

# **Summary of Three Dissertation Recitals**

by

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## **DEDICATION**

Praises to God for His eternal love.

Deep gratitude to Professor Christopher Harding, for your unceasing support, guidance, devotion, and for being my role model.

Sincere thank you to my doctoral committee, for your invaluable advice, generous support, and inspiration.

To my family, for your everlasting love, support, and encouragement.

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## ABSTRACT

Three dissertation recitals were given to fulfill the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts.

The first dissertation lecture-recital was presented in Britton Recital Hall on November 13, 2020. It featured a lecture on *Carl Vine and His Piano Sonatas* with a focus on Vine as a composer, his compositional styles and techniques, and an analysis of his *Piano Sonata No. 1 (1990)* and *No. 3 (1997)* with a performance of both works.

The second dissertation recital was performed in Britton Recital Hall on February 5, 2021. The program consisted of music by Frédéric Chopin: *Rondo, Op. 1*; *Mazurkas, Op. 24*; *Ballade No. 4 in F minor, Op. 52*; and *Piano Sonata No. 3 in B minor, Op. 58*.

The third dissertation recital was given in Britton Recital Hall on March 25, 2021. It consisted of a set of works in various genres: *Fantasia and Fugue in A minor, BWV 904* by Johann Sebastian Bach; *Fantasia in C minor, K. 475* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart; *Piano Sonata No. 2 “Sonata-Fantasia” in G-sharp minor, Op. 19* by Alexander Scriabin; and *Piano Sonata No. 2 (1997)* by Carl Vine.

## RECITAL I PROGRAM

### **Lecture:** Carl Vine and His Piano Sonatas

This lecture-recital features Carl Vine as a composer, his compositions, compositional styles and techniques, as well as a dig into Vine's First and Third Piano Sonata.

Carl Vine  
(b. 1954)

#### Piano Sonata No. 1 (1990)

- I.
- II.     *Leggiero e legato*

#### Piano Sonata No. 3 (1997)

- I.     Fantasia
- II.     Rondo
- III.    Variations
- IV.    Presto

## RECITAL I PROGRAM NOTES

### **Carl Vine (b. 1954)**

One of the most prominent and widely performed composers of Australia in the 20th Century, Carl Vine enjoys a thriving career as a composer and pianist worldwide, with an impressive output of compositions across genres ranging from symphony, concerto, instrumental work, chamber music, music for dance, film, theatre, television, and electronic music.

A composer of Modern “Classical” music, Vine’s compositions are marked by great virtuosity, vibrant character, and sensuous romanticism. As mentioned in a description by Faber Music: “in the mid-1980s Vine began to seek a novel way of writing. Vine’s refreshed style was just as rigorous as that which preceded it; complex rhythms are built into rich kinetic textures and set alongside an austere lyricism.”<sup>1</sup>

Born in Perth, Western Australia, Vine received his first compositional award at age sixteen with his electronic music *Unwritten Divertimento*. He subsequently enrolled in college at the University of Western Australia with a major in Physics before switching to Music in the third year. Moving to Sydney in 1975, where his career as composer and pianist has flourished ever since, Vine worked with various ensembles, dance companies, and theatres, and also performed regularly at the Sydney Opera House.

As an active musician, Carl Vine has undertaken important public roles, arranging the Australian National Anthem and composing for the Closing Ceremony of the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. He was the artistic director of *Musica Viva Australia*, the world’s largest chamber music organization, as well as the recipient of the prestigious *Don Banks Music Award* in 2005, the highest honor offered to an Australian musician.

### **Piano Sonata No. 1 (1990)**

Commissioned by the Sydney Dance Company for dance choreographed by Graeme Murphy, the Piano Sonata No. 1 is the most enthusiastically received among Vine’s Piano Sonatas, for its dramatic musical effects and colorful imagination.

The sonata is dedicated to pianist Michael Kieran Harvey, the first Australian pianist to win a major international piano competition, who gave its premiere in Melbourne, Australia, in 1991.

