and, crucially, stage a similar sense of hexatonic/octatonic 'emulsification'.[97] When stacked, such likenesses suggest that the slow movement/slow introduction of the Eighth Sonata is a pre-emptive proto-iteration of the sonata form's S material, a double function upon double function that has gone unmentioned in the literature so far — probably due to the tempo disparity.[98]

There are other features of interest in the Eighth Sonata that differentiate it from the design of the Fifth. Whereas fragments of various movements were employed in a montage-like structure within op. 53, in op. 66 there are clear local sonata forms nested within the overarching sonata form, found in both the exposition and recapitulation P zones (bars 22–87 and bars 320–85; Smith notes only the first of these) and in the development between bar 174 and bar 263.[99] In the case of the local sonata movements nested within the exposition and recapitulation, from the overarching sonata-form perspective, these local forms are $P^{1.1}$–bridge–$P^{1.2}$ in construction, where both iterations of P material are comprised of two musical ideas: a descending flourish through harmonic minor material and an upwards striving through acoustic material. As such, Scriabin's local sonata strategy (forms that, in their own structurally autonomous right, are best considered Type 1) concatenates two materials in a montage-like manner within its more global thematic layout, like a Russian tea doll, holding formal constituents that only truly make sense when considered two-dimensionally. The scherzo-like 'bridge material' identified in Figure 2, some of the sonata's purest octatonicism, is an amplified cousin of the *allegro fantastico* block from the Fifth Sonata. In the Eighth's exposition and recapitulation, the bridge material does not assume so Stravinskian a treatment as in the Fifth, instead working as a fleeting

[97] Edwards, 'Setting Mystical Forces in Motion', p. 213. The motifs are documented in Simon Nicholls, 'Scriabin's Eighth Sonata: The Composer's Last Word on Sonata Form', *Scriabin Association*, 17 February 2019 <http://www.scriabin-association.com/skryabins-eighth-sonata-composers-last-word-sonata-form-simon-nicholls> [accessed 13 April 2024], and mirror the technique peculiar to Liszt, from the B-minor sonata, of using the introduction as a 'thematic womb'; see Kenneth Hamilton, *Liszt: Sonata in B Minor* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 38.

[98] Smith's essay notes that the opening slow material of the Sixth Sonata plays a similar role in that work's recapitulatory rotation; Scriabin adopted a related strategy in the Tenth Sonata, where the opening slow movement, which initially appears to be a slow introduction, partakes in all six rotations to some degree. The ramifications of slow introduction material 'becoming' S material retroactively are substantial for a rotational view of Scriabin's form.

[99] Smith, 'Scriabin's Multi-Dimensional Accelerative Sonata Forms', p. 194.

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development substitute (from the local Type-1 sonata-form perspective) to partition $P^{1.1}$ and $P^{1.2}$ into two equally weighted 29-bar subsections. This material also arises in the development's retransition (bars 306–19), where it is juxtaposed with fragmentary fanfare gestures from the earlier *tragique* transition proper; this same cut-and-paste narrative had played out in the Fifth Sonata's retransition, though there with scherzo-like material juxtaposed with S just prior to the 'collapse' that Smith identifies.

The Eighth Sonata's development is more complex than the Fifth's. In op. 53, this section was subdivided into two parts by the conjoined *allegro impetuoso–languido* module. The Eighth's development pursues its own quasi-rotational structure that consists of three distinct sections, each separated by a curious trill gesture quite unlike anything else in Scriabin's output (see bars 185 and 263).[100] From the two-dimensional perspective, the Eighth Sonata's development also betrays other structural tenets, based on structural mirroring. Pavchinsky identifies two intra-development sections that together generate what modern parlance describes as a Type-1 local sonata form, as shown in Figure 2.[101] Nicholls, drawing on the 'experience of learning to play this enormous continuous movement', locates five divisions in varying exact or partial correspondences, a sort of arch form.[102] Clearly, the development of op. 66 is multi-dimensional in the interpretations it engenders: two Type-1 sonatas, three rotations, and a five-part arch structure; it is little wonder that Smith's essay requires three-dimensional spatial metaphors at times.

To fully understand the Eighth Sonata's development, however, a detailed look at its recapitulation is required. The sonata's exposition travels from the neofunctional space of **T** through **D** to **S** (with some fleeting doubling-back on itself in bar 73). This piece sits at the apex of a long line of subdominant S-material works: Beethoven's Overture to *The Ruins of Athens*, the finale of Chopin's Sonata for Piano and Violoncello, the finale of Schumann's *Fantasie*, op. 17, and numerous movements by Schubert.[103]

[100] The trill gestures generate an exceptionally rare moment for Scriabin where four pitches, though registrally displaced, are squashed into one chromatic wedge; set-class 3–1 is melodically rare in set-theoretical breakdowns of Scriabin, set-class 4–1, the smallest means of packing four notes, almost forbidden (see Baker's 1986 monograph for such approaches). The novel status of these trills increases further when we consider the voicing of this chromatic wedge. The left-hand trills belong to the pitch collection that has just concluded the developmental rotation Scriabin wishes to terminate, whilst the right-hand trills belong to the pitch collection that is to begin the next rotation. It is highly unusual in Scriabin's practice to have the structural harmonies of one section blend into those of another, particularly as the harmonies themselves work together to generate a most anti-Scriabin sonority. Certainly, the sonic effect is as mesmerizing as the construction of these moments is rarefied.

[101] Sergei Pavchinsky, *Sonatnaya forma proizvedenii Skryabina* (Muzyka, 1979), p. 204.

[102] Nicholls, 'Scriabin's Eighth Sonata'.

[103] Janet Schmalfeldt, '"Nineteenth-Century" Subdominants', *Music Analysis*, 41.3 (2022), pp. 349–93 (pp. 370–71), doi:10.1111/musa.12200. The Schumann *Fantasie* third movement bears double comparison with Scriabin's Eighth Sonata in that its S material is initially presented in IV, as well as being more tonally and thematically assured (a 'slow waltz' to Schmalfeldt) than the former wandering P material, just as Scriabin's Eighth Sonata S material is in neofunctional **S** space ($OctN_{0,2}$) and far more thematically assured and octatonically pure (referable to just one neighbourhood rather than the full three utilized in the P material). A sonata reading of the *Fantasie* finale is not the chosen interpretation of some authors, notably Nicholas Marston; see *Schumann: Fantasie, op. 17* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 80.

