

PEDAGOGICAL GUIDE TO  
KHACHATURIAN'S PIANO CONCERTO IN D-FLAT MAJOR

by

JOANNA HYEYOUNG KIM

(Under the Direction of David Schiller and Evgeny Rivkin)

ABSTRACT

This dissertation focuses on interpretative and technical challenges found in Aram Khachaturian's Piano Concerto in D-flat major. It is intended to offer pianists and piano teachers a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the concerto and to provide general information on its history and context. The dissertation consists of a pedagogical guide to the concerto which provides detailed suggestions and explanations for solving its technical and stylistic challenges. Formal structure, harmonic language, rhythm, phrasing, articulation, motivic development, and timbre are also addressed. A discography of available recordings in the U.S. is included.

INDEX WORDS: Khachaturian, Piano Concerto in D-flat major, Pianistic Technique, Piano Pedagogy, Practice Method

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated with the deepest respect and love to my parents, Cheong-Hee Kim and Sun-Young Won. My father showed me the value of hard work, diligence, and responsibility, while my mother encouraged me to dream big and reach for the stars. Their love, wisdom, and commitment to their baby daughter's success have inspired me to pursue a doctoral degree in piano performance. From the bottom of my heart, I love and thank you.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

I am now completely immersed in the Concerto, which should come out brilliantly. . . . Every composition should be an event for the real artist. It should pose a problem. My Concerto, being the first national piano concerto, might stir the minds of young people, at least it might induce our master composers of the future to consider this genre from the viewpoint of national material and to proceed from the existing modest attempts in that direction.<sup>1</sup>

Aram Khachaturian is one of the more popular and accessible composers of twentieth-century music and probably the most well-known Armenian composer in the history of western classical music. His Piano Concerto in D-flat major is, in fact, the first work in that genre in the entire history of Armenian music. It shows the composer's love for native Armenian folk music and his interest in the genre of the piano concerto. The world premiere of the concerto was performed by Russian pianist Lev Oborin in 1937 and was received with great enthusiasm. Oborin, to whom the piece was dedicated, performed it in Moscow as a part of the Festival of Russian Music. The concerto became widely popular among professional pianists such as Arthur Rubinstein (1887-1982), William Kapell (1922-1953), Moura Lympany (1916-2005), Julius Katchen (1926-1969), and Alicia de Larrocha (1923-2009). The concerto remained popular until the 1960s in Europe and in the United States. During the years of the Cold War, it was performed in front of two world leaders, United States President Dwight Eisenhower and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, in a gesture resonant with the "possibility of cooperation, and even

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<sup>1</sup> Victor Yuzefovich, *Aram Khachaturian* (New York: Sphinx Press, 1985), 101.

friendship, between East and West.”<sup>2</sup> The popularity of the concerto slowly diminished after the 1960s, possibly due to the death of William Kapell in 1953.

### Purpose of the Study

This dissertation focuses on interpretative and technical challenges found in Aram Khachaturian’s Piano Concerto in D-flat major. It is intended to offer pianists and piano teachers a deeper understanding and appreciation of the concerto and to provide general information on its history and context. The main body of the dissertation consists of a pedagogical guide to the concerto containing detailed suggestions for solving its technical and stylistic challenges. Formal structure, harmonic language, rhythm, phrasing, articulation, motivic development, and timbre are also addressed.

### Need for the Study

Aram Khachaturian’s Piano Concerto in D-flat major offers challenges different from those of the well-known concertos of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As a twentieth-century work that is stylistically “modern,” this composition demands familiarity with piano techniques requiring percussive effects and note clusters. It requires great mobility due to frequent changes in texture and keyboard register. The piano is often treated as a percussive instrument rather than as a melodic one. The creative and unusual use of harmony, such as complex polychords and dissonant intervals, contributes to the distinctiveness of this modern work. Khachaturian’s use of Armenian folk melodies shapes the harmonic language to be almost modal, and the use of added intervals to basic triads further expands the harmonic vocabulary. Technical challenges that result from his expanded harmonic language include extension of the

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

hands to play widely-spaced chords with many interior notes. Diverse articulation markings such as *legato*, *staccato/staccatissimo*, slurs, and accents/*marcato* are also technically demanding.

Another unique compositional feature of this concerto is the use of Armenian folk musical materials. Khachaturian intentionally tried to imitate the timbre of some Armenian folk instruments such as the *douduk*<sup>3</sup> and *kemancha*.<sup>4</sup> Another innovative timbral effect occurs by incorporating an unusual percussion instrument called the flexatone in the second movement.<sup>5</sup> The flexatone creates an eerie vibrato sound. Khachaturian was the first to use it in a piano concerto, demonstrating his modern approach to timbre.

The harmonic language of the concerto is also quite distinctive. Khachaturian's harmonies of triads with added major and minor seconds make the piece sound extremely chromatic and dissonant. Formally, however, the concerto adheres to the conventional three-movement Classical-Romantic structure of a concerto:

- I. *Allegro ma non troppo e maestoso*
- II. *Andante con anima*
- III. *Allegro brillante*

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<sup>3</sup> The *douduk* (*duduk*) is a double-reed aerophone with a cylindrical bore, eight fingerholes, one thumbhole, and one tuning hole on the posterior side near the distal end of the body. It is made of apricot wood and is found in Armenia and Georgia. It has a wide reed which produces a distinctive, mournful sound. The douduk is also the national musical symbol of Armenia (Andy Nercessian, *The Duduk and National Identity in Armenia* [Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, Inc, 2001], 115).

<sup>4</sup> The *kemancha* is a long Armenian spike fiddle with three or four strings and a round, skin-covered, and often beautifully decorated body (*The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music: The Middle East*, eds. Virginia Marcus Danielson, et al., [New York: Garland, 2002], 1084).

<sup>5</sup> The flexatone consists of a flexible sheet of metal suspended in a wire frame with a wooden knob. The player shakes the instrument with a trembling movement which causes the beater to strike the sides of the metal sheet. The instrument was patented in the United States in 1924 and was introduced as a new instrument, making "jazz jazzier." It combines the timbral effects of musical saw, orchestra bells, and song whistle (James Blades, *Percussion Instruments and Their History* [White Plains: The Bold Strummer, Ltd., 1992], 393).

Clearly, the opportunity to learn a “modern” concerto as opposed to an “old standard” from the eighteenth or nineteenth century is valuable to pianists and piano teachers committed to discovering new music. Moreover, studying concertos can have many educational benefits for students. Studying a concerto broadens students’ learning and performing experience through collaboration, teaching them to learn not only a soloist’s role, but also an accompanying or secondary role when working with an ensemble or second pianist. When studying a concerto, students are encouraged to listen more actively, which benefits their listening and collaborative performing skills. These collaborative performing skills cannot be learned from studying solo repertoire but can be transferred from the concerto experience into students’ solo performances.

Another benefit from concerto study is developing the skill to coherently project a large formal structure, demanding that the student demonstrate interpretive consistency throughout each movement. Score analysis with regard to instrumentation assists the student in aural skill development. Studying a concerto can also promote an awareness of interactive writing between soloist and orchestra, developing in the student a keen sense of musical color (harmony and timbre) as interpretive decisions are made.<sup>6</sup>

As Lev Oborin observes, the Khachaturian concerto engages the pianist in a “strenuous contest” with the orchestra. This makes it an excellent vehicle for developing pianists’ artistic confidence. In addition to possessing characteristics of the “modern” concerto, this work is very pianistic in the same sense that the “grand Romantic concerti” of Liszt, Grieg, Tchaikovsky, and Rachmaninoff are.<sup>7</sup> Typical of Romantic concertos, the work makes technical demands on the pianist. For example, several passages contain rapid octave movement and rapid and awkward passages. The work demands a very powerful tone that often dominates the orchestra; therefore,

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<sup>6</sup> Liz Seidel, *Aspects of Piano Pedagogy and Performance for the Early Advanced Student: A Stylistic Analysis of the Concerto No. 1 for Piano and Orchestra by Robert Muczynsk* (D.M.A. diss., Ball State University, 2001), 2.

<sup>7</sup> Karine Poghosyan, *Aram Khachaturian for Piano* (D.M.A. diss., Manhattan School of Music, 2007), 71.

the performer must possess considerable stamina. In short, this concerto is technically challenging and musically engaging.

While there is a scholarly context for the present study, no one has yet studied Khachaturian's piano concerto in the manner proposed. A study of its diverse technical and musical demands will help pianists gain a full understanding of the work which will in turn lead to a better-sounding performance.

### Literature Review

After some years of declining interest in his music, Aram Khachaturian's reputation is growing stronger. UNESCO proclaimed 2003 the Year of Khachaturian in connection with the composer's one hundredth anniversary, an honor that only personalities with significant contributions to the world's cultural and artistic activities have earned.<sup>8</sup> A biographical documentary on the composer was released that same year; it includes Khachaturian conducting the State Orchestra of the USSR along with a clip of the first movement of his Piano Concerto played by Dora Servarian-Kuhn.<sup>9</sup> In 2007, Karine Poghosyan completed a doctoral thesis on Khachaturian's piano music entitled "Aram Khachaturian for Piano" in which she states that Khachaturian's output for the piano is a "true hidden treasure that is worthy of deep study and exploration."<sup>10</sup> Karine Poghosyan's comprehensive study of Khachaturian's piano music has established a broad foundation for the present, more detailed study of his concerto. Chapter Eight of her dissertation provides information on the inspiration and background of the concerto, brief analysis of the movements, and dates for the premiere and subsequent performances until 1978 (the year of the composer's death). In addition to Poghosyan's dissertation, several other

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<sup>8</sup> Margarita Ter-Simonian, "Aram Khachaturian is 100," November 2002, <http://www.armeniaemb.org/DiscoverArmenia/CultureArt/AramKhachaturian.htm> (accessed December 18, 2009).

<sup>9</sup> *Aram Ilich Khachaturian*, DVD, directed by Peter Rosen (2004, Video Artists International).

<sup>10</sup> Poghosyan, *Aram Khachaturian for Piano*, 96.



discussions of Khachaturian and his music are relevant to the present study. Two earlier English-language biographies of the composer exist, written by Grigory Shneerson and Viktor Aronovich Yuzefovich.<sup>11</sup> While both discuss the circumstances of the concerto's composition, neither provides a detailed analysis. Recent dissertations on other parts of Khachaturian's output include Yi-Chuan Chen's study of rhythm in three twentieth-century chamber works, one of which is Khachaturian's Trio in G Minor (1932).<sup>12</sup> Sue Ellen Puyear Thierbach's dissertation is a pedagogical guide to four violin concertos, including Khachaturian's.<sup>13</sup> While not concerned with the piano concerto directly, these studies provide a context for some of the stylistic and pedagogical issues raised by Khachaturian's music. In addition, Liz Seidel's dissertation on Robert Muczynski's Piano Concerto No. 1 provides a useful model of a pedagogical study of another, although certainly very different, twentieth-century piano concerto.<sup>14</sup>

### Delimitations and Methodology

As stated above, the scope of this dissertation is limited primarily to the interpretive and technical challenges of Aram Khachaturian's Piano Concerto in D-flat major. Reference to other piano literature will be made only when it has a direct bearing on the concerto.

Chapter One serves as an introduction to the concerto and provides information about its inspiration and background as well as a brief survey of the piece's performance, reception, and recordings. The chapter focuses primarily on performances in America, especially those of William Kapell.

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<sup>11</sup> Grigory Shneerson, *Aram Khachaturian* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Pub. House, 1959), and Viktor Aronovich Yuzefovich, *Aram Khachaturian* (New York: Sphinx Press, 1985).

<sup>12</sup> Yi-Chuan Chen, "A Rhythmic Study of Trios for Violin, Clarinet, and Piano: Igor Stravinsky's 'L'historie Du Soldat' Suite (1919), Aram Khachaturian's Trio in G Minor (1932), and Bela Bartok's 'Contrasts' (1938)," (D.M.A. diss., City University of New York, 2006).

<sup>13</sup> Sue Ellen Puyear Thierbach, "A Pedagogical Guide to Selected Violin Concertos by Bach, Viotti, Goldmark, and Khachaturian," (D.M.A. diss., University of Northern Colorado, 1999).

<sup>14</sup> Seidel, "Aspects of Piano Pedagogy," 15.

Chapters Two through Four each focus on one movement of the concerto. Each chapter begins with a general introduction to the movement, followed by a comprehensive examination of the challenges it presents along with suggestions for practice. These chapters are organized in accordance with the formal structure of each movement.

### Inspiration and Background

Aram Ilich Khachaturian was born the son of a poor Armenian family in Tiflis, Georgia, in 1903. His career would take him far from the poverty-stricken community in which he grew up, but he never lost sight of his roots. His Armenian heritage remained strongly evident in his music throughout his career, particularly in the composition of his Piano Concerto in D- flat major. Khachaturian did not initially intend to become a professional musician. As a young man he had been a student of medicine; however, as a child and as a teen, he had been fascinated with the Armenian folk music ever present in his household. In 1921, he took the initiative to pursue his career in music by traveling to Moscow where his tremendous talent earned him a spot in the Gnesin Institute.<sup>15</sup>

While at the Gnessin Institute in Moscow, Khachaturian first studied cello, then composition under the late Mikhail Gnessin. After four years of study, he moved on to the Moscow Conservatory where he studied under Nikolai Yakovlevich Myaskovsky, known as the “Father of the Soviet Symphony.”<sup>16</sup> During his time with Myaskovsky, Khachaturian also met

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<sup>15</sup> “Aram Ilich Khachaturian,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2006, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/doc/1E1-Khachatu.html> (accessed January, 13, 2009).

<sup>16</sup> Maya Pritsker, “In the Musical History of the Former Soviet Union,” n.d. <http://www.myaskovsky.ru/?id=34> (accessed January 2, 2009).

the woman who would become his wife, fellow composer Nina Makarova, with whom he composed several works throughout his career.<sup>17</sup>

At the Conservatory, Khachaturian had little time for anything other than his studies and his compositions. The comprehensive curriculum there required him to spend hours a day studying music history, form, composition, harmony and the instruments he would use in his compositions, along with basic studies in philosophy and language.<sup>18</sup> While completing his graduate studies at Moscow Conservatory, Khachaturian wrote many of the pieces for which he would later become widely known—most notably, his Piano Concerto in D-flat major.

In the 1930s, while Khachaturian was completing his studies, the Soviet Union was in the midst of great political upheaval with various factions laying the foundation for the communist government that would soon rule the country. Even as a student of music, Khachaturian was not unaffected by these political changes: popular music and classical art and music were among the most strictly governed aspects of Soviet society at that time. Musicians who proved themselves worthy to hold positions of power in the state bureaucracy were almost invariably appointed to a position in the Moscow Conservatory to influence the music that was being produced.<sup>19</sup> This political influence led to extreme changes in Soviet classical music. One aspect of Soviet musical aesthetics that Khachaturian readily embraced was its enthusiastic acceptance of the use of folk and folk-like themes in classical genres like the concerto.

This government-sanctioned blending of folk music and classical composition laid the foundation for the composition of the Piano Concerto in D-flat major. It drew heavily on the influence of the Armenian folk music which played a vital role in his childhood. Decades later,

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<sup>17</sup> Ted Libbey, “Khachaturian,” *The NPR Listener's Encyclopedia of Classical Music* (New York: Workman Publishing, 2006), 380.

<sup>18</sup> Avery Johnson, “Change from Within: Modern Music in Moscow,” *The Economist*, (January 26, 2002). 54.

<sup>19</sup> Amy Lawson, *Music for the Revolution* (Pennsylvania: Penn State Press, 2004), 129.

Khachaturian is still heralded for “his ability to transplant colorful, rhythmically distinctive folk material from Armenia, Georgia, Ukraine or Belarus into a more formal musical setting, without losing its essence.”<sup>20</sup>

Along with the rhythmic folk music of Armenia, Khachaturian's Piano Concerto also drew heavily on the “Oriental” and exotic sounds that had begun to appear in Russian music as early as Balakirev’s “Islamey.” An example of Khachaturian’s employment of “exotic” material is his piano concerto’s use of the flexatone; it remains one of a relatively small number of classical pieces to include it.<sup>21</sup>

Although she did not actually collaborate with Khachaturian on the concerto, his wife Nina Makarova played a vital part in its inspiration and fruition. She often acted as reviewer, editor, and sounding board during the course of its creation. Sergei Prokofiev, who had established himself before Khachaturian began his career and would later be denounced by the Communist Party along with Khachaturian for being too “formalist,” contributed to the composition of the concerto as well. In 1935, when Prokofiev had just returned to the Soviet Union from Europe, these two composers had many opportunities to meet and communicate. Khachaturian wrote about their conversations:

He did not hide his surprise at my ambitious undertaking. “It is very difficult to write a concerto,” he said. “A concerto must have ideas. I advise you to jot down all the new ideas as they occur to you without waiting for the thing as a whole to mature. Make a note of separate passages and interesting bits, not necessarily in the correct order. Later on you can use these as ‘bricks’ to build a whole.” Each time we met, Prokofiev would ask me how my Concerto was progressing. He let me play parts of it to him, and gave me very useful pointers.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 381

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Shneerson, *Aram Khachaturian*, 40.