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<sup>1</sup> Faber Music. “Carl Vine”, [fabermusic.com](https://www.fabermusic.com). Accessed March 10, 2021. <https://www.fabermusic.com/we-represent/carl-vine>

“Many reviews portray this sonata as one of the most intense and virtuosic piano sonatas in the twentieth century.”<sup>2</sup> According to the composer, the sonata was inspired by Elliott Carter’s Piano Sonata which involves surging rhythmic energy and dramatic dynamic shifts.

The sonata is a two-movement work filled with breathless excitement, full of fantastical sights and sensations. It is constructed in a loose ABA form. The first movement starts with a slow introduction setting a tone of grandeur; reflective and calm, it introduces the harmonic landscape and descending gestures which later dominate the entire sonata. The introduction soon leads to a rhythmic acceleration, through intricate metric modulation and an accumulation of power, building up to a spectacular climax in the key area of B Major, a moment that quakes with ecstasy, creating “cinematic” effects through a vast soundscape and lush harmonies. The whole movement then gradually falls back to an alluring section embraced with simplicity, full of beautiful cross-rhythms suggesting an improvisatory style. The movement concludes with an affirming and uplifting gesture.

The second movement sets a demand for great virtuosity. Built on intense rhythmic perpetuo, it starts with rapid 16th-notes in parallel motion, and almost unstoppable. With its main theme linked to the first movement, Vine applies a contrapuntal device (in contrary motion while retaining a homophonic texture), along with a mixture of extreme dynamic contrasts in wide registers. The music reflects an exuberant joy and undergoes dramatic events before it dissolves into a slow, ethereal, chorale-like passage filled with chordal gestures, a constant ostinato bass, complex cross-rhythms, with a melodic line inserted in the middle voice. The music then reignites, *Double Tempo*, escalating in activity and power through a vast number of developmental sections and extreme dynamic forces that utilize the entire span of the keyboard. An outburst into its final gesture with the loudest dynamic *ffff* is followed by a retreat of energy, an echo of the beginning of the entire sonata, which then rests in relief.

The Piano Sonata No. 1 takes the listeners on an extraordinary journey through a wide spectrum of sound and emotion. Vine demonstrates his mastery of sonority with rich imagination that marks the sonata as one of the highest among 20th Century Piano Sonatas.

### **Piano Sonata No. 3 (2007)**

The Third Piano Sonata is influenced by the composer’s own *Anne Landa Preludes*, a set of twelve different pieces. Possessing a “freewheeling” sense of construction, the sonata contains coherent, interconnected material throughout all the movements, forming a single entity. An innovative composition displaying Vine’s highest aesthetic imagination and maturity, one can trace his development as a composer, as well as his evolving personal view in this music.

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<sup>2</sup> Gina Kyounglae Kang. “A Study of the Third Piano Sonata of Carl Vine (2007): The Musical Characteristics of the Third Sonata Compared Through the First Sonata and Second Sonata and Practical Performance Guidance” (D.M.A doc., The Ohio State University, 2012), p. 8.



Commissioned by The Gilmore International Keyboard Festival and the Colburn School, the sonata was dedicated to Elizabeth Schumann, the recipient of the 2004 Gilmore Young Artist Award. She gave its premiere in Los Angeles, in May 2007.

Constructed on a four-movement scheme: *Fantasia - Rondo - Variations - Presto*, the sonata is largely based on different sections with independent musical ideas.

The first movement, *Fantasia*, first introduces several ideas which undergo transformation and dominate the whole sonata. It also contains independent and undeveloped ideas. It opens with a slow introduction utilizing a three-layered texture, the music gently flowing under cross-rhythms and triplets, transporting us through different coloristic experiences. A luminous passage filled with glittering scales and free musical gestures appears in the middle section before it shifts to its rhythmic *Rondo*.

The *Rondo* reflects a sense of unshakable determination with the left hand playing continuous percussive chords and repeating itself several times. In the middle section, a shimmering passage filled with thirty-second notes in a transparent texture forms a contrast to what came before.

