SERGEI ZAGNY

TEXTS ON MUSIC

ZNGAY

Zagny Edition 2010

Text 003-en

TEXTS ON MUSIC

CONTENTS

SONATA[1]

The sonata can last for half an hour or more. Its most probable duration is from 30 to 45 minutes.

The sonata consists of 25 parts, or sections, or pieces. Their sequence can be displayed with the following scheme:

Figures indicate the ordinal numbers of the parts. (Pieces in parentheses can be omitted.)

The whole can be imagined as a complex multilayered rondo, where Ⓡ — is the refrain and **A**, **B**, **B**, **C**, **D**, **D'**, **D'**, **E**, **F** and **V** are episodes. Groups **B C B C B** and **D E D' E D' E D'** form local rondos, which, in turn, can be understood as "macro- episodes" of the main rondo, and then the sections $\underset{4}{\mathbf{B}}\ \underset{(5)}{\mathbf{A}}$, $\underset{(11)}{\mathbf{B}}\ \underset{(12)}{\mathbf{A}}$ and $\underset{(21)}{\mathbf{B}}$ can be seen as transitions.

The general structure has obvious signs of symmetry: two refrains in the beginning, two at the end, one exactly in the middle. The first local rondo is reflected in the second. The initial **A** (2nd piece) is answered by **V** (24th piece), which is similar to **A** (in harmonic construction, but quite different in nature… Breaks in symmetry are also obvious: "macro-episodes" are slightly shifted, and episode **F**, breaking the calm correlation Ⓡ A Ⓡ — Ⓡ V Ⓡ , has no direct reflection neither before, nor after itself…

On a psychological or energetic level, the evolution can be imagined as a smooth curve: in the beginning it ascends, coming into the field of joy or warmth; then it descends, lowering into the field of cold or sorrow; and then it ascends again, this time very intensively, flying to the sphere of the transcendental…

The music text of the sonata is written so that the performer, while playing, can at certain points make choices following his inner feeling: to continue playing the piece or to go to the next one, to skip an episode or maybe to return a little and to pass a part of the way once again — in the same manner or a little differently, to play this note or that. Different performances, if notated conventionally, would appear as (somewhat) different compositions. The structure is as if it were striving to meet the desire of a human, as the desire exists at that present moment, and through this meeting to discover more of its own possibilities. The human, in turn, strives to meet that which is capable of answering his desires, and through such meeting to understand better the nature of the latter.

The sonata can be understood as an investigation of musical language, in its different aspects, realised through musical means.

The sonata can be considered as an investigation into the subject of symmetry and asymmetry, chaos and regularity, organic and mineral, necessity and freedom.

The sonata can be seen as a reflection of an experience: the soul tries to be settled now in the living being, now in the stone, now somewhere else, and tries to understand and to feel, how everything is, how everything is related, and how the soul itself can be there or here.

September 1998

Translated by Sergei Zagny with the assistance of Peter Ringwood and Edward Purkiss

---

[1] The text is published in the CD booklets: Zagny Edition 09.1998 (ZECD 001) and Long Arms Records 2000 (CDLA 00014).

FORMULA 1[2]

Formula 1

was inspired by Tom Johnson,
who gave me the formula
$x \rightarrow 3.745\ x\ (1 - x)$,
on which this work is based.
The work is dedicated to him.

September 4, 2000

[2] This text is originally written in English and published in a CD booklet: Zagny Edition 02.2000 (ZECD 003).

NEW YEAR MUSIC[3]

New Year Music is sound recorded at the DOM Cultural Center in Moscow on the evening of 30th December, 1999. The occasion was the New Year's Eve party there. The party started with the performance of the “Cisfinitum” group, followed by the percussion-noise ensemble of Mikhail Zhukov, Nick Dmitriev, Alexander Markov and Sergey Aksyonov (this part is not on the disc), then Sergei Zagny played Arnold Schoenberg’s and his own piano works, and finally there was a discotheque (not on the disc). During this party, people of the audience could conduct themselves more freely than is usual at concerts: they could talk, walk around the hall, sit at tables, drink wine and so on.

The original concept belongs to Nick Dmitriev. Its musical constituent was to be as follows: firstly, as loud and as brutal as possible, then extremely fine and tender with pauses.

The recording was made (with breaks) on DAT by DOM employees.

New Year Music is a work which comprises sound images of a number of fully self-dependent works, as well as other sounds which occured at that time and that place. The authorship of *New Year Music*, the author of these lines ascribes to himself *New Year Music*, the author of these lines ascribes to himself.

February 8, 2001
Translated by Sergei Zagny and Edward Purkiss

Note. The author recommends that you skip the first track of the disc and start listening with the second.

---

[3] This text is published in the CD booklets: Zagny Edition 01.2000 (ZECD 002) and Long Arms Records 2003 (CDLA 03046).