Khachaturian's Piano Concerto was completed in 1936 and received its premiere in the later part of the year in the "Small Hall" of the Moscow Conservatory, featuring pianist Berta Kozels. In the program, the concerto was attributed to the pseudonym Alexei Klumove, possibly to avoid revealing that the composer was still a student. Despite a positive reception, the piece would not make its first public appearance until almost a year later as a part of the Festival of Russian Music. Held in Moscow on July 12, 1937, the festival included a public performance of the concerto by conductor L. Steinberg and pianist Lev Oborin.<sup>23</sup> Oborin, to whom the piece would later be dedicated, had won the grand prize at the first Chopin International Piano Competition in Warsaw in 1927 and was at the peak of his performing career. While composing the work, Khachaturian expressed the hope that Oborin would play his piece.<sup>24</sup> When Oborin heard of the composer's wish, he became very interested in the work. Oborin stated:

What attracts me to this music? It must be the powerful temperament, originality, and the exquisite virtuosity of parts of the soloing [*sic*] instrument and the orchestra which is characteristic for his entire creative work: I dare say that Khachaturian's Piano Concerto is one of the few contemporary works of this genre which are true concertos, not just pieces for the piano with orchestra. There is grandiosity, vivid sharp opposition and competition between the soloist and the orchestra parts. I make bold to say that Aram Khachaturian's concerto is one of the few modern works in this form that can truly be defined as "concerto" and not merely a piece for piano and orchestra. It is cast on a grand scale, is rich in vivid contrasts and affords room for a strenuous contest between the soloist and the ensemble.<sup>25</sup>

#### United States Performances and William Kapell

Khachaturian's Piano Concerto was premiered in the United States, not by a professional pianist, but by a student. During the period of alliance between the United States and the Soviet Union in WWII, Maro Ajemian, a piano student at the Juilliard School of Music in New York

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<sup>23</sup> Boston Symphony Orchestra, "Aram Khachaturian (1903-1978): Piano Concerto in D-flat," n.d. [http://www.bso.org/images/program\\_notes/Khachaturian\\_piano\\_concerto.pdf](http://www.bso.org/images/program_notes/Khachaturian_piano_concerto.pdf) (accessed January 15, 2009).

<sup>24</sup> Shneerson, *Aram Khachaturian*, 38.

<sup>25</sup> Lev Oborin, "Congratulations to the Hero of the Day," *Sovetskaya Muzuka*, No. 6 (1963): 33.

City, learned of the concerto's existence while thumbing through the Am-Rus catalogue.<sup>26</sup> The prospect of introducing a New York audience to the work of a fellow Armenian intrigued her, and she immediately asked her teacher Carl Friedberg to obtain a copy of the score for a student concert at Juilliard.<sup>27</sup>

Khachaturian's Piano Concerto in D-flat major was performed in 1942 at the Juilliard School as a part of its student concerto series under the direction of Albert Stoessel (1894-1943). Despite performances of Chopin, Liszt, and Mozart that same night, Khachaturian's Piano Concerto generated the greatest enthusiasm from the crowd and inspired a flurry of publicity.<sup>28</sup> *New York Herald Tribune* feature columnist Robert Lawrence observed,

Miss Ajemian played with such mastery that she lifted her performance completely out of the student category. She has an individual type of piano tone, rather wanting in roundness but pleasingly so. The quality of her work last night was pointed, precise, elegant, in addition to a substratum of fine poetic feeling. This is a young artist to be watched. Mr. Stoessel gave her admirable orchestral support.<sup>29</sup>

The reviews prompted a second performance of the piece two months later at New York City's Cosmopolitan Opera House (now the New York City Center on West 55th Street, between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenues), organized by the local Armenian community as a benefit for Russian war relief. It too received a rave review. The subheading of Louis Biancolli's *New York World-Telegram* review claimed, "Khachaturian May Displace Tschaikowsky!"<sup>30</sup> Meanwhile,

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<sup>26</sup> Maro Ajemian (1921 – 1978) went on to become a key advocate of contemporary music in the mid-twentieth century. Her most significant accomplishment in this regard was the premiere and subsequent recording of the *Sonatas and Interludes* for prepared piano of John Cage, a work dedicated to her and issued on three Dial LPs in 1951. These albums helped to strengthen Cage's reputation in serious musical circles and, as they were successful, "established the marketability of contemporary music in the then-new LP format." (Paul Cook, "Guide to records," *American Record Guide* [March 1996], 100). Am-Rus editions were American editions of Soviet music published by Leeds Music corporation.

<sup>27</sup> Arzruni, "When the Twain Did Meet."

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Robert Lawrence, "The Review," *New York Herald Tribune* (March 15, 1942), 12.

<sup>30</sup> Sahan Arzruni, "When the Twain Did Meet," *The Juilliard Journal Online*, March 2004, [http://www.juilliard.edu/update/journal/j\\_articles205.html](http://www.juilliard.edu/update/journal/j_articles205.html) (accessed December 9, 2008).

Ajemian's first performance, had caught the attention of fellow student William Kapell. Given that he was “fresh from his victory at the Naumburg Competition and looking for a spectacular composition to launch his career,” Kappell was ready for such a concerto.<sup>31</sup>

Kapell's talent led New York Philharmonic's guest conductor Efrem Kurtz to urge him to “learn it quickly, then we'll play it together.”<sup>32</sup> The pair launched their first performance of the concerto on July 18, 1942, in Lewisohn Stadium.<sup>33</sup> According to concert reviewer Virgil Thompson, “no one else played it like that, with beauty and sweep and fire. . . . [His interpretation was] a rare blend of communicative intensity and sensitivity to structure that made his realizations. . . not only technically impressive but emotionally satisfying.”<sup>34</sup> Indeed, Thompson liked the performance more than the work itself: “Kapell's performances of Khachaturian's Piano Concerto, a trashy yet splendidly virtuosic work, created a sensation.”<sup>35</sup> This performance led Kapell out of anonymity and into classical performance stardom.

Like Khachaturian, Kapell came from very inauspicious beginnings. He was born and raised in Manhattan by a family of Russian-Jewish descent and educated in the New York public school system.<sup>36</sup> He began performing for the public on the piano at a very young age: he won a turkey dinner with pianist José Iturbi at the age of ten and made his professional debut at Town Hall at the age of nineteen. Following his spectacular performance of Khachaturian's Piano Concerto in D-flat major, he contracted with Columbia Artists Management and began his recording career with RCA.<sup>37</sup> By his mid-20s, he had established a very fruitful career: a

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<sup>31</sup> Arzruni, “When the Twain Did Meet.”

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Virgil Thompson, “William Kapell,” <http://www.4music.net/links/kapell.htm> (accessed January 14, 2008).

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Tim Page, “William Kapell's Piano Benchmark,” *Washington Post*, September 27, 1998, <http://www.williamkapell.com/articles/timpage.html> (accessed January 14, 2008).

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

recording contract with RCA Victor and performance dates with such prestigious conductors as Eugene Ormandy, Leopold Stokowski, Fritz Reiner, Pierre Monteux and William Steinberg.<sup>38</sup> Without a doubt, he was the most famous American-born pianist until Van Cliburn appeared.

Said to be deeply attuned to both solo and chamber repertoires and often heralded by both the media and music community as “Rachmaninov's true pianistic heir,” Kapell strongly advocated works written by living composers in his performances. He performed Khachaturian’s Piano Concerto in D-flat major in hundreds of locations across the United States, Canada, Europe, and Australia. His recording of the piece with Serge Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony is considered to be among his most impressive studio achievements.<sup>39</sup>

Ultimately, Kapell’s association with the piece would lead to its near demise as a result of his death. As Tim Page observed in 1998 in the *Washington Post*, “After all, what pianist in sound mind would want to go up against such a formidable ghost?”<sup>40</sup> Astonishingly, however, Kapell rarely played the concerto after 1946, turning instead to Bach, Brahms, and Mozart.<sup>41</sup> In 1953, Kapell’s career was cut short. He died at age thirty-one when his plane crashed outside of San Francisco following a tour of Australia.

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<sup>38</sup> Michael Kimmelman, “William Kapell: A Larger, Truer Vision of a Passionate Modernism,” *New York Times*, October 11, 1998.

<sup>39</sup> Page, “William Kapell's Piano Benchmark.”

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Libbey, “Khachaturian,” 221.



## CHAPTER 2

### MOVEMENT I: *ALLEGRO MA NON TROPPO E MAESTOSO*

The first movement of Aram Khachaturian's Piano Concerto in D-flat major is in sonata-allegro form. The composer infuses this form with folk music materials treated improvisationally. This movement is virtuosic and expressive, and offers a variety of technical and interpretive challenges to the pianist.

Khachaturian's harmonic language is eclectic. Although his framework is primarily tonal, he includes elements such as tone clusters. The movement starts and ends in D-flat major, which is the notated tonic. That does not mean, however, that his music uses functional chord progressions. Rather, his music revolves around the tonal center. Neither major nor minor, it uses non-diatonic pitch collections. His harmonic thinking, rooted in "oriental folk music," is highly original. Many of the peculiarities of Khachaturian's harmony stem from the modes and tuning of Caucasian folk music. The early musical impressions buried deep in his memory stayed with him during his study of classical harmony as practiced in European art music.<sup>42</sup>

Using the sonata-allegro format, the first movement progresses as follows:

I. Exposition in D-flat major

(mm. 1–10) Introduction

(mm. 11–60) Theme I: *Allegro ma non troppo e maestoso*

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<sup>42</sup> Shneerson, *Aram Khachaturian*, 12-13.

(mm. 61–89) Transition

(mm. 90–181) Theme II: short cadenza, *Poco meno*

II. Development (mm. 182–306): *Allegro vivace*

III. Recapitulation in D-flat major

(mm. 307–346) Theme I: *Tempo I*

(mm. 347–400) Theme II: *a tempo il canto marcato*

(mm. 401–480) Cadenza: *vivo*

(mm. 481–498) Closing, Restatement of Theme I: *Tempo I*

### Exposition: Measures 1–181

The first movement opens with a ten-measure orchestral introduction that “always has an impact on first hearing,” as Maurice Hinson comments in his *Music for Piano and Orchestra*.<sup>43</sup> This majestic introduction starts with dissonant harmonies comprised of triads with added major and minor seconds. The opening, in 3/4, time is rhythmically steady with loudly accented chords sounding on every beat. This opening, however, is harmonically unstable. In m. 11 the bass line moves in eighth notes in half steps, descending from A-flat to the home key of D-flat. Then the soloist enters with a three-note motive (marked *pesante*.) This recurrent motive is made up of scale degrees 3, flat 6, and 5. Despite the presence of the altered sixth scale degree, the motive clearly reinforces D-flat as tonic. It becomes an important structural building block for the concerto and can be located in a number of other thematic contexts in the first and the third movements (see Example 2.1).<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Maurice Hinson, *Music for Piano and Orchestra: An Annotated Guide* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), 151.

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Example 2.1. mm. 9–12. The three-note motive

The musical score for Example 2.1, measures 9–12, is presented in a two-piano reduction format. The top staff, labeled 'Pno. I', represents the solo piano part, and the bottom staff, labeled 'Pno. II', represents the orchestral reduction. Both staves are in 3/4 time. In measure 9, Pno. I has a whole rest, while Pno. II plays a chord of F4, A4, and Bb4. In measure 10, Pno. I has another whole rest, and Pno. II plays a chord of F4, A4, and Bb4. In measure 11, Pno. I plays a three-note motive (F4, A4, Bb4) with accents on beats 1 and 3. Pno. II plays a chord of F4, A4, and Bb4. In measure 12, Pno. I plays the same three-note motive with accents on beats 1 and 3. Pno. II plays a chord of F4, A4, and Bb4. The score includes dynamics such as *f* *pesante*, *ff*, and *mp*. There are also lyrics '- scen' and 'do' under Pno. II in measure 11. A first inversion symbol (1) is placed below Pno. II in measure 14.

In mm. 11 and 12, the orchestra provides the tonic triad on the downbeat; then the pianist plays the three-note motive with recurring accents on beat three. Normally, the third beat should be the weakest beat in 3/4 meter. The placement of the accents in this first statement of the motive captures the listener's attention immediately. Mm. 11–22 are marked *pesante*, and Khachaturian specifies either *staccatos* or accents on every notes. To show the contrast between the *staccatoed* notes and the accented notes, the pianist should quickly depress the damper pedal only on the beats with the accent marks. In m. 20, when the meter suddenly switches to 4/4 time, Khachaturian places an accent on a syncopated note. The 4/4 meter lasts only one measure, and then the music resumes 3/4 meter in m. 21. The use of brief damper pedals on accented notes will bring out the syncopated effect more audibly.

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Changing meter is a favorite device that Khachaturian uses in his instrumental music. He often uses the alternation of even and odd meters to create abrupt interference with the metric foundation of the music, a feature which never fails to catch the listener's attention. The dance rhythms peculiar to the Transcaucasian people were a source of Khachaturian's inspiration that captivated his imagination during his childhood in Tbilisi.<sup>45</sup> These rhythmic "disturbances," or shifts interrupt the smooth flow of the music and introduce a note of turbulence.<sup>46</sup>

To execute this energetic passage (mm. 11–22) properly, the pianist must employ a weighted, heavy touch and activated fingertips. Both hands must release tension immediately, which is critical for a clean, articulated performance of this passage. Both hands should also remain relatively close to the keyboard. The last joint of the thumb and the fifth finger should be angled slightly inward. Suggested use of the damper pedal is provided in Example 2.2.

Example 2.2. mm. 13–22. Suggested use of the damper pedal

The image displays a musical score for Piano I, specifically measures 13 through 22. The score is written for a single instrument, Piano I, and is in 3/4 time. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 13 to 17, and the second system covers measures 18 to 22. Above the first system, a dashed line with the number '8' indicates the duration of the damper pedal. Below the first system, a dashed line with the number '(8)' indicates the duration of the damper pedal. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. A 'p' (piano) marking is present at the end of measure 22. The score is labeled 'Pno. I' on the left side of each system.

<sup>45</sup> Shneerson, *Aram Khachaturian*, 42, and Yuzefovich, *Aram Khachatuyian*, 31.

<sup>46</sup> Shneerson, *Aram Khachaturian*, 41.

Measures 23–25 contain the first *legato* marking in the score (See Example 2.3).

Khachaturian writes a series of rapid sixteenth notes in octaves. The pedal usage and fingerings given in Example 2.3 are recommended.

Example 2.3. mm. 23–26. Suggested use of damper pedal and fingering

The image shows a musical score for Piano I, measures 23-26. The score is in 3/4 time and D-flat major. Measures 23-25 feature rapid sixteenth-note octaves in both hands, marked *mf*. A dashed line with a circled 8 above it spans measures 23-25, indicating a single damper pedal stroke. Fingerings are indicated: 4, 5, 4, 5, 4, 5, 4 in the right hand and 5, 4, 4, 5, 4, 4, 5 in the left hand. Measure 26 begins with a *cresc.* marking and continues the octave pattern. The score is labeled 'Pno. I' on the left.

Measures 26–37 are similar to the opening *pesante* section. In mm. 38–41, Khachaturian repeatedly uses a polychord over D-natural in the bass. The polychord clashes with the orchestra’s F-sharp, and the syncopated rhythm takes hold of the listener’s attention immediately. At m. 42, the piano part then starts its *strepitoso* descending passage for four measures. It is chromatic and almost improvisational, marked *poco accelerando* and *poco ritardando* until it arrives at the tonic of D-flat major at m. 46. The *strepitoso* effect requires a sharp fast hammer attack, thus creating a percussive sound quality. For accuracy in executing this passage, the pianist needs to focus on the thumbs to facilitate clean delivery. A practice suggestion for this section is slow and accurate repetition of the line, experimenting with different rhythmic groupings, and *staccato* practice bouncing up and snapping the wrist to produce immediate release of tension in the wrists. Once this motion feels secure, the tempo can be gradually increased.

With the arrival of the tonic in the piano at m. 46, the piano’s role quickly switches to accompaniment as the orchestra states the main theme of a major triad with an added second and

a falling lowered sixth to fifth scale degree. The soloist helps to confirm D-flat as the tonic by reiterating D-flat octaves in various registers for nine measures. With the orchestra playing full force, the piano should do its best to achieve a dynamic balance with the orchestra. Pianists should use the damper pedal throughout mm. 46–54 to project enough sound and also to project the polychordal sonorities. As the orchestra begins its diminuendo at m. 55, the pianist can use briefer pedals and decrease the dynamic as well (See Example 2.4).

Example 2.4. mm. 55–57. Recommended pedal usage



Measures 61–89 are the transitional section to the second theme. Measures 61–64 are technically problematic (See Example 2.5). The right hand plays a chromatic mixture of harmonic thirds and fourths while the left hand plays ascending harmonic thirds for two measures and then moves in contrary motion against the right hand with chords for the remaining two measures. Each measure can be organized into three groups of four sixteenth notes. The technical solution to this passage involves very precise and rapid rotation of both wrists, almost like the action involved in turning a door knob. To accurately play these measures at a fast tempo, slurring the first three sixteenth notes can be beneficial even though they are marked *non legato* and *marcato*. Slurring these notes with the right hand coordinates them with the left hand's dotted eighth note (See Example 2.5). Since this motion follows the directional change of the line, it facilitates clean and accurate performance in both hands.

Pno. I

*f non legato*

wrist gesture:

63

Pno. I

Example 2.6. mm. 65–66. Two suggested damper pedalings

Musical score for Piano I, measures 1-10. The score is in 6/8 time, key of B-flat major, and features a forte (*ff*) dynamic. The piano part includes a melodic line with slurs and a bass line with a "Ped." marking. The vocal line is indicated by a treble clef and a "V" marking.

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fallboard in its raised position, allowing the right hand to jump to the next octave unimpeded. Here, the right hand should stay as close to the keyboard as possible.

Two practice suggestions may be applied to mm. 67–68, 69–70, 71–73, and 76–79. The first is to block the notes in m. 66 to practice the shifting of the hands simultaneously. The direction of these blocked notes can be reversed as well. This exercise will help memorize the distance of the shift and will aid the accurate shifts at a faster tempo. (See Example 2.7a)

Example. 2.7a. mm. 65–66. Blocking notes

A second practice technique involves stopping at the accented downbeat and delaying moving to the next position. This will help the right hand's fifth finger to land on the correct note.