When the P material returns (bar 320) in the neofunctional realm of **D**, the order is reversed, and the recapitulation proceeds from **D** through **S** to **T**, bearing direct comparison with the dominant recapitulation of Beethoven's *Leonore* Overture No. 3 and the first movement of Schubert's Fourth Symphony.[104] Because Scriabin's 'tonal' structure is tripartite (octatonicism comes in three distinct modes), rather than the bipartite I–V–I axis of functional tonality, the effect of a recapitulation in **D** neofunctional space is akin to the 'self-evident logic' that Hepokoski and Darcy identify in a Schubertian *subdominant* recapitulation; no recomposition is required for the recapitulation to travel back to **T**, minus some registral reworking that does not erode the nested local sonata form of bars 320–85.[105] A 'parallel' recapitulation thus ensues that produces the 'necessary tonal resolutions for the S and C zones', both in **T** neofunction $\mathrm{OctN}_{0,1}$, and this can only occur effectively if the development concludes in **D** space before bleeding over into the reprise.[106] In effect, the 'standing on the dominant',[107] or rather standing within **D** neofunctional space, that 'ought' to conclude the development is a feature of almost half of the recapitulation, meandering in the opposite manner to the exposition's octatonic argument. Some new motivic interlacing does also occur (see bars 344–49, which parallel the texture of the close of the slow introduction), but the recapitulation is, broadly, a replica of the exposition in all significant terms. Only eight bars of closing material to usher in the coda differentiate their lengths.

Reading the present analysis of the Eighth Sonata so far, one could be forgiven for thinking that Scriabin's strategy was in no way discontinuous; two-dimensional complexity and octatonic balance have been almost the sole features, and both appear executed with considerable elegance. There are Stravinskian characteristics at play here too, though. Firstly, the P zone is block-like, as previously mentioned. Secondly, the motivic interminglings in the development are often not so much mixtures but sharp juxtapositions between musical units; bars 297–319 are most instructive in this regard.

Eagle-eyed viewers of Figure 2 will note that there is some material, mostly in the transition sections, that is not referable to a single octatonic neighbourhood. In these instances, with an eye on the fact that in late Scriabin theme and harmony are joined at the hip, the set-class membership for the music is given, 6–Z44, alongside a hypothesized 'root' tone affiliated with each appearance of this set.[108] Set 6–Z44 is a pitch resource novel to the Eighth Sonata in Scriabin's oeuvre, arising most prominently as a rhythmically obscure (triplet versus quadruplet) idea that a) seems to oscillate, at breakneck speed, between a minor triad with an added major seventh and a dominant

[104] Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, pp. 278–79.
[105] Ibid., p. 265. In essence, the 'up a fifth' motion from I to V in a textbook tonal exposition is consolidated by the 'up a fifth' motion from IV to I in a textbook subdominant 'parallel' recapitulation. The octatonic equivalent of this is best thought of as a rotation about three equidistant points on a circle, as in Ernő Lendvai's 1971 tri-axial study of Bartók; thus, **T** rotates to **D** rotates to **S** in the exposition, whilst **D** rotates to **S** rotates to **T** in the 'parallel' recapitulation, in both cases a 240-degree shift.
[106] Ibid., p. 265.
[107] Caplin, *Classical Form*, p. 257.
[108] On the welding of theme and harmony in Scriabin, see Carl Dahlhaus, *Schoenberg and the New Music*, ed. by Derrick Puffett and Alfred Clayton (Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 204.

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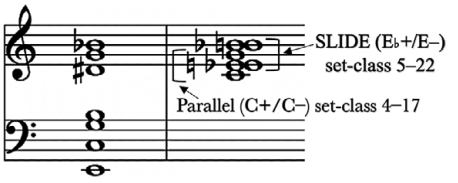
Example 2. Scriabin, Eighth Sonata, pitch-centred voicing of set-class 6–Z44, displaying coexistent third and seventh types.



seventh, and b) amplifies the uneasy semitone 'tremors' of the Fifth Sonata's transitional material.[109] Bars 82–87 provide a representative example of 6–Z44 in context, treated with maximum thematic insulation from the striving P material that surrounds it.

Set 6–Z44 arises in other locations, too. Firstly, it is the upbeat sonority to bar 1 and a key player in the Introduction, framing the chorale-like texture of bars 1–4. There it manifests as a chord rooted on C, in first inversion, with minor *and* major thirds and minor *and* major sevenths; Example 2 rationalizes such an identity in terms of C as a pitch centre. This particular sonic likeness is hard to shake for the duration of the work, particularly in light of the much-explored role of pitch centricity in Scriabin's late harmonic practice.[110] In such terms, 6–Z44 may even be heard as a concentrated fusion of the constituents of a neo-Riemannian 'SLIDE' transformation (E♭ major to E minor) over a C root, with the stabilizing C–G fifth held invariant.[111]

Other manifestations of 6–Z44 include its extensive surfacing in the development as part of the triplet–quadruplet rhythmic obfuscations, composing out its micro-appearances in the exposition's transition. Moreover, the set arises as three *piano* stabbed chords in bars 214–15 and 292–93, gestures almost as athematic and peculiar as the aforementioned double trills that partition the developmental rotations. In this final instance, 6–Z44 appears to reset the development's motivic working, in both instances engendering pseudo-reprises of S material set in sharp distinction from any other thematic ideas. Excluding those within the introduction, all 6–Z44 appearances are treated with the utmost insularity, as if these are little suspended fragments of some

[109] Similar material appears briefly, though asserts little structural agency, in the Sixth (see bar 171) and Seventh Sonatas (see bar 66). For theorizing on Scriabin and tremors, see Inessa Bazayev, 'The Scriabin Tremor and its Role in his Oeuvre', in *Demystifying Scriabin*, ed. by Smith and Kallis, pp. 115–33.

[110] Hearing this appearance of 6–Z44 as an extended C chord of some nature is a doubly tenable interpretation in that the lower-stave bedrock to the introduction outlines a C-major triad in first inversion. In bars 1–4, there is a sense of an extended chord rooted on C moving to some kind of extended chord rooted on A; Scriabin clearly chooses a 'first inversion' for his C chord to initiate the quartal bass motion E to A, an exceptionally novel strategy in his late works where perfect intervals are so often minimized (see Baker, *The Music of Alexander Scriabin*, pp. 158–61).

[111] Recent work by Amin Honarmand has demonstrated how across the twentieth century, pitch-class sets may be derived from fused combinations of the 'SLIDE' and 'Parallel' Neo-Riemannian operations; see 'The Subsets of SLIDE- and Parallel-Related Combinations in Twentieth-Century Music', *Music Analysis*, 42.1 (2023), pp. 74–111, doi:10.1111/musa.12206. In the case of the 6–Z44 vertical posited above, the 'Parallel' operation is present with regard to the nested C major-minor tetrachord component.

other piece or style (few will not have noticed the shared set-class membership with the 'Schoenberg hexachord') — just like the *allegro fantastico* ghost of a scherzo and the opening *allegro impetuoso* block from the Fifth Sonata. This thematic hermeticism noted, all 6–Z44 appearances in op. 66 exhibit what can be thought of as chordal root tones — built up thus: [0, 3, 4, 7, 10, 11], where 0 equates to a discernible pitch centre — that map neatly onto one of the four nodal points of the parent octatonic collection that governs the neighbourhood in force at that particular moment. Pitch centricity, an established essential condition in Scriabin's late works, is in no way eroded by this unusual set and its strange orthography.

