Nikolai Medtner's First Piano Concerto: A Metrotectonic Analysis

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NIKOLAĬ MEDTNER’S FIRST PIANO CONCERTO: A METROTECTONIC ANALYSIS

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Music in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts, The City University of New York

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Abstract

NIKOLAĬ MEDTNÉR’S FIRST PIANO CONCERTO: A METROTECTONIC ANALYSIS

by

Aleksandra Sarest

Advisor: Professor Philip Ewell

This dissertation focuses on the work of the Russian-born composer Nikolaï Medtner, presenting an original analysis of his Piano Concerto No. 1 in C Minor, op. 33. The analysis is preceded with an overview of Medtner’s life and his entire body of music, and with a discussion of the composer’s artistic beliefs and musical style. Medtner lived at a time when most composers searched for new paths, believing that nothing original could be produced unless there were drastic changes to musical language itself. Medtner was among the few composers who remained loyal to the Western classical tradition. Working within its limits, Medtner was able to find a distinctive and powerful voice. My analysis of Medtner’s First Piano Concerto is based on the formal theories of the twentieth-century Russian music scholar Georgiĭ Konius—an approach called metrotectonicism. I also mention Medtner’s subtle use of modality in a basically traditional tonal context, applying the theories of another twentieth-century Russian music scholar, Iuriĭ Tiulin. Prior to the analysis of the First Concerto, Konius’s metrotectonic theory and Tiulin’s theory of the natural and altered modes are both introduced, explained, and used for a sample analysis of a short work by Medtner—his Tale, op. 26, no. 3.
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Chapter One: Introduction

Foreword

The Russian composer Nikolaĭ Medtner (1880–1951) was a contemporary of such famous compatriots as Igor Stravinsky, Alexander Scriabin, and Sergeĭ Rachmaninoff. His was an era of turbulent changes in classical music. Most composers searched for new paths, believing that nothing original could be produced unless there were drastic changes to musical language itself. Medtner was among the few composers who remained loyal to the Western classical tradition. Working within its limits, Medtner was able to find a distinctive and powerful voice. Medtner’s compositions are masterly crafted and inspired, and are of consistently high quality; yet they have not been nearly as popular among performers as those of Rachmaninoff, for instance, who remained close to the tonal tradition as well. Medtner has long worn the label of a “lesser” composer—undeservedly so, one might argue.

A revival of interest in Medtner’s music occurred in the decades following his death, first in Russia and later in the West. In Russia, the publishing of Medtner’s collected works took place in 1959 (edited by Medtner’s student, the prominent pianist Vladimir Sofronitskiĭ and by the famous pianist and pedagogue Alexander Goldenweiser). Outside Russia, Medtner’s music remained virtually unknown longer. Starting in the 1970s, the British pianist Hamish Milne made numerous recordings of Medtner’s works, which spurred a wave of interest in the composer and his music. In the United States, Dover editions of the composer’s complete piano sonatas, in two

1 I have used the transliteration system of the Library of Congress in this work, which can be found in the Chicago Manual of Style (16th ed.), on page 568 as Table 11.3. (Though typical Anglicized names—Medtner, Rachmaninoff, and Scriabin, or Moscow and St. Petersburg, for example—appear throughout.)

2 These recording, made between 1977 and 2000 for the CRD label are now available as a boxed set of seven CDs: Nikolai Medtner, Piano Sonatas (complete); Piano Works, Hamish Milne (piano), Brilliant Classics B0011UFTCM, 2007, compact disc set.
volumes,\(^3\) and of his complete Tales\(^4\) were published in 1998 and 2001, respectively. This project was undertaken by the American-based group called the International Medtner Foundation. In recent years, Medtner’s music has been receiving even more of its due attention in terms of both scholarly interest\(^5\) and popularity among performers and listeners.\(^6\)

An excellent concert pianist himself, Medtner wrote works exclusively for the piano or works including a piano. The three piano concertos occupy an important place in Medtner’s compositional output; they are his only compositions to include the orchestra. The concerto form is an ideal ground for the composer’s imaginative and complex treatment of musical material.

This dissertation presents an original analysis of Medtner’s Piano Concerto No. 1 in C minor, op. 33 (1918), based on the formal theories of the twentieth-century Russian music scholar Georgiĭ Konius (1862–1933)—an approach called metrotectonicism. I also mention Medtner’s subtle use of modality in a basically traditional tonal context, applying the theories of another Russian music scholar, Iuriĭ Tiulin (1893–1978). The analysis of the First Concerto will be preceded with an overview of Medtner’s life and complete works, and with a discussion of his


\(^5\) Over the past decade, there has been a proliferation of dissertations on the subject of the music of Medtner; these include: “An Analysis of Medtner’s Piano Concerto No. 2 Op. 50 in C Minor,” by Bo Won Hong (2003); “An Introduction to Nikolai Medtner and Performance Analysis in Dialogue Form of his Works for Two Pianos: ‘Russian Round Dance’ and ‘Knight Errant’,” by Saidia Kafarova (2003); “Medtner: his Beliefs, Influences, and Work,” by Natalya Kalendarev (2005); “Nicolas Medtnner, the Neglected Composer: Comparative Study of Nicolas Medtner’s Piano Concerto No. 2 in C Minor, Op. 50 and Sergei Rachmanninoff’s Piano Concerto No. 4 in G Minor, Op. 40,” by Ching-Wen Hsiao (2010). Several others are listed in the Bibliography, including the currently in-progress dissertation on Medtner’s piano sonatas by Nellie Seng of the Graduate Center, CUNY.

\(^6\) The number of recordings of Medtner’s music has also increased in recent years. Geoffrey Tozer had recorded nearly all of Medtner’s works for the Chandos label: complete piano sonatas—B00000IYMY (1999); the three piano concertos—B0009SC716 (2005); complete piano works, vol.1—B000000APZ (1992), vol. 2—B000000ARI (1994). Vol. 3B000000AHC (1996), vol. 4—B000005Z6U (1998), vol. 5—B00000AFTS (1998), vol. 6—B00000G4ND (1999), vol. 7—B000059LXA (2001), vol. 8—B0006AZPYU (2005). Other proponents of the composer’s piano music include Marc-André Hamelin, Nikolai Demidenko, and Yevgeny Sudbin. The singers Susan Gritton and Vassily Savenko, among others, have recorded Medtner’s vocal works.
artistic values and musical style. Both methods used in the concerto’s analysis will be introduced
and explained in a separate chapter as well.

The Life of Nikolaï Medtner

Nikolaï Karlovich Medtner was born in Moscow on January 5, 1880 to parents of
German descent. His ancestors had settled in Russia in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth
century. Medtner’s father, Karl Petrovich, ran a successful factory business, and Medtner’s
mother, Alexandra Karlovna (née Goedicke), was a singer and a music teacher. Nikolaï was the
fifth of the couple’s six children. He was very close to his siblings. The Medtner children were
brought up in a highly cultured environment, in accordance with their parents’ values and
traditions. Nikolaï showed remarkable musical talent as well as great interest in learning the
piano; he started piano lessons with his mother at the age of six. A few years later, Nikolaï’s
mother asked her brother, Fëdor Goedicke, to become his next piano instructor. The boy
preferred serious repertoire over “children’s music,” asking his teacher to let him study works by
Bach, Scarlatti, Mozart, and Beethoven. Nikolaï also composed and improvised at an early age.