Example 2.7b. mm. 65–66. Delaying jumping chords

To aid the *crescendo*, include the low E as a pedal point by depressing the damper pedal in m. 65 for a longer time. Cumulative sonority creates an effect of timpani building up to a



climax. Both hands should articulate each chord, detaching them almost as if playing *staccato*. Since the notes of the sextuplets are repeated in different octaves in m. 66, depressing the damper pedal for the entire measure is recommended to enable the alternation of the hands to sound smooth. If the soloist prefers to bring out the accented notes more, she can change the pedal on every beat (see Example 2.6). The section ascends chromatically and cascades over the keyboard until it arrives in the tonic of D-flat enharmonically (C-sharp) in m. 80. After a long sustained D-flat bass line in the orchestra, the music descends chromatically and decreases in volume, preparing for the entrance of the second theme in m. 90.

In contrast to the angry, powerful opening theme, the second theme is lyrical and more introspective in nature. In the second theme area, the influence of folk music is clear as Khachaturian imitates a folk instrumental trio. The oboe imitates the sound of the Armenian *douduk*; the viola plays the role of the accompanying *kemancha*; and the bass clarinet and *pizzicato* cello represent percussion instruments.<sup>47</sup>

Example 2.8. mm. 90–97. Instrumental trio

The musical score for Example 2.8, mm. 90–97, is presented in two systems. The first system (mm. 90–95) features three staves: Oboe / Douduk (top), Pno. II (middle), and Viola / Kemancha (bottom). The Oboe / Douduk staff begins with a melodic line in measure 90. The Pno. II and Viola / Kemancha staves provide a continuous sextuplet accompaniment. The second system (mm. 96–97) features four staves: Pno. II (top), Viola / Kemancha (middle), Cello / Percussion (bottom), and a fourth staff (bottom). The Pno. II and Viola / Kemancha staves continue the sextuplet accompaniment. The Cello / Percussion staff begins with a melodic line in measure 96. The score concludes in measure 97.

<sup>47</sup> Pogosyan, “Aram Khachaturian for Piano,” 74.

The theme is first stated by the oboe. When it is taken over by the pianist in m. 118, it becomes improvisatory. This extensive free-flowing cadenza demonstrates an important aspect of the composer's style. Khachaturian stated that,

My love of improvisation has its source in folk music. But this is an innate peculiarity of my individuality as a composer and should not be taken as a leaning towards an anarchic looseness of musical development. Improvisation is not blind wandering “without compass or rudder” over the keyboard in search of “spicy” sonorities. Improvisation is only good if you know exactly what you are after, what you want to find. It then acts as a spur on your imagination, as an impulse to creative thought, enabling you to build up a harmonious and balanced whole. Improvisation should go hand in hand with a sense of logic in the construction of form determined as it is by the ideological conception of the work, by its content.<sup>48</sup>

The cadenza is introspective, improvisatory, and tonally elusive. The shift in character allows more artistic freedom: without the orchestra, the pianist has total freedom to make decisions on phrasing, dynamics, and tempo. In general, the right hand carries the melody while the left hand provides accompaniment either in a chordal or linear, arpeggiated fashion. Balancing the melodic line over the accompaniment is the key to performing this section expressively. The right hand requires a gentler touch which can be obtained by using somewhat flatter fingers—using the arm more than the finger—versus keeping an “arch” in the hand. The left hand should also use flatter fingers to produce a rich, warm tone.

Pedaling in this section should provide a *legato* effect since, interpretively speaking, the mood and the dynamic of this section is more melancholy and relaxed. Khachaturian does mark *staccatos* on notes that are added to the melody as embellishment. One can think of these short, detached embellishments as the composer's attempt to depict the plucking of the strings on a *kemancha*. When *staccatos* are marked in the melodic line, they are either combined with *tenuto* marks or covered with slur marks. Thus, the pianist should not play the *staccato* marks literally

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<sup>48</sup> Shneerson, *Aram Khachaturian*, 41-42.

but with sensitivity to the melodic line. In order to project the melodic line in a *legato* fashion while providing a “plucking of the string” effect, careful pedaling is critical. Good coordination of the hands and the foot can only be achieved when the player listens actively while practicing at a very slow tempo.

Because of the slow tempo and lack of technical difficulty in this section, a different approach to practice is recommended. The focus should be on sound and touch to create timbral variety. To hear the melody more clearly, the pianist can practice excluding the embellished notes using the damper pedal multiple times to create a sustained and relaxed *legato* line. Practicing the accompaniment part alone while singing or imagining the melodic line will free the pianist’s imagination. Varying the degrees of *rubato* is another way of experimenting with interpretation in this section.

#### Development: Measures 182–306

After the exposition concludes in the key of E-flat, the development section, marked *Allegro vivace*, begins with a C-flat tremolo bass line in m. 182. The new tempo contrasts sharply with the preceding *Lento*. This section also has a new meter: Khachaturian shifts the folklike second theme of the exposition, previously in triple meter, to 4/4.

The soloist enters in m. 186 with the first theme played by both hands an octave apart. This rhythmic variation of the three-note motive is twice as fast as the opening statement in the exposition (see Example 2.9). The sixteenth-note passages in the development of Theme I (mm. 182–217) can be difficult. These rapid chromatic passages demand extra attention from the pianist, especially one who has little experience playing twentieth-century music. Reading in patterns in both hands will facilitate learning since each slurred group of notes occurs in sequence and requires consistency of fingering for execution and memorization. Because both

hands are in unison, the student must practice aligning the right hand thumb with the left hand fifth finger at the start of each five-note group. This alignment will require employment of wrist rotation (see Example 2.10).

Example 2.9. Comparison of three-note motives in m. 11 & m. 186

Example 2.9 shows two musical excerpts. The left excerpt, labeled 'Pno. II' and measure 11, features a three-note motive in 3/4 time, marked *f pesante*. The right excerpt, labeled 'Pno. I' and measure 186, features a similar three-note motive in 3/4 time, marked *f*.

Example 2.10. mm. 186–188. Suggested fingering

Example 2.10 shows measures 186–188 for Pno. I. The notation includes suggested fingering for the three-note motives. The fingering is indicated by numbers 1 through 5 above and below the notes.

Practice strategies for this section include slow, accurate repetition with a focus on finger alignment. The hand position should be rather compact, spanning no more than five adjacent notes, enabling the fingers to remain close to the keys for optimum precision and clarity. Practicing accents on strong beats at a slower tempo will help with the accurate alignment of both hands and also prevent rushing. Practicing slowly with different rhythmic groupings and practicing *staccato* with a very high finger stroke will also benefit the rapid movement of the fingers; at faster tempi the height of the finger stroke will naturally be reduced. Variations of touch and dynamic levels should also be considered. The more variation is introduced in

practicing this section, the more precisely and uniformly the finger muscles will learn to execute it. The following practice sequence for rhythmic and articulation variations will aid in developing an acute sense of control.

Example 2.11. Practice suggestions for m. 187.



A. Dotted sixteenth–thirty-second notes (long–short)



B. Reverse of exercise A (short–long)



C. Grouping every four sixteenth notes (long–short, short, short)



D. Reverse of exercise C (short, short, short–long)



### E. *Staccato* practice



After a series of long rapid sixteenth note passages, the pianist briefly switches roles with the orchestra at m. 221. Instead of playing flamboyant finger work, the piano powerfully states the theme while the orchestra showcases a florid accompaniment. In this section, time signatures change in every measure. Khachaturian's treatment of meter here closely relates to the melodic line. Even with these rapid changes in time signature, listeners do not sense the metrical shifts.

As Shneerson points out,

Khachaturian possesses a rare gift of melody. His ideas find their realization primarily in expressive melodies, in catchy song and dance tunes. His unbridled creative imagination and *sense of rhythm* enable Khachaturian to develop his melodic finds freely, enriching them with ever new features.<sup>49</sup>

Nevertheless, these metrical shifts can be problematic for the performer. To address this problem, the pianist might disregard the meter changes and think instead in 3/4 meter. Since this section is to be played *ff marcato*, accents on the downbeat for 3/4, 2/4, and 4/4 scarcely make an audible difference. The next example shows an alternate way of counting this section.

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<sup>49</sup> Shneerson, *Aram Khachaturian*, 12. Italics added.

Example 2.12. mm. 221–227. Alternative rhythmic counting

The musical score for Example 2.12, measures 221–227, is presented for two pianos, Pno. I and Pno. II. The time signature is 3/4. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). Pno. I begins at measure 221 with a forte (*ff*) *marcato* dynamic. The score includes alternative rhythmic counting numbers (1, 2, 3) above the staves. Pno. II has a melodic line with rapid sixteenth-note passages. The score is written in a key with three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a 3/4 time signature.

From m. 228–250, the piano resumes the role of soloist and embellishes the melody by cascading over various registers of the keyboard. Rapid ascending and descending sixteenth note passages are scored in a hocket texture between the two hands. These passages are each two measures long. Then, two measures of chordal accompaniment to the orchestral melody follow. The two-measure sequences alternate with two measures of chordal accompaniment. This

alternation is repeated four times until m. 244. Then the chordal accompaniment continues by sequencing up diatonically until it reaches F-natural over an F-sharp pedal in the bass line.

Two factors require attention in this section: rhythm and pedaling. Because of the interchange of hands motion, it is difficult to maintain rhythmic precision. Since the tempo is fast and the part is a flowing accompaniment, however, the pianist should concentrate on smooth alternation of the hands. The four-note pattern (F#–G–B–D) ascends for five octaves then descends in reverse order. Since the harmony remains the same, the pedal should be kept down for the duration of these two measures, evoking the sound of a harp. To facilitate the smooth execution of this passage, see Example 2.13.

Example 2.13. mm. 228–229. Use of damper pedal

The image shows a musical score for Piano I, measures 228 and 229. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The score is written for two staves. The right hand (treble clef) plays a four-note pattern (F#–G–B–D) ascending for five octaves and then descending in reverse order. The left hand (bass clef) plays a sustained F-sharp pedal point. The score includes fingerings (6, 8, 6, 6) and a forte (f) dynamic marking. A damper pedal line is indicated at the bottom of the page, spanning measures 228 and 229.

In mm. 230–231, the right hand chords should come in on the beat, not as grace notes before the beat. Khachaturian marks accents for every note in these measures. The F-sharp bass notes are to be sustained for three beats; therefore, the damper pedal should be held down for the entire measure. Another way of interpreting these measures is to depress the pedal for both mm. 230 and 231 since the harmony remains the same. This F-sharp pedal point is paramount since it is reiterated until m. 250 and acts as an enharmonic common tone into the next section in m. 251 (see Example 2.14).



Example 2.14. mm. 229–231. Sustained F-sharp bass notes

Example 2.14 shows a musical score for Pno. I, measures 229–231. The score is in 3/4 time. The left hand features sustained F-sharp bass notes, while the right hand has complex rhythmic patterns with sixteenth and thirty-second notes, some marked with accents and slurs.

The next section, *Poco più mosso e stretto in tempo* (mm. 251–307), functions as a transition into the recapitulation. It moves through various key areas at an accelerated tempo, thus creating increased tension. (See example 2.15)

Example 2.15. mm. 251–256. Moving through various key areas

Example 2.15 shows a musical score for Pno. II, measures 251–256. The score is in 3/4 time. The tempo is marked *Poco più mosso e stretto in tempo*. The key signature changes from B-flat major to D-flat major. The score features a 'galloping' rhythmic pattern of two sixteenth notes followed by an eighth note.

The clustered sonorities in the orchestral part, together with the repetition of the “galloping” rhythmic pattern (two sixteenth notes followed by an eighth note) create a forward driving momentum. The term *stretto* requires clarification. In contrapuntal textures, the term refers to

“the imitation of the subject in close succession.”<sup>50</sup> However, in non contrapuntal textures, as here, it refers to “a concluding section in increased speed.”<sup>51</sup> A notable aspect of piano part in this section is the use of the three-note motive from the opening of the piece. In m. 257, the motive is expanded to four notes and its directional tendency is reversed (see Example 2.16). Instead of using the flat 6<sup>th</sup> scale degree shown in m. 11, scale degree 4, G-flat is used in m. 257. This modification can also be seen as a variant of m. 18 as well.

Example 2.16. Comparison of m. 11 & m. 257. Modified version of the three-note motive

The image displays two musical excerpts side-by-side. The left excerpt, labeled 'Pno. II' and measure 11, is in 3/4 time and features a three-note motive in the right hand, marked *f pesante*. The right excerpt, labeled 'Pno. I' and measure 257, is also in 3/4 time and features a modified four-note motive in the right hand, marked *mf espress.*. Both excerpts show the piano part with treble and bass staves.

The orchestra and the pianist exchange the role of leader in this section as well. From mm. 257–268, the pianist states the modified version of the three-note motive, ascending by half steps up to B-flat in m. 261, to B-natural in m. 263, and to C in m. 265, finally reaching D-flat at the end of m. 268. In m. 271, the orchestra takes the three-note motive while the pianist provides a powerful chordal accompaniment, steady in rhythm yet unsettled in harmony with constant chromatic motion. This piano part features rapid alternation between the two sixteenth notes in the right hand and powerful chords in the left. While the right hand pattern is repeated every two measures, the left hand position changes every beat, chromatically descending after the powerful bass C octave is announced. From mm. 271–291, it is important to notice the accents given to the right hand in groups of two measures in order to help with the memorization of the chordal

<sup>50</sup> Willi Apel, *Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1961), s.v. Stretto.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

changes. Practice suggestions for this area include combining the pitches in both hands to create a single chordal block with a gradual increase in tempo, and practicing with high fingers for strength and endurance at a moderate tempo.

After the section of rapid hand alteration in m. 292, both orchestra and piano arrive on G-flat chords (sub-dominant of the tonic key). By this point, the theme has disappeared, and both the piano and the orchestra emphatically set up the return of the tonic. In m. 295, A-flat (dominant of D-flat) is established. Finally in m. 298, the D-flat bass line occurs in both the piano and the orchestra. An enormous crescendo from *p* to *ff* in m. 307 marks the beginning of the recapitulation. At this point, *Tempo I* returns in the tonic.

This development section has few pianistic technical difficulties. In fact, Khachaturian renounces technical tricks that do not convey his ideas. Khachaturian advised that

You mustn't divorce technique from live music which is meant to touch the listener's heart strings. Technique is all very well when the artist has something to say, to communicate to his audience; when he is a bard of his people, of his time, of which he can present a true and convincing picture.<sup>52</sup>

Because of its fast tempo and tempestuous nature, the main pianistic challenge of this developmental section is keeping up stamina. The impetuosity and dramatic tension of many passages in this section make it difficult for the soloist to compete with the orchestra. Often, the soloist accompanies the entire orchestra, creating an alert need for interaction between the two forces. The full range of the keyboard is utilized, requiring facility to negotiate shifts in register.

#### Recapitulation: Measures 307–498

The recapitulation, marked *Tempo I*, begins in m. 307. Compared to the opening motive from m. 11, in the recapitulation this motive is filled in harmonically, outlining the D-flat major triad. It is louder in dynamic and incorporates a wider range of the keyboard to announce the

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<sup>52</sup> Shneerson, *Aram Khachaturian*, 12.

triumphant return of the opening motive. The steady eighth notes in the exposition are varied and embellished into a series of sixteenth notes. More interaction occurs between the orchestra and the soloist than occurs in the exposition, as shown in example 2.17.

Example 2.17. Comparison of mm. 18–19 & mm. 314–315

The image displays two musical staves for Piano I and Piano II, comparing measures 18–19 and 314–315. The score is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). A dashed line with a circled 'S' above it spans measures 18–19 and 314–315, indicating a comparison of musical material. In measures 18–19, Piano I plays a melody of eighth notes, while Piano II plays a bass line of eighth notes. In measures 314–315, Piano I plays a melody of eighth notes, and Piano II plays a bass line of eighth notes, with a forte (f) dynamic marking in measure 314 and a fortissimo (ff) dynamic marking in measure 315.

From m. 307 to 341, the same musical material from the exposition repeats in the recapitulation. Of note here is the new spelling of the chords in the pianist’s right hand in mm. 334–337.

After a series of descending scales by the orchestra, Theme II arrives in m. 347. Earlier in the exposition, the second theme was announced first by the orchestra, then by the pianist alone. In the recapitulation, the two forces play simultaneously. Here the orchestra takes the melody while the pianist provides a long improvisational passage based on the harmony. The passage creates a shimmering bell-like effect with its broken sixteenth-note pattern in a high register. The black key pentatonic harmony used in this section evokes the sonic image of “Oriental” folk music. This passage can be troublesome pianistically. Even though the sixteenth notes are grouped in series of four, the pattern lays awkwardly under the hand (see Example 2.18). The first challenge is executing the rapid shift of the right hand thumb without creating an accent after the quick shift. The second challenge is to bring out the accented notes the composer

marked on the score. This section looks easy enough in the score. The technique Khachaturian asks for, however, is quite unorthodox. The composer's boyhood fondness for improvising at the piano and his self-taught technique may be in evidence here.

The next example provides recommended fingerings for this section. Notice the repetition of the finger numbers in both hands. The left hand repeats a 5–1–3 pattern while the right hand repeats 1–5/2–1. Grouping the fingers and using consistent fingering facilitate the performance of this passage. Because the shifts of the hands do not align when using the fingering below, however, practicing hands separately is highly recommended.

Example 2.18. mm. 347–354. Fingering suggestions

The image shows a musical score for Piano I, measures 347 to 354. The score is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. The right hand (RH) plays a complex, rapid passage with many beamed eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand (LH) plays a simpler, more rhythmic accompaniment. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes. A dashed line with an '8' above it spans measures 347-354. A second dashed line with an '(8)' above it spans measures 351-354.

