



S e r g e i
RACHMANINOV

É T U D E S
T A B L E A U X

O p u s 3 3 N° 2



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Sergei RACHMANINOV

1873 - 1943

ÉTUDES - TABLEAUX

Opus 39 N° 5 E♭ minor

In 1915 following the death of his colleague Alexander Scriabin, Rachmaninov and Koussevitsky gave a series of concerts in memoriam for the benefit of Scriabin's family. Although their musical paths were poles apart, he must have looked back at their shared classes under Zverev some 30 years earlier with nostalgia. Rachmaninov was renowned for his generosity and at this time he made a serious study of Scriabin's music. During his long and successful career, he did not hide his distaste for contemporary music and rarely performed Scriabin, recording just

one piece. It would also appear that those performances were generally censured.

Between 1914 and 1917, two volumes of *Études-Tableaux* were published, their title suggesting studies inspired by a visual picture, similar to those of Chopin and Liszt. However, Rachmaninov did not divulge his visual inspiration, suggesting that each artist should be encouraged to "paint for himself". The nine *Etudes-Tableaux* of Op 39 are the last major works for piano composed before leaving Russia for ever.

Superficially this E♭ minor picture study might owe something to Scriabin's *Poème Tragique* written in 1903; they share some similarity in the heavy chordal triplets and the central section LH accompaniment. On a few occasions even the harmonies begin to resemble his old classmate's "modernist" style; i.e. the first two beats of **35**. By turns tempestuous and passionate, anguished and solemn, this work features atypical harmonic dissonance. Poignant and soaring melodies guaranteed its popularity among pianists and audiences and it was performed and recorded by Horowitz several times throughout his career.

Given that the composer was born in 1873, an age of great artistic individuality, it is not surprising that he typically performed without wholly respecting the score. This edition reflects the editor's personal approach to the music, usually indicated with an asterisk*. In addition, some of the phrasing, dynamics and agogic markings have been sometimes modified; a zealous student will need to consult other editions.



without disclosing the source of my inspiration. I find that musical ideas come to me more easily when I have a definite non-musical subject to describe. This is particularly true in writing a shorter piece for the piano. A small piece can become as lasting a masterpiece as a large work. The artist learns, after long experience, that it is more difficult to be simple than to be complicated.”

* The tonality, generally given as C major, has been omitted here; it is true that the piece begins and ends with open fifths on C, but for me, its centre, or tonic must be F, and it will be seen that it is easier to read with a key signature of four flats. It evokes a rather perturbed picture with strange modal and Russo-Asiatic associations; Rachmaninov was after all of noble Tatar heritage.

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1 hands exchanged — bass chord upper C removed

4 editorial alto line

11-16 time-signatures & barlines modified

40 editorial ties

******The family home of his wife Natalia Satina — a country estate and the summer residence where Rachmaninov composed prolifically between 1890 and 1917



ETUDE TABLEAU

Op 33 N° 2

allegro

molto espressivo

The first system of the musical score. The left hand (bass clef) starts with a 4-measure rest, marked with a 4 and *pp*. The right hand (treble clef) begins with a half note G4, marked with an asterisk (*). The tempo is *allegro* and the expression is *molto espressivo*. The system concludes with a *f* dynamic marking.

rit

The second system of the musical score. The left hand continues with a 3-measure rest, marked with a 3. The right hand features a 2-measure rest, marked with a 2, followed by a half note G4 marked with an asterisk (*). The tempo is *rit* (ritardando). The system concludes with a *f* dynamic marking.

a tempo

The third system of the musical score. The left hand starts with a 5-measure rest, marked with a 5 and *pp*. The right hand begins with a half note G4, marked with an asterisk (*). The tempo is *a tempo* and the expression is *molto espressivo*. The system concludes with a *f* dynamic marking.

The fourth system of the musical score. The left hand starts with a 7-measure rest, marked with a 7 and *mf*. The right hand begins with a half note G4, marked with an asterisk (*). The system concludes with a *f* dynamic marking.

rit

9 *pp* *mf*

tempo primo

11 *p* *meno mosso*

mf *mf*

13 *4*

f *accelerando*

15 *4* *sopra*

f *ff* tempo primo

16

18

appassionato e sempre più mosso

20 *crescendo*

22 *8va*

(8^{va})

24 *ff*

26 *rit*

meno mosso

28 *p* **4**

tempo primo

30

p

32 **3**

8va - - -

veloce

(8va) - - -

34 **4** *pp*

8va - - -

(8va) - - -

36 *f* *p* *tr*

meno mosso

38 *mf* *p*

*



R A C H M A N I N O V

Études Tableaux Op 33 N° 2

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