At the age of twelve, having attended a music gymnasium for two years, Medtner
declared his intention to devote himself completely to the study of music by entering the
Moscow Conservatory. His parents were not pleased with this decision, and it was not until
Nikolaï’s older brother Emil intervened on his behalf that his parents conceded. As Nikolaï had
excelled in his music studies, his audition and entrance exams went smoothly and he was
accepted into the conservatory. Medtner chose piano as his primary instrument and studied first
with Anatoliï Galli and Pavel Pabst, later joining the class of the more famous Vasiliï Safonov,

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7 This and other pieces of biographical information about Medtner, unless noted otherwise, appear here as reported
who had taught such illustrious figures as Alexander Scriabin and Joseph Lhévinne. Upon entering the conservatory’s senior division in 1894, Medtner took Anatoliĭ Arenskiĭ’s *Encyclopaedia* course, which was a combination of several music-theoretical disciplines, instead of taking separate courses in harmony, counterpoint, and fugue (as someone who planned to pursue a career in composition would usually do). Thus, even as late as during the time of his study in the senior division, Medtner had considered himself primarily a performer—it was not until after his graduation from the conservatory that he felt that composition was his life’s calling. Medtner did, however, later enroll in Sergeĭ Taneev’s counterpoint course, but dropped it after a while. After Medtner’s graduation, Taneev continued to review Medtner’s completed compositions from time to time, once commenting, “Until now I thought it was impossible to become a real composer without having thoroughly learned counterpoint, but now I see from your example that I was mistaken in this.” Medtner was apparently able to develop remarkable skill in composition by self-discipline and by learning from older masters—this, combined with his natural gifts and amazing intuition, made it possible for him to produce technically mature works from early on in his career.

Medtner graduated from the conservatory in 1900 with a “Small Gold Medal”—the highest award possible for a pianist. That same year, he went to Vienna to participate in the Third International Music Competition in honor of Anton Rubinstein. He only received an honorable mention, and was quite disappointed. Upon Medtner’s return home, Safonov began promoting him as a concert pianist, organizing local performances and planning a European tour. However, the young Medtner was not interested in such a career; the prospect of having to play the same showy repertoire over and over again did not appeal to him at all. He declined the tour,

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8 Quoted in Martyn, 6.
upsetting Safonov, who then refused to talk to his student for quite a while. Medtner decided he would pursue a composer’s career instead. His family was not pleased with such a rash and insensible decision—after all, Medtner was not even trained properly as a composer, yet he was giving up what seemed like the most suitable career in favor of this uncertain path. But Nikolai’s brother Emil, as well as Taneev, supported this move.

In 1903, Medtner’s works first appeared in print. Medtner’s publisher during this time was Jurgenson. As Medtner showed great promise as a composer, besides having numerous influential connections among Russia’s greatest musicians, he did not have any trouble getting his works published during this early period of his career. The craze for novelty in arts, which would later cause Medtner to get dismissed as “old-fashioned,” had not yet started in Russia, and musicians of the old school, such as Aleksandr Glazunov and Taneev, still set the tone in musical circles.

Medtner’s first works to be published were Acht Stimmungsbilder (Eight Mood Pictures), op. 1, dating from 1896–97. In August 1903, Medtner completed his first Piano Sonata in F Minor, op. 5. He would compose a total of fourteen piano sonatas. The following decade was creatively active for Medtner; he composed prolifically—songs, small-scale works, and the Sonaten-Triade, op. 11.

This period was one of emotional turmoil for the young composer. Back in 1896, the Medtner brothers became acquainted with the three Bratenshi sisters, Maria, Elena, and Anna. Karl Medtner soon married Elena, while Emil and Nikolai both had affections for Anna, a talented violinist, who was eighteen at the time. Medtner’s parents discouraged Nikolai’s attachment to Anna, forbidding him to see her, while encouraging the development of Emil’s
relationship with the girl. Nikolaï was deeply saddened by this, but after a while met another girl and, with his parents’ encouragement, the two got engaged. Emil, in turn, asked Anna to become his wife, to which she reluctantly agreed. Anna and Emil were married in 1902. In 1903, however, while Nikolaï and his father were visiting the young couple in Nizhniï Novgorod (stopping by on their way to visit Nikolaï’s fiancée), Anna and Nikolaï finally had a chance to reveal and discuss their true feelings. They told Emil about the situation right away, and he showed remarkable understanding and brotherly love, only asking Anna and Nikolaï not to reveal anything to their parents for the time being. Nikolaï broke off his engagement, and although Anna and Emil continued to live together as a couple for a considerable time, it was only for the sake of propriety and, especially, for the sake of Medtner’s parents. Not until Medtner’s mother passed away in 1918 did Anna and Nikolaï officially become a couple.

In 1906, Nikolaï, Anna, and Emil all went abroad, to Munich. There, the young composer was deeply saddened by the state of contemporary music— he was to remain strongly opposed to modernism in music and the toppling of traditional principles of harmony and rhythm for the rest of his life. On the other hand, in Munich, Medtner had the opportunity to attend performances of the music of Wagner and Franck, whose compositions he admired. This suggests that for Medtner, great freedom, variety, and individuality in music composition were not automatically “sins”—unless they crossed a certain border determined by Medtner’s own beliefs regarding the nature and purpose of musical art as well as, unavoidably, his personal taste.

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10 For a discussion of Medtner’s views on music composition, see Chapter Two of this dissertation.
During his stay in Germany, Medtner continued to compose, yet he kept feeling that his compositional output was not adequate in either quantity or quality. He was troubled by constant doubts about his talent and the uncertain state of his finances. Medtner played several concerts in Berlin, Leipzig, and Dresden, mostly containing his own music. Although most critics agreed on his extraordinary skill as a pianist, none were really impressed by his compositions.

Returning to Russia in early 1908, he played in several more recitals and continued his compositional work as well. During this time, Rachmaninoff, who had supported Medtner as a composer and had otherwise been friendly, came up with the idea of creating a new publishing house for Russian composers, which they themselves would oversee. He had been arranging this with Serge Koussevitzky for some time, and finally, in March 1909, the Russian Musical Press was established, with Rachmaninoff, Koussevitzky, Scriabin, and Medtner on the editorial board. Medtner maintained his affiliation with the Russian Musical Press, which published his compositions until he left Russia in 1921.

That same year, 1909, Medtner accepted an invitation from the Moscow Conservatory to become a piano professor. Although fearful that the heavy teaching load would hinder his progress as a composer, Medtner was tempted by the income this post would offer. He ended up, however, quitting the position after only one academic year.

From 1911 to 1914, Nikolaï, Emil, and Anna resided in a suburban house at Khlebnikovo. There, the atmosphere of a “cultural retreat” was conducive to Medtner’s creative ability. Days were filled with not only work but also with reading and intellectual discussion, walks, and other diversions. Visitors at Khlebnikovo included composers, writers, and

\[11\] See Medtner’s letter to A. Goedicke, excerpted in Martyn, 56–7.
musicians; Rachmaninoff was often a guest there. Visits by the family were frequent as well. During winters, Medtner usually presented his recently composed works in concerts in the city, usually to mixed reviews from the critics.

On August 1, 1914, World War I started. This tragic event was especially difficult emotionally to a family of German descent, like the Medtners. Moreover, the first years of the war saw the deaths of many prominent musical figures—Anatoliĭ Liadov, Scriabin, Taneev, and also a recent good friend of Medtner, the young composer Alexeĭ Stanchinskiĭ. In the autumn of 1915, Medtner resumed his teaching at the Moscow Conservatory, both to confirm his status as a Russian citizen and to have a reliable source of income in the uncertain time of war. He kept this post until his departure from Russia in 1921.

There were some fortunate events in 1915–1916 for Medtner as well: he learned from a favorable article written by the English critic Ernest Newman that his music was being received well in England. Medtner also received a letter from his former teacher Safonov, who expressed his deep satisfaction with Medtner’s compositions and invited Nikolaĭ to come to England to give concerts with him. In 1916, Medtner was awarded the Glinka Prize for his contributions to the piano literature.