FRAGMENTS FROM "SWAN LAKE" BY PIOTR TCHAÏKOVSKI[4]

"Fragments from Swan Lake" had its origins in the "Swan Lake" theatre project of the Von Krahl Theatre, Tallinn, the authors of the project being Sasha Pepelyaev and Peeter Jalakas. The initial idea was as follows: to preserve Tchaïkovski's music so far as possible, while stripping out the excessive emotion and overblown sentimentality we now find so embarrassing. Further modifications were made while working on the project, some dictated by technical requirements (instead of a full orchestra, only a chamber group was available), others directed at overcoming the "pristine simplicity" expressed by the score by introducing a number of signs of "aristocratic abundance", such as transpositions, counterpoint, transitions, etc. Some modifications help to bring out connections and parallels: for example, the piece is sometimes unexpectedly crowned by a cadence in the spirit of the 15th century, while on occasion, almost imperceptibly, a quotation from a Bruckner symphony emerges. Absence of modification also represents an important aspect. Many episodes and, sometimes, entire works have remained almost in their original form. Outwardly almost unchanged, they are rewritten, re-read or listened to afresh and thereby endowed inwardly with another meaning (cf. Borges's story "Pierre Menard, Author of Don Quixote"). The absence of modifications renders particularly acute the problem of authorship and the associated problem of novelty, both of which are of fundamental importance in relation to the present work.

January 19, 2003
Translated by Keith Hammond

[4] The text is published in a CD booklet: Zagny Edition 01.2003 (ZECD 011).

“STARS”[5]

The performance “STARS” took place on October 10, 2004 at DOM Cultural Centre, in a small hall (room) on the first floor.

The space was reorganized in such a way as to resemble a kind of temple. In front of the audience, right in the center, about one and a half meters from a wall, the “Sacred Object Magic Star” was placed, in the form of the star corresponding to the day (for October 10, 2004, it was the second star — 10+10+2004 modulo 6 makes 2). Behind the object and above it on the wall (on A3 size portrait sheets), images of six magic stars were hung, three on the left and three on the right side. Below them (on landscape paper strips) there were two short phrases: “please be silent” on the left side, and “please do not try to understand” on the right side. Just in front the object was a small bowl containing joss sticks, which were lit approximately every 20-30 minutes. On the left side, near a wall, a grand piano stood. On the right hand and rear walls, like unrolled scrolls, fragments from the score of “Magic Stars” printed on paper of ivory color were hung. All along the room in a “chaotic” order, at some distance from one another, were some chairs, on which one could seat, and some small mattresses, on which one could lie. When climbing the stairs to the room, one could read eight anticipatory phrases (printed on small landscape paper strips):

please do not speak loudly
inside, you can sit, lie down, stand and walk around
you can come in or leave whenever you like
you can stay as long as you wish
you can read, write or draw
you can sleep or do nothing
you can bring in and consume refreshments
try to be quiet

Downstairs, at the entrance to the stairs, the “Generalizing Symbol of Magic Star” was hung (on an A4 size portrait sheet; several identical symbols were on the left wall in the room, at about two or three meters one from another; the symbol is reproduced on the cover page of this booklet).

Near the entrance to the room, everyone coming in was given a booklet with the text “Magic Stars and Their Components”.

The main part of the performance took the form of music played on the piano. The order of pieces was not determined in advance, and was defined during the performance. All the works performed are related in one or another way to magic stars. The full titles of the works are:

Magic Stars, tables for piano or other appropriate instruments (in progress);
Bases, piano or other appropriate instruments, 2000. (Zagny Edition, ZE Score 014);
"On Words: J" by Luiz Henrique Yudo, piano or other appropriate instruments, 2001. (Zagny Edition, ZE Score 011).

Piano music alternated from time to time with “actions”, during which improvisations were played on recorder and small drum, joss sticks burned, the “Magic Star” rotated, etc. The very beginning of the performance, the “Tuning”, was also improvised.

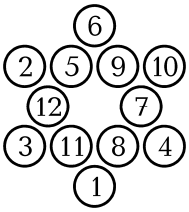
[5] The text is published in a CD booklet: «Stars», Dom Records 2005 (CDDOMA 05032-33).

The pieces and improvisations follow one another on the discs in exactly the same order as during the performance. The duration of all the pauses has also remained unchanged.