**Measure 347:** RH: 1 2 1 1 2 1 1 2 1 1 3 1 1 2 1 1; LH: 5 5 1 3 5 1

**Measure 348:** RH: 5 2 1 1 2 1 1 2 1 1 3 1 1 2 1 1; LH: 3 5 1 3 5 1

**Measure 349:** RH: 5 2 1 1 2 1 1 2 1 1 3 1 1 2 1 1; LH: 3 3 1 5 3 1

**Measure 350:** RH: 5 2 1 1 2 1 1 2 1 1 3 1 1 2 1 1; LH: 3 3 1 5 3 1

**Measure 351:** RH: 5 2 1 1 2 1 1 2 1 1 3 1 1 2 1 1; LH: 3 3 1 5 3 1

**Measure 352:** RH: 5 2 1 1 2 1 1 2 1 1 3 1 1 2 1 1; LH: 3 3 1 5 3 1

**Measure 353:** RH: 5 2 1 1 2 1 1 2 1 1 3 1 1 2 1 1; LH: 3 3 1 5 3 1

**Measure 354:** RH: 5 2 1 1 2 1 1 2 1 1 3 1 1 2 1 1; LH: 3 3 1 5 3 1

The left hand should maintain a rounded arch shape to bring out the section in a smooth manner while the right hand should remain close to the keys to shorten the distance of the jump of the thumb. In order to attain the necessary speed, the right hand should be as light as possible with a flexible wrist. Effective practice for the right hand should include variations of rhythm, and

varying dynamics to achieve a light, seamless delivery of the passage. Suggested practice methods for the first four measures of this passage are shown in Example 2.19.

Example 2.19. Practice Suggestions for mm. 347–362.

A. Grouping of two sixteenth notes (long–short) with accents on longer notes



B. Grouping of four sixteenth notes (Long–short, short, short)



C. All *staccato* (fingers should “rebound” instead of pressing down the keys)



D. Blocking each octave position–shifting to next chords



These practice suggestions, executed both at loud and soft dynamic levels, will help the fast, accurate shift of the thumb and facilitate the fast rotation of the wrist (“door knob” action).

The phrases in Theme II are symmetrical. They are eight measures long, mm. 347–354 and mm. 355–362, with the second phrase being an exact repetition of the first phrase. A new

phrase starts with different musical material at m. 363, this time on G-flat, a fourth higher than the same material in m. 126 of the exposition. Briefly, the pianist switches her role from the accompanying part to the melodic part. The melancholy melodic line is stated in unison an octave apart. It is marked *mp dolce, poco sostenuto*; therefore quickly changing the tone color while also bringing out the *legato* line is important. In mm. 366 and 370, Khachaturian asks for an ornate arpeggiation of a triad, creating a shimmering and harp-like effect. This requires using a sustained pedal for the entire measure along with using flatter fingers to achieve a seamless interchanging of the hands motion. Khachaturian specifically notates his intention of phrasing in these measures. Careful pedaling, detaching after every slur, is important.

Example 2.20. mm. 363–370. Fingerings and articulation suggestions

The image displays a musical score for Piano I, covering measures 363 through 370. The score is written for a single instrument, Piano I, and is in 3/4 time. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The tempo and mood markings are *mp dolce, poco sostenuto*. The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 363, 364, 365, and 366. The second system contains measures 367, 368, 369, and 370. The music features a melancholy melodic line in the right hand, often in unison with the left hand, and a supporting accompaniment in the left hand. Fingerings and articulation suggestions are indicated by numbers (1-5) and slurs above or below the notes. Measure 363 starts with a melodic phrase in the right hand, marked with a slur and fingerings 2, 4, 3. Measure 364 continues the melodic line with fingerings 4, 3, 2. Measure 365 features a more complex melodic line with fingerings 4, 3, 4, 3, 4, 3, 2, 4, 3. Measure 366 shows a melodic phrase with fingerings 5, 4, 2, 1, 5, 4, 2, 1, 1, 2, 4, 5. Measure 367 continues the melodic line with fingerings 2, 4, 3, 4, 5, 4. Measure 368 features a melodic phrase with fingerings 5, 4, 3, 5. Measure 369 shows a melodic phrase with fingerings 4, 3, 4, 3, 4, 3, 2, 5, 4. Measure 370 features a melodic phrase with fingerings 5, 4, 2, 1, 5, 4, 2, 1, 1, 2, 4, 5. The accompaniment in the left hand consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in measures 363-365, and a more complex pattern in measures 366-370, including arpeggiated triads in measures 366 and 370. The score is marked with a slur and fingerings 3, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2 in measures 363-365, and 2, 5, 5, 2, 2 in measures 366-370.

In m. 371, the piano resumes its role as accompanying instrument, as in m. 347. The eight-measure phrase of improvisation is repeated in the same manner as earlier. After the

second repetition, it is shortened by two measures. Now the phrase shape of a large arch becomes three smaller arches of two measures each.

Example. 2.21. mm. 379–384. Structural phrase shape

The musical score for Piano I, measures 379–384, is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 379–381, and the second system covers measures 382–384. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 3/4. The right hand (RH) plays a melodic line with slurs and accents, while the left hand (LH) provides a harmonic accompaniment. A dashed line with a circled 'S' above it spans measures 379–384, indicating a single structural phrase.

After the long improvisation is finished at m. 385, the piano part's texture changes. A brief motivic passage of alternating octaves descends chromatically to the cadenza in m. 401.

#### Cadenza: Measures 401–480

The cadenza starts with an abrupt change in tempo, marked *vivo*, and it unifies many of the previously heard materials. Impetuous and virtuosic, it combines all the technical challenges presented within the first movement: widely-spaced chords, large intervals, perpetual motion, difficult rhythms, *marcato* octaves, meter changes, register shifts, rapid hand alternation, elaboration of musical motives, sudden dynamic shifts, and mood changes.

Khachaturian maintains excitement in this cadenza through the improvisational development of short musical fragments. The first phrase lasts for seven measures (mm. 401–407), grows in dynamic from *mp* to *f*, and then becomes subdued again. It uses an ascending three-note motive (C–D ♭–E ♭) in the right hand that grows into a full scale. The left hand



repeats an *ostinato* pattern of G ♭ –G♮–A ♭ –A♮, alternating single notes with octaves. As the right hand motive ascends, the dynamic also increases. Khachaturian marks accents on the last note of the three-note motive, and the pianist should bring this accent out as clearly as possible. In m. 402, due to the *vivo* tempo, the pianist can treat the accents on beats one and two as a *staccato* and hold beat three a bit longer, which will clearly bring out the composer’s wish. It is also very important to make the *staccato* as short as possible for the left hand, so that later, when a *legato* line is called for, a greater contrast is created. When the pianist’s right hand reaches a high E-natural, the phrase starts to descend by alternating an arpeggiated C major triad in the right hand with D ♭ in the left hand. Again, as seen in m. 208, finding the placement of the downbeat is tricky. As recommended earlier, slower rhythmic variation practice is suggested. When accuracy and speed are achieved, the damper pedal should be used, since only one harmony is being sustained. In mm. 406–407, the phrase comes to an end using contrary scalar motion with decrescendos. Mm. 408–413 are an exact repetition of the first phrase, only transposed up a fourth as seen in Example 2.22.

Measure 414 is marked *espressivo e poco rubato*. Starting from this point, the three-note motive from m. 401 is treated in a more melodic manner. The composer does indicate *legato* marks for both hands along with accents and dynamic indications. The ascending and descending shape of the scalar passage from the beginning of the cadenza in the right hand is now moved to the left hand, while the right hand sings the three-note motive in a very *legato*, melodic manner. The motive is placed on top of tertian chords. In m. 422, the melodic notes are moved down to the bottom of the chords in the right hand, and the arch shape of the left hand’s scalar passage is changed into an arpeggiated pattern. The right hand tertian chords are expanded into four notes. In the score, *tenuto* marks are indicated at every right hand chord (mm. 422–429).

Example 2.22. mm. 401–407. Beginning of cadenza

The musical score for Example 2.22, measures 401–407, is for Piano I. It begins with a 'Vivo' tempo marking and a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The first system (mm. 401–403) shows a melodic line in the right hand with slurs and accents, and a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the left hand. The second system (mm. 404–405) continues the accompaniment in the left hand while the right hand is silent. The third system (mm. 406–407) features a forte (*f*) melodic line in the right hand and a continuing accompaniment in the left hand. The key signature has three flats, and the time signature is common time.

The pianist should bring out the melodic tones on the bottom of the four-note chords. As Khachaturian indicates *rubato*, *piu espressivo*, bringing out the melodic notes make the music more expressive, given that the upper three notes in the chords are repeated and function as “filler” in the harmony. The pianist should project the melodic line as smoothly as possible, playing *legato* in the left hand, and shaping the phrases. Careful use of the damper pedal will assist in playing *legato*. Articulation in the right hand, which voices the melodic line, requires a softer attack of the hammer on the string. Keeping a somewhat flatter finger is thus recommended. This approach will mobilize the arm more than the fingers to produce a rich and expressive sound (see Example 2.23).

Example 2.23. mm. 414–416 & mm. 423–425. Fingering suggestions

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Piano I. The first system covers measures 414, 415, and 416. The right hand (treble clef) features a series of chords with specific fingering suggestions: 3 2 1 4 5 for the first measure, 3 2 1 4 5 for the second, and 5 2 1 4 5 for the third. The left hand (bass clef) plays a continuous arpeggiated pattern with a consistent fingering of 5 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4. The second system covers measures 423, 424, and 425. The right hand is marked 'a tempo' and 'melody' in measure 423, then 'rubato' in measure 424, and 'più espress.' in measure 425. The left hand continues the arpeggiated pattern with the same fingering. The score includes various musical notations such as accents, slurs, and dynamic markings.

Beginning in m. 429, the dynamics and range are greatly expanded. The melodic line in the right hand ascends and gets louder while the left hand's arpeggio moves down in contrary motion until it reaches a low bass F-natural in m. 431. The dynamic level is expanded from *p* to *ff*. Then the octave descent occurs in the next five measures as the hands, with marked accents on every beat, maintain an *ff* dynamic. Next, the three-note motive comes back at the top of the right hand's chords, still in *ff* but quickly fading away to *p*. This announcement of the three-note motive along with the quick shift of dynamic is repeated until powerful seventh chords are reached in m. 443. The piano then arpeggiates down and up, evoking a harp-like timbre. The same musical material is repeated from mm. 445 to 452.

The pianist should pay close attention to the layering of sounds and sustaining the bass note while shaping the upper line the way Khachaturian indicates. Using the damper pedal to

sustain the bass line and to assist in creating the quick increase of volume is also recommended (see Example 2.24).

Example 2.24. mm. 430–444. Recommended use of damper pedal

The musical score for Piano I, measures 430–444, is presented in four systems. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes dynamic markings (*ff*, *rubato*, *f*, *ff*, *p*, *f*) and articulation marks (accents, slurs). Pedal markings are indicated by a 'Ped.' symbol at the beginning of the first system and by dashed lines with '8' at the end of measures 432, 434, 436, 438, 440, 442, and 444. The notation shows a complex interplay between the right and left hands, with the right hand often playing chords and the left hand playing a more active bass line.

The last section of this cadenza is marked *moderato con sentimento*. It begins with six measures of mixed meters while the three-note motive is clearly marked by the composer's use

of *tenuto* and accent marks. While the right hand projects the melodic line, the left hand inserts G  $\flat$  as a pedal point, as shown in Example 2.25.

Example 2.25. mm. 455–460. G-flat pedal point

**Moderato con sentimento**

The musical score for Example 2.25, measures 455–460, is for Piano I (Pno. I) in 3/4 time. The tempo is **Moderato con sentimento**. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The score shows a G-flat pedal point in the left hand. The right hand has a melodic line with a triplet in measure 455. Dynamics include *p*, *mf*, *f*, and *p*. The tempo is **Moderato con sentimento**.

From m. 461, the meter is stable, staying in 3/4 until the end of the movement. Marked *poco a poco stringendo e crescendo*, it combines the motoric pattern of sixteenth notes in the right hand with the eighth notes (G  $\flat$  –C–G  $\flat$ ) in the left hand. The tempo is slow to begin with and then gradually speeds up until it reaches Tempo I in measure 481. This last section includes many fragments of material used previously in the movement. The hand position from mm. 461 to 471 should be rather compact, not encompassing more than five notes. Fingers should remain close to the keyboard, and wrists should remain relaxed to facilitate better legato playing. Using the patterned fingering provided in Example 2.26 will aid in playing these rapid sixteenth notes smoothly.

Example 2.26. mm. 461–464. Fingering suggestions

461

Pno. I

*p* *poco* *a* *poco* *stringendo*

463

Pno. I

*e* *crescendo*

Measures 472–477 feature alternating motion between the hands, which repetitively announces an F major triad in the right hand and an interval of a fourth (D ♭ –G ♭ ) in the left. Similar writing was seen in m. 207. On beat three of m. 477, this alternating motion becomes an octave ascent, starting on D-flat and arriving on an E major chord in m. 481, marked *Tempo I*. This bravura octave passage is based on a D-flat mode with chromatic alterations. Its rapid coverage of the whole keyboard presents a definite physical challenge in terms of functioning efficiently with both hands while shifting the body weight. From this point forward, the dynamic marking is *ff*, requiring endurance and strength. The octaves should be approached technically with the use of the hands, wrists, forearms, and upper arms coordinated so as not to waste energy. To help with the rapid execution of the octaves, both hands should rebound when pressing down the keys, instead of moving downward. Though necessary for a clean release, this bouncing motion should be as small as possible so that the distance on the way to the next octave is kept to a minimum. For a better-sounding performance, the pianist should practice this passage with

thumbs only, in order for both hands to minimize the bouncing. To play this passage perfectly at a faster speed, repetitive rhythmic variations are suggested in Example 2.27. The fingers should be placed toward the front of the keys. *Legato* pedaling, as indicated below, will greatly enhance the connection with the line and will also help with sustaining the *ff* dynamic.

Example 2.27a. mm. 477–480. Suggested use of the damper pedal

Example 2.27a is a musical score for Piano I, measures 477–480. The score is in 3/4 time and features a complex, fast-moving passage. A dashed line with a fermata symbol above it spans measures 477 and 480, indicating a sustained pedal point. A bracket labeled 'Ped.' is placed below the bass staff, spanning the entire duration of the passage, suggesting the use of the damper pedal.

Example 2.27b. mm. 477–480. Practice suggestions for the octave passage

Example 2.27b is a musical score for Piano I, measures 477–480, showing practice suggestions for the octave passage. The score is in 3/4 time and features a complex, fast-moving passage. The right hand (R.H.) thumb is indicated with notes stemmed upward, and the left hand (L.H.) thumb is indicated with notes stemmed downward. The score is marked with a fermata symbol above measure 480, indicating a sustained pedal point.

Measures 481–498 bring the movement to a close, as the soloist becomes subservient to the orchestral restatement of the “call” of the main theme. The pianist provides powerful tertian chords in both hands, marked *ff*, covering a wide range of the keyboard. Instead of projecting D  $\flat$  major (the tonic), E major is emphasized until the harmony starts to move around in m. 485. After a brief wandering of the chromatic orchestral line, D  $\flat$  arrives in measure 489, where the pianist asserts herself with very dissonant chords which grow into a full D  $\flat$  major. In the last

five measures of the first movement, marked *Piu maestoso*, both orchestra and pianist join forces to state the opening motive one last time before coming to an end.

Example. 2.28. mm. 481–498. Final conclusion of the first movement

The musical score is arranged in three systems, each for Piano I (Pno. I) and Piano II (Pno. II). The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 3/4.

- System 1 (Measures 481-486):** Marked **Tempo I**. Measure 481 starts with a forte (*ff*) dynamic. The music features complex chordal textures in the right hand and more active, often eighth-note, lines in the left hand. A repeat sign with first and second endings is indicated above measure 481.
- System 2 (Measures 487-492):** Continues the **Tempo I** section. The texture remains dense with many chords. The right hand often has sustained chords while the left hand moves. A repeat sign with first and second endings is indicated above measure 487.
- System 3 (Measures 493-498):** Marked **Piu maestoso**. Measure 493 begins with a *rit.* (ritardando) marking, followed by a *fff a tempo* (fortississimo at tempo) marking. The music becomes more rhythmic and driving, with many eighth and sixteenth notes. A repeat sign with first and second endings is indicated above measure 493.



The technical approach for executing these chords involves large, circular gestures in both hands which make the transfer and release of weight on each chord and octave easier. The eighth note on the second beat of each measure in the left hand should move in one gesture to beat three. A practice strategy for this section is to repeat each measure at a very slow tempo, focusing on the physical process of playing each chord. *Legato* pedaling in accordance with each change in harmony will effectively project the sound against the orchestra.

To help memorize these chords, patterned reading and analyzing the common tones in the chords will help the pianist. Since the orchestra and the pianist move simultaneously, it is essential to listen carefully in order to coordinate an effective *ritardando*. The dynamic marking is *fortissimo* and later in m. 494, *fff*. Therefore, endurance and strength in execution are necessary to project the sound above the orchestra.