The 1917 Revolution brought turmoil into the lives of the intelligentsia in Russia. Many went abroad; Rachmaninoff was able to use a visa he got for a concert tour of Scandinavia to leave Russia permanently with his family. Nikolaĭ generally disapproved of emigration. Little did he expect that he too would soon leave his homeland.\footnote{Natalia Konsistorum, \textit{Nikolaĭ Karlovich Metner: Portret kompozitora} (Berlin: Henschel, 2004), 33.}

The winter and spring of 1918 was an especially hard time for the Medtners. Many of the family members, including Nikolaï, fell ill. In March, Nikolaï’s mother passed away. His brother Karl, who had fought in and survived World War I, died in the battles of the Russian Civil War (which followed the 1917 Revolution) in the autumn of 1919. Earlier that year, Medtner had to give up his Moscow apartment, and stayed at a friend’s suburban house for the next year and a half. He obtained a paid leave from the conservatory and devoted his time entirely to composition.

Throughout the war there was very little correspondence between Nikolaï and his beloved brother Emil, who was in Munich when the war started and was interned there. Finally, in 1920, a long-awaited letter from Emil arrived, bringing relief into Medtner’s heart. He started planning a visit to Emil. In the autumn of 1920, Medtner returned from the suburbs to Moscow. Right away, he prepared for some concert appearances, which took place in early 1921 before an enthusiastic public. In September of that year, Anna and Nikolaï were finally able to leave Russia to go to Germany via Estonia to visit Emil. In spite of the unstable situation in his homeland, Medtner was certain that he did not want to abandon it and hoped he would return soon.

In late 1921, the Medtners arrived in Berlin. It proved very difficult for Nikolaï to make a living there—he had been forgotten in Germany and his attempts to launch a career were hardly successful. On top of everything, he was depressed by Berlin’s artistic atmosphere, where precisely the music that was least to his taste enjoyed the greatest popularity. His worst worry was that, although he often got favorable reviews as a pianist, he could not make it as a composer. Medtner’s devoted friend Rachmaninoff helped him a lot during this period, offering not only moral but material support. Once in Germany, Medtner was finally able to meet with his
brother Emil. This meeting was sad, because right at that time they received news of their father’s death from Russia.

Trying to launch a career cost Medtner so much time, that he hardly had any energy left for composition. Financial difficulties remained, despite Rachmaninoff’s efforts to arrange performances for his friend. Medtner decided to leave Germany for France, but not before fulfilling his dream of visiting Italy. During the 1924–25 concert season, the composer made his first American tour, which Rachmaninoff had helped organize. It was very successful and provided Medtner with some financial stability, enabling him to focus on composition after the Medtners returned from the United States. Upon their return, the Medtners settled in suburban France, near Paris.

After Medtner left Russia and until his death, the majority of his works was published by Zimmermann\textsuperscript{14}—the Russian origins of the publishing house and the German origins of the Zimmermann family resulted in a personal connection of the company’s owners with Medtner and thus, their willingness to publish his works. However, as early as the middle 1920s, Zimmermann reduced the composer’s royalties from his published works, explaining this move by saying that the sales of Medtner’s music were low since his music was out of fashion.\textsuperscript{15} Surrounded by a musical world in which novelty was deemed a great merit and adherence to tradition the biggest flaw, Medtner remained adamant in his artistic beliefs. In 1926, he began

\textsuperscript{14} Musikverlag Zimmerman was formed in Saint Petersburg in 1876 by Julius Heinrich Zimmermann. The company grew and became successful, opening branches in Leipzig (1886), London (1897), and Riga (1905). From 1905 to 1919, Julius Zimmerman was deputy of the German Reichstag and opened more branches in Germany, including Berlin. After the Russian Revolution, the Russian branches of the Zimmermann company were nationalized by the Bolsheviks, while the Western branches were operated by Julius’ son August Zimmermann.

\textsuperscript{15} Martyn, 174.
writing down his thoughts and philosophical ideas on music. This project would eventually
develop into a book called *Muza i moda* (The muse and the fashion)—Medtner’s artistic credo.\(^\text{16}\)

In 1927, the composer toured his Russian homeland. He was met there with great
enthusiasm, and his spirits were lifted not only by this success but also by the general Moscow
atmosphere in which a lot reminded him of the days past. However, he would soon find out that
the Soviet government controlled the arts in many new ways and dictated specific paths for the
“proper” development of music and other arts.

Upon their return to France, the Medtners had to move into a new residence, which they
did not like. This hindered Nikolai’s compositional creativity, making him depressed and
disappointed. Suddenly a letter arrived from the England-based Russian singer Tatiana
Makushina. She had recently discovered Medtner’s songs and was eager to perform a concert
with the composer. Medtner accepted her invitation to come to London; thus, in 1928, the first of
many professional visits to England took place. The recital with Makushina was a great
success.\(^\text{17}\) Subsequently, Medtner enjoyed greater popularity in England than anywhere else in
Europe.

Anna and Nikolaï spent the next summer in the French countryside. Emil stayed with
them. Many of their lifelong friends lived nearby: Rachmaninoff, Alfred Swan, with whom
Medtner had made acquaintance while in America, and the pianist Lev Konius (the brother of
Georgiï Konius, who had taught Medtner during his years at the Moscow Conservatory and
whose metrotectonic method I will use later in this dissertation to analyze Medtner’s

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\(^{17}\) Martyn, 199.
compositions). This friendly atmosphere lifted Mednter’s spirits, and his compositional work went well. The next autumn, his second tour of England took place, followed by another tour of the United States. The American tour was successful once again but, unfortunately, Medtner was paid by a check that proved worthless. As always, Rachmaninoff came to his friend’s rescue, buying the check at face value from Anna Medtner, who turned to him for advice (he hoped he would later get the money for the check, which he never did). From the United States, Medtner went straight to England for some recitals as well as several recording sessions for Columbia Records, which, however, were only trials and were not issued until 2004.18

Back in France, the composer had a difficult period. Burdened by financial difficulties and saddened by the health of his brother Emil (who was plunging ever deeper into depression), Medtner composed little. The publisher Zimmermann, much to Medtner’s distress, urged him to submit shorter, less difficult works, suitable for amateurs. Medtner devoted more time to writing Muza i moda instead of composing. During this time, he was awaiting a visa for another Russian tour, but the application was declined. The composer was able to see the publication of his book Muza i moda, in Russian, by Rachmaninoff’s Paris publishing house, “Tair,” in 1935. That same year, having visited England six times over the years, Medtner decided to make it his permanent residence, reasoning that his music was appreciated there more than elsewhere. The composer enjoyed a more rigorous concert schedule for the next few years, and he looked forward to having more students.

In 1936, Emil died of pneumonia, which was an immense blow to Nikolaï. Otherwise, the Medtners’ life in England was relatively stable, although Nikolaï did not compose much. With

18 These recordings, which include Beethoven’s “Appassionata” Sonata and numerous piano miniatures by Medtner himself, have now been issued as The Complete Solo Piano Recordings of Nikolas Medtner, Vol 1: the unpublished 1930–31 Columbia recordings, APR B000026A48, 2004, CD.
the outbreak of World War II in 1939, matters changed. After suffering in London for several months, the Medtners accepted an invitation from Nikolai’s pupil Edna Iles to move with her and her family to Wythall, away from the bombing. Later, they all moved even further away, settling near Stratford-upon-Avon. There, although greatly depressed by the news of Germany’s invasion of Russia, Medtner composed more, working on his Third Piano Concerto.

By 1942, Medtner had developed serious health problems and suffered a heart attack. After a slow recovery, he returned to London and premiered the Third Concerto, but it was not received well. Medtner was greatly embittered; in addition, health problems forced him to decline another tour of the Unites States.

Meanwhile, an Indian maharaja, Jaya Chamaraja Wadiyar, became greatly interested in Medtner’s music and formed a “Medtner Society,” which enabled the composer to make a series of recording of his works. This exciting project brightened the last years of Medtner’s life and inspired him to keep up his creative work in spite of his worsening health. Although not all projected recordings were realized, three albums containing the piano concertos,¹⁹ as well as many of the songs and solo piano works²⁰ became Medtner’s legacy thanks to Maharaja Wadiyar’s support. Having made the last recordings in the autumn of 1950, Medtner passed away a year later, on November 13th, 1951.

