

SERGEI ZAGNY

THREE TEXTS

text score
1995

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A

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Score 020-en

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THREE TEXTS

These texts are to be understood not only as texts for reading, but also as scores notated in verbal form. The works are parts of the triptych, but can also be performed individually.

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TWELVE PIECES for instrumental ensemble

Transcription for Violin and Piano

There is a piano on the stage. A chair is near it. A violin is on the chair. The performer comes in, bows, takes the violin and puts it on the piano, bows, leaves.

Piece for Oboe and Piano

The oboist with instrument and the pianist come in and settle down on stage. Oboist plays 'A' of the first octave. The pianist (he is the tuner as well) takes out tuning tools and starts to tune piano — all that time the oboist sits on the chair and waits. When the piano is tuned at last, the oboist stands up and the musicians play some short piece a sort of Neapolitan Song by Tchaikovsky. Bow, leave.

Duo for Two Violins

Two performers come in. One says: "I am the first violin". The other: "And I am the second!" (Variant: "And I am the first!") Together they sing something quite illegible. Bow somehow awkwardly. Jostling, they leave.

Transcription for Violin and Piano No.2

There is a piano, a chair and a violin on it on the stage. Six strong men come in. One of them carefully takes the violin and places it on the floor, then they all start to move the piano, attempt to lift it and to place in with one of its legs on the violin. One more man comes in, as if he intends to help the others, and suddenly he grabs the violin and runs off stage. The other dash after him, one of them tries <here it is illegible> him by coat-tails. Everybody runs behind the stage. From there one can hear sounds of romp and short low shouts. One of the six (most likely the chief) appears out of the wings, says "Sorry", leaves.

Feuilles mortes for solo flute

There are several stands on the stage removed from one another with music on separate sheets. A performer with a flute walks on stage from one stand to other and drops the music on the floor. The piece is considered as finished when all the sheets are dropped.

Des pas sur la neige

A stage attendant brings in a bag with cotton and on a small area (approx. 2 square meters) makes a snow covering. The pianist comes in and, walking over the "snowy field", treads on it for some time. Then he comes to the piano and plays, if he wants to, piece by Claude Debussy with the same title.

Sleeping Beauty
(in two movements)

1-st Movement

There is an orchestra on the stage.

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES: Tchaikovsky! Sleeping Beauty!

Turns to the orchestra, inviting it to stand up, and begins to bow. The orchestra, together with the audience, applauds the master (who is the conductor as well) in its own, orchestral manner, slightly tapping with bows, etc. Finally, everybody leave.

2-nd Movement

From behind the wings a sleepy young lady is brought in on stage. She is compelled to take a bow, to which she complies unwillingly. Yawning, she is quickly led away.

Trio

for violin, clarinet and piano

The musicians and musicologist come in.

THE MUSICOLOGIST: In the Trio, which you are about to hear, the instruments are interpreted in an extremely non-traditional way! The clarinet is used as a string instrument, the violin does as a wind one and the piano is not used at all!

The clarinetist takes the bow from the violinist and starts to draw it over the clarinet. At the same time the violinist blows on his violin and inside it in a different methods, trying to make sounds as loudly as possible. Having played a little in the like manner, the musicians mark the end of the composition.

Well Tempered Clavier, Part I

A salesman comes in on stage and offers the audience to buy compact discs of Bach's Well Tempered Clavier well performed.

Well Tempered Clavier, Part II

A well-tuned piano is installed in the middle of the stage. After a certain pause the piano is taken away.

Water Music

(not performed)

New Doll

There is an ensemble of instruments on the stage.

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES: Tchaikovsky! New Doll! A transcription for instrumental ensemble! (*Leaves*).

The ensemble plays Tchaikovsky's "New Doll".



September 22 — October 14, 1995
Translated with the assistance of Anton Rovner

SYMPHONY

1. The musicians — first one alone, then gradually the others join him — play long 'A', each one in his own comfortable range. When playing, the musicians become more and more immersed into the sound, acquiring the ability to discern the overtones and the smallest gradations of sound. Each one carries on his own line, perceiving himself at the same time as a participant of the whole — the continuing and embodying the here-and-now Act of Creation.

2. Fastening its glance inwards, the soul meets itself and discovers that it and the sound are one. The soul discovers itself in the sound, such as it is at that present moment — realising its desires through the sound. The performer can change the timbre, volume, within about $\frac{1}{4}$ tone pitch, and on the 'A' of its octave, can create successions of notes and rests of any duration.