## CHAPTER 3

### MOVEMENT II: *ANDANTE CON ANIMA*

The second movement of Khachaturian's piano concerto satisfies conventional expectations for such movements. Different in character from the outer movements in general mood and tempo, the melancholy second movement contrasts with the triumphant mood of the first movement. In the second movement, one clearly perceives Khachaturian's love of folk material. The lyrical theme is based on an old Armenian folk song that was quite well-known in the Trans-Caucasus area.<sup>53</sup> Khachaturian recounts that he arrived at this particular theme through the "elaboration of the melody of an unpretentious Armenian song":<sup>54</sup>

I found the main theme of the second movement of my Piano Concerto. . . by means of subjecting to a drastic modification the tune of a "light" Oriental urban song. . . . But by changing it radically, by considerably developing it I have come to my theme. . . . By taking this melody as the basis for the central theme of the Piano concerto I obviously ran the risk of the critics tearing me to pieces when they learned the source of the music. But I departed so far from the original, changing its content and character so radically, that even Armenian musicians could not detect its folk origin.<sup>55</sup>

The original tune "Meh Avara" is printed in Example 3.1<sup>56</sup> and its modification in Example 3.2.

Example 3.1. Original folksong "Meh Avara"



<sup>53</sup> Shneerson, *Aram Khachaturian*, 40.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Aram Khachaturian, "My Idea of the Folk Element in Music," *Sovetskaya Muzyka*, No. 5, 1952, 40.

<sup>56</sup> Shneerson, *Aram Khachaturian*, 42.

Example 3.2. II, mm. 9–16. Khachaturian’s modification of “Meh Avara”

The musical score for Example 3.2, II, mm. 9–16, is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 9 through 12, and the second system covers measures 13 through 16. The score is for two pianos, Pno. I and Pno. II, in 3/4 time. Pno. I plays a melody with trills and triplets, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. Pno. II provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes and rests, also marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The score is divided into two systems by a dashed line labeled '8'.

The direct quotation of an existing melody enhances the gives emotional appeal of this movement. As Yi-Chuan Chen states in his dissertation, folk music provides a spontaneous means of expressing true emotions, contributing to the mood in an intuitive and natural manner.<sup>57</sup> A comparison of Examples 3.1 and 3.2 reveals that the composer embellished the folk melody with passing notes, rolled chords, altered rhythms, and added grace notes. The ornaments smooth out the leaps between notes in the melody and adorn the melodic line.

<sup>57</sup> Yi-Chuan Chen, “A Rhythmic Study,” 104.

The tempo of this movement, *Andante con anima*, is spirited, but certainly not at all hurried. Technically speaking, this movement is not as challenging pianistically as the first movement since the emphasis here is on the melodic line. According to Khachaturian, Sergei Prokoviev, who had established himself before Khachaturian began his career, teased him about the second movement: “So what will then the pianist be doing, loafing?”<sup>58</sup> In reality, of course, lyrical expressivity becomes the focus of the student’s preparation of this movement.

The movement is in A minor, but its tonality is somewhat ambiguous, as can be seen in Example 3.3. Khachaturian starts the movement by using two chords (A minor and B-flat minor) in alternation as the background harmony while stating a low bass melodic line in alternation of D and B-flat natural minor scales. These alternating chords, distanced by a half step, create intervallic conflicts, while the natural minor melodic line gives the movement a modal sound.

Example 3.3. II, mm. 1–8. The opening of the second movement

Andante con anima

Pno. II

*mf*

*mf*

*espress.*

5

*cresc.*

*poco rit.*

*dim.*

*a tempo*

*p*

In contrast to the ambiguity of the harmonic language in the second movement, the formal structure is very clear. The borrowed Armenian folk melody “Meh Avara” constitutes the movement’s main theme in the first section. The theme is explored by the pianist and the

<sup>58</sup> Rasmila Alaverdyan, “Reminiscences [sic],” *Virtual Museum of Aram Khachaturian*, n.d. <http://www.khachaturian.am/eng/remember.htm> (accessed March 22, 2009).

orchestra as the movement progresses. In the middle section B, an elegant new tune, first stated by the flute and then by the pianist, is presented. This section escalates in scale, dynamics, and agitation, climaxing in an explosion of dissonant chords all over the keyboard. After the piano's powerful ascending octaves passage, the A material returns in a majestic manner, labeled below as A'. The A' section begins in *fff* but eventually transforms itself to reach a more lyrical and introspective ending. The formal structure of this movement is therefore ternary form with a coda. The outline of the formal structure is as follows:

Section A (mm. 1–125): *Andante con anima ; Poco più mosso* (at m. 85)

Section B (mm. 126–172): *Tempo I*

Section A' (mm. 173–204): *Appassionato, Tempo I*

Coda (mm. 205–236): *Lento*

#### Section A: Measures 1–125

Following an eight-measure orchestral introduction, the soloist enters in m. 9. The first statement of the modified “Meh Avara” theme enters in unison between the pianist's hands, two octaves apart, and lasts for eight measures before it is repeated. This melody has a narrow range and is conjunct in nature. It projects sorrowful and yearning emotion. It is embellished with repeated notes that create intervals of seconds, thirds, and fourths underneath the original melody. Some of these intervals are rolled. This eight-measure phrase has specific articulations marked by the composer: *staccato* quarter notes marked *tenuto*, followed by slurred notes for the rest of the phrase. It is important to clearly articulate this phrase, without using too much *legato* in the touch. The pianist should make sure to create gaps in the sound by detaching after each slur. Due to the soft dynamic in the piano's higher register, playing with “flat” fingers as opposed to

“articulated,” high-arched fingers is recommended in this passage. The “flat” finger touch provides a warmer tone; with proper weight distribution, it is possible to project a softer sound. Another thing to consider is the balancing of the upper notes which carry the melody. The lower repeated harmonic tones should be played more softly than the melodic tones (as shown above in the interior accompaniment figure in Example 3.2).

The “Meh Avara” theme is developed further in the next eight measures. The muted and sorrowful melody becomes more active and intense as the dynamic grows from *p* to *mf*. The orchestra takes a different accompaniment pattern in these measures. Instead of continuing the mellow, broken-chord pattern used in the first phrase, this time the orchestra plays *staccato* octaves along with dissonant chords. The range of sound is expanded, and the clashes of the tones in the chords provide intensity. This second phrase is also repeated. These two eight-measure melodic phrases are the fundamental element of the second movement. The same articulation is used in mm. 25–32.

Regarding the relationship between the piano and orchestra in a concerto, Khachaturian wrote that

Probably thirst for concerto music, for the colorful-virtuoso style is inherent to my creative individuality. I am fond of the task of creating a composition where the cheerful principle of free competition between a virtuoso-soloist and a symphony orchestra prevails.<sup>59</sup>

In this movement, however, the soloist and the orchestra do not compete but take turns performing and supporting the melody. Sometimes these two opposing forces work together to share a melody collaboratively. Starting from m. 40, the roles of solo and accompaniment are reversed. The pianist restates the opening melodic line in m. 40. This time, however, the melody covers a slightly larger range, using louder dynamics and expanded harmonies. Khachaturian

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<sup>59</sup> Rasmila Alaverdyan, “Life and Creative Work,” *Virtual Museum of Aram Khachaturian*, n.d. [http:// www.khachaturian.am/eng/biography.htm](http://www.khachaturian.am/eng/biography.htm) (accessed March 22, 2009).

indicates that part is to be played *poco rubato e molto espressivo*. After the restatement of the opening melodic line, the orchestra brings back “Meh Avara” with its own variation. The theme is stated in a single line without supporting intervals. It uses trills instead of rolled chords, and most importantly it has a counter-melody, starting at m. 51. This counter-melody is stated rather firmly with a *forte* dynamic and *tenuto* markings. After a rapid ascent, the conjunct line quickly descends and then ascends again, using arpeggios that cover more than an octave. This wave-like counter-melody is used again extensively in the transition to B. Example 3.4 shows the countermelody introduced by the orchestra.

Example 3.4. II, mm. 51–64. The orchestral countermelody in Section A

The musical score for Piano II, measures 51–64, is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 51–55) shows a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a counter-melody. The counter-melody in the bass staff begins with a whole rest, followed by eighth notes, and includes a trill and a triplet. The second system (measures 56–64) continues the counter-melody in the bass staff, featuring a trill, a triplet, and a 12-measure arpeggiated passage. The piano part is marked *mf espress.* and *con Ped.*.

While the orchestra states melodies and countermelodies, the piano provides an accompaniment similar to the orchestra’s previous accompaniment in mm. 8–32. This time, however, the pianist uses more registers on the keyboard, and the dynamic is expanded, at times reaching *ff*. The composer allows the pianist more freedom in tempo (*poco rubato e molto espressivo*) to pave the way for the orchestra to emerge with the original melody. In mm. 49–64, the composer asks for pedal. Since every measure in this phrase has only one harmony, the pianist should keep the

damper pedal down for the entire measure. The pianist should be careful not to include the grace note in m. 49 when pedaling, however, as doing so can ruin the effect of the low A in the bass on beat two (see example 3.5).

Example 3.5. II, mm. 49–64. Recommended use of pedal

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Piano I, measures 49–64. The first system covers measures 49–52, and the second system covers measures 53–56. The music is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes a treble and bass staff. The bass staff features a low A note on beat two of measure 49, which is the focus of the pedaling instruction. Pedal markings are indicated by a bracket labeled '8' with a dashed line underneath, spanning the duration of the notes in measures 49, 50, 51, and 52. The first system is marked with a piano (*mp*) dynamic. The second system continues the melodic and harmonic progression with similar pedaling instructions.

In mm. 65–68, however, the pianist should lift the damper pedal more frequently since the second part of the original theme is clearly articulated, and the harmony moves chromatically and more rapidly, as shown in example 3.6.

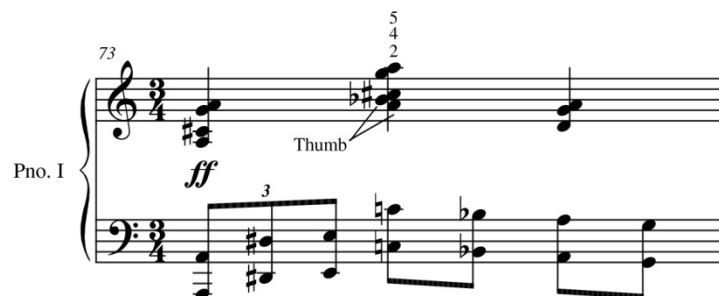
Example 3.6. II, mm. 65–68. Recommended use of damper pedal

The image shows a single system of musical notation for Piano I, measures 65–68. The music is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes a treble and bass staff. The bass staff features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 65, marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. Pedal markings are indicated by a bracket labeled '8' with a dashed line underneath, spanning the duration of the notes in measures 65, 66, and 67. The music is characterized by chromatic movement and rapid harmonic changes, requiring more frequent lifting of the damper pedal.



In m. 69, the pedal can be used as it is in m. 49. Mm. 73–80 are an expanded repetition of the second phrase of the original theme. In m. 73 beat two, the chord in the pianist’s right hand is quite problematic. This five-note chord is awkward pianistically due to the added minor ninth in the A seventh chord.

Example 3.7. II, m. 73. Beat two, right hand



There are at least three potential ways to play this chord. First, using all five fingers will work nicely if the pianist has large hands and can easily stretch to play all five notes. If this stretching position is not comfortable, playing the lower two notes, A and B-flat (as suggested in Example 3.7), with the thumb is a second option. Finding the precise vertical angle of the thumb, however, can be challenging. In a worst-case scenario, pianists with small hands could possibly omit the lower A. The top note of the chord is A, and since the top note will obviously project more clearly, sacrificing the lower A is an acceptable decision.

Besides its innovative use of Armenian folk music, Khachaturian’s Piano Concerto in D-flat Major also includes an innovative timbral effect. It is among the first compositions to incorporate the flexatone and to this day remains one of only a few classical compositions to include it. The flexatone is a percussion instrument that was invented in the early 1900s. This instrument’s unique and eerie vibrato is generated by a shaking motion which causes a beater to

strike the instrument's metal sheet.<sup>60</sup> In mm. 49–80, a flexatone plays the “Meh Avara” theme along with the first violin. According to Poghosyan, the composer uses this unique combination to imitate the color of two specific Armenian folk instruments: the wind *shvi* (a small duct flute) and the *kanon* (a plucked instrument similar to the psaltery).<sup>61</sup> The pianist should be aware of this special sound effect, balancing the dynamics so that it can be heard clearly.

The intensity is high when the orchestra completes the eight-measure melody in m. 80. After a three-measure step-wise descending line, the *Poco più mosso* section starts. It is more active and faster in tempo, and it uses the counter-melody from the previous section. The orchestra states the assertive step-wise ascending line for three measures (mm. 84–86) while the pianist plays the arpeggiated descent. The wave-like shape of the counter-melody is thus completed by their collaboration (see example 3.8).

Example 3.8. II, mm. 84–88. Distribution of the counter-melody in the orchestra and piano

The piano's descending arpeggio composed by D triads with both major and minor thirds. The arpeggiated passage is written in unison triplets. This rapid cascading triplet passage includes A–

<sup>60</sup> Blades, *Percussion Instruments and Their History*, 393.

<sup>61</sup> Poghosyan, “Aram Khachaturian for Piano,” 77.

F#–F $\flat$ –D–B $\flat$ . Because of this unfamiliar chord structure, the conventional finger numbers for triadic chords do not work here. Example 3.9 suggests finger numbers for this descending passage.

Example 3.9. II, mm. 87–88. Suggested fingerings

- A. The first option is to break the passage into two triads. There is a gap when the fourth finger crosses over the thumb; however, this numbering works best for memorization since the thumbs line up at the same spot.

Pno. I

87

*f*

5 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1

1 2 3 5 1 2 3 4 5

- B. The next option works well for smoothly gliding down the passage.

Pno. I

87

*f*

5 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 2

1 2 3 1 2 4 1 2 4

- C. The third option works best for pianists with large hands who can encompass a wide span of notes.



The sharing of the counter-melody lasts for sixteen measures. At m. 100, it is restated a step higher, and the same fingering used in m. 88 can be re-used in m. 103. In mm. 107–108, however, this descending passage is slightly altered, requiring a different fingering. (see Example 3.10).

Example 3.10. II, mm. 107–108. Suggested fingering



The soloist briefly and triumphantly announces the melody in mm. 109–112, then quickly resumes the role of accompaniment in mm. 113–124. This exchange of roles between the soloist and the orchestra is repeated throughout mm. 115–125. Here, the pianist's accompanying part can be problematic. Executing this rapid passage flawlessly requires special attention to fingering and careful practice techniques (see example 3.11).

Example 3.11. II, mm. 119–121. Suggested fingering

Example 3.11 shows a musical score for Pno. I, measures 119–121. The score is in 3/4 time and features a complex, rapid passage. The suggested fingering is indicated by numbers 1 through 5 above and below the notes. The passage is characterized by a series of triplets and a staccato articulation. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#).

The *staccato* in these measures should be crisp and short. Only slow repetition will ensure flawless delivery of the passage. Practicing with different rhythmic groupings, such as groups of two and three, will help to stabilize the intervallic relationship and ground each pattern within the fingers. Instead of thinking vertically, note-by-note, the pianist should focus on the linear aspect of the phrase, redirecting attention to the completion of the phrase and away from its technical challenge.

Section B: Measures 126–172

Section B of the second movement starts in m. 126 with the orchestra. After a drastic *diminuendo* on a C-sharp seventh chord, a tuneful though rather subdued melody is introduced. It is four measures long, conjunct, and narrow in range. It also includes ornamented notes (see Example 3.12).

Example 3.12. II, mm. 128–131. Melody of Section B

Example 3.12 shows a musical score for Pno. II, measures 128–131. The score is in 3/4 time and features a melody for the right hand and a supporting bass line for the left hand. The melody is marked *mp* (mezzo-piano) and includes a trill in measure 128. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The left hand part includes a series of eighth notes and a trill in measure 128.

The piano doubles the melody two octaves apart in m. 132. However, in the piano part, the eighth-note figure in m. 130 is changed to an eighth-note triplet pattern. Concurrently the pianist plays harmonic intervals to support the doubled melody. The four-measure melody expands as it sequences, each time moving higher in register with added harmonic tones that support the melody. The dynamic level increases as tension builds, ultimately reaching *ff*. At the peak of the increased intensity in m. 152, Khachaturian asks for a *poco a poco accelerando* adding more tension to the music. At the *Quasi Allegro* in m. 156, a long, dissonant, and violent cascade of descending chords takes place. Over the course of thirteen measures, these dissonant chords move down by half steps, creating harmonic conflict against the orchestral C-sharp pedal notes (see example 3.13).

Example 3. 13. II, mm. 156–159. First four measures of *Quasi Allegro*

**Quasi Allegro**

The image shows a musical score for Piano I, measures 156-159, marked *Quasi Allegro*. The score is written for two staves (treble and bass clef). The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 3/4. The music consists of a dense, dissonant cascade of descending chords. The dynamic level is marked with a large '8' (fortissimo). A dashed line indicates a tempo change from the previous section. The score is labeled 'Pno. I' on the left.

For maximum efficiency, the technical approach to executing these *fortissimo* chords requires coordination of the fingers, hands, wrists, forearms, and upper arms. Due to the dynamic level, projection of the melodic tones is not an issue. Even though it is not indicated, the pianist should use touches of the damper pedal to increase volume and maintain the passage's textural intensity.

### Return of Section A: Measures 173–204

The return of Section A starts in m. 173 in full force, scored at *fff* and with an *appassionato* marking. Several measures in, the pianist plays four measures of rapidly ascending octaves with alternating hands. Indicated as *Tempo I*, the opening “Meh Avara” theme is restated in full chords utilizing both hands. In contrast to the opening of the movement, this A material is written in a bravura style. The chords cover a wide range on the keyboard and present the physical challenge of shifting rapidly between the extreme registers. Marked *fff* for both the piano and the orchestra, the passage requires endurance and strength from the pianist in order to project the sound loudly over the orchestra. The chords should be played employing the pianist’s entire upper body weight. Hands should relax during longer notes. Since the bass A-minor chords are meant to be held for a measure’s duration, the damper pedal should be changed each measure except when more frequent changes are required by notated rests. (see Example 3.14).

