

PREFACE

Shortly after my last recording session at CBS of the complete Rachmaninoff solo piano works, C.F. Peters Corporation invited me to begin yet another project – to edit the complete Rachmaninoff Preludes in a new performing edition. I felt very enthusiastic about the idea, and could hardly wait to begin.

For a start, I would have to locate the original manuscripts and then determine what changes would be necessary for an edition suitable for the 1980's.

I soon discovered that this was not an easy task. Although the manuscripts of the *Preludes Opus 23* and *Opus 32* are listed as items in the State Central Glinka Museum of Musical Culture in Moscow, my personal requests for information about the documents went unanswered. After many months of silence from the Soviet Union, Don Leavitt, a friend who also happens to be Chief of the Music Division of the Library of Congress, drafted a letter on my behalf in an attempt to obtain information and photocopies of the Preludes.

The reply, when it finally came, was terribly ambiguous and downright discouraging. According to the curator of the Museum, the Rachmaninoff Preludes were either “missing” or “unavailable.” By then, it became apparent that I could not expect cooperation from the Glinka Museum of Musical Culture.

Therefore, I had to turn to other sources. Mrs. Natalia Rachmaninoff had made a generous gift of her husband's original scores to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. I was permitted to study the originals and to obtain photocopies at my discretion. In addition, thanks again to Don Leavitt, I discovered an unusual two-piano score of the famous *C-sharp Minor Prelude* which eventually became the model for my work on all of the Preludes.

During the arduous preparations for recording all of Rachmaninoff's solo works, I grew to feel very close to this austere man whose music expressed such rich melancholy. The years of playing his music gave me a strong instinct about the man himself, so that when I began to pore through the Gutheil edition of the *Preludes Opus 23*, I knew they had to have been altered by someone else.

Contrasting the first edition of *Opus 23* (printed in Moscow by Gutheil in 1903) with the manuscript copy of the *C-sharp Minor Prelude*, I knew that my instincts about Rachmaninoff had to be correct. Rachmaninoff's own compositional style was clear, exact, simple and unadorned. The Gutheil (with no editor named) was a mass of inconsistent, unnecessary and largely misleading dynamics, tempo markings and phrasings. Someone had tampered with Rachmaninoff's score, adding his own very personal (though anonymous) interpretation of Rachmaninoff's intentions. This was common practice in 1903. Today we are accustomed to the Urtext, the original; to what the composer had in mind.

In that spirit, I decided to use the recorded performances of Rachmaninoff himself to help form the basis of this edition. With the manuscript copies of the *C-sharp Minor Prelude* and the *Corelli Variations* as a guide, I have tried to allow the music of the Preludes themselves to shine through. I've given some dynamic and tempo indications, but I've totally eliminated the clutter of extraneous markings.

For the student, I've indicated my own fingerings, which I hope will be of help in this very difficult music and, finally, I have tried to illuminate the work of this great creator of incomparable beauty and sentiment in an edition for a new generation of pianists to discover and enjoy.

A Monsieur A. Arensky

PRELUDE

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873–1943)

Edited by Ruth Laredo

Klavier

Largo
ff
p

poco più mosso
poco cresc.
p

tempo precedente

pp morendo e ritenuto

The musical score is written for piano (Klavier) in G major, 4/4 time. It consists of four systems of music. The first system begins with a *Largo* tempo and a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic. The second system includes a *poco più mosso* tempo change and a *poco cresc.* dynamic marking. The third system returns to the *tempo precedente*. The fourth system concludes with a *pp morendo e ritenuto* dynamic and tempo marking. The score features complex textures with multiple voices in both hands, including chords, arpeggios, and melodic lines. Fingerings and articulation marks are clearly indicated throughout.

First system of a musical score. It consists of four staves: two for the right hand (treble clef) and two for the left hand (bass clef). The music is in a key with three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 3/4 time signature. The first two measures show a complex texture with many sixteenth notes in the right hand and a steady bass line in the left hand. The last two measures feature a large fermata over the right hand, while the left hand continues with a rhythmic pattern.

Second system of the musical score. It follows the same four-staff layout. The first measure is marked with a forte dynamic (*ff*). The right hand has a melodic line with many sixteenth notes. The left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment. The final measure of the system has a *sempre f* marking and a large fermata over the right hand.

Third system of the musical score. It continues the four-staff layout. The first measure is marked with a forte dynamic (*f*). The right hand has a melodic line with many sixteenth notes. The left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment. The system concludes with a series of measures marked with a piano dynamic (*pp*) and a *dim.* (diminuendo) marking, ending with a large fermata over the right hand.