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Los Angeles

Vladimir Tsybin's Ten Concert Etudes:  
Performing Virtuosity within Russian Flute Miniatures

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree Doctor of Musical Arts

by

Anastasia Petanova

2019

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Vladimir Tsybin's Ten Concert Etudes:  
Performing Virtuosity within Russian Flute Miniatures

by

Anastasia Petanova

Doctor of Musical Arts

University of California, Los Angeles, 2019

Professor Robert S. Winter, Committee Chair

This dissertation addresses the *Ten Concert Etudes for Flute and Piano* written by the prominent early twentieth-century Russian flutist, pedagogue, and composer Vladimir Tsybin (1877-1949). These works, virtually unknown in the West, are virtuosic miniatures comparable to prominent virtuosic cycles such as Niccolò Paganini's 24 Caprices for solo violin or Frédéric Chopin's two main sets of Études for piano. The dissertation's principal objective is to demonstrate—through the analysis of the expressive, stylistic, and didactic dimensions of these works—their high merit both as etudes and performance pieces. An additional goal is to familiarize the reader with a rare musician-flutist of the recent past who, despite a turbulent life in a very calamitous time, dedicated his entire life to music, bequeathing a significant legacy for future generations of flutists. The research for this work included learning and performing the *Ten Concert Etudes*, obtaining and working with the topic-related rare primary sources at the Russian State Library in Moscow, and familiarizing myself through various means with the details of the life and work of Vladimir Tsybin.



The dissertation of Anastasia Petanova is approved.

Neal Stulberg

Richard Danielpour

Cheryl Keyes

Robert S. Winter, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2019

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## Biography

Praised as “an extraordinary artist with a perfect technique and a gorgeous sound” by American composer John Corigliano, flutist **Anastasia Petanova** has performed in the major concert halls of Russia, the countries of the former Soviet Union, Europe, and North and South America. These performances include concerts in Carnegie Hall, The Kennedy Center, The Phillips Collection, the Music Center at Strathmore in the U.S., the Tonhalle in Zurich, Switzerland; the Max Joseph Saal in Munich, Germany; the UNESCO Center in Paris, France; and the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory.

From a young age Ms. Petanova has been a guest soloist with two major Russian orchestras: the Russian State Chamber Orchestra “Moscow Virtuosi,” and the legendary Russian National Orchestra, both directed by the renowned conductor and violinist Vladimir Spivakov. This collaboration resulted in numerous concert tours in Russia and abroad, including performances at the Festival International de Musique de Colmar, France and concerts across North America.

Ms. Petanova’s musical education began in Russia at the age of four (playing recorder, piccolo, and piano). She then continued at the Central Music School of the Moscow Conservatory, studying under the distinguished teacher and professor at the Moscow Conservatory, Yuri Doljnikov. During her school years, Ms. Petanova actively performed as a recitalist in Russia and Europe, as well as holding scholarships from the Vladimir Spivakov International Charity Foundation, the “New Names” International Charity Program, Yuri Bashmet’s Foundation “The Stars of New Russia,” and the “Orpheus of the 21st Century,” to name but a few. She was also a prize winner of the “New Names National Competition” in Moscow in 2000 and a prize winner at the Young Concert Artists International Auditions in New York City in 2001.

Ms. Petanova completed her Bachelor of Music Degree and the prestigious Artist Diploma program at the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University, studying as a recipient of the Ruth Blaustein Rosenberg Scholarship and Grant under the renowned flutist, Marina Piccinini. While at Peabody, Ms. Petanova was awarded the Peabody Development Career Grant twice (in 2003 and 2008) and won several awards for outstanding academic achievement. During her studies at Peabody, Ms. Petanova has worked with the most outstanding members of the conservatory faculty, including pianists Benjamin Pasternack and Alexander Shtarkman, guitarist Manuel Baruecco, the legendary American soprano Phyllis Bryn-Julson, and the Pulitzer Prize winning composer Kevin Puts. She also had lessons and participated in master classes with renowned flutists Julius Baker, Jeanne Baxtresser, Bradley Garner, Maxence Larrieu, and Elizabeth Rowe.

A devoted chamber musician, Ms. Petanova has been involved in numerous chamber music projects. She has been one of the few instrumental fellows at the La Gesse Festival in France, Italy, and the US, and is currently a member of the Phillips Camerata, an ensemble-in-residence at the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C. Most recent performances include those with the Lyrus Quartet, Grammy-winning soprano Hila Plitmann, and internationally acclaimed cellist Antonio Lysy.

Ms. Petanova has held teaching positions at the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University, the SUNY Fredonia School of Music, and the University of Nevada-Las Vegas. Her debut CD recording, “Somnium” was released in 2016 on the TNC/Cambria Recordings label.

Ms. Petanova plays on a flute by Brannen Brothers Inc. generously awarded to her in 2004 by Maestro Vladimir Spivakov.

Chapter I  
The Many Faces of the *fin de siècle* Flute:  
Europe, Russia, and Vladimir Tsybin

The European Flute Tradition in the Late Nineteenth  
and Early Twentieth Centuries

The brightest chapter in the history of the modern flute unfolded during the late 1800s at the Paris Conservatory. There, an exceptional musician, virtuoso flutist, and pedagogue Paul Taffanel (1844-1908) founded what has become known as the French Flute School. Taffanel's revolutionary philosophy of flute playing and teaching emphasized the vocal qualities of the flute and its full potential range of expression. In stark contrast to his virtuosi predecessors, Taffanel, in the words of his student Marcel Moyse, "took the flute out of the bird range .... Taffanel was the first to make the flute an expressive instrument."<sup>1</sup>

As a young man, Taffanel heard the young French soprano Adelina Patti.<sup>2</sup> In the words of Edward Blakeman, "Patti's example was crucial for Taffanel. It pointed a clear way forward for flute as an expressive 'voice,' and, as time went on, the press reviews would reflect a similar picture of naturalness, ease and purity of sound in his own playing."<sup>3</sup> Moyse wrote that his teacher had "...a really big, beautiful, ample sound—not strong, but generous. And the emotion came to the fore above all [...]. He always came out of a phrase very big, generous, and deep. He was always at ease."<sup>4</sup>

Some of the principal aspects of Taffanel's teaching philosophy were reflected in an article "*La Flûte*," written by his student Louis Fleury. In the section *The Art of Flute Playing* he states:

*Tone:* First and foremost a flute player should be concerned with searching for a good quality of tone...[...]. Tone quality is everything.

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<sup>1</sup> McCutchan, Ann. *Marcel Moyse Voice of the Flute*. Amadeus, 1994, p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> Adelina Patti (1843-1919).

<sup>3</sup> Blakeman, Edward. *Taffanel: Genius of the Flute*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 23.

<sup>4</sup> McCutchan, Ann. *Marcel Moyse Voice of the Flute*. Amadeus, 1994, p. 62.



*Intonation:* Being a good flute player is inseparable from being a good musician ... the lips must obey the ear.

*Breathing:* This is of paramount importance to the art of flute playing .... The aim of breathing is not only to replenish the lungs with air, it is also a means of expression ....

*Finger Technique:* Concern for evenness is more important than speed .... Fingering practice that neglects tone quality is disastrous.<sup>5</sup>

Salon miniatures showcasing superficial virtuosity made up the bulk of nineteenth-century flute literature.<sup>6</sup> “In sum,” states Nancy Toff, “the nineteenth century treated the flute as a bird; trills and ornaments predominated. Only in the last quarter of the [...] century did the flute enter its third phase; it evolved from imitating the birds to imitating the human voice.”<sup>7</sup> Taffanel was unquestionably responsible for generating this transformation. Parallel to that was his involvement in the revival of eighteenth-century repertoires, his vocal support of French music, and his adoption of the silver Boehm flute.<sup>8</sup> All of this was part of the French view of music in the Third Republic. It served, in the words of Jann Pasler, as a *utilité publique* (public utility), an output and activity that both defined the nation and provided a common bond among its citizens.<sup>9</sup>

A new wave of French nationalism in the wake of the humiliating defeat by the Prussians in the six months from August 1870 to January 1871 led in 1871 to the founding of the *Société Nationale de Musique Française*. This organization, of which Taffanel was a founding member, dedicated itself solely to the support and promotion of French music. For the flute it prompted, in the words of Ardal Powell, “...in one of the richest, if not the most prolific, outpourings of music ever composed for [that instrument].”<sup>10</sup> Pieces like Claude Debussy’s *Prélude à l’après midi*

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<sup>5</sup> Blakeman, Edward. *Taffanel: Genius of the Flute*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 210.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>7</sup> Toff, Nancy. *The Flute Book: A Complete Guide for Students and Performers*. Oxford Univ. Press, 2012, p. 256.

<sup>8</sup> Powell, Ardal. *The Flute*. Yale University Press, 2002, pp. 208-224.

<sup>9</sup> Pasler, Jann. *Composing the Citizen: Music as Public Utility in Third Republic France*. University of California Press, 2009.

<sup>10</sup> Powell, Ardal. *The Flute*. Yale University Press, 2002, p. 217.

*d'un faune* and *Syrinx*, Maurice Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé*, Cécile Chaminade's *Concertino, op. 107*, and other prominent works featuring the flute all came into being.<sup>11</sup>

Taffanel and his students did more than premiere and perform these works. By means of introducing new French pieces, they established "...a particular tone quality, playing style, and emotional sensibility, all entirely French in character, ultimately linked."<sup>12</sup> Their playing style, henceforth closely identified with French music of that period, was itself labeled *French*.

Although Taffanel composed flute music, his own works did not generate a legacy equivalent in quality to his performing and teaching.<sup>13</sup> Toff acknowledges that his pieces were "...disappointing in the context of his exalted reputation as a performer and pedagogue; they are typical salon or context music [...]. As a composer, Taffanel represents the last phase of the French Romantic flute tradition. As a flutist and teacher, however, he initiated a new era, the most golden yet. In the next generation—beginning with Taffanel's protégé Philippe Gaubert—the flute shed its birdlike reputation and again became an instrument worthy of serious attention."<sup>14</sup>



1. Paul Taffanel (ca. 1890 – 1908)<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 216-218.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 219.

<sup>13</sup> Toff, Nancy. *The Flute Book: A Complete Guide for Students and Performers*. Oxford Univ. Press, 2012, p. 253.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 253.

<sup>15</sup> Image credit: Powell, Ardal. *The Flute*. Yale University Press, 2002, p. 217.

Indeed, Taffanel's pupils Philippe Gaubert, Marcel Moyse, René Le Roy, Georges Barrère, and their peers brought the flute back into the mainstream. As they continued to concertize, perform in the world's leading orchestras,<sup>16</sup> and teach at major conservatories, the French Flute School's influence spread throughout the Western world.<sup>17</sup>

The British Flute School was pioneered by virtuoso-flutist Charles Nicholson (1795-1837).<sup>18</sup> His playing brought about even more radical developments. Powell writes: "...Nicholson was famed for performing slow national melodies in a highly interesting and expressive manner. But the most noted characteristic of his playing was his tone, which, as Theobald Boehm wrote after visiting London [...], was so powerful that no continental player could match it."<sup>19</sup> Years later, Boehm revealed that Nicholson's playing had influenced him to remodel his flute: "...I could not match Nicholson in power of tone, wherefore I set to work to remodel my flute. Had I not heard him, probably the Boehm flute would have never been made."<sup>20 21</sup>

While the French Flute School<sup>22</sup> included mostly Frenchmen, the British Flute School included a range of nationalities. Dutchmen, Norwegians and Swiss were among the best flutists in Britain.<sup>23</sup> In due course, some of them adopted the French style of playing by reason of its growing popularity. Geoffrey Gilbert (1919-1989), for example, entirely altered his playing in order to maintain his active performing and recording career. In adulthood, he took lessons with Taffanel's pupil René Le Roy, and adopted the silver flute.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Paris Opera, Boston Symphony, the Philadelphia Orchestra to name a few.

<sup>17</sup> Glick, Dorothy. "Paul Taffanel and the Construction of the French Flute School." *University of Kansas*, 2014, p. 78.

<sup>18</sup> Raposo, Jessica Ann. "Defining the British Flute School: a Study of British Flute Performance Practice 1890-1940." *University of British Columbia*, 2007, pp. 11-12.

<sup>19</sup> Powell, Ardal. *The Flute*. Yale University Press, 2002, p. 134.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

<sup>21</sup> The Boehm flute of 1847 that gradually became the principal model flute in the Western world, was made out of silver (versus the wooden flutes of the past) and had open tone holes.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 222.

<sup>23</sup> Raposo, Jessica Ann. "Defining the British Flute School: a Study of British Flute Performance Practice 1890-1940." *University of British Columbia*, 2007, p. 15.

<sup>24</sup> Powell, Ardal. *The Flute*. Yale University Press, 2002, p. 236.

Macaulay Fitzgibbon wrote: “The English school (founded by Charles Nicholson) differs from that of most continental players chiefly in its vigour and robustness of tone, especially on the lower notes. In the hands of unskillful [...] players of this type there is a certain tendency to coarseness of tone, and a lack of refinement and delicacy of expression. The French and Belgian flautists aim chiefly at producing silvery purity and sweetness of tone rather than volume—quality rather than quantity...”<sup>25</sup>

The “silvery purity and sweetness of tone” associated with French players was in part a consequence of the silver Boehm flute that they quickly adopted.<sup>26</sup> In other European countries, popularization of this specific new flute took some time. Toff writes: “Ironically, [...] the Boehm flute was slow to gain acceptance in the inventor’s native Germany. [...] By the first decade of the twentieth century, the Boehm flute was still not common in Germany, Italy, or Russia [...]”<sup>27</sup>

The nineteenth-century German flute tradition gave rise to prominent flutist-composers. Besides their first-rate playing, Theobald Boehm (1794-1881),<sup>28</sup> Anton Fürstenau (1792-1852), Wilhelm Popp (1828-1903) and others contributed reams of flute compositions, etudes, and method books. Once Taffanel’s revolutionary school of playing had been introduced, the old German (and British) tradition of wooden flute-playing receded into the past.<sup>29</sup> A new flute era had unfolded in Europe.