The eight-measure statement of “Meh Avara” is repeated in mm. 180–188. As seen in mm. 49–64, the melody is transferred to the orchestra in mm. 189–204, as the roles of soloist and accompanist are reversed. For practice suggestions for mm. 180–204, refer to the earlier discussion of the initial statement of A and Examples 3.5, 3.6, and 3.7.

Example 3.14. II, mm. 173–180. Restatement of “Meh Avara” theme

The musical score is for two pianos (Pno. I and Pno. II) in 3/4 time. It features a restatement of the "Meh Avara" theme. The score is divided into three systems. The first system (mm. 173-175) shows Pno. I with a "Tempo I" marking and "ff" dynamics, and Pno. II with "ff" dynamics. The second system (mm. 176-178) shows Pno. I with a "(8)" marking and Pno. II with a "(8)" marking. The third system (mm. 179-180) shows Pno. I with a "(8)" marking and Pno. II with a "(8)" marking.



### Coda: Measures 205–236

For the closing of the second movement, Khachaturian suddenly shifts its *appassionato* mood to a more melancholy and nostalgic affect. The piano plays a free and almost improvisatory gesture by itself after the orchestra's *fff* B-flat tremolo in m. 205. An arpeggiated F major-seventh chord building to an A minor diad, is interrupted by a powerful orchestral tremolo in the next measure. The piano again responds alone by arpeggiating a soft, yearning harmony as shown in example 3.15.

Example 3.15. II, mm. 205–208. First four measures of the coda

The musical score for Example 3.15 shows the first four measures of the coda for Piano I and Piano II. The tempo is marked *Lento* and the time signature is 3/4. Piano I (Pno. I) begins in measure 205 with a soft (*p*) arpeggiated F major-seventh chord, which builds to an A minor diad. This is interrupted by a powerful orchestral tremolo in measure 206. Piano II (Pno. II) plays a powerful (*fff*) B-flat tremolo in measure 205, which is interrupted by a powerful (*ff*) tremolo in measure 206. The score shows measures 205, 206, 207, and 208.

The pianist's hands should remain close to the keyboard to execute the ascending sweeping motion required in this passage. Touching the keys with the rounded pads of the fingers, along with less arch in the hand, will produce a soft and warm timbre. Depressing the damper pedal throughout the entire measure will add to the passage's mystical, unresolved, and yearning mood.

Returning to the regular tempo in m. 209, the piano solo plays a wave-like A-minor scalar passage with a raised sixth. Starting on the fifth scale degree, the passage descends to C and then ascends. This scalar passage sequences twice more, each time moving down a step.

Due to the ten-note length of these scale passages and the unconventional altered sixth scale degree, the regular A-minor scale fingering is ineffective. Example 3.16 suggests fingering for mm. 209–210. Since each passage is repeated a step lower, the same fingerings can be applied in mm. 211–214 (see example 3.16).

Example 3.16. II, mm. 209–210. Suggested fingering for ten-note scale passage

The span of ten notes is divided equally into two groups of five notes each. Well-adjusted rotation of the wrists is critical for smooth delivery of the scale passage. Each new five-note position should be played without changes in dynamic or gaps in sound. A flattened finger touch is recommended to create a more muted and warm tone. A short touch of the damper pedal when shifting to the next five-note position can also aid in making the *legato* more fluid. As indicated by the composer, the dynamic should be slightly increased when the passage descends and decreased when it ascends. Focusing on expressing the indicated *crescendo* and *decrescendo* will also help with the smoothness of the scale passages.

The movement comes to an end after a long orchestral postlude. The piano plays an intervallically-conflicted series of chords in m. 235 before the closing of the movement. The movement ends with orchestral A-minor triads.

## CHAPTER 4

### MOVEMENT III: *ALLEGRO BRILLANTE*

The concerto's third movement is a finale that is "heroically triumphant" in character.<sup>62</sup> It is in the style of a folk dance in ternary form, followed by a grand coda. The formal structure of the third movement is as follows:

Section A (mm. 1–156): *Allegro Brillante*

Section B (mm. 157–256): *Meno Mosso* including a *cadenza* (mm. 197–256)

Section A' (mm. 256–347): *Tempo I*

Coda (mm. 348–434): *Maestoso*

Each section is delineated by a change in character and mood. Section A clearly demonstrates a folk dance influence: its rapid, steady eighth note pulse, 2/4 meter, and disjunct, broken-chord figuration give it a "jumpy" feeling. It is very lively and energetic with an unrestrained flow of driving rhythm. The lyrical and unhurried style of Section B contrasts with Section A. It projects a meditative mood, almost like a recitative in which the tempo is freer. This lyrical section develops into a *cadenza* showcasing fantasia-like improvisatory passages that cascade over the entire keyboard. The coda reintroduces the main theme of the first movement in a majestic manner, closing the concerto on a powerful and exultant note.

The movement starts in C major and finally returns to D-flat major, the concerto's tonic, in the coda. Interestingly, the return of D-flat is accomplished through the use of accidentals; the

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<sup>62</sup> Shneerson, *Aram Khachaturian*, 43.

key signature remains C major. Khachaturian thus emphasizes the juxtaposition of these two tonal centers. He further increases harmonic interest by simultaneously implying other chords through fifth-relations. For example, F (which is a fifth away from C downwards) is used as a pedal point throughout the movement. Melodic lines and vertical chords also contain many accidentals. Khachaturian also maintains a folkloric mood in this movement. According to Yuzefovich, Armenian tunes tend to leap or start from a lower note and descend vigorously with ornaments.<sup>63</sup> This characteristic might explain why Khachaturian employs neighboring notes to embellish his theme. In this movement, he often includes adjacent chromatic notes through the use of alternating thirds that shift between modes more smoothly and freely. This modal alternation becomes a useful technique of the third movement, creating new tonal relationships that result in enhanced color and interesting harmonies.

#### Section A: Measures 1–156

The opening section of this final movement starts with fourteen measures of very disjunct C–major chords with an added minor third in the bass. This introduction establishes the tonal center of C major while foreshadowing the intervallic conflicts that occur later. These chords move in contrary motion in steady eighth notes, creating a motoric rhythmic sensation. The phrases are four measures long, and the beginning of each phrase repeats the modal conflict found in the C major triad placed against an E-flat in the bass. Example 4.1 illustrates the C-major triad with the minor third conflict in the introduction of the third movement.

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<sup>63</sup> Yuzefovich, *Aram Khachaturian*, 105.

Example 4.1. III, mm. 1–4. Opening of third movement

In mm. 15–22, the orchestra introduces a four-measure phrase that plays an important role in this movement. The melody is conjunct with chromatic neighbor and passing tones introduced to give it an improvisational, folk-like modal flavor.

Example 4.2. III, mm. 15–18. Melodic phrase

This motive is repeated once more before a section of 3/8 meter interrupts the 2/4 meter in m. 23 by the orchestra. At the meter change, the passage shifts from a driving to a more relaxed pace. In m. 25, the piano picks up the sixteenth-note motive. Since this is the first time Khachaturian writes slurs over the notes, proper articulation is crucial. Pianists should pay close attention to the *legato* line, making sure all the notes are connected, suiting the relaxed atmosphere. Example 4.3 presents suggested fingering for *legato* execution of this passage.

Example 4.3. III, mm. 25–29. Suggested fingering for better articulation

25

Pno. I

1 3 1 3 1 (2) 3 2 3 2 3 2 2 3 2 1 2 1 2 3 2 1 3 1 2 1 (3) poco rit. (3) 1 3 1 2 1 1 3 1 3 1

1 3 1 3 1 2 3 2 3 2 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 1 2 (3) 1 3 1 3 1 1 3 1 3 1

In m. 30, the meter returns to 2/4 with the solo piano stating the four-measure sixteenth-note motive. The tension gradually increases as the piano ascends in register. The tempo indication in m. 36 (*poco a poco accelerando e crescendo*), along with more animation in the four-measure phrase each time it enters, drives the music forward. As expected, this driven, rhythmic passage is again interrupted by 3/8 meter in m. 44 since the alternation between 2/4 and 3/8 has now become a regular cycle. In m. 50, the sixteenth-note phrase begins again over a B-flat pedal point now by the orchestra a step lower than the previous statement in m. 30. The four-measure phrase is shortened, and a series of unison motivic sequences occur over the next ten measures.

Executing these rapid passages with many added accidentals can be problematic. Adding octaves in the right hand at such a fast tempo also increases the technical challenges. In order to perform this passage at tempo, articulation in both hands should be *non-legato*, using the lightest possible touch. The right hand's octaves should be played *staccato* to ensure that the *accelerando* begins at a fast enough tempo. When the right hand plays *staccato*, the left hand should mimic the articulation of the right for consistency in the unison voicing. Example 4.4 illustrates suggested fingering for mm. 30 to 44.

Example 4.4. III, mm. 30–40. Suggested fingering

The musical score for Pno. I, measures 30–40, is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 30–35) is marked *a tempo*. The second system (measures 36–40) is marked *poco a poco accel. e cresc.* and includes dynamic markings *8* and *8-*. The score is in 2/4 time and features a sixteenth-note motive. Fingering numbers (1-5) are provided for each note. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

**Measure 30:** Treble clef, F#4 (5), G#4 (1), A4 (2), B4 (3), C5 (1), D5 (2), E5 (3), F#5 (1), G#5 (2), A5 (3), B5 (1), C6 (2), D6 (3), E6 (1), F#6 (2), G#6 (3), A6 (1), B6 (2), C7 (3), D7 (1), E7 (2), F#7 (3), G#7 (1), A7 (2), B7 (3), C8 (1), D8 (2), E8 (3), F#8 (1), G#8 (2), A8 (3), B8 (1), C9 (2), D9 (3), E9 (1), F#9 (2), G#9 (3), A9 (1), B9 (2), C10 (3), D10 (1), E10 (2), F#10 (3), G#10 (1), A10 (2), B10 (3), C11 (1), D11 (2), E11 (3), F#11 (1), G#11 (2), A11 (3), B11 (1), C12 (2), D12 (3), E12 (1), F#12 (2), G#12 (3), A12 (1), B12 (2), C13 (3), D13 (1), E13 (2), F#13 (3), G#13 (1), A13 (2), B13 (3), C14 (1), D14 (2), E14 (3), F#14 (1), G#14 (2), A14 (3), B14 (1), C15 (2), D15 (3), E15 (1), F#15 (2), G#15 (3), A15 (1), B15 (2), C16 (3), D16 (1), E16 (2), F#16 (3), G#16 (1), A16 (2), B16 (3), C17 (1), D17 (2), E17 (3), F#17 (1), G#17 (2), A17 (3), B17 (1), C18 (2), D18 (3), E18 (1), F#18 (2), G#18 (3), A18 (1), B18 (2), C19 (3), D19 (1), E19 (2), F#19 (3), G#19 (1), A19 (2), B19 (3), C20 (1), D20 (2), E20 (3), F#20 (1), G#20 (2), A20 (3), B20 (1), C21 (2), D21 (3), E21 (1), F#21 (2), G#21 (3), A21 (1), B21 (2), C22 (3), D22 (1), E22 (2), F#22 (3), G#22 (1), A22 (2), B22 (3), C23 (1), D23 (2), E23 (3), F#23 (1), G#23 (2), A23 (3), B23 (1), C24 (2), D24 (3), E24 (1), F#24 (2), G#24 (3), A24 (1), B24 (2), C25 (3), D25 (1), E25 (2), F#25 (3), G#25 (1), A25 (2), B25 (3), C26 (1), D26 (2), E26 (3), F#26 (1), G#26 (2), A26 (3), B26 (1), C27 (2), D27 (3), E27 (1), F#27 (2), G#27 (3), A27 (1), B27 (2), C28 (3), D28 (1), E28 (2), F#28 (3), G#28 (1), A28 (2), B28 (3), C29 (1), D29 (2), E29 (3), F#29 (1), G#29 (2), A29 (3), B29 (1), C30 (2), D30 (3), E30 (1), F#30 (2), G#30 (3), A30 (1), B30 (2), C31 (3), D31 (1), E31 (2), F#31 (3), G#31 (1), A31 (2), B31 (3), C32 (1), D32 (2), E32 (3), F#32 (1), G#32 (2), A32 (3), B32 (1), C33 (2), D33 (3), E33 (1), F#33 (2), G#33 (3), A33 (1), B33 (2), C34 (3), D34 (1), E34 (2), F#34 (3), G#34 (1), A34 (2), B34 (3), C35 (1), D35 (2), E35 (3), F#35 (1), G#35 (2), A35 (3), B35 (1), C36 (2), D36 (3), E36 (1), F#36 (2), G#36 (3), A36 (1), B36 (2), C37 (3), D37 (1), E37 (2), F#37 (3), G#37 (1), A37 (2), B37 (3), C38 (1), D38 (2), E38 (3), F#38 (1), G#38 (2), A38 (3), B38 (1), C39 (2), D39 (3), E39 (1), F#39 (2), G#39 (3), A39 (1), B39 (2), C40 (3), D40 (1), E40 (2), F#40 (3), G#40 (1), A40 (2), B40 (3), C41 (1), D41 (2), E41 (3), F#41 (1), G#41 (2), A41 (3), B41 (1), C42 (2), D42 (3), E42 (1), F#42 (2), G#42 (3), A42 (1), B42 (2), C43 (3), D43 (1), E43 (2), F#43 (3), G#43 (1), A43 (2), B43 (3), C44 (1), D44 (2), E44 (3), F#44 (1), G#44 (2), A44 (3), B44 (1), C45 (2), D45 (3), E45 (1), F#45 (2), G#45 (3), A45 (1), B45 (2), C46 (3), D46 (1), E46 (2), F#46 (3), G#46 (1), A46 (2), B46 (3), C47 (1), D47 (2), E47 (3), F#47 (1), G#47 (2), A47 (3), B47 (1), C48 (2), D48 (3), E48 (1), F#48 (2), G#48 (3), A48 (1), B48 (2), C49 (3), D49 (1), E49 (2), F#49 (3), G#49 (1), A49 (2), B49 (3), C50 (1), D50 (2), E50 (3), F#50 (1), G#50 (2), A50 (3), B50 (1), C51 (2), D51 (3), E51 (1), F#51 (2), G#51 (3), A51 (1), B51 (2), C52 (3), D52 (1), E52 (2), F#52 (3), G#52 (1), A52 (2), B52 (3), C53 (1), D53 (2), E53 (3), F#53 (1), G#53 (2), A53 (3), B53 (1), C54 (2), D54 (3), E54 (1), F#54 (2), G#54 (3), A54 (1), B54 (2), C55 (3), D55 (1), E55 (2), F#55 (3), G#55 (1), A55 (2), B55 (3), C56 (1), D56 (2), E56 (3), F#56 (1), G#56 (2), A56 (3), B56 (1), C57 (2), D57 (3), E57 (1), F#57 (2), G#57 (3), A57 (1), B57 (2), C58 (3), D58 (1), E58 (2), F#58 (3), G#58 (1), A58 (2), B58 (3), C59 (1), D59 (2), E59 (3), F#59 (1), G#59 (2), A59 (3), B59 (1), C60 (2), D60 (3), E60 (1), F#60 (2), G#60 (3), A60 (1), B60 (2), C61 (3), D61 (1), E61 (2), F#61 (3), G#61 (1), A61 (2), B61 (3), C62 (1), D62 (2), E62 (3), F#62 (1), G#62 (2), A62 (3), B62 (1), C63 (2), D63 (3), E63 (1), F#63 (2), G#63 (3), A63 (1), B63 (2), C64 (3), D64 (1), E64 (2), F#64 (3), G#64 (1), A64 (2), B64 (3), C65 (1), D65 (2), E65 (3), F#65 (1), G#65 (2), A65 (3), B65 (1), 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A96 (1), B96 (2), C97 (3), D97 (1), E97 (2), F#97 (3), G#97 (1), A97 (2), B97 (3), C98 (1), D98 (2), E98 (3), F#98 (1), G#98 (2), A98 (3), B98 (1), C99 (2), D99 (3), E99 (1), F#99 (2), G#99 (3), A99 (1), B99 (2), C100 (3), D100 (1), E100 (2), F#100 (3), G#100 (1), A100 (2), B100 (3), C101 (1), D101 (2), E101 (3), F#101 (1), G#101 (2), A101 (3), B101 (1), C102 (2), D102 (3), E102 (1), F#102 (2), G#102 (3), A102 (1), B102 (2), C103 (3), D103 (1), E103 (2), F#103 (3), G#103 (1), A103 (2), B103 (3), C104 (1), D104 (2), E104 (3), F#104 (1), G#104 (2), A104 (3), B104 (1), C105 (2), D105 (3), E105 (1), F#105 (2), G#105 (3), A105 (1), B105 (2), C106 (3), D106 (1), E106 (2), F#106 (3), G#106 (1), A106 (2), B106 (3), C107 (1), D107 (2), E107 (3), F#107 (1), G#107 (2), A107 (3), B107 (1), C108 (2), D108 (3), E108 (1), F#108 (2), G#108 (3), A108 (1), B108 (2), C109 (3), D109 (1), E109 (2), F#109 (3), G#109 (1), A109 (2), B109 (3), C110 (1), D110 (2), E110 (3), F#110 (1), G#110 (2), A110 (3), B110 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(3), A138 (1), B138 (2), C139 (3), D139 (1), E139 (2), F#139 (3), G#139 (1), A139 (2), B139 (3), C140 (1), D140 (2), E140 (3), F#140 (1), G#140 (2), A140 (3), B140 (1), C141 (2), D141 (3), E141 (1), F#141 (2), G#141 (3), A141 (1), B141 (2), C142 (3), D142 (1), E142 (2), F#142 (3), G#142 (1), A142 (2), B142 (3), C143 (1), D143 (2), E143 (3), F#143 (1), G#143 (2), A143 (3), B143 (1), C144 (2), D144 (3), E144 (1), F#144 (2), G#144 (3), A144 (1), B144 (2), C145 (3), D145 (1), E145 (2), F#145 (3), G#145 (1), A145 (2), B145 (3), C146 (1), D146 (2), E146 (3), F#146 (1), G#146 (2), A146 (3), B146 (1), C147 (2), D147 (3), E147 (1), F#147 (2), G#147 (3), A147 (1), B147 (2), C148 (3), D148 (1), E148 (2), F#148 (3), G#148 (1), A148 (2), B148 (3), C149 (1), D149 (2), E149 (3), F#149 (1), G#149 (2), A149 (3), B149 (1), C150 (2), D150 (3), E150 (1), F#150 (2), G#150 (3), A150 (1), B150 (2), C151 (3), D151 (1), E151 (2), F#151 (3), G#151 (1), A151 (2), B151 (3), C152 (1), D152 (2), E152 (3), F#152 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(2), C208 (3), D208 (1), E208 (2), F#208 (3), G#208 (1), A208 (2), B208 (3), C209 (1), D209 (2), E209 (3), F#209 (1), G#209 (2), A209 (3), B209 (1), C210 (2), D210 (3), E210 (1), F#210 (2), G#210 (3), A210 (1), B210 (2), C211 (3), D211 (1), E211 (2), F#211 (3), G#211 (1), A211 (2), B211 (3), C212 (1), D212 (2), E212 (3), F#212 (1), G#212 (2), A212 (3), B212 (1), C213 (2), D213 (3), E213 (1), F#213 (2), G#213 (3), A213 (1), B213 (2), C214 (3), D214 (1), E214 (2), F#214 (3), G#214 (1), A214 (2), B214 (3), C215 (1), D215 (2), E215 (3), F#215 (1), G#215 (2), A215 (3), B215 (1), C216 (2), D216 (3), E216 (1), F#216 (2), G#216 (3), A216 (1), B216 (2), C217 (3), D217 (1), E217 (2), F#217 (3), G#217 (1), A217 (2), B217 (3), C218 (1), D218 (2), E218 (3), F#218 (1), G#218 (2), A218 (3), B218 (1), C219 (2), D219 (3), E219 (1), F#219 (2), G#219 (3), A219 (1), B219 (2), C220 (3), D220 (1), E220 (2), F#220 (3), G#220 (1), A220 (2), B220 (3), C221 (1), D221 (2), E221 (3), F#221 (1), G#221 (2), A221 (3), B221 (1), C222 (2), D222 (3), E222 (1), F#222 (2), G#222 (3), A222 (1), B222 (2), C223 (3), D223 (1), E223 (2), F#223 (3), G#223 (1), A223 (2), B223 (3), C224 (1), D224 (2), E224 (3), F#224 (1), G#224 (2), A224 (3), B224 (1), C225 (2), D225 (3), E225 (1), F#225 (2), G#225 (3), A225 (1), B225 (2), C226 (3), D226 (1), E226 (2), F#226 (3), G#226 (1), A226 (2), B226 (3), C227 (1), D227 (2), E227 (3), F#227 (1), G#227 (2), A227 (3), B227 (1), C228 (2), D228 (3), E228 (1), F#228 (2), G#228 (3), A228 (1), B228 (2), C229 (3), D229 (1), E229 (2), F#229 (3), G#229 (1), A229 (2), B229 (3), C230 (1), D230 (2), E230 (3), F#230 (1), G#230 (2), A230 (3), B230 (1), C231 (2), D231 (3), E231 (1), F#231 (2), G#231 (3), A231 (1), B231 (2), C232 (3), D232 (1), E232 (2), F#232 (3), G#232 (1), A232 (2), B232 (3), C233 (1), D233 (2), E233 (3), F#233 (1), G#233 (2), A233 (3), B233 (1), C234 (2), D234 (3), E234 (1), F#234 (2), G#234 (3), A234 (1), B234 (2), C235 (3), D235 (1), E235 (2), F#235 (3), G#235 (1), A235 (2), B235 (3), C236 (1), D236 (2), E236 (3), F#236 (1), G#236 (2), A236 (3), B236 (1), C237 (2), D237 (3), E237 (1), F#237 (2), G#237 (3), A237 (1), B237 (2), C238 (3), D238 (1), E238 (2), F#238 (3), G#238 (1), A238 (2), B238 (3), C239 (1), D239 (2), E239 (3), F#239 (1), G#239 (2), A239 (3), B239 (1), C240 (2), D240 (3), E240 (1), F#240 (2), G#240 (3), A240 (1), B240 (2), C241 (3), D241 (1), E241 (2), F#241 (3), G#241 (1), A241 (2), B241 (3), C242 (1), D242 (2), E242 (3), F#242 (1), G#242 (2), A242 (3), B242 (1), C243 (2), D243 (3), E243 (1), F#243 (2), G#243 (3), A243 (1), B243 (2), C244 (3), D244 (1), E244 (2), F#244 (3), G#244 (1), A244 (2), B244 (3), C245 (1), D245 (2), E245 (3), F#245 (1), G#245 (2), A245 (3), B245 (1), C246 (2), D246 (3), E246 (1), F#246 (2), G#246 (3), A246 (1), B246 (2), C247 (3), D247 (1), E247 (2), F#247 (3), G#247 (1), A247 (2), B247 (3), C248 (1), D248 (2), E248 (3), F#248 (1), G#248 (2), A248 (3), B248 (1), C249 (2), D249 (3), E249 (1), F#249 (2), G#249 (3), A249 (1), B249 (2), C250 (3), D250 (1), E250 (2), F#250 (3), G#250 (1), A250 (2), B250 (3), C251 (1), D251 (2), E251 (3), F#251 (1), G#251 (2), A251 (3), B251 (1), C252 (2), D252 (3), E252 (1), F#252 (2), G#252 (3), A252 (1), B252 (2), C253 (3), D253 (1), E253 (2), F#253 (3), G#253 (1), A253 (2), B253 (3), C254 (1), D254 (2), E25