The third movement, *Variations*, is in itself an ‘independent’ movement in a dignified manner with unrelated musical ideas gently flowing one by one. The theme is taken directly from the opening of the *Fantasia*, in a different key without a melody added on top. The primary theme of the *Fantasia* comes back in its entirety, forming a structural unity. Vine employed various rhythmic gestures and melodic patterns in the movement, much like the capturing of random thoughts, giving a sense of mystery and freedom.

The last movement, *Presto*, is in ternary ABA form. It starts with rapid pounding sixteenth-notes, full of spark and spirit that continues through dynamic surprises, before reaching a lyrical middle section with intricately woven layers creating a sublime atmosphere. The A section then returns, this time serving as the bridge to a Coda, bursting forth with seething energy, arriving at an impassioned climax which erupts in exultant defiance.

## RECITAL II PROGRAM

Frédéric Chopin  
(1810-1849)

Rondo, Op. 1

Mazurkas, Op. 24

- I. G minor
- II. C Major
- III. A-flat Major
- IV. B-flat minor

Ballade No. 4 in F minor, Op. 52

Piano Sonata No. 3 in B minor, Op. 58

- I. Allegro maestoso
- II. Scherzo: Molto vivace
- III. Largo
- IV. Finale: Presto non tanto

## RECITAL II PROGRAM NOTES

### Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)

#### Rondo in C minor, Op. 1 (1825)

The Rondo in C minor, Op. 1 was Chopin's first published work, written at age fifteen in Warsaw. The young Chopin was immersed in an exploration of Rondo form, finding his own voice as a young composer, experimenting with new harmony and expression. Having absorbed stylistic features of rondos from earlier Classical composers such as Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, Chopin went on to explore the *style brillant* in this Rondo.

Although a young composition, we find this early work to be already marked with brilliance and gracefulness. Though not yet foreshadowing the composer's later compositional style, the Rondo was well received. As Robert Schumann once wrote to his teacher Friedrich Wieck "Chopin's first work (I believe firmly that it is his tenth) is in my hands: a lady would say that it was very pretty, very piquant, almost Moschelesque. But I believe you will make Clara [Wieck's daughter, afterwards Mdme. Schumann] study it; for there is plenty of Geist in it and few difficulties."<sup>3</sup>

Built on a rather atypical form with episodes doubled in different key, the Rondo embraces diverse musical ideas coherently connected to the main theme, and not heavily obscured. Chopin employs simple yet charming melodic expression in the slower sections, and a sense of wittiness throughout. Each section immediately contrasts to the other with a freshness reflecting Chopin's young spirit. The piece displays Chopin's considerable grasp of form, style, as well as his technical mastery as a young composer.

#### Mazurkas, Op. 24 (1833-36)

One of Chopin's most distinctive compositional genres, the Mazurkas reflect 'Polish' styles and nationalism alongside the Polonaises. Mazurkas draw influence from traditional Polish folk music and dances (without direct use of any folk tune), which derive mainly from three types of dances: *Mzaur*, *Kujawiak*, and *Oberek* (sometimes multiple dances are blended in a single Mazurka), with each one distinct in rhythm, accentuation, and character. Chopin's Mazurkas are a manifestation of folk elements and his individual style; having adopted rhythmic characters and repetitive features from the Polish dances, the Mazurkas are endowed with classical compositional devices such as the use of counterpoint, chromaticism, chorale, etc.

Chopin composed approximately 57 Mazurkas in his life between 1825 to 1849, each one unique. Schumann once hailed these works: "Each of the mazurkas has an individual poetic feature, something distinctive in form or expression." (Schumann in a review, 1838)<sup>4</sup> Mazurkas are highly personal works when it comes to making an interpretive decision, for "[...] virtually

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3 Niecks, F. (1902). *Frederick Chopin: As a man and musician* (Third ed., p. 147). Neptune City, NJ: Paganiniana.