#### The Flute Scene in Late Imperial Russia

Musical life in nineteenth-century Russia was concentrated in the Imperial Theaters and their orchestras. Saint-Petersburg and Moscow theaters sought the best musicians across the

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<sup>25</sup> Raposo, Jessica Ann. “Defining the British Flute School: a Study of British Flute Performance Practice 1890-1940.” *University of British Columbia*, 2007, p. 16.

<sup>26</sup> Powell, Ardal. *The Flute*. Yale University Press, 2002, pp. 170-171.

<sup>27</sup> Toff, Nancy. *The Flute Book: A Complete Guide for Students and Performers*. Oxford Univ. Press, 2012, p. 57.

<sup>28</sup> Famous not only for his flute inventions, but also for his numerous flute compositions.

<sup>29</sup> Montagu, Jeremy, Howard Mayer Brown, Jaap Frank, and Ardal Powell. “Flute.” *Grove Music Online*. 2001. Oxford University Press. Date of access 11 Sep. 2019.

country, although the majority lacked musical education and prior experience. Musical instruction was sporadic, unsystematized, and the orchestral selection process was chaotic. As a consequence, the performance level was low.<sup>30</sup>

To improve their situation, the theater managers freely contracted with musicians from Europe. These conservatory-educated, experienced performing artists were welcomed enthusiastically by the Russian musical community. While working in Russia they often gave instruction in pedagogy by means of the *pension* (French for *lodging school*). Students received lessons as well as room and board at the pedagogue's residence in exchange for minor house labor. Unfortunately, this practice proved unsuccessful on account of too many teachers' unethical treatment of their students; the pupil's musical studies frequently morphed into personal serfdom in the household. As might be expected, little improvement was possible under such circumstances.<sup>31</sup>

The launch of the Saint-Petersburg Conservatory in 1862 and the Moscow Conservatory in 1866 completely reformed musical education in Russia.<sup>32</sup> The institutions' founders, Nikolai and Anton Rubinstein,<sup>33</sup> both acclaimed and respected pianists, devised a rigorous musical curriculum and then invited the best musicians available to join the faculty. The Russian musical community's high regard for European players led to Europeans making up the majority of the faculty at both conservatories.<sup>34</sup> Needless to say, this impeded for some time the development of a school of specifically Russian playing.

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<sup>30</sup> Ivanov, Valeriy. "The History, Formation and Development of Flute Traditions in Moscow until the Middle of the 20th Century." *The Moscow State Conservatory*, 2003, pp. 50-51; Barantsev, A. P. *Flute Professors of Saint Petersburg/Leningrad Conservatory 1862-1985*. Petrozavodsk Publisher, 1990, pp. 7-8.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>32</sup> Fedorovich, Elena. *The History of Professional Musical Education in Russia (19th and 20th Centuries)*. Direct-Media, 2014, pp. 7-10.

<sup>33</sup> Anton Rubinstein (1829-1894) and Nikolai Rubinstein (1835-1881).

<sup>34</sup> Fedorovich, Elena. *The History of Professional Musical Education in Russia (19th and 20th Centuries)*. Direct-Media, 2014, p. 10.

The Italian Cesare Ciardi (1819-1877) occupied the first flute professorship at Saint-Petersburg conservatory (1862). This accomplished soloist from the Imperial Theaters—who was also a composer—introduced a foundational methodology that stressed breathing, intonation, articulation, and other core elements of flute playing. Ciardi systematized the repertoire and wrote a flute method *The School of Flute Playing* (the first flute method to be used in Russia).<sup>35</sup>

German flutist Karl Waterstraat (1835-1896) succeeded Ciardi. His pedagogy focused on exercises, scales, arpeggios, and etudes. His approach to repertoire conformed to the fashions of the time, especially Romantic miniatures and opera-based fantasias. Much favored were salon composers such Friedrich Kuhlau, Ernesto Köhler, and Bernhard Molique.<sup>36</sup>

Fyodor Stepanov (1867-1914), a student of Waterstraat, became the first Russian woodwind professor in flute. This progressive performing flutist cultivated the advancement and popularization of flute-playing in his native Russia. Stepanov learned of Boehm's latest developments, adopted the metal flute and actively promoted its adoption in his pedagogical practice.<sup>37</sup>

The Moscow Conservatory's faculty gained the prominent German flutist Ferdinand Büchner (1823-1920) in 1856, soon after his appointment at the Bolshoi Theater.<sup>38</sup> Leonardo de Lorenzo wrote: "[Büchner's] performance of a solo is said to have been very fine and artistic, combining a round, noble tone production with correct technique and elegant, refined interpretation."<sup>39</sup> Büchner raised a class of successful pupils who enjoyed performing careers

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<sup>35</sup> Barantsev, A. P. *Flute Professors of Saint Petersburg/Leningrad Conservatory 1862-1985*. Petrozavodsk, 1990, pp. 8-13.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18-25.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 25-31.

<sup>38</sup> Ivanov, Valeriy. "The History, Formation and Development of Flute Traditions in Moscow until the Middle of the 20th Century." *The Moscow State Conservatory*, 2003, pp. 53-54.

<sup>39</sup> Lorenzo, Leonardo De. *My Complete Story of the Flute: the Instrument, the Performer, the Music*. Texas Tech University Press, 1992, p. 143.

and private teaching studios in Moscow. One of his students, Elizar Ryvkin, left for America to accept an orchestral position at the Chicago Opera.<sup>40</sup>

Büchner's contribution to the Russian flute tradition is substantial. His fundamental conservatism, however, impeded the entry of the latest flute developments into his class.<sup>41</sup> He advocated against Boehm's new model. His repertoire approach echoed Waterstraat's at the Saint-Petersburg Conservatory: mainstream virtuosic flute works. Baroque and classical works were neglected. His mission was limited to the development and refinement of flute technique.<sup>42</sup>

By the late 1800s, the Bolshoi Theater's next German flute soloist, Wilhelm Kretschmann (1848-1922), succeeded Büchner at the Moscow Conservatory. A sought-after player, he was described as a "precise, accurate flutist [...] with a full, beautiful tone [...], who was the first to use Boehm's system flute in Russia."<sup>43</sup> In 1889, during Kretschmann's tenure at the Conservatory, Paul Taffanel visited Moscow on a concert tour. His program included Mozart's *Concerto No. 2 in D major, KV. 314* and the *Romance* by Taffanel's friend Camille Saint-Saëns.<sup>44</sup>



2. Wilhelm Kretschmann (ca. 1905)<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Ivanov, Valeriy. "The History, Formation and Development of Flute Traditions in Moscow until the Middle of the 20th Century." *The Moscow State Conservatory*, 2003, p. 59.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>43</sup> Ivanov, Valeriy. "The History, Formation and Development of Flute Traditions in Moscow until the Middle of the 20th Century." *The Moscow State Conservatory*, 2003, p. 64.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>45</sup> Image credit: Public Domain, <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/ru/thumb/c/cf/%D0%9...>

The silvery, clean sound of the French flute virtuoso and his flawless, brilliant technique awed Kretschmann's students.<sup>46</sup> Additionally, his choice of pieces was novel. Although other instrumental repertoires at the Moscow Conservatory included music by Mozart and Carl Maria von Weber, Kretschmann's repertoire remained largely the same as under Büchner. He especially favored music by German composers.<sup>47</sup>

Notwithstanding its German origins, the consolidation of the Russian Flute School was achieved by a native son. His work at the Saint-Petersburg and Moscow Conservatories influenced multiple generations of Russian and Soviet flutists. His brilliant playing enabled him to work with the very best musicians of his time. His flute compositions conveyed the wide capabilities and multifacetedness of his instrument.<sup>48</sup> This man's life, achievements, and philosophy provide the next section of this chapter.

Flute Virtuoso, Composer, Conductor: Vladimir Tsybin  
(1877-1949)

The future founder of the Russian Flute School was born in 1877 into a modest but musical family. His mother, an amateur singer, loved opera arias and romances. When she sang, she frequently accompanied herself on the guitar. Tsybin's father, a professional violinist, led a chamber ensemble in the town of Ivanovo-Voznesensk.<sup>49</sup> Tsybin wrote: "... throughout my childhood, I absorbed the motives my father played on the violin and my mother sang [...]. I memorized a lot of melodies for the rest of my life. I also regretted not to have studied violin with my father because, who knows, perhaps I would have become a violinist [...]."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., pp. 65, 71.

<sup>48</sup> Abanovich, Anton. "Moscow Conservatory's Flute School in the 20th Century: V. Tsybin, N. Platonov, A. Korneev." *The Moscow State Conservatory*, 2013, pp. 13-50.

<sup>49</sup> A small town about 180 miles East of Moscow. It is now called Ivanovo.

<sup>50</sup> Grot, Aleksandra. *Unpublished Biography of Vladimir Tsybin*. Moscow, 2009, p. 1.



In the mid 1880s, the Tsybin family<sup>51</sup> moved to Moscow. Upon the patriarch's death a short time later from tuberculosis, his widow and three children found themselves on the verge of destitution.<sup>52</sup> To ensure the family's survival, Tsybin's mother enlisted her eldest son, Vladimir, in the army regiment's musical service.<sup>53</sup> He was nine years old.<sup>54</sup>

At the regiment, the flute fell unexpectedly into young Tsybin's hands. Initially he inquired: "Could I ask for a violin, Sir [kapellmeister]? Because my father played the violin and I would love to play it as well!"<sup>55</sup> Instead, he was given a piccolo in D-flat with an unusual tuning<sup>56</sup> that impacted Tsybin's musical hearing for the rest of his life. He wrote: "...for the rest of my life, I was prone to hear pitches a half-step lower. For example, a D would sound like a D-flat, G sharp like a G-natural. My sense of pitch also affected my visual memory."<sup>57</sup>

Tsybin's childhood musical development flourished under Kapellmeister Adolf Brandt's systematic instruction. Aided by strong memory, intonation, and musicality, the boy's spirited playing quickly earned him a good reputation in the orchestra. Regular exposure to various music broadened Tsybin's knowledge of wind orchestra repertoire. Besides the traditional band marches, he was versed in polkas, mazurkas, quadrilles, waltzes, and other dances. In addition, he sang in the regiment's choir.<sup>58</sup>

Among Tsybin's early musical memories were works by Glinka, Tchaikovsky, Offenbach, Johann Strauss, Rossini, Verdi, Veniavsky, and Bruch. They elicited deep, joyful emotional responses in the boy. Remembering a festive concert he attended as a ten-year old, Tsybin

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<sup>51</sup> Vladimir had two younger brothers, Alexander and Piotr.

<sup>52</sup> They were forced to sell their father's violin and music scores to pay for his burial (Grot, Aleksandra. *Unpublished Biography of Vladimir Tsybin*. Moscow, 2009, p. 2.).

<sup>53</sup> A military band service for young people that included room, board and basic education.

<sup>54</sup> Grot, Aleksandra. *Unpublished Biography of Vladimir Tsybin*. Moscow, 2009, p. 3.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5-10.

wrote: "...I felt the music reach deep into my soul [...]. I felt the beauty of harmony."<sup>59</sup> He began to contemplate pursuing music professionally.<sup>60</sup>

Before long, Tsybin acquainted himself with the standard flute. He wrote: "I regularly took up the big flute [...], but did not yet possess enough strength to play comfortably. I was only eleven, and my breath was not fully developed [...], but the sound and patience allowed me to perform harder pieces."<sup>61</sup> In 1889, encouraged by his friend and violinist Alfons Brandt,<sup>62</sup> Tsybin auditioned and was accepted at the Moscow Conservatory. His solid technique especially impressed the jury. There he began his first serious flute studies under Kretschmann's tutelage.<sup>63</sup>



3. Vladimir Tsybin at the age of 12 in his military uniform<sup>64</sup>

Still serving at the regiment, and now a student at the Conservatory, the young virtuoso eagerly embraced his new and highly engaged lifestyle. Besides the frequent Conservatory-related solo performances, studies, and regimental duties, Tsybin played in numerous private

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>60</sup> Abanovich, Anton. "Vladimir Tsybin-Russian Taffanel." *Musical Academy*, no. 4, 2009, p. 5.

<sup>61</sup> Grot, Aleksandra. *Unpublished Biography of Vladimir Tsybin*. Moscow, 2009, p. 13.

<sup>62</sup> Kapellmeister Brandt's nephew.

<sup>63</sup> Abanovich, Anton. "Vladimir Tsybin-Russian Taffanel." *Musical Academy*, no. 4, 2009, p. 5.

<sup>64</sup> Image credit: Grot, Aleksandra. *Unpublished Biography of Vladimir Tsybin*. Moscow, 2009, p. 14.