¹⁹ Nikolai Medtner, Piano Concerto No. 1, Nikolai Medtner (piano) and the Philharmonia Orchestra, conducted by George Weldon, Recorded 1947, MP3 file, http://medtner.org.uk/mp3_files.html, also available on compact disc from http://www.historic-recordings.co.uk/EZ/hr/hr/index.php, HRCD0004, transferred form HMV DB0069/4; Medtner Plays Medtner: Piano Concertos No. 2 and 3, Nikolas Medtner (piano) and the Philharmonia Orchestra, conducted by Issay Dobrown, Testament B002PNJVD8, 1994 (originally released 1948), compact disc.

²⁰ These recordings, transferred by Yves Saint Laurent from the rare English HMV pressings, are available on compact discs from the St-Laurent Studio label (each compact disc includes a mixture of solo piano works and songs; the three piano concertos are also included, in volumes 1, 2, and 3 respectively): Vol. 1–YSL 78-004, Vol. 2–78-005, Vol. 3–YSL 78-006, Vol. 4–YSL 78-007, Vol. 5–YSL 78-023, Vol. 6–YSL 78-024, Vo. 7–YSL 78-027. The discs are most readily available from http://www.78experience.com/welcome.php?mod=disque&disque_id=4
Nikolai Medtner’s compositional output is made up exclusively of works for piano or ones that include piano. They are piano sonatas, piano concertos (his only works with orchestra), character pieces (such as the Tales and other small and medium-length works), a few works for two pianos, also violin sonatas and smaller works for violin and piano, numerous songs, two large-scale wordless vocal works, and a piano quintet.

The Fourteen Piano Sonatas

Medtner completed the first of his fourteen piano sonatas in 1903 and the last in 1937. This body of work fully exhibits Medtner’s skillful handling of the form and his inspired originality. It is an important addition to the twentieth-century Russian sonata repertoire. Medtner’s first sonata is in a four-movement format, but thereafter he favored the single-movement format (the three sonatas of the Sonaten-Triade, op. 11; Sonata in G Minor, op. 22; Sonata in E Minor, op. 25, no. 2; Sonata in A Minor, op. 30; Sonata-Reminiscenza, op. 38, no. 1; Sonata tragica, op. 39, no. 5; and Sonata minacciosa, op. 53, no. 2) and the two- or three-movement format (Märchen-Sonate, op. 25, no. 1; Sonate-Ballade, op. 27; and Sonate-Idylle, op. 56). Medtner went back to the four-movement format only once, in Sonata romantica, op. 53, no. 1. In addition to the mood-indicating titles, some of the sonatas are prefaced with poetic epigraphs. The sonatas are of varied lengths, but most of them are grandiose. Many are technically difficult for the performer and pose challenges for recreating the composer’s musical intentions as well.

The Sonata in F Minor, op. 5 was composed in 1902–3 and, aside from unpublished youthful attempts at sonata form, was the composer’s first sonata and his first large-scale work.
Geoffrey Tozer, in his performance note to the sonata, calls it “astonishingly mature.” The great pianist Joseph Hofmann, whom Medtner first met in 1902 (the two became lifelong friends) and to whom he showed his new compositions, called the first movement of the sonata “a perfect whole.” Far from depending on bravura and showy pianistic effects, the F Minor Sonata features skillful thematic development and clarity of formal design.

By 1907, Medtner completed his next three piano sonatas, which constitute the *Sonaten-Triade*, op. 11. Sonata in A-flat Major, *Sonate-Elegie*, in D Minor, and Sonata in C Major are dedicated to the memory of Andreĭ Bratenshi, Medtner’s brother-in-law who had committed suicide. The epigraph to the collection consists of the closing lines of Goethe’s three-part poem *Trilogy of Passion*, the parts of which are “To Werther,” “Elegy,” and “Reconciliation.” The content of the poem’s three parts may help reveal the meaning of the three sonatas. However, according to Anna Medtner, the poem should not be taken too literally as the works’ program, and Medtner later regretted having put the epigraph into the score.

Medtner composed his next piano sonata in 1909–10. Sonata in G Minor, op. 22, dedicated to the composer and theorist Grigoriï Catoire, is also a single-movement work, but one of much greater dimensions, dramatic power, and difficulty. This work originated in the composer’s mind as a multi-movement work, once bearing the title Concerto-Sonata. It impresses pianists and theorists alike with its ingenuity of construction and strong sense of unity and has been compared to Liszt’s B Minor Sonata.

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22 Martyn, 38.
23 Martyn, 42.
24 Tozer, “Performance Notes,” iv.
Composed a year later, *Märchen-Sonate* in C Minor, op. 25, no. 1, is a three-movement work with motivic connections between the movements. It is shorter and simpler, with interesting harmonic twists and intricate rhythms. The music impresses the ear with lyricism and a certain feeling of fantasy. This sonata is dedicated to Alexander Goedicke. Completed by the end of 1911, the other sonata of the same opus, Sonata in E minor, op. 25, no. 2 (“Night Wind”), is in striking contrast with *Märchen-Sonate*. Dedicated to Rachmaninoff, this monumental one-movement work bears as an epigraph the poem “O chem ty voesh, vetr nochnoi…?” (“What are you howling about, night wind…?”) by the famous Russian poet Fëdor Tiutchev. The composer also includes a performance direction, “Vsia p’esa v épicheskom duhe” (The whole piece in epic spirit). This extremely difficult work runs for over thirty minutes and is believed by some to be Medtner’s most important addition to the piano sonata repertoire, as well as the most taxing and challenging.

Medtner worked on *Sonate-Ballade*, in F-sharp Major, op. 27, from 1912 to 1914. Originally consisting only of the first movement, the sonata was later reworked by the composer to include a second movement—*Introduzione e Finale*. The sketches reveal that Medtner’s inspiration for the work was Afanasiĭ Fet’s poem about Christ’s temptation by Satan in the desert, “Kogda Bozhestvennyi bezhal liudskikh rechei” (When the Divine fled human speech). The Introduzione is marked with the line “Satan stole away” and the Finale with the line “And the angels came.” *Sonate-Ballade* is, on the whole, a reflection of the human soul’s struggle to choose light over darkness. Medtner uses the switch between F-sharp major and F-sharp minor tonalities to suggest this duality. The Finale features extensive use of fugue as a developmental technique.

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25 Martyn, 85.
26 Tozer, “Performance Notes,” v.
Medtner wrote the Sonata in A Minor, op. 30, during the World War I. It portrays the dark mood of the times and is therefore known as the “War Sonata.”\textsuperscript{27} It is in a single movement and, like in *Sonate-Ballade*, Medtner uses major-minor mode alternation for the portrayal of contrasting emotions, with the major mode prevailing in the end. The A Minor Sonata is dedicated to the pianist Lev Konius.

The composer’s following piano sonata was one of his personal favorites. *Sonata-Reminiscenza*, in A Minor, op. 38, no. 1, is part of *Forgotten Melodies*, first cycle (there would be a second and a third cycle with this name in Medtner’s output). Composed in 1918–20, the music is a remembrance of Medtner’s world before it was disturbed by World War I and the Russian revolution. This lyrical work is a nostalgic reflection on times forever gone. The cycle contains eight works, of which the sonata is the longest.\textsuperscript{28}

Medtner’s next sonata, *Sonata tragica*, in C Minor, op. 39, no. 5, is part of *Forgotten Melodies*, second cycle. Although a single-movement work, it has, according the Medtner’s wish, to be prefaced in performance by the fourth piece of the cycle, the short “Canzona matinata.” After *Sonata tragica*, there was a period of over ten years during which Medtner composed no piano sonatas.