This harmony is remarkable in more than its spelling system, though, because despite its distinctly discontinuous treatment within the sonata structure (and thus its sense of non-belonging to either the sonata-form or the sonata-cycle dimensions), 6–Z44 summarizes the variable scale degrees of the various scalar maximal intersections that govern the work's pitch structure. If we conceptualize 6–Z44 not as a set-class but as a pitch-centred entity in tertian voicing, in the manner outlined above in its very first appearance in 'bar 0' and rationalized in Example 2, we can note that it possesses both types of third and both types of seventh. These are precisely the key variable scale degrees that govern the parsimonious voice-leading in the sonata.

Let us step back for a moment. Smith's 'neofunctional' and Edwards's 'octatonic neighbourhood' analyses of op. 66 agree that $OctN_{0,1}$, by way of example, holds an expanded tonic status, comprised of the following array of thirteen scales: $Oct_{0,1}$, $C_{ac,}$ $E♭_{ac}$, $F♯_{ac}$, A_{ac}, Ghm, B♭hm, C♯hm, Ehm, DHM, FHM, A♭HM, BHM. Whilst I agree that the sonata partitions its neighbourhoods in this way, there is no sense, within $OctN_{0,1}$, for example, of G, B♭, C♯, E, D, G, A♭, or B centricity. Indeed, within a neighbourhood, pitch centricity remains entirely affiliated to the nodal points of the parent octatonic collection governing that neighbourhood. Although the hm and HM scales appear as enharmonic objects, they are modally permuted to adhere to the diminished-seventh quartet of pitch centricities that make up the nodal tones of the parent octatonic collection. Thus Scriabin uses the fourth mode of the harmonic minor scale, also known as the 'altered Dorian' scale, and the fourth mode of the harmonic major scale, also known as the 'Lydian ♭3' scale.

The role of 6–Z44 as an abstract transformational nexus now becomes clear, as shown in Example 3. The right-hand portion of this diagram shows Scriabin's well-established whole-tone, acoustic, and octatonic voice-leading procedures that bridge larger neighbourhood relations; these have been understood since Callender's 1998 work. Turning to the relationship between columns, acoustic collections are related to altered Dorian collections by lowering their natural third by a semitone to a minor third; this variable scale degree is summarized by one aspect of 6–Z44. Further, considering the relationships in the left-hand portion of Example 3, altered Dorian collections are related to Lydian ♭3 collections by raising their minor-seventh scale degree to a major seventh, a feature also exemplified by the 6–Z44 object. These variable scale degrees have profound ramifications for musical structure, for in the P material throughout the sonata, acoustic → altered Dorian transformations are the harmony's foundational premise; the two P-zone components alternate in this way,

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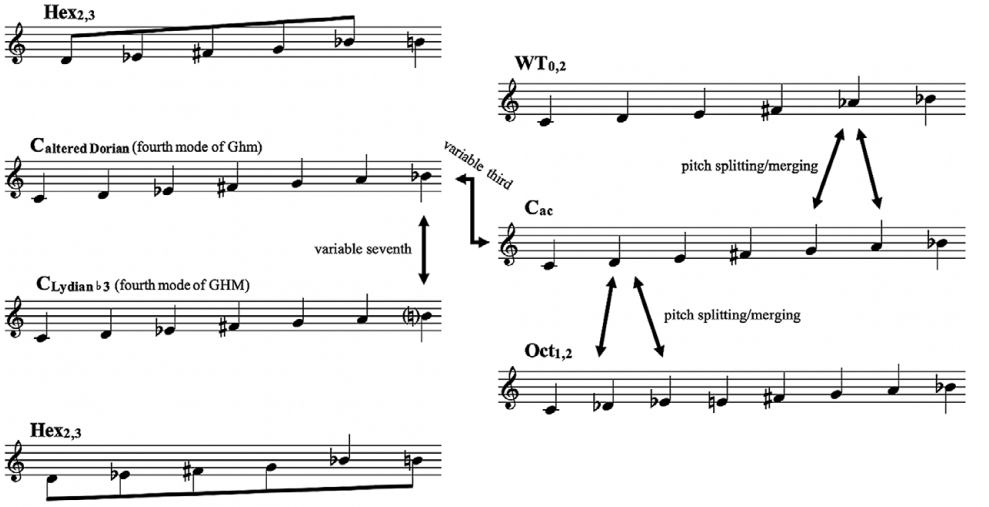
Example 3. Scriabin, Eighth Sonata, scalar parsimony model for hexatonic/octatonic interaction.



strictly, throughout bars 22–51. In the S material and in the development, altered Dorian → Lydian ♭3 transformations are a more frequent manoeuvre, resulting in passages of complete near-hexatonic cycling through all four of Richard Cohn's so-called 'hexatonic systems'.[112] Bars 198–213 and 276–91 provide the clearest examples of such movement, an utterly novel soundscape in the broader context of Scriabin's published oeuvre, in which (almost full) hexatonic collections rotate about the four nodal points of $Oct_{1,2}$.[113] Discerning scalar theorists will note that Example 3 posits a particular richness to the soundscape of op. 66. It offers a complete model for how octatonicism and hexatonicism relate without eroding the pitch centricity germane to both Scriabin's octatonic neighbourhoods and wider practice; diagrams extrapolating 'acoustic → altered Dorian → Lydian ♭3 pathways' from the other three nodal points of $Oct_{0,1}$ would each yield different hexatonic collections to exhaust the quartet of Cohn's systems. To achieve this, we must acknowledge that any given Lydian ♭3 harmony at play temporarily erodes the scalar purity of its relevant $OctN_{x,y}$; C altered Dorian and C_{ac} maximally intersect $Oct_{0,1}$, for instance, whilst C Lydian ♭3 belongs to another neighbourhood altogether.

[112] Richard Cohn, 'Maximally Smooth Cycles, Hexatonic Systems, and the Analysis of Late-Romantic Triadic Progressions', *Music Analysis*, 15.1 (1996), pp. 9–40, doi:10.2307/854168. The cycling is 'near-hexatonic' because Scriabin prefers the right-hand melodic use of set-class 5–21, the sole hexatonic subset, during these bars, not pure set-class 6–20. This occurs because altered Dorian and Lydian ♭3 collections that themselves share a root also share (slightly different) five-note components of one hexatonic collection, as beamed in Example 3.