Moscow theater orchestras.<sup>65</sup> While classical music and opera formed some of their repertoire, the majority of programs consisted of light musical entertainment. His steady work enabled Tsybin to sustain himself financially and also to aid his needy family. However, his non-flute Conservatory studies suffered greatly, ultimately leading to his expulsion in 1895.<sup>66</sup>

Nonetheless, the next year the Imperial Bolshoi Theater's orchestra hired Tsybin for its third flute/piccolo position in 1896. New professional doors now opened for the fledgling flutist. He wrote: "I was unbelievably happy. The Bolshoi was in its prime at that time. Besides the old operas by Meyerbeer, Verdi and Mozart, the Russian operas by Rimsky-Korsakov, Tchaikovsky, Borodin, Mussorgsky were also being staged, as well as ballets by Glazunov, Tchaikovsky, etc."<sup>67</sup>

Atop opera and ballet performances, the Bolshoi's orchestra regularly appeared in symphonic concerts under the patronage of the Imperial Russian Musical Society.<sup>68</sup> Prominent guest conductors from Russia and abroad included Alexander Siloti, Arthur Nikisch, and Felix Weingartner. Outside his work at the Bolshoi, Tsybin conducted an amateur church choir and taught vocal skills at an all-boys academy. During the summer seasons, he performed and toured with various symphony orchestras across the country.<sup>69</sup>

After ten successful years at the Bolshoi, Tsybin felt the strong need for a change. The opening of the principal-flute position at the Imperial Mariinsky Theater in Saint-Petersburg presented an irresistible opportunity. He auditioned and won the post in 1907. In addition to the theater's crack reputation, one of its other major perks was regular participation in Sergei Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes* in Paris.<sup>70</sup> In 1909, Tsybin spent several months there playing opera

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<sup>65</sup> *Salon de Variété*, The Hermitage Theater and The Korsh Theater were among them.

<sup>66</sup> Abanovich, Anton. "Vladimir Tsybin-Russian Taffanel." *Musical Academy*, no. 4, 2009, p. 6.

<sup>67</sup> Grot, Aleksandra. *Unpublished Biography of Vladimir Tsybin*. Moscow, 2009, p. 28.

<sup>68</sup> A musical society founded in 1859 in Saint-Petersburg by Anton Rubinstein. The Moscow branch was led by his brother, Nikolai.

<sup>69</sup> Abanovich, Anton. "Vladimir Tsybin-Russian Taffanel." *Musical Academy*, no. 4, 2009, p. 7; Grot, Aleksandra. *Unpublished Biography of Vladimir Tsybin*. Moscow, 2009, p. 29.

<sup>70</sup> *Ballets Russes* was a Paris-based ballet company founded by the Russian impresario Sergei Diaghilev.

and ballet programs. They included Nikolai Cherepnin's *Le Pavillon d'Armide*, *Polovtsian Dances* from Alexander Borodin's *Prince Igor*, *Le Festin* staged to music by Rimsky-Korsakov, Tchaikovsky, Musorgskiy, Glinka, and Glazunov, as well as Anton Arenskiy's *Cleopatra*, *Sylphides* staged to music by Chopin, Musorgskiy's *Boris Godunov*, Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Maid of Pskov*, and the first act of Glinka's *Ruslan and Lyudmila*.<sup>71 72</sup>



4. Vladimir Tsybin in Moscow, 1895<sup>73</sup>

In his youth and early adulthood Tsybin regularly studied orchestration. He also embraced opportunities for conducting. With regard to his other strong interest, composition, Tsybin realized that he lacked sufficient knowledge of music theory. The realization led him to the Saint-Petersburg Conservatory, where he successfully completed the full course of study

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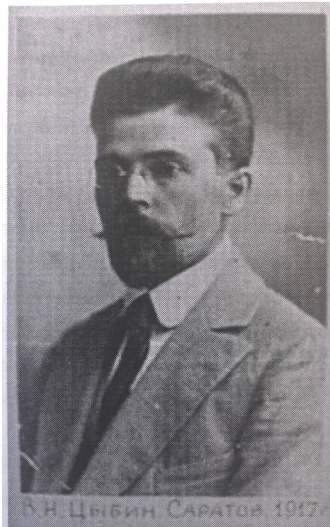
<sup>71</sup> Abanovich, Anton. "Vladimir Tsybin-Russian Taffanel." *Musical Academy*, no. 4, 2009, p. 8.

<sup>72</sup> Tsybin's memoir does not mention the trip. It is likely that the excerpt was removed after the Bolshevik Revolution in fear of the government's repercussions.

<sup>73</sup> Image credit: Grot, Aleksandra. *Unpublished Biography of Vladimir Tsybin*. Moscow, 2009, p. 25.

and graduated in 1914. He obtained degrees in both composition and conducting.<sup>74</sup> In addition, Tsybin joined the Conservatory faculty as a flute instructor, advancing to a professorship in 1917.<sup>75</sup>

Tsybin's memoirs omit the years between 1914 and 1920.<sup>76</sup> Other records indicate that after the Russian Revolution of 1917 he experienced severe professional hardships. He continued to perform and teach flute at the Conservatory, but his central ambition remained conducting. Despite his successful debut at the Mariinsky Theater leading Giacomo Puccini's *La Boheme*, he rarely conducted afterwards. Ballet programs formed the bulk of these rare occasions. After 1919, he no longer conducted "...as a consequence of the Revolution..." he wrote later.<sup>77</sup> This doubtless proved very dispiriting, yet he would continue to be buffeted by the historical earthquakes taking place in the formerly Imperial Russia.



5. In the town of Saratov, 1917<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Abanovich, Anton. "Vladimir Tsybin-Russian Taffanel." *Musical Academy*, no. 4, 2009, pp. 8-9.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>76</sup> Tsybin scholars believe that his wife Elizaveta Tsybina purposefully removed that section upon submitting the memoirs to the Soviet State Archives in 1956.

<sup>77</sup> Abanovich, Anton. "Vladimir Tsybin-Russian Taffanel." *Musical Academy*, no. 4, 2009, p. 10.

<sup>78</sup> Image credit: Grot, Aleksandra. *Unpublished Biography of Vladimir Tsybin*. Moscow, 2009, p. 47.

The political situation in the country was unstable, dangerous, and worrisome. Tsybin's large orchestra-score collection was confiscated by the new government in 1917, to be only partially returned to him the following year. His best scores had disappeared. His wife and three children moved back to Moscow in search of safety, and he followed suit in several years.<sup>79</sup> "I still conducted some ballets at the Mariinsky, but in 1920 [...] I could no longer live apart from my family. I left everything, and moved to Moscow [...]. I focused on composing, and wrote about one hundred pieces and some methods [...]. But even then I felt that luck has turned away from me [...]. I was losing faith in myself..."<sup>80</sup>

In Moscow, Tsybin returned to work at the Bolshoi Theater as its principal flutist. In addition, the Bolshevik government assigned the Tsybins to curate an Orphanage for Musically Gifted Children in the Moscow suburb of Pushkino. There, amidst a generous supply of orphans, the family battled the hardships of everyday life. Tsybin wrote: "1921 was a very difficult year for us all. Besides the common studies and music lessons, we had to collect and carry wood, maintain fire in the furnace, prepare food [...]. We had cows, goats, chickens, a vegetable garden. We worked every day from dawn till dusk."<sup>81</sup>

In 1923 Tsybin succeeded Kretschmann as the Moscow Conservatory's flute professor. He left his post at the Bolshoi Theater in 1925 to focus entirely on pedagogy and composition. Tsybin's numerous works and method literature generated considerable praise and respect among his Conservatory colleagues. The Soviet music-publishing system, however, never acknowledged its fundamental importance, and he found himself rarely published. Tsybin's later writings express deep frustration and despair at this situation.<sup>82</sup>

Yet by the time of his death in 1949, Tsybin's pedagogical contributions to Russian and Soviet flute-playing were unparalleled. These merit a separate study on their own. My

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<sup>79</sup> Abanovich, Anton. "Vladimir Tsybin-Russian Taffanel." *Musical Academy*, no. 4, 2009, p. 10.

<sup>80</sup> Grot, Aleksandra. *Unpublished Biography of Vladimir Tsybin*. Moscow, 2009, p. 48.

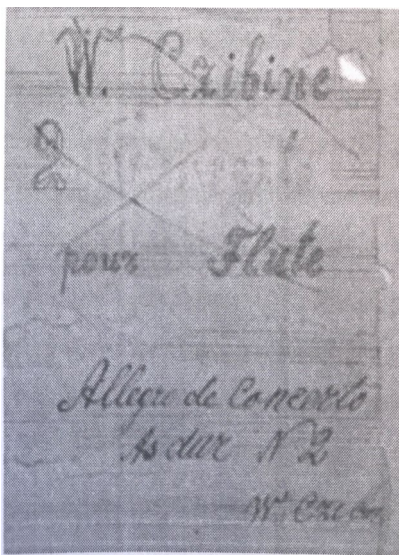
<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 56-57.

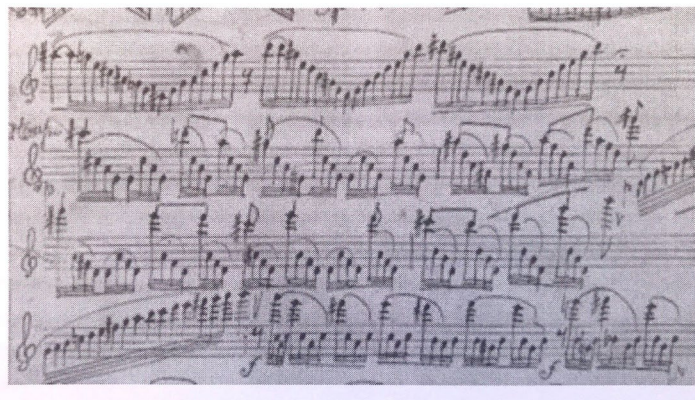


exploration of the *Ten Concert Etudes* strategies nonetheless touches upon a central portion of Tsybin's pedagogy.

In addition to Tsybin's multifaceted achievements, his turbulent life undoubtedly left its mark on his musical ideals. A disciplined childhood centered around music, the twilight of Russian Imperialism, intensive work in the theaters and conservatories, the upheaval of the Bolshevik Revolution—all these influenced his style and musical preferences. They serve as a backdrop to my detailed study of his *Ten Concert Etudes* for flute and piano.



6. The cover page of *Allegro de Concerto No. 2*<sup>83</sup>



7. One of Tsybin's manuscripts<sup>84</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Image credit: Grot, Aleksandra. *Unpublished Biography of Vladimir Tsybin*. Moscow, 2009, p. 48.

<sup>84</sup> Image credit: *Ibid.*, p. 51.

Chapter II. Tsybin's *Ten Concert Etudes* for Flute and Piano;  
Musical Paraphrase in  
Etude No. 1, Book I and Etude No. 1, Book III

Etude Versus a Concert Study

A “study” (or “etude”) is defined by the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* as “An instrumental piece, usually of some difficulty, [...] designed primarily to exploit and perfect a chosen facet of performing technique, but the better for having some musical interest.”<sup>85</sup> The presence of “musical interest” separates an etude fundamentally from an “exercise,” the latter usually consisting of repetitive patterns devoid of any great musical significance.<sup>86</sup> An exercise targets specific technical difficulties, and little more, while an etude should also demonstrate musical ambitions within its didactic scope.

In Simon Finlow’s classification, a *concert study*, or an etude intended to be heard in concert, occupies the next level of the etude literature.<sup>87</sup> Notwithstanding the importance of showcasing the performer’s virtuosity, concert etudes were intended first and foremost as virtuoso *pieces* with musical concepts as their driving force. Here the music’s character is so highly fused with the technical element, the latter’s presence so interwoven within its marrow, that the didactic aim is not always as overtly evident. The expressive objective prevails.

Over time, selected concert etudes for the repertoires of various instruments have established their permanent place as concert pieces of major importance.<sup>88</sup> Among them are

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<sup>85</sup> Ferguson, Howard, and Kenneth L. Hamilton. "Study." Grove Music Online. January 01, 2001. Oxford University Press,. Date of access 19 Apr. 2019, <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000027018>>

<sup>86</sup> Finlow, Simon. “The Twenty-Seven Etudes and Their Antecedents.” *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, edited by Jim Samson, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992, pp. 50–77. Cambridge Companions to Music.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53

<sup>88</sup> Ferguson, Howard, and Kenneth L. Hamilton. "Study." Grove Music Online. January 01, 2001. Oxford University Press,. Date of access 19 Apr. 2019, <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000027018>>



Frédéric Chopin's *Douze Grandes Études, op. 10* and *Douze Études, op. 25* (1833, 1837), Franz Liszt's *Transcendental Études* (1852), Sergei Rachmaninoff's *Études-Tableaux, op. 33* and *39* for piano (1911, 1914), and Niccolò Paganini's *24 Caprices* for solo violin (1805). Within the flute repertoire, while the array of didactic material is large (a multitude of exercises, studies, and etudes by Joseph-Henri Altès, Joachim Andersen, Marcel Moyse, and Ernesto Köhler, to name just a few<sup>89</sup>), *concert studies* are quite rare. Their role also appears to be incidental, unlike some of the piano or violin counterparts listed above. In the professional world of performing and recording flutists, with the exception of Astor Piazzolla's *Tango Etudes* (1987), Sigfrid Karg-Elert's *30 Caprices, op. 107* for solo flute (1918), and Paganini's *24 Caprices* as transcribed by Jules Herman (1902), concert etudes are rarely encountered. We have a number of recordings of the aforementioned pieces, along with several of Tsybin's *Concert Etudes* played by Russian artists, but even these are rarities next to mainstream repertoire.<sup>90</sup>

The reasons that cycles of concert studies have not been incorporated into the flute's core concert repertoire presumably derives from the flute's primary history as an orchestral and salon instrument. Other genres took up the soloist roles. During the Baroque it was often the fantasia, in which performers' improvisational abilities were of equal importance to their technical fluency on the instrument. the late eighteenth century introduced a new type of concerto, in which soloists competed and conversed with the orchestra, the technical demands surpassing the orchestral accompaniment. The typical concert flute repertoire of the Romantic

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<sup>89</sup> Flute World Catalogue of Methods and Studies, <https://www.fluteworld.com/Methods--and--Studies--44-.html?sort=1&scr=1500>

<sup>90</sup> Jessica Quiñones. "Astor Piazzolla: 6 Tango-Études for Solo Flute ." MP3, 2019.  
*Karg-Elert 30 Caprices - A Study Guide with Amy Porter DVD*. (2009). [DVD] Directed by C. Boyers. University of Michigan.  
 Bonita Boyd. *Bonita Boyd Plays Paganini: 24 Caprices on Flute*, Fleur De Son, 2000.  
 Inna Gilmore, Brian Gilmore. *The Romantic Russian Flute*, DreamBoxMedia, 2011.

era mainly popularized the large-scale fantasy (often based on themes from operas or ballets), and short miniatures in a slow-fast format.<sup>91</sup>

As for etudes, by the time various schools of flute playing were established in Europe in the late nineteenth century, with France as their leaders,<sup>92</sup> flute studies were a purely didactic subgenre dedicated to the teaching of technical proficiency.<sup>93</sup> Meanwhile, the few concert studies did not gain the same degree of recognition within flute culture as with the piano, and we do not see them performed often even today.