Medtner returned to the piano sonata genre in 1930, while living in Paris. *Sonata romantica*, in B-flat Minor, op. 53, no. 1, is in four movements (Romanza, Scherzo, Meditazione, and Finale) with all the movements performed *attaca*. Interestingly, this work contains direct quotations from Medtner’s Sonata in G Minor, op. 22, and *Märchen-Sonate*, as

\textsuperscript{27} Martyn, 109.
\textsuperscript{28} The other pieces are “Danza graziosa,” “Danza festiva,” “Canzona fluviala,” “Danza rustica,” “Canzona serenata,” “Danza silvestra,” and “Alla reminiscenza.” “Canzona serenata” and “Alla reminiscenza” are thematically related to *Sonata-Reminiscenza*. 
well as allusions to Balakirev’s Sonata in B-flat Minor and Tchaikovsky’s First Piano Concerto.  

The companion to Sonata romantica is Sonata minacciosa, in F Minor, op. 53, no. 2, composed slightly later. This turbulent single-movement work is dedicated to the Canadian pianist and composer Alfred LaLiberte, a great admirer of Medtner’s music. Medtner referred to it as “my most contemporary composition, for it reflects the threatening atmosphere of contemporary events.” Barrie Martyn argues that this work portrays the composer at his most rigorously intellectual. 

Medtner’s last piano sonata, Sonata-Idylle, in G major, op. 56, was completed in 1937 in London. The composer started working on it two years before, in Paris. The work is in two movements. The short first movement is appropriately titled Pastorale and the second, much longer, is marked Allegro moderato e cantabile (sempre al rigore di tempo). Technically simpler than most of the composer’s other sonatas, it is imbued with a mood of innocent calm. This sonata is dedicated “to my friends, L. E. and O. N. Konius.”

The Three Piano Concertos

Medtner, a master of formal design, as indicated by his skillful and unorthodox treatment of form in the piano sonatas, wrote three fascinating works in the piano concerto genre. However, the task of orchestration seemed to pose an immense problem for him. As the composer himself revealed, he did not consider instrumental color to be of much importance—unlike themes and harmony—and, therefore, the task of assigning parts to various instruments

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30 Quoted in Martyn, 207.
31 Martyn, 207.
was tedious and uninteresting to him, on top of his admitted lack of technical skill as an orchestrator.  

The three piano concertos are Medtner’s only works to include the orchestra. Although they have been criticized for certain bleakness in orchestration, it can be argued that their merits outweigh this flaw. The musical material is very interesting, and the treatment of form is ingenious.

The Piano Concerto No. 1, in C Minor, op. 33, was composed while Medtner was still living in Russia, during World War I. Medtner started working on the concerto in 1914 and finished the piano score in a year. He spent two more years orchestrating the work. The work was premiered in May 1918 at the Moscow Nezlobin Theater, with the composer as soloist and Koussevitzky conducting. Medtner had originally planned to dedicate the concerto to his brother Emil but eventually the dedication went to the memory of Medtner’s mother Alexandra Karlovna, who died of pneumonia in March of that year. The concerto is cast in a long single movement, quite extraordinary in formal design. I will discuss this concerto in detail in Chapter Four.

Medtner’s Piano Concerto No. 2, op. 50, also in C Minor, dates from his first two years in France, 1925–26. However, it was most likely begun in Russia in 1921 and then abandoned for several years, before the composer returned to it in 1926, giving the first performance of the work during his Russian tour of 1927. The concerto has three movements: Toccata, Romanza, and Divertimento. The final movement is in the major mode. Richard Holt calls the concerto “a

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33 See Medtner’s letter to Emil Medtner (dated 14 May, 1918), in Nikolaî Medtner, Pis’ma, 176.
34 Martyn, 180.
compound of the classical and romantic styles” and comments on its “spirit of exuberance.”\textsuperscript{35} Barrie Martyn notes that the title of the second movement is probably after Mozart (K. 466) and Chopin (Piano Concerto No. 1), while the form of the last movement, a rondo, and the fact that its theme starts at the end of the second movement, is Medtner’s homage to Beethoven (Piano Concerto No. 5).\textsuperscript{36}

Piano Concerto No. 3, in E Minor, op. 60, subtitled “Ballade,” was composed in England in 1941–43. A wartime piece (like the First Concerto), the Third Concerto is, however, removed from the influences of the real world and infused instead with a purely imaginative content. The concerto is in three movements. The second movement, Interludium, is a brief introduction to the third. According to Medtner’s own program notes for a recital in England, the concerto’s first movement is connected to Lermontov’s ballade “Rusalka” (“The Mermaid”). Medtner wrote:

The first movement is tied to Lermontov’s ballade “Rusalka.” Swimming down a deep moonlit river, Rusalka is singing of a life underwater, of crystal cities, and of a sleeping knight “of a faraway land” who remains “numb and silent” to her kisses. With this, Lermontov’s ballade, as well as the concerto’s first movement, ends (is interrupted). But in the Interludium and Finale, Lermontov’s Knight—who, to me, portrays the human spirit, lulled and put to sleep by the charms of earthly life (“the river”)—slowly awakens, rises, and sings his song. This song turns into a hymn of sorts in the concerto’s coda.\textsuperscript{37}

In spite of writing this, the composer was worried about imposing an overly definitive program on the music, and, according to his wife, said that the connection between the concerto

\textsuperscript{36} Martyn, 183.
\textsuperscript{37} Quoted in Anna Medtner, “O Nikolae Karloviche Metnere” (on Nikolaĭ Karlovich Medtner), in Zarui Apetian, ed., Vospominaniia, stat’i, materialy (Recollections, articles, materials), (Moscow: Muzyka, 1981), 44. All translations from Russian to English in this and other chapters are my own unless otherwise noted.
and Lermontov’s ballade was only in certain emotions and feelings that Lermontov and Medtner
himself happened to share.  

Character Pieces— the Tales and Other Small and Medium Forms for Piano Solo; the Two
Cadenzas for Beethoven’s Fourth Piano Concerto.

Of Medtner’s smaller works, the most well-known, loved, and played are the Tales. The
Russian title Skazki or the German Märchen used by the composer is often translated into
English as Fairy Tales, which, arguably, distorts the meaning of the title, as the Russian folklore
hardly includes fairies. “Tales” is a more appropriate translation. The thirty-four works are
diverse in mood, length, and formal design (although none of them is very long) and usually
possess a character of storytelling and often an air of fantasy. Nine of them have titles, such as
wrote the Tales throughout his life, their opus numbers ranging from 8 to 51.

Medtner composed a variety of other small- and medium-length piano works. His first
published opus, for example, was a collection of eight Stimmungsbilder (Mood pictures). Other
titles used by the composer for his character pieces include “Improvisation,” “Arabesque,”
“Novelle,” “Lyric Fragment,” “Dythiramb,” “Hymn,” and “Elegy.” These pieces were usually
composed and published in sets of three or four. Important among this part of Medtner’s output
are the three cycles of Forgotten Melodies, opp. 38, 39, and 40. As mentioned above, op. 38
includes Sonata-Reminiscenza and op. 39 includes Sonata tragica. The other member pieces of
the collections are shorter works. Medtner wrote various character pieces throughout his life, the
last being Two Elegies, op. 59.

38 Anna Medtner, 45.
Worthy of mention here are Medtner’s two cadenzas for Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 4. The concerto was a work he admired and he performed it frequently.

Two-Piano Works

Medtner composed two pieces for piano duo: *Russian Round Dance*, op. 58, no. 1 and *Knight Errant*, op. 58, no. 2. Both were started in the late 1930s, but *Russian Round Dance* was completed in 1940, while *Knight Errant* was finished much later, around 1946. *Russian Round Dance*, dedicated to Edna Iles, is subtitled *Skazka* (Tale) and is a charming, bright-spirited piece. *Knight Errant* is a longer and more serious piece, but not without elements of humor. It is dedicated to the two-piano ensemble of Vronsky and Babin—Russian-born American musicians.