[113] This technique prefigures the constitution of some harmonies in Scriabin's *Prefatory Action* sketches, as explored in Simon Morrison, 'Skryabin and the Impossible', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 51.2 (1998), pp. 283–330 (p. 316), doi:10.2307/831979.

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In sum, we are presented with a discordance in the Eighth Sonata's treatment of its 6–Z44 block. On the one hand, this unit, in all its real-time, audible appearances within the sonata form (parageneric space excluded), suggests a lack of integration with the rest of the work. However, from a more abstract, harmony-orientated perspective, 6–Z44 is a summative entity regarding the work's key pitch-collection interplays. It seems to me that the Eighth Sonata reaches a level of disjunction and obfuscation quite unique even for Scriabin, with the formal treatment of material contradicting its status as a harmonic nexus. Close comparison ought to be made with the first twelve *allegro impetuoso* bars of the Fifth Sonata; there too, a discrete block handled outside of the principal sonata form was a key player in the extendedly tonal argument that occurred. Between 1908 and 1913, Scriabin's harmonic language evolved considerably, though the relationship between harmony and formal units retained its subtle trappings predicated on an uneasy discord. In both sonatas examined here, Scriabin's discontinuous blocks fail to partake in any developmental trajectory associated with the sonata-form dimension; nevertheless, they present the missing piece to the enigma that is each work's abstract harmonic argument.

It was Dahlhaus who first noted the problem that Scriabin's late harmonic appetites posed for sonata form, a 'contradiction' that required 'rescue'.[114] Such negative outlooks are reinforced in scholarship by Copland's earlier assertion of 'straitjackets' and by Macdonald's notion of Scriabin sonata analysis as an 'unproductive activity'.[115] For Dahlhaus, only deferral to Lisztian virtuosity in recapitulations and codas could cure Scriabin's sonata deficiency.[116] The Eighth Sonata is not 'accelerative' in these terms, though, despite its vertiginous coda; the central development is the virtuosic climax of the work and no late apotheosis is staged, as in the Fifth, Seventh, and Ninth Sonatas. Indeed, the exposition and recapitulation are mirror images of one another, not only in octatonic scheme but also in terms of character and real-time performance duration. The 70 bars of coda also mirror the 21 bars of slow introduction when accounting for their tempo disparity, as Ritter notes.[117] An elegance and balance of the harmonic and formal dimensions is clearly key for Scriabin in this work; Kelkel speaks of a 'mirror with double facets'.[118] Such features are intruded upon and set into sharpest relief by

[114] Dahlhaus refers to the limitations that manifest when Scriabin's harmonies are grafted onto the tension–release dynamic of sonata form; we will come to this notion shortly. See *Schoenberg and the New Music*, pp. 206–09.

[115] Aaron Copland, *What to Listen for in Music* (McGraw-Hill, 1967), p. 118.; Hugh Macdonald, *Skryabin* (Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 60. Copland's vocabulary of bodily binding indicates an opinion that Scriabin, despite harmonic innovation, adhered closely to an A. B. Marxian sonata model; Copland regards this as 'one of the most extraordinary mistakes in music'.

[116] Dahlhaus, *Schoenberg and the New Music*, pp. 201–09. Dahlhaus refers to what modern scholarship knows as the 'vertiginous dances', identified by Garcia ('Scriabin's Symbolist Plot Archetype'), and to the 'accelerationist trajectory' outlined in Smith's *Desire in Chromatic Harmony*, both of which see virtuosity peak in the near-closing stages of most Scriabin sonatas.

[117] Ritter, 'Between Harmony and Geometry', pp. 153–57.

[118] Manfred Kelkel, *Alexandre Scriabine: sa vie, l'ésotérisme et le langage musical dans son œuvre* (Honore Champion, 1978), p. 150.

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the Stravinskian character of the 6–Z44 'block', which both belongs and does not belong, in different senses, to the two deft formal dimensions.

Conclusions: How and Why, Influence versus Inheritance

At the outset of this article, I declared a desire to uncover not just *how* Scriabin's mature sonata forms are Lisztian-Stravinskian but *why*. I hope that the first of those goals has been satisfied in some regard by the analyses above. Those that remain unconvinced about the application of a Lisztian-Stravinskian lens to the Sixth, Seventh, Ninth, and Tenth Sonatas might wish to note the language of thorough thematic demarcation employed in Garcia's 'symbolist plot archetype' reading of the sonatas from the Fifth to the Tenth (minus the Eighth). The 'block' nature of Scriabin's structural units has been a fixture, implicitly, of the literature for at least two decades; the commonplace 'modular assembly' construction elucidated in Hepokoski and Darcy's *Elements* is adopted by Scriabin and made ever more modular, ever more discontinuous, ever more Stravinskian.[119] Scriabin, of course, was not to know of that final label in his lifetime.

As for the question of *why* Scriabin sought to construct his mature sonata forms in a two-dimensional manner with more than a hint of Stravinskian discontinuity worked into his structural arguments, several complementary factors appear to be at play. To each of the individual characteristics first: Scriabin's sonata forms are two-dimensional and thus Lisztian in their inheritance not simply because the climate of sonata forms post-1853 required innovation to avoid stagnation. Nor do these traits manifest because Scriabin was directly wired into the world of Alexander Siloti, Liszt's greatest champion in Silver Age Russia, though such existing, apparently self-explanatory, links between Liszt and Scriabin seem likely to have been nurtured and strengthened by this biographical bridge. Rather, Scriabin's sonatas appear to me most justifiably two-dimensional precisely because they are 'blocky'; that is, they are Lisztian because they are also Stravinskian. This may strike some readers as extraordinary historical acrobatics with composer-named conceptual heuristics. However, the interpretative angle of multi-dimensional movement nesting is necessitated, within Scriabin's already small structures, by his desire to imbue 'textbook' sonata form with sharply contrasting materials that resemble — in well-delineated topical terms accorded by Garcia's work — different movement structures in the sonata-analytic paradigm, both single- and multi-movement-framed. In short, the inclusion of certain discontinuous structural components prompts fertile interpretation in two-dimensional terms; we will revisit this notion again shortly.

Rerouting back to historical considerations, I have been careful in this article to minimize discussions of direct influence and instead to use the term 'inheritance'. This softer vocabulary enunciates a more general biographical climate in which Liszt's influence on Scriabin sonatas is theorized as thriving, one that flies closer to T. S. Eliot's 'generosity theory' than to more anxious Bloomian frameworks popularized by

[119] On modularity, see Smith, 'Scriabin's Multi-Dimensional Accelerative Sonata Forms', p. 184.