### *Ten Concert Etudes: An Exposition*

The lack of popularity of concert studies in the mainstream flute repertoire partially sparked my interest in Tsybin's *Ten Concert Etudes* for flute and piano. Including the three concertos (all titled *Allegros de Concerto*), these pieces stand out among his numerous flute compositions, which also include an abundance of miniatures, several sets of etudes targeting different difficulty levels, opera transcriptions, and chamber music with flute.<sup>94</sup>

That the *Ten Concert Etudes* were composed during a single concentrated period seems improbable. In all likelihood, Tsybin wrote them as individual pieces throughout his earlier professional life. Their first collated publication in 1936 reflects not Tsybin's but the Soviet publishing system's preferences.<sup>95</sup> The specific dates of composition for most of the *Concert Etudes* remain unknown. Tsybin's autobiography lists Etude No. 8, *Nocturne*, as having

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<sup>91</sup> Toff, Nancy. *The Flute Book: A Complete Guide for Students and Performers*. Oxford Univ. Press, 2012, pp.187-255.

<sup>92</sup> Raposo, Jessica Ann. "Defining the British Flute School : a Study of British Flute Performance Practice 1890-1940." *Open Collections*, Midway : [Publisher Not Identified], 1 Jan. 1970, open.library.ubc.ca/collections/ubctheses/831/items/1.0100743, pp. 8,11; Powell, Ardal. *The Flute*. Yale University Press, 2002, pp. 208-224.

<sup>93</sup> In part because there were often written by the flute professors themselves—such as Altès, Taffanel, Gaubert, Moyse, all of whom taught at the Paris Conservatory.

<sup>94</sup> Grot, Aleksandra. *Unpublished Biography of Vladimir Tsybin*. Moscow, 2009, pp. 59-60.

<sup>95</sup> It is likely that due to the infrequent publishing of Tsybin's works, he may have been faced with the choice to publish the Etudes as a set (cheaper for the publisher), or not have them published at all.

been written ca. 1923, and No. 3, *Safronov*, as first published in 1929.<sup>96</sup> No other concrete information regarding the dates of the *Etudes* exists at this time.

The 1956-58 version of the *Etudes* by the State Music Publishing house divides the ten studies into three books: Book I, Etudes 1-3 (A-flat major, F minor, B-flat major); Book II, Etudes 4-6 (E-flat minor, D-flat major, B major); and Book III, Etudes 7-10 (A-flat major, A-flat major, D-flat major, E major). The titles for Nos. 1 (*Scherzo*), 3 (*Safronov*), 8 (*Nocturne*), and 9 (*Arabesque*) suggest character miniatures. The lack of titles for the remaining etudes notwithstanding, they possess idiosyncratic qualities relevant to character miniatures as well.

Rounded binary, ternary, and theme and variation shapes predominate in the *Etudes*. The structural predictability is more than offset by unexpected changes of tonality and the introduction of fresh ideas. The motoric, study-like current of fleeting sixteenth notes in No. 10, for example, is interrupted by a jubilant motive inserted in the middle of its binary-form first half. Unremarkable at first glance, the motive contains a musical quote indicative of the composer's influences and tastes.

This motive consists of a segment from "*Kamarinskaya*," a popular Russian folk song about the drunken peasantry. This kind of practice harks back to a longstanding practice among Russian composers of incorporating well-known folk melodies into their works. In addition, "*Kamarinskaya*" suggests an influence of both Glinka and Tchaikovsky on Tsybin, since both composers incorporated the song into their own music. (Exs. 1a and 1b).<sup>97</sup>

A quote from Tsybin's favorite pupil, Yuli Yagudin, lends further credence to the impact of nineteenth-century Russian music on his teacher: "Tsybin's flute music was largely influenced by the works of Russian composers: Mussorgsky, Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakov, Tchaikovsky and

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<sup>96</sup> Grot, Aleksandra. *Unpublished Biography of Vladimir Tsybin*. Moscow, 2009, p. 59.

<sup>97</sup> Glinka wrote a symphonic overture titled *Kamarinskaya* in 1848. It became a piece of major influence in the Russian symphonic music (Levashev, Eugene. "Glinka's 'Kamarinskaya' and Its Mythology in the Russian Culture." *Musical Academy*, no. 2, 2019.); One of the pieces in Tchaikovsky's piano cycle *Children's Album*, Op. 39 (1878) is titled *Kamarinskaya*.

Glazunov. Tchaikovsky was his favorite composer.”<sup>98</sup> Among the aforementioned nineteenth-century Russian composers, Tchaikovsky was undeniably the greatest melodist. Hence the *Etudes*’ melodicism, on full display despite the abundance of virtuosic content, makes sense.

At the time of Tsybin’s participation in the 1909 season of the *Ballets Russes*, the contemporary music scene had begun to evolve at warp speed. Within a few short years, the ballet version of Claude Debussy’s *Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune*, Ravel’s *Daphnis and Chloe*, and Igor Stravinsky’s *Le Sacre du Printemps* all premiered in Paris. No component of musical language was left untouched. Tsybin, however, remained entirely unaffected by these tidal waves, and his musical language continued to rely on traditions of the past. In his later years, Tsybin criticized Soviet composers such as Sergei Prokofiev, his classmate in composition at Saint-Petersburg Conservatory, for their radical approaches to harmony and dissonance. Tsybin remained a staunch, unapologetic traditionalist until the end of his life.

In sharp contrast to his harmonic conservatism, the *Concert Etudes* illustrate Tsybin’s approach to flute technique as entirely progressive. The etudes’ technical challenges are extensive, crossing at times into extravagance. They frequently push players to exert themselves to the very edge of their abilities. The music’s graceful, melodic phrasing serve as a reminder, however, that the desired sound is one of ease and eloquence, not the exertions of a technical exercise. Yagudin also wrote: “...Vladimir Nikolaevich [Tsybin] was never focused on technique for technique’s sake. A brilliant virtuoso with a big, beautiful sound and exceptional technical fluency, he only used technique as a tool to reveal a composer’s musical ideas. He demanded the same from all of his pupils ...”<sup>99</sup>

Typical technical challenges pertaining to the *Etudes* and Tsybin’s other virtuosic flute pieces include especially rapid tempos, densely-packed passages, chromatic saturation, unpredictability *within* harmonic or rhythmic patterns, unforeseeable tonal shifts, juxtaposed

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<sup>98</sup> Grot, Aleksandra. *Unpublished Biography of Vladimir Tsybin*. Moscow, 2009, p. 62.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

registers, and high demands on breathing and breath support. These vast demands compel players to retain their focus at all times. Hence a pre-existing mastery of technical refinement—not simply the average level expected of a professional flutist—defines the rather select performers for these *Etudes*.

A successful performance of any of the *Etudes*, however, lies not in a perfect technical execution but in the realization of an underlying musical conception. Concealed amidst the *Concert Etudes*'s conspicuous didactic demands, their melodiousness, lyricism, humor, and phrasing recall those of the best character miniatures. Yagudin commented: "...the *Ten Concert Etudes* are a serious contribution to the development and mastery of virtuosity in a flute performer. I would compare them to Nicolo Paganini's concert etudes [24 Caprices] for solo violin."<sup>100</sup>

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Mikhail Glinka's *Kamarinskaya*. The first system is titled "Tanzlied. (Kamarinskaja.)" and features a flute part with a melodic line of eighth notes, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system is titled "ПЬЕСОВАЯ. (Камаринская.)" and shows a more complex rhythmic pattern in the flute part, also marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. Both systems include piano and bass staves, which are mostly empty in this excerpt.

Example 1a: Mikhail Glinka's *Kamarinskaya*

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 62.



Example 1b: Tsybin's Concert Etude No. 10

Paraphrasing Strauss and Mendelssohn:  
Etude No. 1, Book I, and Etude No. 1, Book III

“Musicologists have studied musical borrowings for over a century, writing on every aspect from cantus firmus and variation to less overt procedures such as allusion and structural modeling [...]. There is much to be gained by approaching the uses of existing music as a field that crosses periods and traditions [...]. Knowledge of the ways existing music has been reworked in other times and by other composers can clarify the historical place of those we focus on, helping us recognize what is unusual or innovative in their approach to the uses of existing music.”<sup>101</sup>

The art of paraphrase exercised an especially strong appeal among nineteenth-century flute composers. Numerous opera or ballet-based fantasies as well as theme-and-variations derived from pre-existing themes make up a major part of that period's repertoire.<sup>102</sup> Composed

<sup>101</sup> Burkholder, J. Peter. “The Uses of Existing Music: Musical Borrowing as a Field.” *Notes*, vol. 50, no. 3, 1994, pp. 851–870. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/898531](http://www.jstor.org/stable/898531).

<sup>102</sup> Some of the well-known examples include Frédéric Chopin's *Variations on a Theme by Rossini* (1824), Franz Schubert's *Introduction and Variations on "Trockne Blumen," D. 802* (1824), Paul Taffanel's

in the early twentieth century, Tsybin's numerous concert arrangements of Russian opera excerpts for flute and piano testify amply to his interest in the venerable paraphrase tradition. This same interest evinces itself in the *Concert Etudes* No. 1 of Book I (*Scherzo*), and No. 1 of Book III.

Paraphrase-based miniatures necessarily prioritize and develop particular details of the existing musical work. The *Scherzo*'s thematic origin and its subsequent evolution stem from Richard Strauss's orchestral tone poem, *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche*, Op. 28 (1894-95). Among flutists the work is renowned for its prominent flute solos. We can safely assume that Tsybin performed the piece in the course of his orchestral career, creating the paraphrase at a later time.

Signifying mischief, humor, and irony throughout Strauss's tone poem, *Till Eulenspiegel's* second motive assumes a central role in Tsybin's *Scherzo*. It appears, however, in a different guise. Rhythmically forthright, Tsybin's motive substitutes for Strauss's eighth-note rest an actual eighth note. The alteration transforms the facetious depiction into a brilliant one (Exs. 2a and 2b).

The image displays a page of a musical score for Richard Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche*, Op. 28. It features four staves: 3 Oboes (Ob.), Clarinet in D (Clar. (D)), 2 Clarinets in B-flat (Clar. (B)), and 3 Bassoons (Fag.). The music is in 3/4 time and includes dynamic markings such as *ff* and *crac.*. A section of the Clarinet in D part is marked *Justige*. The score shows rhythmic patterns with eighth notes and rests.

Example 2a: Richard Strauss' *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche*, Op. 28

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*Fantaisie sur "Le Freyschütz" de Ch. M. de Weber (1876) and François Borne's Fantaisie Brillante sur Carmen (1900).*

Example 2b: Tsybin's Concert Etude No. 1

In addition to the Strauss motive providing the etude's thematic basis, various other features of the tone poem inhabit the *Scherzo*. For example, its 3/8 triple meter and "lively" (*Vivace*) tempo marking resonate with the tone poem's 6/8 meter, as well as the initial tempo indication *allmählich lebhafter* ("gradually more lively"). Both works' tempos teem with buoyancy and forward-motion. Identical articulation displacements further enhance the propulsive effect (Exs. 3a and 3b).

Example 3a: Richard Strauss' *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche*, Op. 28

Example 3b: Tsybin's Concert Etude No. 1



The etude's extensive reliance on the flute's top register arguably derives from the instrument's resonance in *Till Eulenspiegel*. The third register produces the flute's most brilliant, penetrating sound. Soaring atop the other orchestral instruments, its sonorous presence prevails regardless of the musical texture's density. The examples below demonstrate Tsybin's *Till*-like, high-pitched flute passages soaring above the piano part (Exs. 4a and 4b).

The image shows a musical score for Example 4a. It consists of two staves. The top staff is labeled 'k1. Fl.' and the bottom staff is labeled '3 gr. Fl.'. The flute part features high-pitched, rapid passages in the top register, while the piano part provides a dense accompaniment.