Works for Violin and Piano

Medtner wrote his first violin works for his brother Alexander, who in 1907 switched his concentration from playing the viola to playing the violin. The Three Nocturnes, op. 16, get their name from the title of Goethe’s poem “Nachtgesang” (Night song), which tells of the subliminal power of sleep. The poem serves as an epigraph to the works. All three pieces are in the minor mode, within which lies a great variety of emotional shades.

The composer wrote three violin sonatas. The first, in B minor, op. 21, was premiered in March 1910 by Alexander Medtner with the composer at the piano. Its three movements have Italian titles: Canzona, Danza, and Ditirambo. This sonata is relatively popular and is the most performed of Medtner’s violin sonatas.
The next violin sonata Medtner wrote differs significantly from the first. Written during 1922–25, Sonata in G major, op. 44, is dedicated to Alexander Goedicke. It is large in scope, its three movements running for a total of about fifty minutes, and it features great expressive nuance. The first movement is a passionate sonata allegro preceded by a cadenza-like introduction, the middle movement is made up of variations on a theme of remarkable lyrical beauty, and the finale is a spirited rondo.

With his second violin sonata, Medtner composed another work for violin and piano simultaneously—Two Canzonas with Dances, op. 43. The two pieces in each pair have the same tonality but contrasting moods. They are well-crafted and pleasant pieces, yet they do not quite make as deep an impression on the listener as do the sonatas.

Medtner started his last violin sonata, the Sonata in E minor, op. 57, “Epica,” in 1936, the year of Emil’s death, and completed it by the end of 1938. This monumental work is dedicated to Emil’s memory. The first of the sonata’s four movements features, like the opening movement of the second sonata, a slow introduction. It is followed by agitated, turbulent music in the exposition. Interestingly, the slow material comes back at the end of the movement. The second movement is a scherzo, whose melodic turns have a Russian folk-like flavor (as do the finale’s themes, too). The slow third movement is in F minor.

**Vocal Works**

Medtner wrote over one hundred songs. Franz Schubert, Robert Schumann, and Hugo Wolf clearly influenced Medtner’s style. Medtner’s piano parts are complex and difficult. He often treats the voice as another part of the polyphonic texture. Medtner’s favorite poets were
Goethe and Pushkin; he also set works by Heine, Nietzsche, Chamisso, and Eichendorff, as well as the Russian poets Fet, Tiutchev, and Lermontov.

Medtner also composed two wordless vocal works—Sonata-Vocalise and Suite-Vocalise, op. 41, no. 1 and no. 2. Sonata-Vocalise was composed in 1922 and published two years later. It is dedicated to Anna Medtner. A vocal setting of Goethe’s poem “Geweihter Platz” (Hallowed ground), which precedes the sonata, informs us of the poetic content of this wordless work. The poem is beautiful and mysterious, telling about the poet’s ability to see and absorb, in the nighttime, the secret glories of heaven and earth and to communicate them to the muses, who then inspire the poet to tell of these secrets modestly in order to avert gods’ wrath. Following Medtner’s setting of this poem is a single-movement work in which the wordless voice is used not only as the main melodic line but also in counterpoint against the pianist’s right hand (which in that case assumes the leading role).

The second work of op. 41, Suite-Vocalise, was composed later, in 1927, and published in 1931. Based on the same poem by Goethe, it consists of five short movements with programmatic titles: “Introduction,” “Song of the Nymphs,” “Mysteries,” “Procession of the Graces,” and “What the Poet Says.” Medtner’s writing style in the Suite gives it an antique flavor, in agreement with the content.

The Piano Quintet

The Piano Quintet in C Major, op. posth., was the very last work completed by the aged composer. Medtner attached great importance to this piece because he believed that in it, he had achieved a simplicity and clarity that were natural and not artificially imposed.\(^{39}\) Moreover, the

\(^{39}\) Anna Medtner, 42.
composer worked on the quintet for over forty years! The first sketches for it were made in 1905, but the work was not completed until 1949. The quintet is Medtner’s most spiritual composition; Barrie Martyn calls it “overtly religious.” According to Medtner’s student Edna Iles, it is a work dedicated to God.

The first movement of the three-movement quintet features an adaptation of the “Dies Irae” melody, a thirteenth century hymn about judgment day; its words were originally set to music as plainchant. The melody is famous as it has been used extensively by composers to suggest the theme of mortality. Medtner also quotes a theme of his own, previously used in Sonate-Ballade (the sonata based on Fet’s poem of spiritual content) as well as in his song “The Muse,” where the text mentions “songs magnificent, inspired by gods immortal.” The second movement of the work is inspired by Psalm 24, David’s penitential prayer. It is a very personal utterance of a man who has lived through the greater part of his life and has experienced, like nearly anyone, things that make his heart heavy. The second movement gives way, without a formal break, to a vigorous finale, which is complex, featuring themes from the previous movements and a triumphant, high-spirited conclusion.

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40 Martyn, 248.
41 Martyn, 249.
42 Martyn, 249.
43 Konsistorum, 70.
Chapter Two: Medtner’s Musical Style

Medtner’s Musicological and Pedagogical Writings

Medtner’s artistic beliefs are expressed in his book *Muza i moda* (*The Muse and the Fashion*). In this book, Medtner shares his thoughts about the art of music composition, noting how it had developed in the past, describing its present state, and wondering what the future may bring. In the preface, Medtner says that his book is also a critique of the modernistic movement in music—of an ideology that has “ruined the connection between an artist’s soul and his art.”

At the very opening of the book, Medtner assures his reader that it is impossible to talk about music, since music itself is more precise than words at expressing one’s feelings and thoughts; music is the most precise language. Yet, while music itself is beyond verbal description and analysis, its elements (Russian *elementy*) are discernible and have indeed long been discerned—that is why music as a great historical art exists. These elements from which music is made—its roots—are not disparate sound-atoms (*razroznennye atomy zvukov*), like separate letters of a language, but complexly constructed meanings (*smysly*) that are combinations of musical sounds, like words of a language. In the same way as spoken words of a language (each one carrying a specific meaning understood by all speakers of that language) had developed before separate letters of the alphabet (those were later carved out of words), musical meanings had existed before the “alphabet” of separate sounds became known. Musical meanings need not be justified, since each one of them as well as their interrelationships are

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44 Nikolai Medtner, *Muza i moda*, 3. All ideas, tables, and terms from this book appear here in my own translation.  
45 Nikolai Medtner, 3–4.
subjects of the human spirit—which, in its primeval urge to express that which it is impossible to say, had once produced the original song.46

Medtner argues that only a person who believes that all musical art is inseparably tied to that original song (the initial, mystical, meaning) is able to properly understand and value the meanings contained in music’s elements. Only one who cherishes the sacred connection to music’s roots may be granted a mastery of musical language. The endless variety of individual contents in works of music as well as a multitude of forms has been possible through and owning to this connection; this variety has been based not on completely new musical meanings but on a constant renewal of them through their coordination. A musical genius is one who is able to coordinate (soglasovat’) all musical meanings into a single meaning.47

Medtner then describes the so-called “law of coordination into unity” (zakon soglasovaniia v edinstvo). According to this law, the basic elements (meanings) of music exist in pairs; one of the elements in each pair is the center to which the other one of the same pair is perpetually attracted. Below is Medtner’s table showing how the basic musical meanings are subject to the law of coordination into unity.48