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Straus and Korsyn in musicological discourse.[120] Scriabin's sonata forms are Stravinskian, to an extent, for quite the opposite reason to the Liszt connection; indeed, it seems likely that Stravinsky might have acquired what became his structural hallmark from Scriabin, not the other way around. And the notion of 'inheritance' holds sway here again, for Stravinsky likely acquired such hallmarks from composers in addition to Scriabin (Debussy? Mussorgsky? etc.), to say little of the uptake of octatonicism, and hexatonicism, that almost certainly *also* came from Rimsky-Korsakov as well as from his early theosophist idol.[121] Philip Ewell expounds the hexatonic angle in detail and further notes the important matter of a post-Wagnerian harmonic inheritance in this regard, a connection that the Scriabin scholar must feel acutely and relate both to harmony, which Scriabin maximalized in cardinality relative to even Wagner, *and* to the cultivation of 'blocky' structures.[122] Debussy, Strauss, Mahler, and even Schoenberg are also probably players in this shared climate of interconnectedness.

Scriabin's Stravinskian sonata tenets are probably the result of negotiating several compositional penchants. The first is his preference for miniaturism.[123] This results in the brief duration of all the sonatas from the Fifth to the Tenth, relative to other two-dimensional works; these are compressions of a Lisztian model more accustomed to expansive temporal domains.[124] Miniaturism also plays into Scriabin's sculpting of well-defined musical units referable to Symbolist plot archetypes. To create a tangible sonata structure, such small units must be combined en masse to render a broader form, this necessitating ambition that Scriabin was not usually accustomed to.[125]

[120] For a summary of theories of influence in music, see Joseph Straus, *Remaking the Past: Musical Modernism and the Influence of the Tonal Tradition* (Harvard University Press, 1990), pp. 1–20. Eliot's model, where artists assimilate the generous provisions of the past, can be traced to his 1919 essay 'Tradition and Individual Talent' and is adopted, broadly, in musicological studies by Charles Rosen ('Influence: Plagiarism and Inspiration', *19th-Century Music*, 4.2 (1980), pp. 87–100, doi:10.2307/746707) and Leonard B. Meyer ('Innovation, Choice, and the History of Music', *Critical Inquiry*, 9.3 (1983), pp. 517–44, doi:10.1086/448215). For Bloomian frameworks in musicological study, see Straus, *Remaking the Past*, and Kevin Korsyn, 'Towards a New Poetics of Musical Influence', *Music Analysis*, 10.1–2 (1991), pp. 3–72, doi:10.2307/853998.

[121] Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, p. 283, offers groundwork for this more general view of Scriabin's octatonicism.

[122] Philip Ewell, 'On Rimsky-Korsakov's False (Hexatonic) Progressions outside the Limits of a Tonality', *Music Theory Spectrum*, 42.1 (2020), pp. 22–42, doi:10.1093/mts/mtz020.

[123] For a discussion of miniaturism in Scriabin's life and works, see Stephen Downes, 'Scriabin's Miniaturism', in *Demystifying Scriabin*, ed. by Smith and Kallis, pp. 99–114; Downes touches only fleetingly on the late works, focusing instead on connections to Nietzsche and the general climate of 'enigmas and excesses produced when multiplicity is squeezed within a singularity' (p. 103).

[124] Next to all the two-dimensional forms surveyed by Vande Moortele, Scriabin's sonatas are miniature. Liszt's Sonata in B minor is over thirty minutes in length, *Tasso* between twenty and twenty-three minutes long, *Die Ideale* around twenty-seven minutes, Strauss's *Don Juan* around twenty minutes and his *Ein Heldenleben* at least forty-five. Schoenberg's *Pelleas und Melisande* is typically between forty and forty-seven minutes in length, his First String Quartet similar, whilst the First Chamber Symphony runs at just over twenty minutes. Zemlinsky's Second String Quartet is thirty-six minutes long. By contrast, Scriabin's longest mature sonata is the Eighth; most performances last around thirteen-and-a-half minutes.

[125] Pople remarks that the tone poems 'stand like islands' in a 'sea' of piano miniatures; see *Skryabin and Stravinsky*, p. 15. One might also note that Scriabin's truly large-scale projects almost always ended

The compression is thus twofold, at the level of the overall piece and the level of the musical unit.

A negotiation of national identity may also have a role to play in Scriabin's Stravinskian structures. Smith asserts that 'Scriabin is doing something idiosyncratically Russian with these structures […] staging a dialogue along the lines of Eisenstein's Montage cinema'.[126] A reference to Cone's work follows, mooring Scriabin to Stravinskian 'Russianness' by implication. I do not wish to pursue generic national musical stereotypes in this article.[127] We know that Scriabin, though connected through publishing to the Belyayev school of composers for some time, was essentially ambivalent towards the Russianness espoused by several of his colleagues. Scriabin maintained a healthy distance, with a more cosmopolitan and yet (perversely) more insular outlook on style, though whether conscious rejection of Rimsky and his students, amongst others, is attributable to the all-consuming nature of his world views from about 1907 onwards or to personal grudges is up for debate.[128]

I think that a more telling 'Russianness' in Scriabin's music is his employment of the pitch collections that saw first extensive use in Rimsky-Korsakov, and concurrently in Liszt — with cross-pollination evident.[129] Because such symmetrical resources (chiefly octatonicism, known as 'Rimsky-Korsakov's mode' in Russia during Scriabin's lifetime) lend themselves to cyclical rotation, potentially ad infinitum, the harmonic evolution of Scriabin's oeuvre almost necessitates a block-like structure in some regard. To cite the simplest possible example: when a passage's harmonic motion is confined to octatonic collections, some sense of thematic insulation between materials is required to ensure that the sound world does not turn into Kallis's idea of a 'musical monochrome'. All octatonic collections have the same character, harmonically speaking, which engages in dissolution of the teleology familiar to functional tonal arguments, so the material itself must be juxtaposed in some other way to avoid prosaic circularity. The problem is particularly acute in extended sonata forms. Scriabin negotiated an avoidance of monochrome, perhaps what he would have deemed 'Rimsky-Korsakoffery', partly through his well-documented acoustic–octatonic interactions,

with bathetic death, not unlike the composer's own succumbing to an infected furuncle in 1915. Scriabin jettisoned plans for what would have been a middle-period opera, aborted his grandiose *Mysterium* project, and provided just fifty-four pages of *Prefatory Action* sketches, an 'asymptotic process' (to borrow Morrison's term) if ever there was one; see Boris de Schloezer, *Scriabin: Artist and Mystic*, trans. by Nicholas Slonimsky (University of California Press, 1987), pp. 157–76. Even the choral finale of the First Symphony, which calls Beethoven's Ninth to mind in several respects, was declared 'unperformable' by Rimsky-Korsakov, Glazunov, and Lyadov; this section was omitted at the work's premiere in November 1900.