Example 4a: Richard Strauss' *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche*, Op. 28

The image shows a musical score for Example 4b. It consists of two staves. The top staff is for the flute and the bottom staff is for the piano. The flute part features high-pitched, rapid passages in the top register, while the piano part provides a dense accompaniment.

Example 4b: Tsybin's Concert Etude No. 1

The *Scherzo*'s lyricism occupies a special niche within the etude's expressive range. Its delineation in the external sections of the piece's ternary form echoes *Till Eulenspiegel*'s select lyrical flute passages. While indirectly related, both pieces make poetic gestures in graceful, wave-like, slurred descending lines (Exs. 5a and 5b). In the *Scherzo*'s Trio section, the lyricism derives from a kind of melodiousness particularly common in Russian music. The lack of a

dance-like piano accompaniment notwithstanding, the Trio's principal melody evokes a lyrical, Tchaikovsky-ish Russian waltz (Ex. 6).

Example 5a: Richard Strauss' *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche*, Op. 28

Example 5b: Tsybin's Concert Etude No. 1

Example 6: Tsybin's Concert Etude No. 1

While the etude’s multiple expressive elements showcase Tsybin as a composer, its didactic properties reflect the objectives of Tsybin the pedagogue. For example, the Trio’s initial melodious, effortless lyricism morphs before long into a cascading multi-note filigree. The fleeting, triplet-filled passages appear deceptively uncomplicated on the page. However, their full impact manifests itself only at full tempo. The whirlwind speed of the “uncomplicated” passagework will impress and require serious practice even from an experienced, skilled performer (Ex. 7).<sup>103</sup> Notably, the Trio’s key is E major, while the exterior *Scherzo* sections are in A flat major. Only distantly related to each other, both keys contain a wealth of accidentals. Most likely, forcing students to navigate a sea of flats and sharps within the same piece was one of the goals of Tsybin the pedagogue.



Example 7: Tsybin’s Concert Etude No. 1

Beyond the sheer demands of finger movement, Tsybin also takes dead aim at performers’ ability to sustain their concentration. The chromatic density present throughout most

<sup>103</sup> The crosses above select notes suggest the alternative (“trill”) keys to be used within these passages. Nowadays it is a common practice—in Tsybin’s time, however, it was most likely an unusual, advanced technique.

of the *Scherzo*'s passagework deters performers from playing in any kind of "automatic mode" or mechanically predicting even the next note. For example, in further intensifying a chromatic idea from Strauss's original, Tsybin extends his passage by two measures, incorporates more chromaticism, subsequently alters the meter from 3/8 to 2/8, and further treats the notes to more rhythmic diminution (see Ex. 3b). Such complex alterations demand mindfulness during both the learning and performing processes.

The above observations reflect the *Scherzo*'s amalgamation of qualities pertinent to the Romantic miniature, the study, and the paraphrase. The latter provides an idea-based foundation for the former's conception and evolution. A concise, vivacious *Concert Etude* giving off brilliance and lyricism in equal abundance is the quintessential mark of Tsybin's performing inspiration, his pedagogical intentions, and his compositional imagination.

Another indisputable gem among the *Ten Concert Etudes* is the one based on Felix Mendelssohn's *Scherzo* from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Op.61* (1847). Celebrated for its enchanting principal theme, the *Scherzo* already contains one of the orchestral literature's most popular flute excerpts. That solo (located in the *Scherzo*'s Coda), along with the *Scherzo*'s primary (opening) theme, provides the motivic foundation for Tsybin's Concert Etude's No. 7 (No. 1 in Book III.).

The two ideas bracket the Etude's rounded binary form sections. The opening motive<sup>104</sup> supplies the Etude's Introduction (its first four measures), as well as the beginning of the C-section. The "Coda motive"<sup>105</sup> delineates sections A, B and the Etude's Coda (Ex. 8). Motive II generates the majority of musical textures within the etude, while Motive I delineates the music's points of arrival and departure (Ex. 9).

The etude's tonal language revolves around key relations between the sections. The key of the A-section is G-sharp minor. The B-section is in E major, the submediant of G-sharp

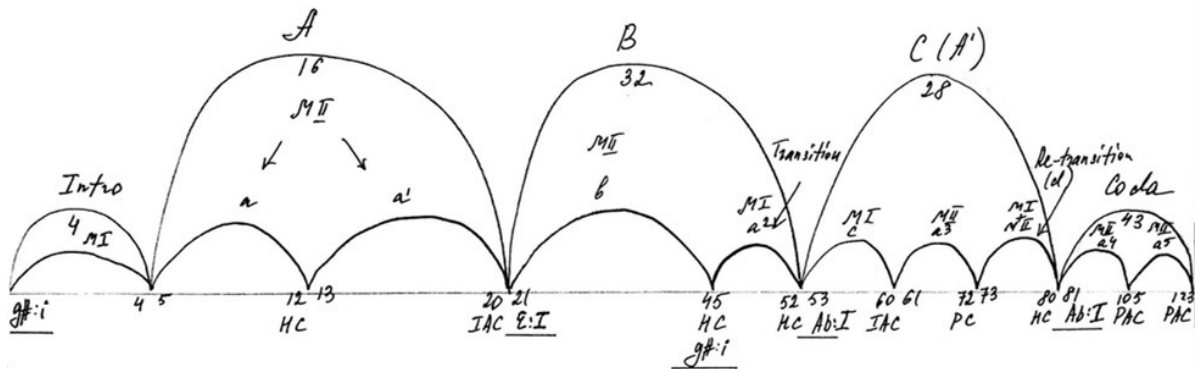
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<sup>104</sup> From now on referred to as "Motive I"

<sup>105</sup> From now on referred to as "Motive II"

minor. Lastly, the key of the C-section and Coda is A-flat major, the parallel major of G-sharp minor (Ex. 9). Hence all of the aforementioned keys relate in different ways to G-sharp minor, marking it as the etude's primary (central) key.

Example 8: Tsybin's Concert Etude No. 7 (No.1 Book III)



Example 9: Structural and tonal diagram of Tsybin's Concert Etude No. 7<sup>106</sup>

<sup>106</sup> M I and M II stand for “Motive I” and “Motive II.” The top numbers refer to the number of measures in each section, the bottom numbers refer to a specific measure number. PAC – Perfect Authentic Cadence, IAC – Imperfect Authentic Cadence, HC – Half Cadence, PC – Plagal Cadence. The main key centers are underlined for each section.

G-sharp minor is not a key commonly encountered among works for the concert flute. In all likelihood, one of two factors determined the composer's decision. Because of Tsybin's intonational idiosyncrasies described in Chapter I,<sup>107</sup> it is possible that he simply *heard* the key of G-sharp minor as G minor, the key of Mendelssohn's *Scherzo*. Nonetheless, he committed to paper what performers and even some listeners doubtless experienced as G-sharp minor. Another explanation incorporates the key selections in Etude No. 1, Book I (*Scherzo*): to push a student to master a difficult key, Tsybin incorporates that key into the framework of his piece.

Although few concert flute pieces are limited to a single articulation, *staccato* is the sole articulation exhibited throughout Etude No. 7. Its primary challenges are the continuousness of double-tonguing, and the synchronization between fingers and tongue. Both concepts derive from Mendelssohn's original, widely recognized among flutists as notoriously difficult due to the above-mentioned qualities.

To produce *staccato* on the flute, the player must use the tongue. The tongue is a muscular organ that can produce tension. When a flutist's tongue actively moves for long periods of time, instead of tightening, it loosens. The loosening stimulates the tongue's agility, which, in turn, increases the speed of *staccato*. Additionally, the velocity and quality of tonguing will depend highly on the register in which it is being produced.<sup>108</sup>

In the Etude, the A-section centers around the flute's middle range, where the production of double-tonguing requires the least amount of effort (see Ex. 8). The B-section actively employs the flute's second and third registers (above CII and CIII), where continuous tonguing is more challenging. The C (A1)-section brings the piece to its climax, pushing the most intensive *staccato* to the flute's high C, and subsequently releasing the tension in a descending line (Ex. 10).

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<sup>107</sup> Chapter I, p. 10.

<sup>108</sup> Fast double-tonguing is the hardest in the octave above CIII mostly due to the intense fingering changes required in that range and the large amount of air being used up quickly.



The scalar ascension, high register, *ff* dynamics and *double* double-tonguing lasting for eight full measures force the flutist's tongue to work immensely hard. By the time the Coda arrives, the flutist's tongue is markedly looser (if not simply exhausted), and therefore more agile than at the beginning.

Example 10: the climactic ascension in Tsybin's Concert Etude No. 7

While the etude's tempo indication is *Allegro Scherzando*, the Coda is marked *Vivace*. It consists of *moto perpetuo*-like stream of sixteenth notes. Due to the lack of breaks in the music and the urgent need to breathe, players have two options. They can play the entire coda in one long breath and at lightning speed (*Vivacissimo* or faster). The other option is to artificially create breathing space by omitting several notes (Ex. 11).

Example 11: Tsybin's Concert Etude No. 7 (Coda)

In addition to the speed and continuity of the double-tonguing, its *quality* presents a significant challenge for the performer. The buoyancy and agility of the tongue largely depends on a well-maintained breath support and an evenness of air distribution. Mastery of these two components will lead to a well-executed, fully articulated staccato on the flute. The lack of air support will encourage the tongue's natural tension, and, as a consequence, the *staccato* will be heavy, tense and/or inarticulate.

Despite its immense technical demands, Etude No. 7 maintains the playful characteristics of its German counterpart. For the most successful delivery of the Etude, the performer should retain a light, dance-like, and delicate *scherzoso* style. All of the aforementioned difficulties notwithstanding, it is the effortlessness (or its persuasive imitation) of the Etude's execution that will truly determine the level of the flutist's virtuosity.



### Chapter III

#### *Paganiniana* and *Chopiniana* in the *Concert Etudes*: Parallels between Two Major Etude Cycles of the Romantic Era

How aware of, or influenced by, pillars of Romantic virtuosity might Vladimir Tsybin have been? Some possible answers to this question supply the focus for this chapter. In particular, we explore these possibilities with special reference to Paganini's *24 Caprices* for solo violin (1805) and Chopin's *Études* for piano, Op. 10 and Op. 25 (1833, 1837). Like Tsybin's *Ten Concert Etudes*, these cycles were written by composers who were themselves virtuosos on their own instruments. Like Tsybin, they chose the dedicated concert study to showcase the performing possibilities of their instruments. Comparative analyses of selected works from Tsybin's *Concert Etudes* suggest that they are worthy companions to their acclaimed piano and violin counterparts.

#### C-sharp Minor: Concepts and Challenges

Initial similarities between Tsybin's Concert Etude No. 5, Book II, and Chopin's Op. 10, No. 4<sup>109</sup> (Exs. 12a and 12b) are quickly evident. Both etudes are in the key of C-sharp minor and in a fast tempo (marked as *Vivace* and *Presto*). Their melodies both consist of perpetual motion sixteenth notes in 4/4/ meter. They share eight-bar phrase structures,<sup>110</sup> with occasional extensions. Both avoid counterpoint. These parallels suggest that Tsybin may well have been inspired by Chopin's Etude—a supposition strengthened by an investigation of their specific musical challenges.

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<sup>109</sup> From here on, referred to as "Tsybin No. 5" and "Chopin No. 4."

<sup>110</sup> In Tsybin No. 5, the first eight-bar phrase begins in m. 5, not in m. 1.

Example 12a: Tsybin, Concert Etude No. 5

Example 12b: Chopin, Etude No. 4

On the flute, music that involves continuous musical lines makes breathing the biggest challenge. How long can players go without interrupting the continuous flow of sixteenth notes? How do they choose where to stop and take necessary breaths, and what factors might govern these decisions?

Absent any recordings of Tsybin's Concert Etude No. 5 that might provide some clues, we must look deeper into the music for answers. Tsybin's phrase groups are mostly eight bars

long. They divide into sub-groups of four bars each that, in turn, divide into phrases of two bars each. Hence the logical solution is to breathe according to these divisions (after m. 4 or m. 8, for example, depending on the performer's ability). To smooth the transition into the next sub-group or phrase after the breath, one might slow ever so slightly right before the breath is taken (for example, on the last beat of m. 8). The music does not remain static, however, and breathing will need to follow the shape. When the phrase moves a little faster (Ex. 13), and the accents

The image shows a musical score for two systems, measures 17 and 18. The top system (measure 17) has a treble staff with a triplet of eighth notes and a piano (p) dynamic. The piano accompaniment has a pp crescendo. The bottom system (measure 18) has a treble staff with a forte (f) dynamic and a red 'v' marking above the staff. The piano accompaniment has a pp dynamic.

Example 13: Tsybin, Concert Etude No. 5. Breathing suggestions are indicated in red in mm. 17 and 18

propel the music forward, more frequent breathing than outlined above can be added (every four, or even two beats may be acceptable, if that does not conflict with the player's interpretation).<sup>111</sup> This breathing option will create a purposeful and dramatic out-of-breath

<sup>111</sup> Notably, the quarter-note pickups in Example 2 parallel those throughout Chopin No. 4.

effect, adding to the momentum of the music. It will also supply the player with extra air until a more substantial breath can be drawn.