4 Narodowy Instytut Fryderyka Chopina. (n.d.). Accessed February 25, 2021. [http://chopin.nifc.pl/en/chopin/gatunki/4\\_mazurki](http://chopin.nifc.pl/en/chopin/gatunki/4_mazurki)

nobody but Chopin himself can play his music and give it this unusual turn, this sense of the unexpected which is one of its principal beauties; his interpretation is shot through with a thousand nuances of movement of which he alone holds the secret, and which are impossible to convey by instructions.”<sup>5</sup>

The set of four Mazurkas Op. 24 was composed in the middle period between 1833 to 1836. The first Mazurka in G minor opens with a reflective tone, a sense of nostalgia in *Kujawiak* melody. The melody undergoes rises and falls before reaching B-flat Major, reflecting a brighter character. It further modulates to E-flat Major in *Mazur* with more agitation filled with a sense of joy and uplifted spirit under dotted rhythms, thirds, and strong accentuations. The G minor then crawls back, this time in a languid manner, concluding in a soft voice.

The second Mazurka in C Major begins with a tone of remembrance that gradually comes into light inviting us for a jubilant dance. It is rich in spirit, with an emphasis on every second measure that certainly reflects an *Oberek*, and which seamlessly leads to the middle section in D-flat Major in a *Mazur*. Colored with Lydian fourth, the melody weaves back and forth using chromatic voice-leading, until with almost unnoticeable modulation it leads back to C Major, recalling to its ‘start’. The piece ends only in a fragmented manner.

The third Mazurka in A-flat Major is simple and graceful in *Kujawiak*. It is based primarily on a single melodic line that repeats itself several times over an unusual twelve-beat rhythm, that is only interrupted by another motif after several repetitions which shifts in flow to duple rhythm. The ending swirls to a halt unexpectedly.

One of the most well-known Mazurkas, the fourth one in B-flat minor is based on *Kujawiak*. It begins with a “searching”, somewhat hesitant in its voice but soon finds its way and falls into a dance full of charm and grace, before it turns to a more overt sense of motion and exhilaration in the key of D-flat Major. Also colored by the Lydian fourth, in the middle section, an “exotic” melody appears in unison. Chopin has told us that the third section is a mixed choir; the opening unison is answered by the chords.<sup>6</sup> A new *Kujawiak* melody is then introduced, swinging back and forth with a moment of rapture. Heading to the Coda with a retreat in energy, the Mazurka dwindles in a solitary manner.

### **Ballade No. 4 in F minor, Op. 52 (1842)**

Chopin was the first composer to invent an instrumental ballade. The four Ballades he composed contain some of his most personal, complex, and poetic music, which brought the genre, the range of pianistic expression and technical challenge to new heights. In particular, his innovative forms significantly impact many composers who came after him.

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5 Eigeldinger, J., Shohet, N., Osostowicz, K., & Howat, R. (2013). *Chopin: Pianist and teacher as seen by his pupils*, p. 71. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

6 Eigeldinger, p. 74.

The term *Ballade* often relates to storytelling, a narration prone to poetry in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. It is often believed that the Chopin Ballades were composed under the inspiration of Adam Mickiewicz's poems. Each one stands alone as an exquisite exploration of Chopin's inner emotion.

The Ballade No. 4 in F minor is one of Chopin's most substantial compositions, in which his exploration of form, texture, sonority, and intricacy come into full play. The Ballade No. 4 was written in 1842, in Chopin's late years. The architecture of the Ballade reintroduces opening material and demonstrates an extraordinary sense of formal richness and direction.<sup>7</sup>

The Ballade opens with a seven-measure introduction in the dominant key C Major, a recalling of a tender memory. The main theme appears as a reflective monologue in a balladic tone in F minor, tying together the entire Ballade by four variations through melodic embellishments, polyphonic, canonic, and contrapuntal writing with a gradual escalating in activity and intensity under more thickened textures. The second theme in B-flat Major is rather pastoral-like, written in chordal gestures that lead to episodes which later bring back the 'introduction', in a sublime and unexpected A Major. There are longing moments, moments of lament and flashes of rage. In the later music there is also a more adventurous approach to counterpoint, expressed partly through greater independence of the separate lines, and partly through the seamless absorption of canonic elements into the musical flow.<sup>8</sup> The 'theme' surges for the last time sweeping through the entire keyboard into emphatic chords defying its tragedy; then, after a sudden halt, a total tranquility, the piece starts to regain power, going through rapid passages under relentless escalation and desperate outpouring, leading to the emphatic F minor chords, drawing this epic tale to a close. And only by then, we see how far we have travelled.