Example 4.5. III, mm. 50–59. Suggested fingering

The image displays a musical score for Piano I (Pno. I) covering measures 50 to 59. The music is written in 2/4 time and features a continuous sixteenth-note passage. The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 50 through 54, and the second system contains measures 55 through 59. Above the treble clef staff, suggested fingering numbers (1-5) are provided for each note. Below the bass clef staff, additional suggested fingering numbers are provided. The dynamic marking *f* (forte) is present at the beginning of measure 50. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Starting in m. 60, the motoric sixteenth-note motive takes on a different form. Instead of being played in unison, the motive is now expanded into triads, distributed between both hands as illustrated in example 4.6. Marked *marcato* and *poco sostenuto*, the triads are meant to be played in a very articulated manner. Pianistically speaking, however, the dynamic level is already at *f*, and playing the triads with rapid alternation of the hands will naturally make this passage sound heavier than the previous linear motivic passage.



Example 4.6. III, mm. 30–31 & mm. 62–63. Comparison of the sixteenth-note motive

*a tempo*

30

Pno. I

5 1 2 3 1 3 2 3 1 5 1 2 3 1 2 1 2

1 3 1 4 1 3 1 4 1 3 1 4 3 2 1

*poco sostenuto*

62

Pno. I

*f*

>

>

In m. 69, the pattern of alternating the hands stops and returns to a unison pattern. At this point, a new rhythmic fragment of sixteenth-note triplets followed by eighth notes appears. These new rhythmic fragments were introduced by the orchestra in m. 61–62. In unison octaves, these new rhythmically varied fragments cascade over wide ranges of the keyboard and emphasize E-flat from mm. 69–72 and B-flat from mm. 74–77. These moments of harmonic emphasis are clearly indicated by the composer with accent marks. To project this harmonic emphasis, the pianist should use a short touch of the damper pedal for each accented note. (See example 4.7)

Example 4.7. III, mm. 73–79. Recommended use of damper pedal

The musical score for Piano I, measures 73–79, is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 73–76, and the second system covers measures 76–79. The time signature is 2/4 for measures 73–77 and 3/8 for measures 78–79. The right hand (RH) plays a continuous melodic line with eighth notes and rests, while the left hand (LH) plays a steady eighth-note pulse. A dashed line with an '8' above it indicates a recommended damper pedal duration. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, accents, and dynamic markings like *f* and *ff*.

The meter changes to 3/8 in m. 78. As previously mentioned, when the time signature shifts from 2/4 to 3/8, the mood becomes more relaxed, and, the hurried sixteenth-note motive is nowhere to be found. Instead, the music moves in a steady eighth-note pulse, punctuated with eighth rests. Mm. 78–108 convey a more leisurely mood; in these measures, the soloist and the orchestra are musically conversing instead of competing with each other. In mm. 87 through 96, the left hand of the pianist plays widely-spaced chords with large intervals. These measures feature B-flat as the pedal point, marked *ff* *fervore*. Projecting the continuous melodic line on top while sustaining the lower notes at a loud dynamic requires a more careful and longer use of the damper pedal (see Example 4.8). The pedal is changed when there is an accent, when harmonies change, or when melodic notes are blurred which would conflict too much with the sustained notes.

Example 4.8. III, mm. 87–96. Recommended use of damper pedal

After the calm, steady 3/8 passage fades out softly in m. 108, the orchestra abruptly and shockingly brings back the furious, loud sixteenth-note motive. This transitional passage to the B section, marked *ff* and *poco piu mosso*, returns to the energetic and rhythmically-driven style of the 2/4 part of Section A. The soloist enters in m. 117 with a rapidly descending sixteenth-note passage, starting on C and ending on D-flat. Because of Khachaturian's scalar language, the standard fingering for major or minor scales cannot be applied (see Example 4.9).

Example 4.9. III, mm. 117–122. Suggested fingering

In mm. 124–130, it is worthwhile noticing the simultaneous use of C and D-flat. When the pianist's hands alternate, the left hand states the moving melodic line and the right hand stubbornly inserts both C and D-flat as a harmonic *ostinato* for eight measures. The dynamic here is marked *ff*, which makes this clash of pitches very prominent. The descending line of the soloist's left hand arrives on F in m. 131—the subdominant of C. For the next eighteen measures, the orchestra juggles F and C as pedal tones. In m. 149, the piano enters with an accented F in both hands, ending the harmonic confusion. The highlighting of F acts as a significant point of harmonic arrival and departure. Concurrently, the orchestra takes D-flat as a pedal tone until Section B begins in m. 156. The key of D-flat is the concerto's tonic, and this pedal tone briefly foreshadows the return of the home key at the end of the movement.

#### Section B: Measures 157–256

The arrival of the theme in Section B is initiated in m. 155 when the right hand of the pianist plays chords spanning an octave. The beginning of Section B, itself is clearly indicated by the double bar at the end of m. 156, along with the indication *poco ritardando*. After the double bar, Khachaturian indicates *Meno mosso* for the tempo and *ff espressivo e fervore* for the artistic interpretation. Compared with Section A, the difference in this middle section is the dramatic change in the soloist's part. The pianist's right hand plays widely-spaced chords with the melodic notes in the soprano line, while the left hand functions as the accompaniment. This accompaniment consists of three-note chords that ascend chromatically to a full F-minor chord. This section sounds very different from the quick, linear figuration of the sixteenth-note motive in Section A. The overall mood in this middle section is dark and passionate.

Technically, there are only a few concerns to address in this section. The melodic line calls for a supportive gradation in sound in the left hand even though the dynamic is intense.

Loudly projecting the top melodic notes in the pianist's right hand and maintaining a beautifully connected line without sounding harsh or choppy present another challenge in this passage. The pianist should practice this section at a very slow tempo, concentrating on balancing each hand accordingly. The pianist should experiment with different angles of the right hand in playing these widely-spaced chords to ensure sufficient projection by the fifth finger. One option is to tilt the hand slightly to the right, giving more weight to the fifth finger. This shift aids in projecting the soprano notes and also prevents the thumb from sounding too loudly. Careful listening while using the damper pedal is also critical, since according to the slurs, the phrases in this section are meant to be played in a lyrical and connected style.

Example 4.10. III, mm. 157–160. Beginning of Section B

The musical score for Example 4.10, III, mm. 157–160, shows the beginning of Section B. It is written for two pianos, Pno. I and Pno. II, in 2/4 time. Pno. I starts at measure 157 with a 'Meno mosso' tempo change and a 'ff espr. e fervore' dynamic. The right hand plays a series of widely-spaced chords, and the left hand plays triplets. Pno. II also starts at measure 157 with a 'Meno mosso' tempo change and a 'mf' dynamic. The right hand plays triplets, and the left hand plays a 'p' dynamic. The score includes slurs and a fermata over the final measure.

The melody does not cool down emotionally until after it reaches its climax in m. 197, where the ebullient cadenza starts. The tempo in the cadenza, as expected, is very free. Marked *allargando*, the cadenza starts with a powerful C-major chord supported by the orchestra, and then continues with a rapid, fantasia-like descent through several registers of the keyboard using alternating

hands. As the pianist's hands approach the extreme left side of the keyboard, the sweeping passage (marked *pesante* and *poco ritardando*) slows down. The meters change quite often to reflect the improvisational quality of this passage. Example 4.11 shows the first seven measures of the cadenza where this improvisational quality is evident.

Example 4. 11. III, mm. 197–202. Beginning of cadenza

The musical score for Piano I, measures 197-202, is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 197-198) is in common time (C) and marked 'allarg.' and 'ff'. It features a right hand with a sweeping melodic line and a left hand with arpeggiated chords. The second system (measures 198-199) continues the melodic line in the right hand and the arpeggiated chords in the left hand. The third system (measures 200-202) is marked 'pesante' and 'poco rit.' and shows a change in the right hand's melodic line and the left hand's arpeggiated chords. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Beginning in m. 203, a textural change occurs. Here, Khachaturian experiments with the piano's different timbral effects. Arpeggiated D-flat major and C-major chords are added as embellishments before the main melodic note in the left hand is introduced. The right hand plays a single, accented C octave in each measure, which creates a harmonic conflict with the left hand's melodic line. The arpeggiated chords create the effect of strumming a string instrument. For the smooth execution of the arpeggios in these measures, each chord must be distributed

between the hands. The pianist should then focus on making the transition between hands so smoothly that the listener cannot hear the point at which the switch occurs. The composer indicates damper pedal markings in m. 203. Applying the composer's instructions, the damper pedal should be changed every two beats wherever the melodic notes create dissonance against the accented C in the right hand.

Example 4.12. III, mm. 203–208. The hand distribution of the arpeggios and suggested use of the damper pedal

**Recitando molto espressivo**

The musical score for Pno. I, measures 203–208, is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 203–208) shows a series of arpeggios and melodic lines. The right hand (R.H.) often plays accented notes, while the left hand (L.H.) provides a harmonic foundation. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'cresc.', 'accel.', 'ff', 'pp', and 'p'. A 'poco rit.' marking is present at measure 209. The damper pedal is indicated by a line with a wavy line underneath, showing when it should be changed.

While executing the arpeggios, both hands should remain as close to the keyboard as possible for a smooth ascent. Keeping flattened fingers will create a warm and soft dynamic. To bring out the accented melodic notes in the left hand and the conflicting tones in the right, the pianist should position her fingers at a more upright angle. A faster attack on the keyboard at m. 209 makes the

notes sound more percussive and cold, aiding in bringing out the difference in tonal color in contrast to the preceding arpeggios.

At m. 212, the cadenza features another textural change. At first glance, it seems to be scored homophonically with the melody in the right hand and the accompaniment in the left hand. The left hand accompaniment adds interest to the melody, however, by providing unusual harmonies, never consonant and constantly changing. The actively participating left hand becomes equal to the right hand in m. 223 as the hands move homorhythmically, and the music gets faster and more intense. This passage, marked *poco a poco accelrando e con fuoco*, is seen in Example 4.13. For the *ostinato* consisting of running eighth notes, a fingering pattern is crucial to facilitate execution and reinforce memorization. The suggested fingering in Example 4.13 will also help these measures sound *legato*.



223

*poco a poco accel. e con fuoco*

*mp*

230

*f*

240

78

Example 4.14. III, m. 208 versus m. 234 & m. 236. Comparison of articulation

m. 208–slurred

m. 234–accented

m. 236–staccato

The image displays three musical staves for Piano I, illustrating different articulations. The first staff, labeled 'm. 208–slurred', shows a series of descending sixteenth notes in the right hand, slurred together, with a *pp* dynamic marking. The second staff, labeled 'm. 234–accented', shows a single accented sixteenth note in the right hand, marked *ff*, with a triplet of eighth notes in the left hand. The third staff, labeled 'm. 236–staccato', shows a single staccato sixteenth note in the right hand, with a triplet of eighth notes in the left hand. All three staves are marked 'Pno. I' and include a '208', '234', or '236' measure number at the beginning.

Due to the change in articulation, starting from m. 234, the use of the damper pedal every two beats, recommended earlier for a similar passage, needs to be altered. Obviously, when *staccato* is indicated, the damper pedal should not be depressed. From mm. 237–242, each descending “strumming” passage is marked with *staccatos* over a slur. The chords that precede this timbral effect are accented and marked *ff*. The fifth chord in measure 242 is longer and is meant to be held down for the duration of the “strumming.” For fast, loud, *staccato* execution of these four sixteenth notes, however, it is wiser to divide them into groups of two notes for each hand. The pianist should depress the damper pedal for the duration of the measure until the last bass C is played with the left fifth finger. In this way, all the accented clusters of sound will be projected loudly enough, and the short, crisp, detached sounds of *staccatos* will be audible. Each hand should play the descending “strumming” notes rapidly, producing the shortest, “driest” duration of sound. Example 4.15 includes suggested use of the damper pedal along with an indication of note distribution in the “strumming” gestures.