Although the piano counterpart to Tsybin's No. 5 does not share this overt breathing challenge, a similar perpetual motion of fleet sixteenth notes in Chopin's No. 4 nonetheless presents parallel difficulties. Its melody shifts repeatedly between soprano and bass voices (and between the right and left hand; Ex. 12b). The performer is expected to pass the melody continuously from one hand to the other, retaining an even delivery while observing all the other critical elements: articulation, accents, abrupt dynamic changes, and chromaticism. On the flute the air-based nature of the instrument helps maintain evenness between notes and registers, preserving the continuity of line.<sup>112</sup>

If well used (taking regular, supportive breaths and maintaining good air control<sup>113</sup>), it will act as connective tissue between the notes, allowing the player's fingers to relax and move effortlessly. On the piano, *legato* and evenness of sound will depend on the technical fluidity and finger control of the performer (and, possibly, the instrument used).<sup>114</sup> Thus, despite its brief length (ca. 2 minutes), the stamina and solidity of a pianist's technique will be seriously challenged in Chopin's No. 4.

While Chopin's etude can be described as robust, energetic, dense, and even demonic from beginning to end, Tsybin's etude is more lyrical and cool, though tinged with occasional melancholy. If we imagine programmatic titles for both pieces, Chopin's No. 4 might be *The Hurricane*, while Tsybin No. 5 would be *The Zephyr*. The fact remains, however, that despite the substantial differences in character, both pieces rely on similar musical techniques. The

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<sup>112</sup> Dolzhikov, Yuri. "A Breathing Technique for Flutists". *Questions of Musical Pedagogy*, no. 4, 1983, p. 21.

<sup>113</sup> Toff, Nancy. *The Flute Book: A Complete Guide for Students and Performers*. Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 85.

<sup>114</sup> Raikin, Bruno. "Towards a Better Understanding of Piano Technique." *British Journal of Music Education*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1985, pp. 133–144., doi:10.1017/S0265051700004733.

composers' treatment of specific features is what makes the music, along with its instrumental challenges, so different.

As mentioned previously, the main melody lines of both pieces consist of cascades of sixteenth notes. They appear horizontally in a linear/scalar fashion, and vertically in an arpeggiated/chordal fashion. In Tsybin's No. 5, the two-part form is clearly delineated by the horizontal and vertical profiles of the melody: Part I (mm. 1- 35) is almost entirely horizontal (see Ex. 12a), while Part II (mm. 35 - end) is vertical (Ex. 14).

35  
Allegro con grazia  
*p dolcissimo*  
Allegro con grazia  
*pp*

Example 14: Tsybin, Concert Etude No. 5, Part II

The change of melodic motion from horizontal to vertical in Part II generates the new theme in D flat major. Harp-like, gliding arpeggios under the leading voice in a major key contrast with the linear, scale-based melody in the minor key of Part I. The tempo indication also changes: *Vivace* becomes *Allegro con grazia*, further refined by *dolcissimo*. While the fast minor-mode melody of Part I falls pleasantly on the ear, its repetitive, motoric nature suggests a study rather than a miniature. By contrast, the beautiful lyricism of the phrasing displaces the multi-note, virtuosic elements of Part II, imparting to it the character of an *Impromptu*.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>115</sup> Similar in character to Franz Schubert's *Impromptu in G-flat major, Op. 90, No. 3*.



The use of the horizontal-vertical dichotomy in Chopin's No. 4 is very different yet it shares a similar principle. Because its character is more dramatic, the changes happen faster and more abruptly. For example, the main melody consists of two contrasting elements of the same four-note cell.<sup>116</sup> (Exs. 15a and 15b). It should be noted that the figuration in Ex. 15b at this tempo would be impossible for even the most adept flutist.



Example 15a: Chopin Etude No. 4, linear element



Example 15b: Chopin, Etude No. 4, winding element

While the linear element pushes constantly forward, the winding element pulls it back by means of accents and inverted figuration. The two impulses are in constant conflict, with the vertical element chasing the horizontal and creating much of the work's drama. In the middle section of Chopin's three-part form, the two attain their highest degree of conflict, leading to the dramatic climaxes (mm. 41-45). (Ex. 16).

<sup>116</sup> Finlow refers to it as "...a motivic structure that permeates the entire composition." Finlow, Simon. "The Twenty-Seven Etudes and Their Antecedents." *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, edited by Jim Samson, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992, p. 54. Cambridge Companions to Music.

Example 16: Chopin Etude No. 4, mm. 40- 45

Chopin's No. 4 expresses this duality of character on a micro-scale, in which the main motivic cell pursues two conflicting objectives. By contrast, Tsybin's No. 5 operates on the macro-scale, wherein the characters of the two main sections differ sharply. In both pieces, the musical character and technical objectives are deeply intertwined. They share the common trait of the musical content being generated in a similar manner by the virtuosic elements.<sup>117</sup>

Virtuosity in Variations:  
Paganini's Caprice No. 24 in A minor and Tsybin's Concert Etude No. 2

Theme-and-variation form amalgamates repetition and alteration. A new variation represents a different version of the same musical story. In the words of Abbé Vogler (1749 –

<sup>117</sup> Finlow, Simon. "The Twenty-Seven Etudes and Their Antecedents." *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, edited by Jim Samson, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992, p. 59. Cambridge Companions to Music.

1814), “Variations are a type of musical rhetoric, where the given meaning appears in different guises, with the distinction that the boundary lines are much more rigorously determined in music than in oratory.”<sup>118</sup> The altered (or varied) elements explore divergent ideas, sounds, and techniques. The repetitive element provides structure and coherence for the music’s organization. This duality generates an unconventional sound world unbounded by heterogeneity but limited by order.<sup>119</sup>

Virtuosic instrumental repertoire is rife with pieces that utilize theme-and-variations.<sup>120</sup> Flute music is no exception.<sup>121</sup> The Variations on a Theme in F minor in Tsybin’s Concert Etude No. 2, Book I target specific areas of technical mastery on the flute, pushing the performer to an ever broader range of expression. Along with its harmonic language and form, Tsybin’s use of particular flute characteristics echoes in key respects the renowned Niccolò Paganini’s Caprice No. 24 for solo violin from his Op. 1.

Jeffrey Perry describes Paganini’s “questive”<sup>122</sup> music as “... harmonically driven and motivically conceived [...]”<sup>123</sup> Tsybin’s Concert Etude No. 2 follows a similar principle (Exs. 17a and 17b). It relies on the opening rhythmical sequence to serve as the piece’s primary “cell.”

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<sup>118</sup> Sisman, Elaine. "Variations." Grove Music Online. 2001. Oxford University Press. Date of access 22 Aug. 2019,

<<https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000029050>>

<sup>119</sup> Igor Stravinsky addressed a similar concept of freedom within limitations: “...my freedom thus consists in my moving about within the narrow frame that I have assigned myself for each of my undertakings [...]. I shall go even further: my freedom will be so much the greater and more meaningful the more narrowly I limit my field of action and the more I surround myself with obstacles.....The more constraints one imposes, the more one frees oneself of the chains that shackle the spirit.” Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music*, Harvard University Press, 1970 ed. (original edition 1942), pp. 36 & 49.

<sup>120</sup> Sisman, Elaine. "Variations." Grove Music Online. 2001. Oxford University Press. Date of access 22 Aug. 2019,

<<https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000029050>>

<sup>121</sup> Flute World Catalogue of Variations, <https://www.fluteworld.com/Flute--and--Piano--01-.V.html?sort=2&scr=283>

<sup>122</sup> The author argues that the two leading modes of expression found in Paganini’s music are lyrical and questive.

<sup>123</sup> Perry, Jeffrey. “Paganini’s Quest: The Twenty-Four Capricci per Violino Solo, Op. 1.” *19th-Century Music*, vol. 27, no. 3, 2004, pp. 208–229. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/ncm.2004.27.3.208](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/ncm.2004.27.3.208).



The “cell” generates and develops the rest of the musical material. Its motivic component evolves and intensifies, while its harmonic component remains unchanged until the Coda.



Example 17a: Paganini, Caprice No. 24, Op. 1, Theme



Example 17b: Tsybin, Concert Etude No. 2, Theme<sup>124</sup>

The Themes of both pieces are two-part, 16-bar periods. Analogous to Paganini’s Caprice,<sup>125</sup> the Theme’s harmonic progression in Etude No. 2 recurs in all of its variations.<sup>126</sup> The intensity grows with each new variation, propelling the piece to its climax in Var. IV. Similarly, the last variation and *Finale* of Paganini’s Caprice No. 24 constitute an overt and dramatic climax (Exs. 18a, b, and c). This progression to a high-voltage climax differentiates these sets from the more popular sets published by Beethoven (and throughout the nineteenth century), in which the final variation is not necessarily a pull-out-all-the-stops affair. It should

<sup>124</sup> The Theme begins in m. 3.

<sup>125</sup> Theme’s harmonic progression in Caprice No. 24: i-V-i-V: V/iv-i/iv-V/III-I/III-ii-o-i-F6-V-i

<sup>126</sup> Theme’s harmonic progression in Etude No. 2:

i-III-i-iiø7-i-viio43-i-i2-viio-#vio-G6-i64-V-i, i-III-i-Ilt.6-V7-i-viio43-i-V/III-viio/iv-V65/V-ii65-i6-V7-i

also be noted that—unlike the two works being compared here—the great majority of well-known theme-and-variations are in the major mode.<sup>127</sup>

A recurring difficulty in Etude No. 2 is the juxtaposition of opposite registers within a fast-moving rhythmic figure (Ex. 19). This technique attempts to compensate for the flute's natural limitation: its ability to produce only *one* voice at a time.<sup>128</sup> Rapidly juxtaposed registers create an illusion of multiple musical voices conversing with each other. A similar principle manifests itself in Variation 5 of Paganini's Caprice No. 24 (notwithstanding that the violin does not share the flute's limitations—Ex. 20).

Caprice No. 24 bestows on each of its variations a different violin technique (Var. III is dedicated to octaves, Var. IV to chromatic scale, Var. VI to thirds, etc.). Etude No. 2 generates various technical challenges atop *one* common objective: the flute's low register. Among the flute's numerous sound dimensions, its low range occupies a special niche. The deep, mysterious, velvet-like timbre of the flute's low tones (below F1<sup>129</sup>) produces a musical atmosphere unlike any other. Composers commonly incorporate it to communicate a special moment, emotion, or character.<sup>130</sup>

Projection, clarity and volume control are especially challenging in the flute's low range. A focused sound requires strong air pressure finely controlled by the player's embouchure. In the low register, the flutist's embouchure opening is wider than in the middle and high registers. A faster air speed is harder to control with the wide opening. Hence, overblowing can commonly

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<sup>127</sup> Winter, Robert. Interview by author, November 10, 2019.

<sup>128</sup> Since Tsybin's time this limitation has been partially lifted. Today, composers often include extended flute techniques such as singing-and-playing simultaneously, or multiphonics that produce more than one pitch at a time (for further examples see *Voice* by Toru Takemitsu or *Three American Pieces* by Lukas Foss).

<sup>129</sup> F above middle C.

<sup>130</sup> Claude Debussy uses the flute's low register in his *Sonate* for flute, viola and harp; the most prominent flute solos in Igor Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* belong to the alto flute, which sounds a fifth lower than a standard flute in C. André Jolivet furthered the expanding role of the flute's low range in his powerful *Chant de Linos* for flute and piano.

cause the low notes to “crack”. One of the main challenges in Etude No. 2 is maintaining a solid low-register foundation that provides support for the texture throughout the piece.

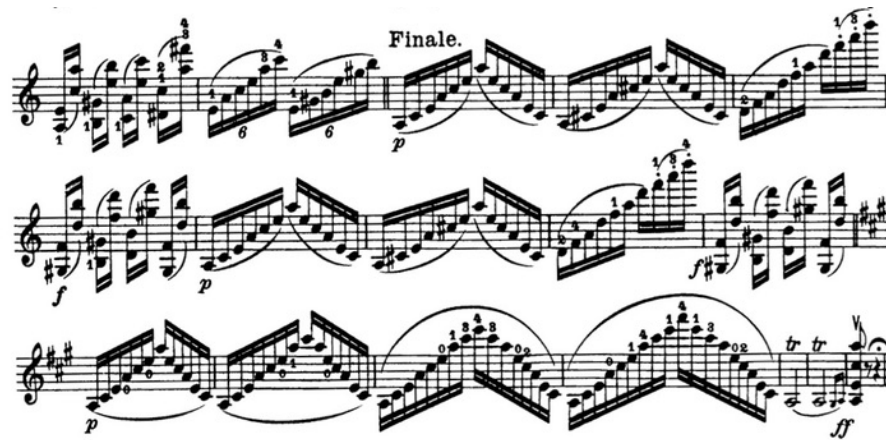
Var. IV

The image shows the first two systems of the musical score for Variation IV. Each system consists of three staves: a single treble clef staff at the top, and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) below it. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system shows a melodic line in the upper treble staff with eighth-note patterns, and a bass line in the grand staff with chords and eighth notes. The second system continues this texture, with a 'cresc.' marking above the upper treble staff.

Example 18a: Tsybin, Concert Etude No. 2, Variation IV

The image shows the final six measures of Variation IV, arranged in two systems. The first system contains measures 1-3, and the second system contains measures 4-6. The notation is more complex, featuring sixteenth-note runs in the upper treble staff and dense chordal textures in the grand staff. Dynamic markings include 'f' (forte) and 'rit.' (ritardando) in the final measures.