[126] Smith, 'Scriabin's Multi-Dimensional Accelerative Sonata Forms', p. 190.

[127] Generic discussion would be doomed to mention that although Taruskin's now famous 1996 notion of *drobnost* (splinteredness) can be applied to Scriabin's mature sonatas quite readily, his accompanying notions of *nepodvizhnost* (immobility) and *uproshchenieye* (radical simplification of means) seem more at odds with Scriabin's post-Wagnerian harmonic language of desire. Stravinsky is much more 'Russian' than Scriabin in these terms.

[128] It is perhaps significant that although Scriabin's writing derides almost everyone, including, eventually, Chopin and Wagner, Liszt is not subjected to such a treatment.

[129] Taruskin, 'Chernomor to Kashchei', outlines this cross-pollination in detail.

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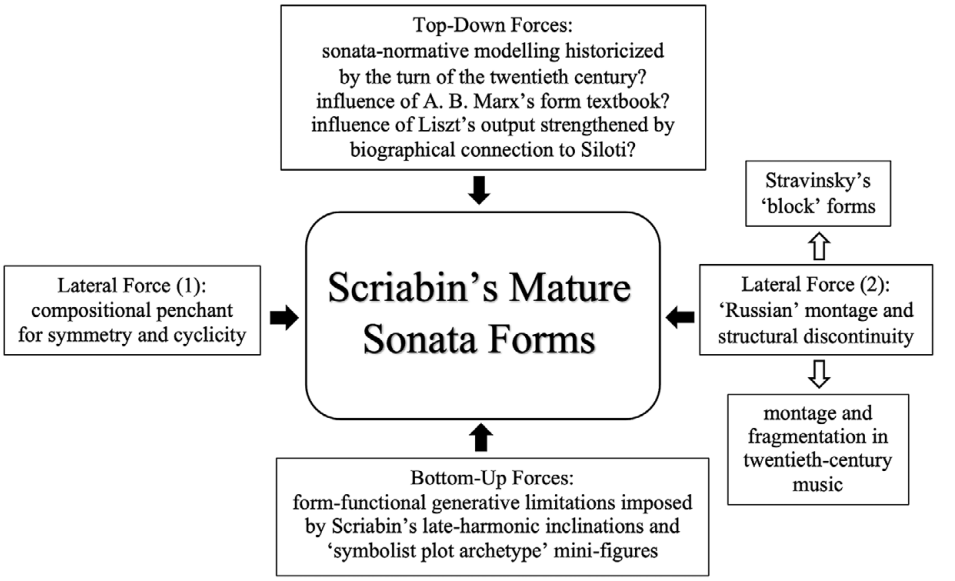

Figure 3. Scriabin's mature sonata forms: cross-currents and top-down/bottom-up factors.

though such subtle strategies, predicated on minute semitone inflection, go only so far.[130] Dahlhaus hit upon the true angle, however, in noting that both Scriabin's miniaturist leanings and the harmonic nature of his thematic materials, 'suggested by the chord centre technique', work together to make the motifs 'extremely short', even cellular.[131] Scriabin, lover of prophecy that he was, staged his own self-fulfilling structural prophecy in his embrace of certain idiosyncratic harmonies most comfortably set as small musical units.[132]

Ultimately, it is the interaction of so-called 'Russian' formal and harmonic strategies (whatever the cause–effect relation between these may be) with the more stereotypically 'Germanic', 'European' sonata principle that results in Scriabin's curious Lisztian-Stravinskian approach towards structure and form in the mature sonatas. Scriabin, ever the cosmopolitan composer in his outlook, found a fruitful way to reconcile a New German model with the structural hallmarks of his homeland, whilst various other lateral and bottom-up forces exerted pressure on his sonata treatments from other angles. Figure 3 attempts to capture this convergence of factors; in short, the mature

[130] Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, p. 799; Vasilis Kallis, 'Demystifying the Mystic', in *Demystifying Scriabin*, ed. by Smith and Kallis, pp. 134–57 (pp. 139–42).
[131] Dahlhaus, *Schoenberg and the New Music*, p. 207.
[132] The Lisztian-Stravinskian sonata theory offered here occupies an interstitial space between the normative modelling of Hepokoski and Darcy, for given time periods, and the recent bottom-up approach of Yoel Greenberg on sonata form as emergent phenomenon; see *How Sonata Forms: A Bottom-Up Approach to Musical Form* (Oxford University Press, 2022). Scriabin's mature forms are an interaction between a top-down historicized model at the turn of the twentieth century *and* bottom-up and sideways forces generated by his penchant for the miniature and certain 'Russian' harmonies and structural hallmarks.

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sonatas are pressure-cooked by numerous competing forces. Concordant with notions of multifaceted inheritance, the convergence of such forces is, of course, also a matter of their interplay. Indeed, one might extrapolate, with reference to the lack of formal self-sufficiency Scriabin's sonata-cycle elements possess relative to the larger models surveyed in Vande Moortele's 2011 monograph, that the atomization of the formal integrity of elements of a profoundly New German model provided a catalytic resource for the 'blocky' approach to structure that characterized much musical style across the twentieth century. In such terms, maybe we ought to speak of a Stravinskian New German inheritance too. Nevertheless, by reading his mature sonatas in such terms, we may now begin a more sophisticated reassessment of Scriabin's 'Russianness', which likely exerted effects on Stravinsky, and his ties to the earlier tradition of sonata-form innovation pioneered by Liszt. Scriabin, far from being hermetically sealed from musics before, surrounding, and after him, is readily 'stitchable' into at least these two traditions, and probably many more. This position is clearest when scholarship shifts focus from harmony to form, though harmony undeniably has a role to play in the arguments outlined above. Indeed, in at least the two watershed works analysed above, harmony entails much of the glue that binds discontinuous and continuous formal tenets together.[133]

Because New German and Russian traditions are often conceptualized as diametrically opposed, and thus difficult to reconcile in a single piece, particularly alongside Scriabin's harmonic appetites and his penchant for symmetry and miniaturism, the legacy and pre-legacy of their appearances in his sonata structures has resisted classification until now. Application of a Lisztian-Stravinskian lens to *Le Poème de l'extase* and *Prometheus* appears the next logical step, perhaps alongside consideration of the extramusical borrowing that these two tone poems also demonstrate with regard to New German and 'Russian' heritages.[134] As is often the case with Scriabin, we can only speculate what even larger asymptotic works might have achieved with their potential sonata inheritance. Certainly, they would not have been 'straitjacketed'.