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46 Nikolai Medtner, 5.
47 Nikolai Medtner, 6.
48 This table appears in Medtner, 7.
Table 2.1: Medtner’s chart showing the central and surrounding elements of music.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center</th>
<th>Surroundings (attracted toward the center)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Existence of song</td>
<td>• Great art of music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Spirit of music—its unsaid theme</td>
<td>• Sounded songs—its themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unity</td>
<td>• Plenitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Homogeneity</td>
<td>• Variety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Contemplation</td>
<td>• Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inspiration (intuition)</td>
<td>• Craftsmanship (development)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Simplicity</td>
<td>• Complexity (of coordination)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rest</td>
<td>• Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Light</td>
<td>• Shade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Medtner’s opinion, unity and simplicity achieved through complexity of coordination should be an artist’s main goal; unity is achieved by organizing variety. The movement toward unity is via the road of the highest resistance and requires strength of spirit while the movement toward uncoordinated multitude and unresolvable complexity happens by inertia, via the road of low resistance, and leads to chaos. Complex organization of musical elements is often unavoidable but it has to be balanced out by the simplicity of those elements—the simpler the elements the more complex their combinations. Unbalanced complexity is a great flaw often
present in modernist music, Medtner argues. Medtner gives the following examples of balancing out the simple and the complex:

1) The simplicity of tonality and its basic chords allows for the complexity of polyphony. The complexity of polytonality excludes the possibility of it being a basis for polyphony.
2) The relative simplicity of Beethoven’s themes and harmonies allows for an easier comprehension of the endless complexity of his formal designs (architectonics). The simplicity and sectional design of Chopin’s dance forms and Schubert’s song forms made it possible to construct complex and rather long melodic lines, while the complexity and length of a sonata form requires shorter, simpler melodies.
3) Complexity of rhythm asks for a strict simplicity of meter, while complex meters are more comprehensible when relatively simple rhythms fill out the measures.

The reason Medtner is dissatisfied with most innovations in music composition is that, to him, they create imbalance between the simple and the complex by ruining the simplicity of the basic element-meanings of music. Medtner argues for preserving the basic traditional rules of music composition, which are not dead schemes but living symbols for the timeless laws of musical relationships. These common practice rules and the elements of music that are subject to these rules are indeed the same for everyone. Inimitability of a great musical work’s content does not depend on inimitability of the basic elements from which it is made, Medtner writes. The origins and reasons for the existence of a common musical language constitute an inexplicable mystery, he adds.

Medtner provides another table which he calls “An approximate chart of the basic meanings of musical language” (Priblizitel’naia skhema osnovnykh smyslov muzykal’nogo iazyka). It is shown below:

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49 Nikolai Medtner, 8–9.
50 Nikolai Medtner, 10.
51 Nikolai Medtner, 11–12.
52 This table appears in Medtner, 13.
Table 2.2: Medtner’s chart of the basic meanings of musical language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center</th>
<th>Surroundings (attracted toward the center)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Contemplated sound (heard with the mind’s ear)</td>
<td>• The played or written down sound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Time— musical plane</td>
<td>• The movement in time of all musical meanings and elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Horizontal line of harmony—the proper placement of tones</td>
<td>• Vertical line of harmony—the harmonic content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The tonic (the main note of a mode, scale, or tonality)</td>
<td>• Mode, scale, tonality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The diatonic scale (diatonicism)</td>
<td>• The chromatic scale (chromaticism)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Consonance (as interval)</td>
<td>• Dissonance (as interval)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The tonic chord (the main triad of a tonality)</td>
<td>• The dominant chord (the coordinating triad of a tonality)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tonality</td>
<td>• Modulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The prototypes of consonant chords—triads and their inversions</td>
<td>• The prototypes of dissonant chords—seventh chords and their inversions; ninth chords and their inversions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The prototypes of other chords and their inversions</td>
<td>• Non-harmonic tones and groups of tones</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking at this table, one sees that Medtner was a firm believer in traditional music theory. He explains the above table in-depth, concluding that the diatonic basis of music and the chromaticism that surrounds it and colors it anew (also allowing for modulation) have for centuries been giving great masters infinite freedom in expressing their individualities. Medtner argues against new theories of music composition, saying that their complexity obscures the basic element-meanings of music. The simpler a theory the closer to life it is and the more productive its use by artists.⁵³

⁵³ Nikolai Medtner, 13–22.
Medtner devotes a separate section to “the theme and its development,” discussing several other elements of music in more detail here as well. The composer writes that a work’s theme is the seed of its form, and the theme’s development lies at the heart of the entire form. To Medtner, a theme is not invented but acquired. The artist is to follow his intuition (German *Einfall*, Medtner notes) and remain true to it while composing. A composer’s work should remain justified by a constant contemplation of the work’s theme, which is not always a melody—it constitutes a much broader concept. Yet, it often is expressed as a melody, as it is most easily comprehended in that guise.\(^{54}\)

Form, to Medtner, is also inseparable from harmony. Harmonic movement is a form’s content that gives it meaning. A complex form (like the sonata form) is genetically tied to simpler forms and their subformations—periods, sentences, cadences, construction of the governing mode, and finally, the tonic. Thus, an atonal sonata is a nonsensical phenomenon.\(^{55}\)

Medtner does not consider rhythm to be one of the basic element-meanings of music, since, however important it is in music, it is not a specifically musical element. It exists in dance and poetry too, and, often, by its power the three arts (music, poetry, and dance) are merged into one. Rhythm is an element of great importance but is still secondary to harmony. Similarly, “sonority” (*zvuchnosti’*), which Medtner defines as the “dynamic, color, and quality of sound” (*dinamika, kolorit, kachestvo zvuka*) is not a basic element of music but a subordinate, “service” (*sluzhebnyi*) element. Sonority appeals not to our spirit and our thought but rather to our ear; it does not define the meaning or the value of a musical work. Yet, the function of sonority is very important as it enhances the power of other musical elements. A theme, in the sense Medtner

\(^{54}\) Nikolai Medtner, 24–5.

\(^{55}\) Nikolai Medtner, 28.
understands it, cannot dwell in either rhythm or sonority, yet it may be contained in the harmony of a given work, existing without any melodic shape.\textsuperscript{56}

Medtner strongly emphasizes his great respect for traditional music theory and his firm belief in its timeless value. Its rules, he argues, are necessary to guide emerging musicians who, upon becoming mature artists, no longer consciously deploy them; those rules remain in the background as hidden pathways toward the infinitely complex laws of musical creation.\textsuperscript{57}

Medtner proceeds to talk about the disciplines of harmony and counterpoint, concluding that the two styles are complementary. The rules governing both styles are the same; they are common musical rules that allow for exceptions and compromises.\textsuperscript{58} Medtner writes that, sadly, modernist music bases itself precisely on those compromises. Too many exceptions to the natural musical laws result not in an “individualistic emphasizing” (\textit{individual’noe podcherkivanie}) of certain musical meanings—like in the music of many great composers of the past—but in a “willful crossing-out” (\textit{proizvol’noe vycherkivanie}) of these meanings. Medtner wonders why the concept of a mistake has ceased to exist in the field of composition, while remaining valid in the field of music performance—just like in any other craft, even a simple one. The arts, however, have freed themselves from such responsibility.\textsuperscript{59}

Balance is everything, Medtner says yet again. He criticizes certain kinds of modern harmony for their discordant simultaneities and the overly simplistic, mechanical way those chords combine with one another and progress. He also criticizes neoclassicism, saying that the movement is a mere bow to fashion. Moreover, the neo-classic movement’s slogan “back to

\textsuperscript{56} Nikolai Medtner, 28–31.
\textsuperscript{57} Nikolai Medtner, 32.
\textsuperscript{58} Nikolai Medtner, 42.
\textsuperscript{59} Nikolai Medtner, 51.
simplicity” is questionable: simplicity cannot be taken for granted even by a genius. “Gods alone live in simplicity,” Medtner says. It is achieved by the infinite complexity of coordination of musical elements. The simpler those elements the more complex and stricter the rules governing their coordination are.60 With this remark, Medtner finishes Part One of *Muza i moda*.