Example 18b: Tsybin, Concert Etude No. 2, Variation IV (last six climactic measures)



Example 18c: Paganini, Caprice No. 24, Op. 1, Var. XI and Finale

Ancillary to the recurring low register challenges are other difficulties built into each variation. Fast-paced chromatic embellishments saturate Var. I. Var. II sets forth fleeting articulation and dynamic changes fitted into one measure at a time. Var. III intensifies the music through the same principle until its climax in Var. IV. The explosive *moto perpetuo* of the latter leads into a triumphant, long-awaited rise from the lower octaves before concluding the cycle on a low F-major chord (see Ex. 18b).

The variations in Etude No. 2 rely on a steady increase in intensity. Their continuous expansion and increasing energy constitute the piece's main strength, compensating for any lack of desired contrast. Caprice No. 24, on the contrary, imparts in each variation a distinct miniature world of its own. They differ in character, sound and technical objectives. A passionate lament in parallel octaves (Var. III) precedes a playful chromatic sketch (Var. IV). The heavy, dense sound of Var. VI (in thirds) contrasts with the light, dance-like Var. VII, etc. Unpredictability and excitement energize the cycle, and the sound of its unchanging harmony is revitalized in every variation.



Example 19: Tsybin, Concert Etude No. 2, Var. III



Example 20: Paganini, Caprice No. 24, Var. V

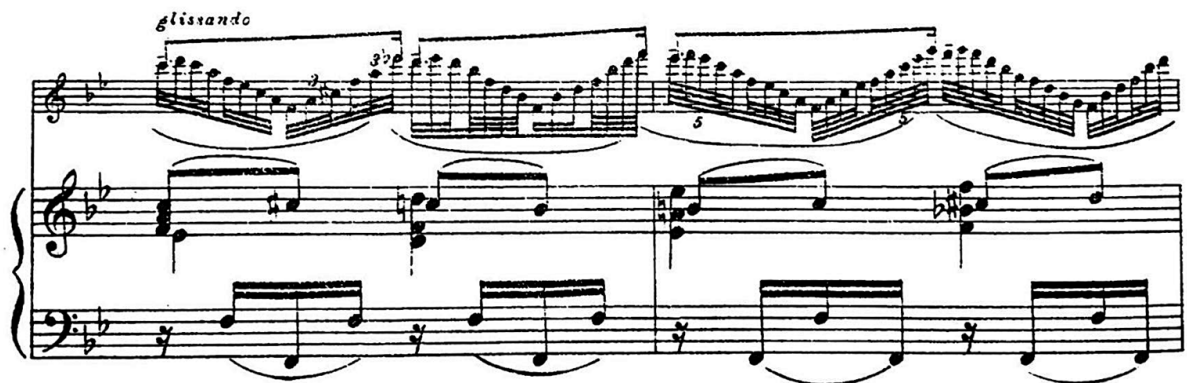
Virtuosity in Imitation:  
Aeolian Harp and Songs Without Words

Earlier in this chapter I discussed Tsybin's Concert Etude No. 5, Book II, and the harp-like sound of its second half (see Ex. 14). Etude No. 3 from Book I expresses a similar scaffolding of gliding arpeggiated chords but on a broader scale. At first, the piece evokes the character of a light, playful humoresque (Ex. 21). However, its petite, unobtrusive rhythmical gestures soon morph into full and expansive multi-note arpeggiated passages (Ex. 22). In

league with this abundance of notes, the *glissando* indication points to a cascading sound effect more common in a plucked (harp) or keyboard (piano) instrument.<sup>131</sup>



Example 21: Tsybin, Concert Etude No. 3



Example 22: Tsybin, Concert Etude No. 3

The voicing of the flute part (the top voice representing the melody line; the bottom voice the accompaniment) projects anew the flute as a multi-dimensional instrument. Once again we encounter the instrument's capability (or a successful illusion of thereof) of playing more than one voice at a time. Here, in contrast to Concert Etude No. 2 (Ex. 19), the textural expansion, not the textural *compression*, helps to create the desired effect.

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<sup>131</sup> Glissando is not possible on the flute the same way it is on a harp or piano. One of the extended flute techniques, sound bending, comes close to glissando, but it was not yet invented or utilized in Tsybin's time.



Because of the lyrical melodic lead in the upper voice and the gliding, supportive chords underneath, the piece bears a strong textural similarity to Chopin's Op. 25, No. 1. Famously compared by Robert Schumann to an *Aeolian harp*, this piece could easily have provided an inspiration for Tsybin's evocation of an Aeolian *flute*. The pensive character, the choice of key (both in flat keys: B-flat major for Tsybin, A-flat major for Chopin), and the harp-like texture suggest "...rather a poem than a study"<sup>132</sup> that is successfully realized on two very different instruments.



Example 23: Chopin, Op. 25, No. 1

A similar poetic quality infuses Tsybin's Concert Etude No. 8, *Nocturne* (Ex. 24). Tranquil and intimate, the piece is an island of quiet beauty amidst a sea of brazen virtuosity. It is surprising that the *Nocturne* was included in the *Ten Concert Etudes* at all, as it has none of the overt study-like challenges typical for Tsybin (complex textures, cascades of fast notes, unusual key signatures, etc.). The *Nocturne* is slow and melodious, filled with long, fluid phrases that evoke a Schubertian song or an early Chopin nocturne. Its other song-like features include the steady sixteenth-note pulse in the piano accompaniment, articulation that invokes verbal

<sup>132</sup> "Imagine that an Aeolian harp possessed all the scales, and that an artist's hand struck these with all kinds of fantastic, elegant embellishments, ever rendering audible a deep fundamental tone, and a softly flowing upper voice—and you will have some idea [...]. No wonder, then, that we were charmed with the pieces at once, [...], and most of all with the first, in A-flat major, rather a poem than a study [...]. And when the etude was ended, we felt as though we had seen a lovely form in a dream, and, half awake, we strove to seize it again..." ("On Music and Musicians." *On Music and Musicians*, by Robert Schumann, University of California Press, 1983, p. 199).

syllables in the flute part, and the overall storytelling mood of the musical narrative. Indeed, the *Nocturne* is a song—a *song without words*. Yet it would be a mistake to view the *Nocturne* as presenting no special challenges. Sustaining a line—and there are several ways to do this—is a perennial challenge faced by performers. Although the pitches themselves present no direct obstacles, the manner in which these notes are connected will determine the success of any performance.

Analogously, Chopin's Op. 10, No. 6 stands out initially as a “non-etude” within its cycle. Although its character and atmosphere are in sharp contrast to Tsybin's *Nocturne*, it also evokes a work that could be sung. Like the *Nocturne*, it conveys a different type of expression from the surrounding etudes: more personal, intimate, and deep. In fact, both composers clearly view the effective sculpting of melodic lines as worthy of serious technical study.

The image shows a musical score for Tsybin's Concert Etude No. 8, Nocturne. The score is in 3/4 time, marked 'Andantino' and 'p' (piano). It features a single melodic line in the right hand and a complex accompaniment in the left hand. The right hand consists of a series of eighth notes with slurs, while the left hand features a dense texture of chords and sixteenth-note patterns. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat).

Example 24: Tsybin, Concert Etude No. 8, *Nocturne*





Example 25: Chopin, Op. 10, No. 6

Supported by the ever-present, chromatically moving underpinning in the middle voices, and stepwise motion in the bass, the upper (soprano) voice provides the focus of attention within the piece. As in Tsybin's *Nocturne*, the leading melodic line of Op. 10, No. 6 is pointedly vocal, song-like, while the accompanying lines undergird its growth and movement (Ex. 25).

Other similarities between the pieces are evident: the closeness in meter and tempo indications, the rhythmical structure, and the expressive nature of the articulation. What is more significant, perhaps, is that both composers—knowingly or not—imitated in these two works the most expressive of all possible instruments. Because, what can possibly be more expressive than the *ultimate* instrument, the human voice?

## Chapter IV Tsybin's Flute Method and the *Ten Concert Etudes*

Vladimir Tsybin's method, *The Fundamentals of Flute Playing*, was published in Russian in 1940—barely a year before Hitler invaded Russia in June of 1941. For understandable reasons it has regrettably been long out of print. About its origins, Tsybin wrote, "Relying on my substantial experience as a performer and pedagogue, and my knowledge of the repertoire, I decided to create a school [method] that would include all of the essential content useful to a musician-flutist. It will encompass performance levels commencing with the beginner and concluding with the virtuoso."<sup>133</sup> This was comprehensive treatment, both broad and deep. We should therefore understand that the term "*Fundamentals*" in the title might mislead potential readers into thinking this is a volume that covers only the basics. The actual product is far from that.

Tsybin divided his *Fundamentals* into four parts. An Introduction covers the basics of flute playing, including breathing, sound production, coordination between the fingers and keys, etc. Parts I, II and III focus on the development and refinement of the flutist's technique. In addition to the exercises, each section contains various etudes and pieces composed by Tsybin. The excerpts from orchestral literature in Tsybin's arrangement for flute and piano conclude Parts II and III.

Tsybin's student Nikolai Platonov, a distinguished Russian flute pedagogue himself, described his teacher's method as "...especially useful for professional flutists, particularly those working in orchestras, because Prof. Tsybin included excerpts from the opera and ballet repertoire performed in our theaters."<sup>134</sup> Platonov notably wrote a flute method of his own during Tsybin's lifetime, titled *The School of Flute Playing*.<sup>135</sup> Tsybin praised the method, saying that it

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<sup>133</sup> Abanovich, Anton. "Moscow Conservatory's Flute School in the 20th Century: V. Tsybin, N. Platonov, A. Korneev." *The Moscow State Conservatory*, 2013, p. 61.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>135</sup> First published in 1933.

was “the first method of high merit within the Russian pedagogical flute literature.”<sup>136</sup> However, it focused solely on beginner-level flute playing. Inspired by Platonov’s work, Tsybin resolved to create a method targeting all proficiency levels. Hence *The Fundamentals of Flute Playing* was born.

The *Ten Concert Etudes* employ many of the practical principles toward which the *Fundamentals* build. Understanding these principles in greater depth will help potential performers of the *Concert Etudes* and their teachers realize the full expressive and educational potential of these pieces. This chapter addresses the specifics of the *Concert Etudes*, focusing primarily on their technical/expressive dimensions as viewed through the lens of *The Fundamentals of Flute Playing*.

### Intervals

The thematic material in the *Ten Concert Etudes* is frequently based on intervals and their possible progressions. Oftentimes, complex intervallic sequences occur in the flute’s top register (where the finger-movement is most demanding). At other times, intervals are separated by long distances between the first and third octaves. The aforementioned instances commonly occur in fast tempos, making even a straightforward interval-based structure technically challenging. In the face of such uncommon complexities, a flutist may wonder whether Tsybin expected his performers to be natural-born “interval virtuosos.” Or, did he equip them with specific approaches that would prepare them for the intervallic agility required by the *Concert Etudes*?

*The Fundamentals of Flute Playing* provides some answers. Each of the method’s first three parts devotes a large portion to interval studies. Exercise No. 7 of Part I, *Finger and*

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<sup>136</sup> Abanovich, Anton. “Moscow Conservatory’s Flute School in the 20th Century: V. Tsybin, N. Platonov, A. Korneev.” *The Moscow State Conservatory*, 2013, p. 61.

*Embouchure Training by Interchanging the Two Pitches through 6 Rhythmical Figures*, is the first to introduce the interval-practicing system unique to Tsybin.<sup>137</sup> By the time the study is complete, the student will have encountered every single intervallic permutation<sup>138</sup> in six (!) different rhythmic variations. All registers of the flute are engaged. Additionally, the student must work on the flexibility of embouchure, and memorize every interval's sound (Ex. 26).





Example 27. A segment of a minor-third study (the top part belongs to the flute)

The majority of the *Concert Etudes* are based on fast moving textures but always within a clear tonal trajectory. Despite actively employing chromaticism, even the most tonally adventurous of the *Etudes* gravitate to a well-defined key center. The “perception of harmony” mentioned by Tsybin proves to be of great assistance for navigating through the *Etudes*’ most technical challenges. The latter include many of the interval-based passages.

*Concert Etude No. 4* in E-flat minor, for example, grows out of fast paced, widely spaced, and often chromatic intervallic alterations (Ex. 28). The performer faces two significant challenges simultaneously: the key of E-flat minor and its accidentals, and the enormously wide intervals within the four-sixteenth-note figure. If performers are familiar with Tsybin’s interval-practicing method, the recognition of these intervals (despite their drastic width) will have become second nature. In addition, they will perceive the intervals’ harmonic function as *extensions* of the piano accompaniment harmonies. Guided by this knowledge, the process of learning *Etude No. 4* will be considerably faster, more efficient, and mindful.

In specific moments the acquisition of “musical memory” put forward by Tsybin as one of the method’s paramount goals is more critical in the *Concert Etudes* than even an understanding of intervals and harmonic perception. The notoriously difficult passage in *Etude No. 1*, based on the Richard Strauss motive already analyzed in Chapter II, revolves around the chromatic alteration of the two intervals of a major third and a tritone. These intervals move at

high speed as components of one rhythmic figure. In addition, because of the complete chromatic saturation throughout the passage, any sense of a harmonic center proves elusive. There is no sonic “center” on which the performer can rely. Hence the musical (and dexterous) memory, achieved through the relentless but imaginative repetition demanded in Tsybin’s *Fundamentals* (and perhaps including rhythmic alterations as well), will supply the most trustworthy path (Ex. 29).