Parageneric Space: History and Analysis

In Scriabin study, historical musicology and musical analysis are quite cordoned off from one another. This is doubtless because relating Scriabin's cocktail of beliefs to his music is difficult when the beliefs themselves are little understood. Nowhere is this more evident than in Smith and Kallis's *Demystifying Scriabin*, an important and impressive essay collection that marked 150 years of the composer, though which

[133] The harmonic readings offered in this article do not invalidate Smith's notion that tonal functions are cycled through in global forms, 'while being more constrained in local forms (with motion around cycles of minor thirds and tritones [serving] as "polarities")'; see 'Scriabin's Multi-Dimensional Accelerative Sonata Forms', p. 193. Rather, the readings here complement Smith's view by extending to the harmonic unification of certain Stravinskian blocks (sonata-cycle members) with broader form, despite their otherwise discontinuous structural treatment.

[134] Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, pp. 807–19, offers just one potential extramusical avenue.

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nevertheless channelled its analytical chapters into one central section: 'the music as prism'. Where such 'technical depth' is concerned, this grouping is of course a practical one for reader intelligibility;[135] such strategies have carried through into this present article, where analytical and historical sections demand a certain sense of isolation. This being said, Taruskin had much correct in his 'millennial essay' when arguing that going forwards, an 'integrated perspective' is vital for this mysterious composer, one that marries theory and analysis to context.[136] Taruskin's view of 'Russianness' is a different one to mine and seeks to relate spiritual vision to scores; limits are also set 'on the use of technical language' in his enquiry.[137] I have contended above that the situation can be at once simpler and more complex; that is, that we need not even touch on belief system when prioritizing matters of form, rather than harmony, and that though we can engage with 'historical musicology' as a base and a prompt, we ought also to make no apologies for that 'technical depth' so valued by analysts. History and analysis can come together in this way; the practicalities engendered by their differing styles nevertheless necessitate that they must form in something of their own vacuums before such bubbles burst.

APPENDIX

Letter 1 — 23 June 1911

From Vera Pavlovna Siloti to Alexandra Pavlovna Tretyakova Botkina

Dear Sasha,[138] I was so glad to receive your letter, as I was lonely without news of you. With the help of Miss Rees, Oxana translated Sasha's[139] 'Memories of Liszt' into English, which Sasha changed lots, as they were merely outlines the first time. They will be printed in Russian and English in the autumn, seeing as the English love everything which concerns famous people such as Liszt… Melartin visited us, with whom I have become closer and closer over the past winter. These are all our *évènements.*[140] It would have all been good, save for the two weeks of unrest for poor Mottl — and still, it's his loss.[141] As you know, he was always sympathetic towards us. It's sad, therefore, that Sasha lost touch with him completely; and for the Liszt-Festival. It's awful to think that we will never hear his 'Tristan' again. But it's great that he managed to win over the entire Russian public!! It's fantastic that this past winter, Siloti and Mottl performed the 'Dances of Death' together! — Siloti is learning the A-major Liszt concerto again (he played it twenty-five years ago). He's also learning Scriabin's 'Prometheus', i.e. the score;[142] Siloti hasn't compiled the programme yet; currently I only know a few things here and there. I'll tell you when it's more or less completed.

Sending the warmest of hugs to you three. Kisses from us. Vera.

Letter 2 — 12 November 1911

From Vera Pavlovna Siloti to Alexandra Pavlovna Tretyakova Botkina

Dear Sasha, today is literally the first day I have had a few hours break in amongst work and the daily race of life… I didn't have a chance to write; it was the week and the day of the first concert. We're happy in the knowledge that you will soon be

[135] Smith and Kallis, 'Introduction', p. 5.
[136] Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically*, p. 319.
[137] Ibid.
[138] This 'Sasha' refers to Alexandra.
[139] This 'Sasha' and all further uses refer to Alexander (Siloti).
[140] *Évènements* = literally 'events', though here a better translation would be 'engagements'.
[141] This refers to Siloti's fallout with the Austrian conductor Felix Mottl.
[142] Referring to Siloti learning from the conductor's score.

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with us! I'll tell you what, the start of winter hugely spurred our interests in many relationships; there were tough and difficult goings; and in the toughest period (artistically and morally) — suddenly, all by itself (with no knowledge as to how or from where) there arrived something of which one could only dream in the future, the distant future in fact… I'm writing to you regarding the last couple of years, more specifically months. The facts are simple: Koussevitzky has his own orchestra, with whom he had forty-five rehearsals prior to the start of the season. Safonov's orchestra is the IRMO, his own;[143] (both orchestras are young, but very well put together); he had thirty-two rehearsals (in September) prior to the start of the season. And here we both were, exasperated; dreaming to succeed (me — for the first time in my life), for Sasha to be able to partake in rehearsals in September for two years, to get his hands working; for the thirty rehearsals per year — ten thousand rubles, how I didn't turn my head inside out — this cannot possibly be allowed; even to say it out loud, especially to somebody such as Tereschenko…

After the first concert, together with my atrocious mood — there was a stern word; to fight for two self-owned orchestras is pointless; Sasha even started to say that after ten years of concerts it may be better to just drop it all and become a pianist again; of course, I said, 'Absolutely not', and it was decided to continue working as is; Sasha wanted to see how he would fare with Debussy's 'La Mer' and Scriabin's 'Prometheus'. And so, thanks to Michael Ivanovich, who asked to do as many rehearsals as it took, Sasha did one more rehearsal on 'La Mer' — and managed to achieve a performance more virtuosic than that of any contemporary conductor (I am convinced); you must first and foremost be a *musician*, not to mention the love and understanding of the newest music. The orchestra suddenly listened in to him, processed it, and played exquisitely. 'La Mer' is so hard to play that 'Prometheus' seemed comparably easy. There were also a lot of rehearsals for 'Prometheus' (between all of the rehearsals I make notes of the nuances and correct any issues in the voices), and they went like 'the devil is sick', as Sasha would say.[144] Scriabin's second symphony (there was only one rehearsal for it) went just perfectly. The Scriabins were deeply impressed. Almost two weeks did we dawdle together with the Scriabins, the Ossovskis (who I found delightful), and Tereschenko. The Scriabins are both very interesting, mystics, but simple, well mannered. Massy played us some things from his future *mystery.*[145] The celebrations for Scriabin–Siloti–Tereschenko were held on 5 November. They went in a 'drunken' mood. Sasha kept saying to M. Ivanov that M. I. could not have performed 'Prometheus' without him (Siloti), who in turn could not have performed it without him (Tereschenko). Coates was astounded by 'Prometheus', banging on about the stellar performance and thanking Sasha for tightening up the orchestra with his rehearsals and making the performance of 'Khovanschina' much easier. In one word, both Sasha and I calmed down about Siloti the conductor. Yes, it is true, that what Siloti the conductor does (always new things) — not one is done or will be done. And so the five–six rehearsals which were for the *musician*, like Sasha, bore the fruits of a hundredfold; whereas for Safonov and Koussevitzky (fairly competent conductors and mediocre musicians), tens of rehearsals passed with not much gain.