Example 4.15. III, mm. 237–240. Use of damper pedal and distribution of the ornamental notes

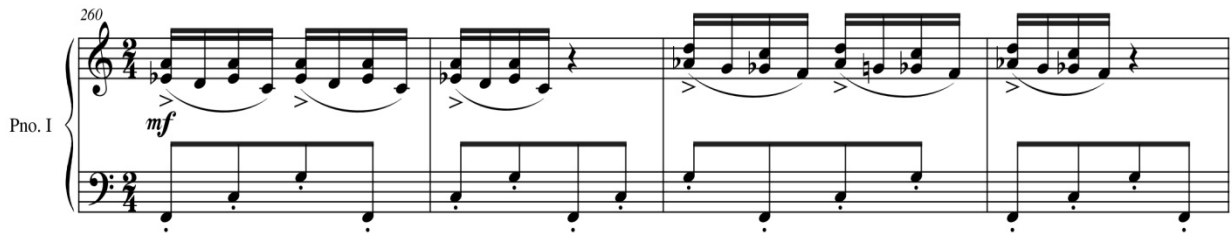
The musical score for Piano I, measures 237-240, is written in 3/8 time. The right hand (R.H.) plays a series of chords with trills and triplets, while the left hand (L.H.) plays a bass line with triplets and a damper pedal. The dynamic is marked *ff*. The score is labeled 'Pno. I' and 'ff'.

The last section of the cadenza recycles material from mm. 212–226, which was the second section of textural change in the cadenza. Mm. 212–226 use a homophonic texture, this time marked *rubato*, *dolce*, and *piano*. This contrasts with the material’s earlier appearance, which started with an accented *sfz* within a *forte* context. Almost all the material in mm. 212–226 is an exact replica of material from earlier in the cadenza, but this time it is at a higher pitch level.

#### Section A’: Measures 256-347

After chromatically descending octave passages in the left hand, Section A’ begins in m. 256. The orchestra re-emerges, providing a pedal point of alternating perfect fifths (F–C and C–G). With the indication of *Tempo I* at m. 256, the time signature returns to 2/4, the opening meter of the third movement. The piano enters in m. 260 with a variation of the movement’s opening sixteenth-note motive. The fast-paced motive is varied with tritones added in the right hand. The right hand carries the motive while the left hand doubles the orchestral accompaniment (see Example 4.16).

Example 4.16. III, mm. 260–263. Opening sixteenth-note motive of Section A’



Each hand plays with different articulations in this passage. The left hand plays short, detached notes, while the right hand has slurs on every beat with added accents on the first sixteenth note. This combination of articulation, along with a relentless pulse and a fast tempo, yields energy and a continued sense of urgency. This section’s mood contrasts heavily with the slower, ominous passages that have just ended.

The fast sixteenth-note motive with added tritones moves in either half steps or in minor thirds, as seen in Example 4.16. Mostly, the pattern occurs in groups of two that descend chromatically. When the left hand joins in with the same motion in m. 275, the fast rotation of the left wrist in conjunction with the right hand can be problematic. The following fingering should help the pianist execute the passage most efficiently (see Example 4.17). The suggested fingering uses patterned groupings; it also suggests using strong fingers such as the thumb and index finger to play accented notes. When performing this passage, the pianist must give careful attention to rotating the wrist. The wrist should rotate using a rapid “door knob” motion (addressed in Chapter 2, p.19). When playing the accented beats, the pianist should turn the wrist with a slightly wider angle so that the stronger fingers land more firmly on the keys.

Example 4.17. III, mm. 275–279. Suggested finger numbers and indication of wrists' rotational direction

The image shows a musical score for Piano I, measures 275 through 279. The score is written for two staves, Treble and Bass. Above the Treble staff, there are finger numbers (1-5) and arrows indicating wrist rotational direction (upward or downward). Above the Bass staff, there are finger numbers (1-5) and arrows indicating wrist rotational direction (upward or downward). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

After the chromatic passage ends in m. 281, the orchestra and the soloist break apart, each projecting a different harmony. The piano plays in C major, and the orchestra at in G-flat major, as seen in mm. 252–287. It is as if the two media are debating which harmony is more prominent until the orchestra plays larger chords in contrary motion in m. 287, finally reaching a C octave pedal point in m. 292. The piano enters with the opening sixteenth-note motive in the exact same manner as in m. 30. From mm. 292–337, the opening motive expands using the motivic material and rhythmic patterns from the first Section A, mm. 30–44. The musical intensity increases as the pianist uses a wider range of the keyboard. The fingering suggestions shown earlier in Example 4.4 can be applied here as well. The only difference is that in these measures, the right hand is placed an octave higher than it was in m. 30. Clean finger work in rapid passages such as these requires slow practice with different rhythmic variations (see Example 2.11). The passage requires the performer to play without the damper pedal so that the listener hears clear finger work in the various registers of the keyboard. The pianist must develop endurance and maintain a constant sense of inner rhythm to perform these passages effectively. The soloist should focus on the groups of four sixteenth notes and not be distracted by the syncopation of the orchestral part.

The piano increases in dynamic as the passage ascends in register, and the rapid sixteenth-note passage culminates in *fff* at m. 337. At this point, the orchestra forcefully brings back the first movement's opening three-note motive made up of scale degrees 3, flat 6, and 5. The three-note motive is announced over an A-flat pedal point, the dominant of the tonic key.

#### Coda: Measures 348–434

Starting in m. 348, the coda, marked *Maestoso*, features D-flat major chords in both hands, supported by the orchestra. Both media assert themselves in full force in this *Maestoso* section, making this last part of the third movement a true collaboration of two opposing forces. Although the spelling of the chords in m. 348 looks unusual, the chords present the initial three-note motive enharmonically (see Example 4.18).

Example 4.18. III, m. 348 & I, m. 11. Comparison of the three-note motive in the third and first movement

III, m. 348

I, m.11

Voicing the coda's melody, which is doubled within large chords in both hands, requires stamina from the pianist in order to project over the orchestra. To create a rich and dynamically powerful tone, the pianist should use the damper pedal throughout the coda. The composer does not specify any articulation from mm. 348–359; therefore, using the damper pedal throughout these measures is appropriate. Allowing for the orchestral rest on the second beat, the pianist should change the pedal on every beat, ensuring projection of the piano part.

The powerful chordal orchestral part, played at a heightened dynamic of *ff*, is abruptly stopped by a quarter rest with a *fermata* in m. 373. The piano enters alone with the material heard in mm. 61 to 64 of the first movement. The passage is technically challenging, involving a chromatic mixture of thirds and fourths in the right hand while the left hand plays ascending intervals of thirds, and then expanded chords. (See Example 2.5 in Chapter 2, p.19 for a practice suggestion for this problematic passage.) The next five measures borrow material from mm. 65–73 in the first movement, also previously discussed in Chapter 2. The borrowed material features blocked, closely-voiced four-note chords in 6/8 meter, which shift quickly to rapid descending sextuplets in 3/4 meter, played by alternating hands (see Examples 2.7a and 2.7b, in p. 21 for excerpts from these measures).

After four measures of the orchestra's chromatic descent, the piano enters in m. 388 with a fast and furious alternation of the hands between single notes and octaves. The piano's chromatic descent lasts eight measures. A similar descending passage played in alternating hands was seen in mm. 478–488 of the first movement. Marked *marcatissimo* and *fff*, this vigorous, extended octave passage is quite demanding.

Example 4.19. III, mm. 388–393. Alternation of the hands between single notes and octaves

The musical score for Piano I, measures 388–393, is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 388 to 391, and the second system covers measures 391 to 393. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked *marcatissimo* and the dynamics are *fff*. The right hand plays octaves (indicated by 's' and dashed lines) and the left hand plays single notes. The pattern of alternating single notes and octaves is maintained throughout the passage.

One practice strategy is to play this passage in rhythmic variations such as dotted eighths followed by a sixteenth note with a gradual increase in tempo. The pattern can then be reversed for additional practice. Reducing the right hand octaves to a single note, choosing the bottom notes played by the thumb will help the right thumb, and the left thumb merge into a single connected line. During practice, both hands remain relatively close to the keyboard since a fast performance tempo will not permit a high “rebound.”

After the soloist finishes rapidly alternating hands passage, the orchestra brings back the motoric sixteenth-note motive in 3/4 time. The soloist then plays a group of chords related by half step, first in 3/8 meter for three measures, and then with syncopation in 3/4 meter for two measures. This pattern of switching back and forth between 3/4 and 3/8 continues until m. 410. In contrast, the orchestra is steadier, stating regular pulses in all the measures. Meanwhile, the piano varies the rhythm by resting on beat one in 3/8 meter and by using syncopated rhythms in 3/4 meter.



Example 4.20. III, mm. 398–410. Switching of time signatures

The musical score for Example 4.20, III, mm. 398–410, is written for two pianos (Pno. I and Pno. II). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The score is divided into three systems, each showing a switching of time signatures.

**System 1 (mm. 398–402):** Pno. I plays complex chords with accents and slurs, marked *ff*. Pno. II plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment in 3/8 time, then rests in 3/4 time (m. 400), and then resumes the eighth-note accompaniment in 3/8 time (m. 402).

**System 2 (mm. 403–406):** Pno. I rests in 3/4 time, then plays complex chords with accents and slurs, marked *ff*, in 3/8 time (m. 405). Pno. II plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment in 3/4 time, then rests in 3/8 time (m. 405), and then resumes the eighth-note accompaniment in 3/8 time (m. 406).

**System 3 (mm. 407–410):** Pno. I rests in 3/8 time, then plays complex chords with accents and slurs, marked *ff*, in 3/4 time (m. 409). Pno. II plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment in 3/8 time, then rests in 3/4 time (m. 409), and then resumes the eighth-note accompaniment in 3/4 time (m. 410).

More conversation occurs between the orchestra and the soloist in this section, requiring continued interdependence and interaction between the two. The pianist must be thoroughly aware of the orchestral part to participate fully in this musical dialogue.

Khachaturian does not indicate any use of the damper pedal in these measures. However, to bring out the rhythmic interest of the syncopation and to support the accents at an *ff* dynamic, the pianist should use a short touch of the damper pedal. However, an excessively sustained sound should be avoided by lifting quickly after depressing the pedal on the accented note. This passage should sound very rhythmic and percussive. Suggested pedaling was indicated previously in Example 4.20.

After settling in 3/4 meter in m. 410, the orchestra and the piano join forces. The pianist plays chords with the melodic line in the lower voice. This line should be voiced with flatter but heavy fingers, using the weight of the arms. The orchestra now provides a tremolo of A–C#–D# over an A-flat pedal point. The A-flat is the dominant of D-flat major, an indication of the upcoming return of the tonic key. After the piano's melodic line wanders around in whole steps, both media play dense A-flat major chords in m. 417. The pianist should incorporate *legato* pedaling as the orchestral *tremolo* starts. The dynamic is already intense (*ff*), and it grows to *fff*. *Legato* pedaling will support the needed dynamic intensity; it is also critical to successfully connecting the melodic line. Good coordination between the hands and the pedal can only be achieved by slow practice and careful listening.

Example 4.21. III, mm. 413–417. Arrival of dominant chord in D-flat major

The musical score for Example 4.21, measures 413–417, is presented for Piano I and Piano II. The time signature is 3/4. The key signature changes from two sharps (D major) to two flats (D-flat major) in measure 417. Piano I plays a series of chords in the right hand and a melodic line in the left hand. Piano II plays a series of chords in the right hand and a melodic line in the left hand. The dynamic is marked *fff* (fortississimo) in measure 417.

To close the finale, the pianist pronounces the three-note motive from the first movement in unison octaves. Every *fff* note is accented, and the motive is repeated five times. Finally in m. 427, the orchestra breaks away from the A-flat pedal point and joins the piano in proclaiming the return of the tonic. The massive force of the full orchestra and the piano playing in unison is triumphant, and the concerto ends heroically. (See Example 4.22.)

Example 4.22. III, mm. 427–434. Finale of the third movement

The musical score for Example 4.22, measures 427–434, is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 427 to 430, and the second system covers measures 431 to 434. The score is for Piano I and Piano II. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked *ritardando*. The score features a three-note motive in unison octaves, repeated five times, and a final triumphant statement in measure 434. The piano parts are marked with accents and dynamic markings. The first system shows measures 427 to 430, and the second system shows measures 431 to 434. The score is for Piano I and Piano II. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked *ritardando*. The score features a three-note motive in unison octaves, repeated five times, and a final triumphant statement in measure 434. The piano parts are marked with accents and dynamic markings.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

As shown in the previous chapters, Khachaturian's Piano Concerto in D-flat major presents diverse technical and musical demands. A study of the work in its entirety from a pedagogical perspective suggests the following conclusions.

First, with respect to its technical challenges, the work highly requires a commanding presence over the orchestra and long-lasting stamina. It contains widely-spaced chords, large intervals, passages in perpetual motion, difficult rhythms, *marcato* octaves, meter changes, register shifts, rapid motoric alternation of the hands, and sudden dynamic shifts. Its wide-registral shifts present a definite physical challenge in terms of shifting the center of body weight in order to achieve the necessary reaches with both hands.

With respect to harmonic considerations, Khachaturian's style is eclectic. The harmonic framework of the concerto is primarily tonal; however, it includes elements such as clusters of notes, conflicting dissonant intervals, polychords, and chromaticism. Due to the mixture of non-diatonic pitch collections and the natural minor scale, the piece often sounds neither major nor minor but ambiguous. Much of the individuality of Khachaturian's harmony stem from the modes and tuning of Caucasian folk music or, more generally, "Oriental" folk music, suggesting a closer look at the work's folkloric aspects.

Khachaturian's use of unusual scales and harmonies is best understood and interpreted in light of his interest in writing art music with a distinct Armenian nationalist flavor. The direct quoting of an authentic Armenian folk song as the basis of the second movement and the way in which Khachaturian develops it gives this movement a highly folkloric ambiance. The composer's attempt to mimic the sound of Armenian folk instruments such as the douduk and the kemancha also contributes to the folkloric effect. Khachaturian's use of the flexatone in the second movement further demonstrates his innovative approach to timbre and casts an eerie shadow over the movement.

The pianist must remain aware of Khachaturian's coloristic approach to orchestration because the piano part also requires several different kinds of touch to produce an appropriate timbre. For active and energetic passages, the use of a weighted, heavy touch and activated fingertips is required. More introspective and melancholy sections of the piece call for warm, soft tones using flatter fingers and employing arm weight in support of the fingers. A specific wrist rotation technique, the "door knob" gesture, is required for precise and rapid execution of certain passages.

As this study has shown, Khachaturian's Piano Concerto in D-flat major is a challenging piece for aspiring pianists. While it is hardly to be expected that this concerto will ever launch another pianist's career as it did Kapell's, it remains an impressive addition to the virtuosic repertoire and a rewarding piece for future generations of pianists.

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## SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Note: While this discography is relatively complete at the time of compilation (February 2010), the on-going appearance of new recordings and reissues of old ones make it impossible to claim comprehensive coverage. The entries appear in alphabetical order, based first on the last name of the piano soloist. When multiple recordings by the same soloist are available, they are further alphabetized by the name of the orchestra, and then by the title of the compact disc. Information about the recordings themselves, including other works, has been provided when available.

Khachaturian, Aram. Piano Concerto. Dickran Atamian, piano, with the Seattle Symphony

Orchestra, Gerard Schwarz, conductor. On *Atamian: Khachaturian and Prokofiev*

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———. Piano Concerto. Ana Claudia Girotto, piano, with the Cordoba Orchestra, Elena Herrera, conductor. On *Rota: Piano Concerto; Khachaturian: Piano Concerto/Girotto*. Compact disc © 2000 Lindoro, 101. Other works: Nino Rota, Concerto for Piano in E minor "Piccolo mondo antico."

- . Piano Concerto. Patrik Jablonski, piano, with the Warsaw Polish Radio/TV Symphony Orchestra, Wojciech Rajski, conductor. On *Khachaturian: Piano Concerto; Shostakovich: Piano Concerto No. 2; Addinsell: Warsaw Concerto*. Compact disc © 2007 Altara, 1018.
- . Piano Concerto. William Kapell, piano, with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Serge Koussevitsky, conductor. Originally recorded 4/19/1946. On *William Kapell*. Compact disc © 1997 Pearl, 9277. Other works: Ludwig van Beethoven, Concerto for Piano No. 2 in B flat major, Op. 19; Sergei Rachmaninov, Morceaux de fantaisies (5), Op. 3: no. 2, Prélude in C sharp minor; Dimitri Shostakovich, Preludes for Piano, Op. 34: no. 5, no. 10, no. 24; Johannes Brahms, Fantasies for Piano, Op. 116: no. 6, Intermezzo in E major.
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- . Piano Concerto. Peter Katin, piano, with the London Symphony Orchestra, Hugo Rignold, conductor. Originally recorded 1959. On *Khachaturian, Piano Concerto*. DVD Audio © 2008 Classic Records, UPC 601704202716, distributed by City Hall Records.
- . Piano Concerto. Mindru Katz, piano, with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Adrian Boult, conductor. On *Prokofiev, Khachaturian, with Mindru Katz*. Compact disc © 2000 Cembal d'Amour, 109. Other works: Prokofiev, Piano Concerto No. 1, Prelude in C major Op. 12 no. 7, Tales of the Old Grandmother Op. 31; Khachaturian, Toccata.
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