3. The soul looks around and discovers that there is something that is not of itself, and it is this that it is able to and wants to become. And soon it discovers something also within itself, about which it did not know before. And at some moment the soul suddenly begins to realise that by accepting the outer world it, in fact, develops itself and vice versa. Now 'A' can also be played in other octaves. And 'E', 'C#', 'G', 'B', 'D#', 'F#', 'G#', i.e. the notes which are the overtones of 'A', can also be played, to form melodic successions of any kind from them or to remain on any one of them for a long time.

4. On cue, a section of the ensemble (possibly the brass) simultaneously play 'G#' *sf* in different octaves. At that moment, all the other performers dramatically change the way of playing. Everything become faster. Now any chromatic successions and glissandi can be played. The intensity of sound and of changes becomes considerably higher and may tend to an extreme level. At the same time the other performers, according to their wishes, can avoid all outwardly directed activity, and can stay in a ringing calm of immovability. The correlations so appearing manifest an extreme augmentation of the compass of existence. Gradually the 'G#' sounds less distinct, and more and more instruments play glissandi, chromatic passages, bird-song-like passages, and long extended notes of various pitches. Feelings are extremely intense, thoughts are lightning-like, the inventiveness is unimaginably great. Everything happens so because the soul, having matured, has decided to leave its home and go on a journey.

4a. A section of the ensemble (possibly the brass) gradually fades out preparing for the next section.

5. On cue, the instruments which directly prior to that moment were silent, play a 'G' minor triad, beautifully arranged in all registers (with the octave-doubled bass). At that time, the other instruments still continue to play the previous music. However, from that moment the intensity quickly subsides. Glissandi entirely or almost entirely disappear. Everybody plays mostly in the middle range of their instruments, *p* or *mf*. Everything becomes to some extent lethargic. Colours become bleak, thoughts become lazy and confused.

But the soul looks for a way out — and finds it and accepts its destiny. From here there are two possibilities:

— in succession, the instruments from low-pitch to high-pitch gradually switch off as they complete their lines. The last instrument to play is likely to be the piccolo or the violin, playing at the highest register, *p*;

— in succession, the instruments from high-pitch to low-pitch gradually switch off as they complete their lines. The last instrument to play most likely being the tuba or the contrabassoon or the double bass, which plays quietly at its lowest notes.

Different in its manifestation, both possibilities are actually one: it reflects in feelings as sorrow, brightened by a warm light, which turns into happiness, and brings one to a blessed, desire-free quietness.



September 22 — October 14, 1995

Translated with the assistance of Anton Rovner and Edward Purkiss

THREE POEMS

on Words by an Unknown Author

1. Symphonies and Sonatas

There are no better symphonies in the world
than those of four movements.
And sonatas are better of three movements.
But sonatas of four movements sometimes occur,
which are not worse than those of three movements.
And even sonatas of two movements occur.
It's amazing how many good sonatas and symphonies
there are in the world!

They can be found in libraries.
And some of them in shops
where goods of this kind are on sale.
When buying, make sure that all the movements
are present and not damaged!

2. Notes

Eighths are running along the path.
After them, skipping,
Quarters are hurrying.
Sixteenths flicker staccato.
As drops of Spring,
Halves (which are unfilled)
Are ringing.
And wholes—
They lie still,
Glumly pouting
At the world, offended
And self-important.
And the barlines occurred,
Which measured out
By boundary paths
The sounding space.

And accidentals also occurred:
Sharps and flats,
Naturals and trills of all sorts,
Damned melismas
Mimicking a nightingale by a brook.*)
Fermatas, ruffled up,
Hanging over the lines,
Long themselves and
Designating duration lengthening.
And legato joined all,
Remembering its
Etymological kinship with religion...
Generally, all was well:
The clefs, treble and bass,
And the times,
And the lines, straight as strings,**)
Stretched
From the beginning of the composition
To its untimely end
(Marked by two bars:
Thin and thick).
Such are the notes.
But there also are different notes, of course,
It is obvious!
For example,—
Entirely different!

*) The expression “Damned melismas” is used for the sake of stylistic beauty. In fact, I attach great importance to melismas and am very fond of them.

**) Variant: as tables.

3.

It is entirely obvious that notes come in three colours: blue, red and green. The proportion of colours gives each composition an inimitable hue, making it unique, the only one of its (and else's!) kind. The combination of blue and red gives a colour entirely inexpressible by words. The behaviour of other combinations is similar: indeed, music is an art hard to verbalize. Often, it is written down in round notes, and sometimes in rhombuses.

November 26, 1995, 12:15
Translated with the assistance of Keith Hammond