A very close relationship quickly formed between me and the Scriabins; there has never been a time that we weren't together and friends. On the second day, he said to me at the table: 'I definitely returned *home* after the trials and tribulations, mountains and wanderings. Why hadn't this happened *before*? It must be that time didn't touch it then, but only does now: we all had to live through a lot, be made thinner — and then come together for the communion labour…'

Weingartner is now here; today — Beethovenabend is ours. Cortot should arrive in the coming days, of whom Casals and Thibaud speak very highly — yesterday I listened to 'Khovanschina' with Lyuba. It was an unfortunate performance (there were repeats); but you don't even recognize the orchestra. Chaliapin worked as a producer and the decorations were better than in 'Kitezh' (Korovin). In fact, the opera becomes alive. Coates works for all of the conductors — the orchestra pays him directly with adoration; I, though, am rather lukewarm towards him. Slowly but surely, he will become more accustomed to Russian music…

There are many, many things I would have liked to write. But we will discuss it all when we next meet… If you see the Kazalsovs — tell them I send my warmest hugs and am waiting for Guillermina to come over along with Pablo. Since the last time we came together, both with the Thibauds, their older one has become very open and sweet; a lot can change in one's life in five years. This year, it seems everyone is coming over with their wives (Thibaud, Cortot, Casals, Weingartner, Scriabin).

Sending you three many hugs. Kisses from Sasha and the children. Yours, Vera.

[143] IRMO refers to the symphony orchestra of the Imperial Russian Music Society, known as such from 1873 to 1917.

[144] 'The devil is sick' is a Russian turn of phrase and quite difficult to translate. It essentially means very strong, amazing, or beyond the realms of the ordinary. The original letter contains a footnote to this sentence: 'In the story, Sasha received the spirit of *Scriabin*, like a new item.'

[145] 'Massy' appears to be Vera's pet name for Scriabin, whilst 'future mystery' refers to Scriabin's piano sketches for the *Mysterium*, which he clearly shared with the Siloti family; these are documented with considerable gusto and elaboration in Sabaneev's 1925 *Reminiscences.*

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Letter 3 — *c.* March 1912

From Tatyana Fyodorovna Schloezer-Scriabin to Vera Pavlovna Siloti

Dear Vera Pavlovna,

I was planning on writing to you for a long time, but never managed to find a spare minute. Not only that, but recently I've had a terrible headache. I'm using this moment of relative relief to finally have a chat with you. You, I suspect, already know that Alexander Nikolayevich has finished his seventh sonata and is playing it on the 21st in his 'Clavierabend',[146] following which he will also play it in St Petersburg in April. We are terribly happy that it means we will be visiting your area and will be able to spend a few happy hours together.

Now we anxiously wait for the first performance of the sonata here in Moscow. It's awful to play a new composition on stage for the time, and it doesn't help that this sonata is so difficult! It'll be interesting to see the public's and critics' opinion of it! Amongst the latter are people such as Sabaneev, who knows the sonata off by heart; the rest, maybe, will refrain from passing judgement after the first performance. Nevertheless, whatever the outcome, I'll write to you after the 21st to let you know how it went. Concerning the St Petersburg performance, Alexander Nikolayevich would like to schedule it for 8 April, lest it be too late; anyway, he's leaving the decision up to Alexander Ilyich.

Now I turn to a big favour to ask of Alexander Ilyich from Alexander Nikolayevich, who himself is in no mindset to even tie two thoughts together, for he is so worried about the forthcoming concert. The topic is of one M. A. Bikhter, whom you both know to be a fabulous musician and a delightful and well-mannered person of the highest order. He was deeply afflicted by the close encounter he had with the 'famous' philanthropist Koussevitzky, as he is known in Russia and abroad. I'll go into details when we meet in person. Now the only thing that matters is that Bikhter was forced to break away from Koussevitzky and finds himself in a rather difficult position. He has a family, and it is imperative that he is helped. Bikhter is soon travelling to St Petersburg, where he has lived and continues to want to live. We thought that Alexander Ilyich wouldn't refuse to help him in some capacity, such as finding him some sort of activity; in other words, bringing out the artistic streak.

Bikhter is a fantastic accompanist, a teacher of theory, and can take up the role of a choir director or conductor, yet remains a serious and good-spirited man. If you have nothing against the matter, he will come to you as soon as he arrives in St Petersburg, and we would be delighted if Alexander Ilyich would be able to find a purpose for his knowledge and talents.

We will have a few musicians gathering at ours today to listen to the seventh sonata; it is a great shame that you aren't with us. You cannot imagine how much we fondly remember and reminisce about you! Alexander Ilyich's last trip wasn't too successful in regard to our seeing him. We barely met up with him, and when we did, we never managed to find anything good to talk about. It's great that St Petersburg is yet to come! We will all be free, the whole season will be behind us, and only the holidays to look forward to! We hope that you are all well and await your news, undoubtedly only good. We're sending you, dear friends, a hearty greeting, and Mother sends you her regards.

Sincerely yours, T. Scriabin

P.S.: 'Prometheus' will be performed in London, conducted by H. Wood. Alexander Nikolayevich may well be able to attend the concert, if we are to be in Belgium at that time.

Letter 4 — 1 March 1915

From Tatyana Fyodorovna Schloezer-Scriabin to Alexander Siloti

Dear Alexander Ilyich!

I am once again running to you for your kindness and courtesy: please don't fail to pass on to G. N. Kudryavcev that of all the offered trips, Alexander Nikolayevich found the most convenient to be the last one, i.e. a trip along the Volga — starting on 17 April in Rybinsk and ending on 2 May in Astrakhan, hopefully skipping a stop at Volsk. We will send a biography and so forth in the coming days.

A thousand apologies for disturbing you, I shan't do it again! Alexander Nikolayevich left yesterday for Kharkiv, with the doctor's permission. I received a telegram this morning that he is well and asking not to worry for him — thank God!

Farewell, dear Alexander Ilyich, and sending you and Vera Pavlovna a hearty greeting and all the best.

T. Scriabin

[146] A piano recital.

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