### **Sonata No. 3 in B minor, Op. 58 (1844)**

Regarded as one of the most significant compositions of 19<sup>th</sup> Century piano literature, the Third Piano Sonata displays Chopin's highest artistic achievements and maturity. A large-scale work written in Chopin's late year in 1844, under circumstances of grief and despair when the composer learned about the death of his father.

The sonata is an epic, majestic yet intricate exploration of Chopin's personal belief. It is a cyclic work consisting of four movements. Each movement preserves elements from the traditional classical sonata, although Chopin alters their structure by expanding thematic material and delaying climaxes, in a manner which is evocative of his style.<sup>9</sup>

The first movement, *Allegro maestoso*, expresses a formal ambiguity and structural complexity, with a blend in genre, its textural varieties and the use of extensive chromaticism and contrapuntal technique, which are typical of Chopin's late compositional style. It begins with a

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7 Samson, J. (2010). *Chopin: The four ballades* (pp. 18-19). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

8 Samson, p. 19.

9 Adam Zukiewicz, "Chopin's Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58: Late Style, Formal Ambiguity, and Performance Considerations" (DMA diss., University of Toronto, 2012). ii.

declamatory flourish of a five-note gesture making a bold statement; this is followed by a building up of intensity through increased rhythmic activity and dynamically creating an imperative and urgent tone. A transition built on large chromatic scales with imitative melodic lines is followed by episodes breathlessly taking us to the gorgeous lyrical second theme in D Major – a Nocturne-like section under simple, exquisite melodies and wash of lush harmonies. The tension accumulated throughout is then released in the closing theme, a new theme that gently concludes the ‘exposition’ through arpeggiations over soothing harmonies. The ‘development’ is imbued with chromatic voice-leading, complex harmonies, and the use of polyphony throughout rather fragmented gestures. The music becomes more agitated, developing motives under chains of modulation and sequence, building up continuously without having a sense of destination. The partial opening theme returns again, for the last time that leads to the ‘recapitulation’, a reprise involving a more satisfying second theme in B Major where it loses its diffidence. The movement concludes itself in correspondence to the opening majesty.

The second movement is a *Scherzo and Trio* in ABA form in a fleeting vision. It starts in the distant key of E-flat Major, with constant running figurations across the keyboard, charming and delightful. However, “fast-paced figuration does not allow any larger tension to form, despite the melodic line being filled with chromaticisms, passing and neighboring notes.”<sup>10</sup> This is contrasted by the polyphonic middle section moving in linear textural layers through stable harmonic progressions. The *Scherzo*, then, comes back and ends in E-flat Major in a dignified manner.

The third movement, *Largo*, is considered the heart of the piece. As a continuation from the second movement, it turns to a Nocturne-like instrumental song. It begins with a rather heavy-hearted introduction emphasized by dotted rhythms in descending motion that magically melts into C Major, then transforms to B Major and starts its sublime lyrical theme. The A section is comprised of four phrases, which are connected in an extended lyrical manner. These phrases are accompanied by an unwavering, oscillating gesture over luminous harmonies with gentle dotted rhythms portraying a sense of contemplation; this draws us into a private sound world. This seamlessly transits to a more expansive ‘development’ in E Major, reflecting a moment of stillness only with occasional pauses that ponder. The ‘development’ consists yet again of four connected phrases. Each phrase is built with two statements, briefly traversing modalities, before resolving in a major key.

The ‘recapitulation’ reintroduces the material from the ‘exposition’, but features a triplet motion in the left hand, evoking a sense of forward momentum.