Example 28. Tsybin, Concert Etude No. 4, mm. 3 and 4



Example 29. An excerpt from Tsybin’s Concert Etude No. 1, *Scherzo*

### Scales

The simplest keys within the *Ten Concert Etudes* begin with four accidentals. Among these are highly uncommon keys for flute, such as E-flat minor, G-sharp minor, and C-sharp

minor. These scales may be likely candidates for inclusion in flute exams at a college or conservatory, but they are not frequently encountered in the flute literature. It is unlikely, therefore, that Tsybin chose them arbitrarily. In all probability, his key selections reflected another dimension of his methodology. A look into the scale studies of *The Fundamentals of Flute Playing* offers a clear perspective on Tsybin's vision of a true virtuoso's scalar proficiencies.

Analogous to his interval studies, Tsybin's scale exercises illustrate the depth of his pedagogical approach. He incorporates a wide variety of meters, rhythmic figures, and articulations into his scale exercises. In a manner that may seem counterintuitive, only upon completing all of the indicated complex versions of a scale is the student actually allowed to play the "original," straightforward scale. Tsybin also incorporates intervals into his scale exercises, pushing the student to a wider dexterity within any given scale. Not surprisingly, Tsybin's scale samples overflow with accidentals, whereas almost all flute methods use C major as the central sample key (Exs. 30a and 30b).



Example 30a. A segment of the D-flat major scale exercise



Example 30b. A segment of the F-minor scale exercise

A number of the *Concert Etudes* demonstrate Tsybin's high-level expectations for the performer's mastery of scale patterns. One such etude is No. 2 in F minor, discussed already in Chapter III. Its second half is built around rapid alterations and interchanges between F-minor scale variants, while the texture is further thickened by additional chromaticism. The performer is faced with the unrelenting task of converting the chromatic scale into all possible versions of the F-minor scale (harmonic, melodic, and natural), and vice-versa. As is customary for Tsybin's Etudes, the process just described transpires at lightning-fast speeds (cf. Ex. 18a in Chapter III). While there are a great number of virtuosic flute pieces employing scalar variants as one dimension of virtuosity, few of them make the kind of extreme scale-based demands as does Tsybin in his Concert Etude No. 2.

Concert Etude No. 7 (the Mendelssohn *Scherzo* etude) offers yet another perspective. As it unfolds, its opening key of G-sharp minor evolves into a three-scale challenge. The three scales are characteristic of Tsybin: G-sharp minor, E major, A-flat major, and their variants (in contrast to Mendelssohn's original key of G minor). Its wonderfully thematic outlining and light virtuosic brilliance notwithstanding, the scrupulously didactic writing in the Etude demands the absolute ultimate in scalar fluency (see Ex. 10 in Chapter II).

Throughout the *Concert Etudes* scales can appear "in disguise." For example, they frequently provide the underpinning for Tsybin's melodicism. In Etude No. 1, the fleeting triplet/sixteenth-note passages of the middle section embellish a melody that is based on scalar



motion (see Ex. 7 in Chapter II). The intervallic embellishment of that motion partially conceals its melodic character, which the performer must nonetheless bring out.

The same passage demonstrates the amalgamation of the two practical dimensions—the scalar and the intervallic—stressed so repeatedly in *The Fundamentals of Flute Playing*. One is a scale study in which the scale is embellished or enhanced by intervals. The other is an interval study in scalar seconds. A close look at both passages reveals the synthesis of the two components: a scalar framework underneath the alternating major and minor seconds, in tandem producing a wickedly disguised melodiousness.

#### Articulation

At the beginning of *The Fundamentals of Flute Playing*, Tsybin unveils his idiosyncratic approach to the range of articulations covering *staccato* to *legato*. Curiously, he compares flute articulation to the bow-strokes on the violin. He writes, “In a strict sense, there is no articulation [strokes] on the flute. However, a certain analogy with string instruments is possible. The ‘down-bow’ on the flute is achieved by blowing fast air while articulating the syllable ‘tu.’ The air stream must be strong, and so should be the lips and the tongue. The ‘up-bow’ effect is achieved with the syllable ‘du,’ accompanied by softer lips and tongue while pronouncing it.”<sup>140</sup>

The analogy with violin performance suggests for Tsybin parallels with other flute articulations, including the double-tongued *staccato*. He compares the rapid tongue shifts between the syllables “tu” and “ku” to the rapid up-bow/down-bow changes on the violin. On both instruments, this articulation causes the notes to be clearly delineated from each other, even in a rapid tempo. Tsybin’s further comments on double-tonguing suggest that he may have

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<sup>140</sup> Tsybin, Vladimir. *The Fundamentals of Flute Playing*. State Music Publishing, 1940, p. 7.

viewed it as a “special” flute articulation. He writes: “...it should be used *only* in fast tempos, in those passages with the same note values that last for a prolonged period of time.”<sup>141</sup>

The “Mendelssohn *Scherzo*” etude illustrates both the “special articulation” and the violin-like concepts. As referenced in Chapter II (p. 31), a prolonged, continuously moving double-tonguing is highly uncommon in the flute repertoire. Only a handful of pieces contain extensive sections dedicated entirely to double-tongued *staccato*. One of the most famous examples is, ironically, a transcription of a *violin* piece, Paganini’s Caprice No. 5 (Ex. 31). Since Tsybin viewed flute and violin articulations as parallel in character, his *staccato* expectations for Etude No. 7 were, by *his* standards, conventional (most flutists would disagree!).



Example 31. Paganini’s Caprice No. 5 (flute transcription by Jules Herman)

Given the specialized nature of this articulation, Tsybin supplies an impressive quantity of double-tonguing exercises in *The Fundamentals*. The range of his approach is similar to his other exercises. The number of rhythms, idiomatic accents, and syllabic variations of the “tu-ku” sequence provides the student with an entire suite of tools to attain proficiency in double-tonguing. Upon completing these exercises, as well as Tsybin’s scale-studies, the student will have acquired a sufficient tonguing background to venture into a demanding piece like the “Mendelssohn *Scherzo*” etude (Ex. 32).

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid., p. 7.



Example 32. A segment of a double-tonguing exercise

### Orchestral Literature

The incorporation of select orchestral excerpts from the orchestral literature into *The Fundamentals of Flute Playing* confirms Tsybin's musical and stylistic preferences discussed in previous chapters. They illustrate how the technical and dramatic aspects of that music influenced him as both a composer and a pedagogue. The majority of excerpts are taken from the ballet and opera repertoires within which Tsybin worked for decades. All of his transcriptions include a piano accompaniment (Tsybin assumes a pedagogical environment in which such pianists are available). As part of his efforts to produce a wholly rounded musician, Tsybin frequently asks the flutist to practice the other instrumental parts prominent in the score at that moment. He insists that the flutist not simply be the source of a single line but a collaborator within the entire texture.

Several of the *Ten Concert Etudes* reference directly or indirectly some of the excerpts included in the method. For example, a flute-part extract from Tchaikovsky's ballet *Swan Lake* is almost identical in its technical challenges to the triplet sixteenth-note passages in *Concert Etude No. 1* (see Ex. 7 in Chapter II). In the method, Tsybin shares some ideas on alternate fingerings that can be used in the Tchaikovsky passage. Similar concepts are addressed in *Etude No. 1*. (Ex. 33).<sup>142</sup>



Example 33. Variation III from Act III of Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* (the crosses underneath the A, G-sharp and F-sharp indicate the alternative fingerings)

The examples of dramatic build-ups encountered frequently in operas and ballets are very much present in the excerpts from Richard Wagner's opera *Lohengrin* and Charles Gounot's opera *Faust*. Although these moments are played *tutti*, Tsybin regarded the principal flute part as distinctly soloistic. The main challenge for the flutist is in the speed, repetition, and exposure that such moments usually entail. By including them in his *Fundamentals*, Tsybin encouraged flutists to approach these passages with the same seriousness as they would a flute solo. In the *Concert Etudes* themselves, the concept of an operatic, virtuosically driven build-up appears in *Etude No. 3*. (Exs. 34a, b and c)

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<sup>142</sup> The concept of alternate or trill fingerings on flute is fairly simple. As noted earlier in this dissertation, the most complex fingering changes occur in the third register (CIII and above). At very fast tempos, such changes are— given the number of fingers undergoing simultaneous upward or downward movements— next to impossible to execute on time. These can be simplified by using *one* alternate key that will be pressed (or de-pressed) by one finger instead of many. For example, EIII to F#III connection requires simultaneous movement of five fingers (3 in right hand, 2 in left hand). An alternate fingering will eliminate the need to move so many fingers at once: while fingering EIII the player will lift just the left hand's thumb. The resulting pitch will be indeed F#III, though just ever so slightly flatter than the normally fingered F#III. In fast tempos this intonation nuance will go unnoticed, and the thumb can move up and down freely at any desired speed.

Vivace

Example 34a. An excerpt from Richard Wagner's opera *Lohengrin*

Example 34b. An excerpt from Charles Gounod's opera *Faust*



Example 34c. Tsybin, Concert Etude No. 3

Tsybin frequently uses the simple continuity of steadily moving sixteenth-notes to propel the music's emotional trajectory. One of the excerpts included in the *Fundamentals*, an early scene from Tchaikovsky's opera *Eugene Onegin*, follows this principle precisely. It contains a series of rapidly moving yet conversational woodwind solos led by the flute. The solos are responsible for conveying the emotional narrative of the scene, transforming what might seem at first glance a straightforward lyrical atmosphere into a dramatic one (Ex.35).

The main musical idea of the Concert Etude No. 9, *Arabesque*, reflects the aforementioned one of Tchaikovsky. The flute begins in the same dynamic range, under the same *leggiero* indication, soon reaching the emotional peak before the next section. Even the grace note can be interpreted as an indirect homage to Tchaikovsky (Ex. 36).



Example 35. An excerpt from Tchaikovsky's opera *Eugene Onegin* (the top two lines belong to Flute I and other woodwind soloists in the orchestra)



Example 36. Tsybin, Concert Etude No. 9, *Arabesque*

*The Fundamentals of Flute Playing* was published in 1940, only a year before Hitler brought the most murderous episodes of World War II into the Soviet Union. In his memoir, Tsybin does not mention the Great Patriotic War (as World War II is called in Russia to this day) of 1941–1945 at all. It is unclear what direct effects it had on him and his family, but we can be certain that it traumatized them, as it did everyone living in the USSR at that time.

After a long and devastating war that cost over forty million Soviet lives,<sup>143</sup> issues around music publishing were scarcely a priority for the Stalinist regime. Tsybin died in relative obscurity in 1949, an unwitting prisoner of the Cold War who remains largely unpublished to this day. I believe that this flutist, pedagogue, and composer, who—despite a turbulent and difficult life—bequeathed a considerable legacy, deserves to be known to a wider audience of flutists and musicians worldwide. It is my hope that this research on his *Ten Concert Etudes* for flute and piano will draw interest to these and his other works so they can take their place within the core flute repertoire, where they rightly belong.

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<sup>143</sup> Guttiontov, Pavel. "Victory Send the Bill." *Novaya Gazeta*, 22 Mar. 2017.

## Afterword

I first encountered the music of Vladimir Tsybin around the age of 12. I had heard an older flute student (of about 17 or 18) at my teacher's<sup>144</sup> studio play Tsybin's *Tarantella*. The dashing speed and brilliance, along with the young player's striking virtuosity, made an enormous impression on me. From that moment on, I perceived Tsybin's music as something both scary and very exciting—scary because of the challenges it presented, exciting because of the immediate impression it made on listeners.

Little did I know, but only a few years later I was assigned to play Tsybin myself: the *Allegro de Concerto No. 2*! I was flattered that my teacher evidently held me in high esteem (it was an unspoken fact among all of the flutists I knew that Tsybin could only be played by those with the “chops”). It was also frightening, as a memorized perfection was expected ...

I did manage to learn the *Allegro de Concerto* that year and successfully performed it several times during the concert season. At the time, it did not feel like a huge achievement; I mostly felt surprised that I could master it, forgetting how many hours I had spent in practice and refinement. Within our flute studio, however, it became somewhat of an inner joke of it being “my piece,” as my teacher would refer to it year after year. “So-and-so is playing HER *Allegro de Concerto*,” he would say, glancing at me with a smile, not without pride. His praise meant the world to all his students; hence I glowed happily when he reminded me that I made him proud.

My next encounter with Tsybin's music came soon after, when I played one of his *Ten Concert Etudes* (of which I knew nothing at the time). I was among several young instrumentalists selected to perform in London, and the inviters requested an all-20<sup>th</sup>-century program. My teacher assigned Sergei Prokofiev's Sonata No. 2 in D major, Op. 94-bis, Sofia Gubaidulina's *Allegro Rustico*, and Tsybin's Concert Etude No. 7 (the Mendelssohn *Scherzo Etude*). I believe that Tsybin was included chiefly because he was considered, alongside

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<sup>144</sup> Yuri N. Dolzhikov (1933-2005), professor at the Moscow Conservatory, and the Central School of Music, where I was a student.



Prokofiev and Gubaiduliina, a *Soviet* composer. I realize now how strangely his Etude must have fit into that program, with the other participants performing pieces by Alfred Schnittke and Dmitry Shostakovich....

Before undertaking this project, I have not performed Tsybin's music for a very long time. Recently, while looking for short, interesting, and challenging pieces to perform as encores, I came across the *Ten Concert Etudes*. I was at once fascinated; it felt as if a bit of my Russian childhood had returned, only this time in another country, and I was an adult. I found myself increasingly grateful for the achievements of this exceptional artist, and I am enormously gratified that I could make a small contribution in his memory. Finally, as my teacher studied with Tsybin's student Nikolai Platonov, I feel honored to be a small part of Tsybin's extraordinary legacy.

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