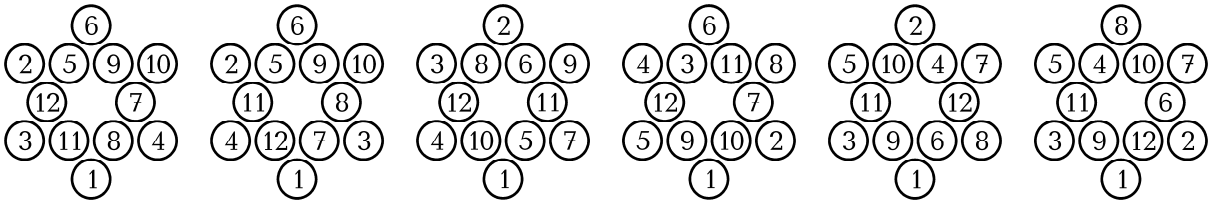
March 17, 2005
Translated by Keith Hammond

Magic Stars and Their Components[6]

The six-pointed magic star is a figure having the following appearance:



Twelve non-recurrent numbers, from 1 to 12, are located on the vertices of the *main triangles* that form the star, and on the points of their intersection. The vertices of the main triangles (1, 2, 10 and 3, 6, 4 in the example) are called the *outer vertices*, and the points of intersection of the triangles (11, 12, 5, 9, 7 and 8 in the example) are called the *inner vertices*. The *side* of a star — which is also the side of one of the main triangles — is a segment, and four vertices are placed on it. The numbers are arranged so that each side can produce the same sum. For example, 1+11+12+2 = 3+12+5+6 = 2+5+9+10 = 6+9+7+4 = 10+7+8+1 = 4+8+11+3. The sum of the six outer vertices also has to be the same, for example, 1+3+2+6+10+4. There are a total of six different magic stars, disregarding variants produced by mirror images or rotation.



One can distinguish the following components in the stars: vertices (outer and inner), sides, complements, hexagons (outer and inner), triangles (outer and inner), enneagons (main triangles) and dodecagons, and also inner equilateral triangles.

There are twelve *vertices* in each star: six outer and six inner ones. Here the expression “sum of vertices” means the sum of the numbers that lie on these vertices.

A *side* is four vertices placed on one segment. On the ends of the segment there are outer vertices and between them there are inner vertices. The sum of the vertices of any side of a six-pointed magic star is always 26.

Opposite (or *parallel*) sides of a star are sides that have no common vertices. Each side has exactly one opposite side. Parallel sides are formed by eight vertices, their sum being 26×2=52. A group formed by the remaining four vertices is called *complement*. The sum of the complement vertices is always 26.

A *hexagon* is six outer vertices (*outer hexagon*), or six inner vertices (*inner hexagon*). The sum of the vertices of an outer hexagon is 26. The sum of the vertices of an inner hexagon is 26×2=52.

---

[6] Updated and extended version of this text became a Preface for the score of Magic Stars (Zagny Edition 2008, Score 018.1).

A *triangle* is three outer or three inner vertices, which form a particular sum. An *outer triangle* is formed by three outer (corner) vertices, which are the points of the main triangle of a six-pointed star. The sum of the vertices of an outer triangle is 13. An *inner triangle* is a set of three inner vertices that make the sum of 26. For each six-pointed star, two outer triangles and two inner triangles are always clearly defined. One can add the following distinction. *The first outer triangle* is one which has the vertex “1” (vertex which contains the number 1; one of the two outer triangles always has such a vertex). *The first inner triangle* is one which has the vertex “12” (one of the two inner triangles always has such a vertex as well). *The second outer triangle* or *the second inner triangle* is one which has no vertex “1” or “12”, respectively.

An *equilateral triangle* (unlike a triangle) is three outer or three inner vertices which form a particular geometrical figure, namely that of an equilateral triangle. An *outer equilateral triangle* always coincides with an outer triangle. An *inner equilateral triangle* never coincides with an inner triangle. The sum of the vertices of an inner equilateral triangle, while being different in different cases, is never 26.

An *enneagon* (or *main triangle*) is three outer vertices of one of the two outer triangles and all six inner vertices. In other words, it is a set of all the vertices of a main triangle of a star (of all the vertices of three adjacent sides of a star, which form such a triangle). The sum of the vertices of an enneagon is 13+52=65.

A *dodecagon* is a figure formed by all the vertices of a star. The sum of the vertices of a dodecagon is 26+52=78.

In all cases (with the partial exception of complements), fundamental importance attaches not only to which elements (vertices) form this or that component of a star, but the order of these elements as well. Thus, for example, we distinguish the side “1, 11, 12, 2” from the side “2, 12, 11, 2” (reverse order) or from “1, 12, 11, 2”. For the same reason, one can say that for the first star there exists the dodecagon “1, 11, 3, 12, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 7, 4, 8” or “8, 4, 7, 10, 9, 6, 5, 2, 12, 3, 11, 1”, but not “1, 3, 11, 12, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 7, 4, 8”.

How can stars be turned into music? For example, like this: let 1 be E, 2 be F and so on, up the chromatic scale… Now one can examine stars and their components, in different combinations and correlations, by means of music.

October 9, 2004
Translated by Keith Hammond