A driving, irresistible energy starts the last movement, a tarantella in 6/8 meter. Despite its formal ambiguity, the finale is best understood as a Rondo, by Tomaszewski, particularly, as “ABA’B’A” + Coda” rondo structure. The movement gradually intensifies until it resolves in its conclusion.

This ambitious movement surges through continuous intense dramatic buildups. The entire movement is based on a single melodic idea: an agitated B minor theme. The theme is presented

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<sup>10</sup> Chomiński, *Sonaty Chopina*, p. 215.

immediately after an eight-measure introduction that rises in octaves; it alternates with episodes involving chains of scales, running figurations going through B minor, E minor, back to B minor in rather fragmented design. Each appearance is more urgent and turbulent until it arrives at its final destination that soars up to a fierce joy and brings us to a triumphant conclusion.

The Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58 undergoes a wide spectrum of emotional intensity expressed through complex structural design and harmony. It stands as a perfect display of Chopin's artistic greatness.

## RECITAL III PROGRAM

Johann Sebastian Bach                      Fantasia and Fugue in A minor, BWV 904  
(1685-1750)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart                  Fantasia in C minor, K. 475  
(1756-1791)

Alexander Scriabin                          Piano Sonata No. 2 in G-sharp minor, Op. 19  
(1872-1915)

- I.     Andante
- II.    Presto

Carl Vine                                      Piano Sonata No. 2 (1997)  
(b. 1954)

- I.
- II.



## RECITAL III PROGRAM NOTES

### Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

#### **Fantasia & Fugue in A minor, BWV 904**

Composed around 1725 during Bach's early period in Leipzig. Though much of the work's origin is left unknown, the piece clearly manifests Bach's improvisatory and virtuoso abilities at the keyboard, as well as his unmatched mastery of counterpoint, which is evident in its complex fugues.

The opening *Fantasia* makes use of traditional contrapuntal textures, including voice leading that we might find in chorales, a simple presentation of material without a lot of ornamentation, and careful use of dissonance to move things along, as well as attention to clear melodic presentation.

It opens with a solid chordal gesture over a descending bass line. This is followed by a more contemplated intermediate passage gently moving through harmonies with dignity and grace. The 'theme' and 'intermediate' passages that alternate throughout the *Fantasia* propel the piece into new key areas, creating contrasts between sense of extraversion and intimacy. The *Fugue* is a double-fugue, both subjects are based upon the central note A: the first presents a diatonic statement ascending from A, the second introduces the chromatic theme descending a fourth from A, and the final combines the two.<sup>11</sup> Both *Fantasia* and *Fugue* share a common motivic unit of E-F-E which is thought to unify both movements.

### Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

#### **Fantasia in C minor, K. 475 (1785)**

Mozart moved to Vienna in 1781. Despite his reputation for being an active composer and performer, Mozart did not compose any Piano Sonatas there until 1784. Piano Sonata in C minor, K. 457 became known as Mozart's first sonata written during his time in Vienna. This Sonata, along with the C minor Fantasy, was published together in 1785, and they are often played as a set.

The C minor Fantasy is imbued with intense dramatic contrasts, through conflicts and a sense of tragedy – an innermost exposure to Mozart's feelings. Largely based on symmetrical phrase structure, the *Fantasia* is composed with non-classical traditional harmonies with an extensive use of dissonance and chromaticism, both of which are frequently employed in the composer's

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<sup>11</sup> Sangjoon Park, "Musical Oration: J.S. Bach's Use of Rhetorical Devices in the *Fantasia and Fugue In A minor, BWV 904*, and the *Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue In D minor, BWV903*" (D.M.A. doc., The University of Arizona, 2020), p. 21.

late compositions. The agitated tone to be expressed in the tragic key C minor would later be more frequently used by Beethoven when conveying such feelings as despair or pathos.

The Fantasia is constructed in five sections: *Adagio*, *Allegro*, *Andantino*, *Piu Allegro*, and *Tempo primo* with each section highly differentiated from the other in character and musical content. The beginning of the Fantasia, marked *Adagio*, already sets its tragic tone through a chromatic climbing-up; this is answered by anxious short-slur gestures in the higher register. The same gesture repeats itself for the second time in a lower key which unfolds its story through modulatory sequences that travel from C minor to as far as B minor, along with striking emphases in dynamic and character. This then, transforms to the loving second theme in D Major with gorgeous lyrical melodies. The *Allegro* shifts character right away in the beginning with an unflinching determination going through intense musical drama involving stark harmonies, breathless phrases in major/minor on oscillating harmonic points that expand in range. The *Andantino* in B-flat Major is perhaps even more expressive, a Recitative involving compelling characters creating operatic language that was easily accessible and well-loved. The *Piu Allegro* in G minor achieves a drastic tone through continuous excessive rapid 16th-notes tremolo driven by tragic desperation. The ending corresponds to the beginning in C minor leaving only a single voice facing its unshakeable destiny.

## Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915)

### Piano Sonata No. 2 “Sonata-Fantasia” in G-sharp minor, Op. 19 (1897)

Russian composer Alexander Scriabin was perhaps the most important composer of Piano Sonatas after Beethoven. His ten published sonatas for solo piano rank as his most visionary artistic statements.<sup>12</sup> Scriabin’s sonatas were highly personal, and they were his only large-scale compositions besides symphonies. Scriabin infused his sonatas with extensive symbolism and programmatic elements of his personal philosophy, perceived as paradoxical and mysterious. The sonata displays Scriabin’s mastery of larger forms and pianistic sonorities.

The second sonata, titled *Sonata-Fantasia* is a work that took Scriabin five years to complete, with the second movement composed four years earlier than the first. It was finally published in 1898. Scriabin pays honor to Beethoven in deciding to call it a “Sonata-Fantasia”, similar to Beethoven’s famous “Moonlight” Sonata Op. 27 No. 2, which is called *Quasi una fantasia*. It also follows the same two-movement pattern that Beethoven used in several sonatas.

The sonata presents an imagery of the vast, turbulent Black Sea of Crimea, which the composer journeyed to during his honeymoon in 1897. These images are at the heart and essence of the second sonata.

The sonata uses an ABA form with a slightly freer structural scheme. The first movement is built around two essential ideas: a firm statement of ‘triple’ that recurs throughout, and a more

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<sup>12</sup> Lincoln Ballard, Matthew Bengtson, and John Bell Young, *The Alexander Scriabin Companion: History, Performance, and Lore* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), p. 36.

improvisatory floating gesture. In combination, these give the movement a sense of gripping expansiveness.

The opening bars of the first movement evoke a sense of calm, by the seashore, with echoes from the 'triple' that dominate the entire movement. The beginning already establishes a harmonic ambiguity, typical of Scriabin's music. The theme starts in B Major with a sensuous melody accompanied by arpeggiated harmonies, somewhat languorous; the use of 'Hemiola' prevents the motion from being started on the downbeats, giving it a seamless flow. With ravishing textures over intricate harmonic progressions, the movement encapsulates the beauty and mystery of the sea. The 'development' starts to surge, roaring in the lower register and building intensity through the use of Fr+6 and Ger+6, thickened textures, dynamic increases depicting turbulence and storms. The 'recapitulation' merges with the 'development' without having its first subject group coming back as a whole, but only the 'triple' figuration. The 'E Major' reflects moonlight glittering over the sea and gives a temporary serenity that leads to the Coda involving the use of cross-rhythms that gradually drift away and end the movement, echoing the beginning.

The second movement is a *moto perpetuo*, in sonata-rondo form interacting between rondo and chains of episodes. Marked *Presto*, we can understand the movement as "the broad expanse of a restless sea."<sup>13</sup> It features breathless rapid triplets in the right hand, both serving as the melody and the supporting chord notes over an eight-measure phrase structure undergoing various guises in different keys, portraying different phases of ocean waves. The 'development' offers a complete contrast with right hand playing the melodic line, and left hand playing triplets under intense dynamic shifts across the registers, with intervallic leaps and lush colors. The Coda echoes the middle section, with a gradual reduction of the movement to the smallest possible elements that are unexpectedly concluded by two striking chords.

## **Carl Vine (b. 1954)**

### **Piano Sonata No. 2 (1997)**

The Piano Sonata No. 2 was dedicated to Michael Kieran Harvey, the Australian pianist who gave its premiere in Sydney in 1998. It embraces a new way of expression, according to Vine: "I wanted the new work to have a far more solid structure than the first sonata, which evolves organically over its entire span."<sup>14</sup>

The sonata is energetic, intense, musically effective and requires extremely fine control over technique, sound and power. It contains a mixture of several moods indicated by the appearance of many themes differing in character. Along with various changes of time signatures Vine also

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13 Leikin, A. (2012). *The performing style of Alexander Scriabin* (p. 136). Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

14 Carl Vine, Program notes for Carl Vine's *Piano Sonata, No. 2*, Michael Kieran Harvey, piano. TallPoppies I20, 2000, compact disc.

uses tempo changes as one of the main sources of displaying a character transformation.<sup>15</sup> The sonata was inspired by Ravel's *Miroirs* which involves cascading arpeggios, wide dynamic ranges, tremolos, complex rhythms and repeated figurations. It also shares similar compositional techniques with his Piano Sonata No. 1, only with more expansion and elaboration.

The first movement is in AB form. It is divided by clear distinction of writing style and texture.<sup>16</sup> It opens with an eight-measure declamatory introduction filled with octaves in both hands, shifting in registers in a grand manner. This leads to rapid arpeggios and scale cascades between hands, creating overlapping tonalities, with monophonic melodic lines accented on top. The fast passages in the left hand involving triplets, quintuplets and sextuplets that dominate almost the entire A section, interact with chordal gestures which are also extensively used in the movement, creating distinct musical contrasts. With expansion of sonorities under varied melodic motives, the movement continues to reach new climaxes in different textures. The B section brings us to a completely different soundscape (using a three-stave layout), complex cross-rhythms, glittering streaks of color reflecting ethereal moments of stillness and contemplation. Built on chordal parallel harmonies, a three-note motive is inserted in the middle voice and is accompanied by the ostinato bass which consist of intervals of 4<sup>th</sup>s and 5<sup>th</sup>s, surely recalling Debussy's writing style. The 'ending' comes in a distant shimmering.

Connected by *quasi attacca*, the second movement features fast motoric rhythms evocative of jazz with its notable syncopations. The form is ABA, with a mixture of characters. It is similar to the first movement, with octaves beginning the piece in the lower register, first starting in a slower pace with emphasized melodic lines on the top, and gradually increasing its rhythmic activity and complexity through metric modulations and textural shifts, each one suggesting different rhythmic groupings and patterns that become more complicated as it develops. Vine employs his typical compositional techniques such as repeated patterns, extreme dynamic contrasts, glissandi, accented figures, strong rhythmic pulses, particularly, the metric modulation in the movement, providing an on-going momentum and a motoric style. Vine also employed new techniques such as the chromatic clusters creating astounding percussive effects.

The B section departs from virtuosity and enters an expansive passage with relatively soft dynamics throughout that is only interrupted by a sudden burst of *f*, surely suggesting Ravel's *Gaspard de la nuit*. The section is largely built upon fragmented passages between moving (rapid notes) and halting (chordal gestures) with continuous meter shifts creating a sense of confusion. Its distinctive character suggests a whole separate musical experience by itself. The reprise of the A section directly leads to its massive Coda involving rapid sextuplets, syncopations, glissando, chordal passages and ascending consecutive 6<sup>th</sup>s under extreme speed and dynamic range, spinning and climbing, reaching to its highest emotional altitude with sheer exhilaration, eventually bursting into four explosive chords in *ffff*.

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15 Hanna Cyba, "A Performer's Guide to The Piano Sonatas by Carl Vine" (D.M.A. doc., University of Miami, 2002), p. 35.

16 Eun-Kyoung Yang, "The Piano Sonatas of Carl Vine: a guideline to performance and style analysis" (D.M.A.doc., The Ohio State University, 2003), p. 24.

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