In Part Two, the composer expresses his thoughts about the eternal versus the temporarily fashionable in music. He says that following the demands of fashion is synonymous with inertness. Instead of listening to what fashion dictates, one should try to attune one’s ears to the true “intonation of musical meanings” (*intonatsiia muzykal’nyh smyslov*). The ability to do that is more important than having “perfect pitch” in the common sense of the term. Medtner bewails the loss of artistic consciousness by many of his contemporaries, who have been disposing of music’s “lawful prohibitions” and adopting a theory of “prohibiting all prohibitions”—an “unlawful” condition, to Medtner.61

Discussing modern composers, Medtner is ardently critical. He defines three types of musical modernists: first, those who write “nonsensical” music from the start, using the musical language without the proper knowledge of its meanings; second, those who have the mastery of the language but, seeing no perspective in its traditional use (because of their own artistic incompetency), use its elements in strange new ways, naively calling that a new musical language; third, those who have great musical skill and technique yet distrust what Medtner calls “musical Logos” (*razum muzyki, muzykal’nyi Logos*), creating “artistic madness” (*hudozhestvennoie bezumie*) by deliberately “playing” with the notes.62

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60 Nikolai Medtner, 52–3.
61 Nikolai Medtner, 56–7.
62 Nikolai Medtner, 61.
Worst of all, for Medtner, is that the concept of serving the Muse is outdated for the majority of modern composers. In their work, each stands for himself/herself only instead of representing the art of music at large. In Medtner’s view, to such composers genius seemed to be measured by the degree of novelty, while true genius in art is the ability to see into the depths of the art’s meanings, developing those meanings in broad new ways. Medtner writes:

A simple theme, dressed into the simplest harmonies and the most primitive rhythms, yet impressed with the inspiration and individuality of its author, is an example of the complexity of a mysterious and sacred union of the author’s personality and the spirit of music—its deepest roots.63

Medtner writes that for human comprehension, artistic truth is always simple, whereas the road to it is complex. Conversely, artistic falsity seems complex, while the ways by which it is created are usually not. Medtner then introduces the concept of “work versus business”—writing about how the genuine artist follows his inspiration to create a work of art, often struggling to find the true theme and meaning of the work and failing to make any material profit, while the businessman undertaking a project in music composition deliberately regulates the process so as to fit his material goals.

Regarding musical form, Medtner writes that since the musical content of a work is always beyond exact definition, the form that holds that content should be well defined. In this way, the whole is made comprehensible. When one tries to define the musical content with words (as in so-called program music), the inadequately “translated” meaning of the music can ruin the form. Medtner is therefore critical of such program music where the purely musical

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63 Nikolai Medtner, 62.
meaning and the balance of form are compromised—for instance, songs where the text controls the music too much.\textsuperscript{64}

Medtner criticizes all aspects of his contemporary musical world, bewailing its deterioration and loss of traditional values. In his opinion, it seemed required of composers to articulate “the topic of a problem” (\textit{tema problemy}), which tended to focus our attention on the given composer’s theoretical research rather than on his or her artistic achievement. There was a fear of clarity found in music’s basic, primary meanings and forms.\textsuperscript{65}

Medtner writes, “The greatest joy in comprehending a musical work is the unexpected meeting with the forgotten images of eternity.”\textsuperscript{66} He adds: “A theme is that which \textit{is}; it is not that which accidentally happens. That is why those artists who looked toward the eternal rather than the accidental were able to handle form much better than we can.”\textsuperscript{67}

As difficult as it is for anyone accustomed to and appreciative of the many facets of modern musical art to agree with Medtner’s sharp criticism of anything based on principles other than strictly those of the Western classical tradition, it is nevertheless fascinating (as well as arguably vital for anyone venturing into a performance or analysis of his works) to read about his musical philosophy. \textit{Muza i moda} is a product of a great creative mind, and however inflexible Medtner’s views might be, they are provocative and well-developed.

\textsuperscript{64} Nikolai Medtner, 71.
\textsuperscript{65} Nikolai Medtner, 72–3.
\textsuperscript{66} Nikolai Medtner, 76.
\textsuperscript{67} Nikolai Medtner, 85.
Some additional interesting insights into Medtner as a musician come from his personal notebooks, which were compiled into a book after his death and published under the title *Povsednevnaia rabota pianista i kompozitora* (The daily work of a pianist and composer). The notebooks are in the form of separate pages, dating from 1916 to 1940. They were written and kept by Medtner for his own use, as reminders for his teaching as well as his own practice and composition. The notebooks allow one to glance into the creative process of the work of a great composer and performer who was also able to analyze this process very effectively.

Medtner writes, “It is necessary to focus well before starting any work and to know what to do and how to do just that.” Following this simple advice is a prerequisite for following his other, more complex, advice. Medtner considered it necessary to write down, as reminders, suggestions about posture, touch, dynamics, tempo control, relaxation, listening, and the right state of mind needed for successful practice and performance.

Medtner is against practice with a metronome—the device, to him, is incompetent in regulating “artistic movement.” A performer has to know whether a work is to be played *al rigore* or *flessibile* and take into consideration the smallest note values present in the work as well as his or her touch, pedaling, the piano to be used, and the acoustics. Medtner advocates practicing with the eyes closed, as this improves one’s ability to listen. Everything in music is

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born out of silence, Medtner says, and one has to “pull sounds out of the deepest silence using one’s hearing.”

Medtner thinks that one has to work energetically, learning many works simultaneously. In his opinion, the more varied and the larger the quantity of work one undertakes the better the outcome. Being well aware of one’s goals during practice allows for very effective work—Medtner himself, a pianist with amazing technique and skill, practiced for only about four hours each day (two hours in the morning and two in the evening).

Medtner advises to use less pedal, especially in practice situations—to “let the ears rest and to let one relax internally.” He says that solo and tutti dynamics achieved with the hands have to be substituted for a mechanical use of the damper and the soft pedals. The “outer and inner center” (vneshtii i vnutrennii tsentr) of a work is best established when the pedals are left out of the picture, Medtner explains (somewhat puzzlingly, as it is hard to know what he means by “the outer and inner center”). In another place in his notes, however, he writes the following about the so-called “center of movement” (tsentr dvizheniia):

In piano playing, like in any musical movement, the first and foremost is to find the axis, the point of support, the center toward which all movement is attracted. This refers to the posture, to finding the right fingering, to movement control, to dynamic and rhythmic nuances, in short—to everything.

Practicing fast pieces in slow tempo a lot and playing too many exercises is less valuable, Medtner says, than playing in medium and fast tempo and playing through actual pieces. It is good to find certain passages in one’s repertoire which address specific technical issues and

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74 Nikolai Medtner, *Povsednevnaia rabota*, 49.
practice those. Accents have to be minimized, and fingers are to be kept close to the keys.
Elasticity of the hand and fingers is crucial.\textsuperscript{75}

The editors of Medtner’s notebooks placed his remarks in regard to a composer’s work in a separate section. Quite interesting is Medtner’s remark that the principle of variety (complexity) leading to unity (simplicity), as described in \textit{Muza i moda}, can also be applied to the process of compositional work. Here, unity is the goal of one’s work and variety is the many ways of searching for this goal.\textsuperscript{76}

For a productive compositional work, writes Medtner, one must not focus for too long on any single detail as that distracts one from the goal and hinders the general progress. To work means to learn; even when one’s work fails to bring expected results, it is still beneficial as learning. To achieve success, it is necessary to work on those parts of one’s project which are easiest to move along and, by doing so, gradually get involved in the entire project. It is never good to persist if the project is not clear or when one is tired. The theme of a work must “develop on its own” (\textit{razlivat’sia sama soboi}), while developing one’s “unrestricted will” (\textit{nichem nesderzivaemaiia volia}) is wrong—that being a feature of much modernist music.\textsuperscript{77}

Medtner advocates quiet contemplation upon a theme, with the goal of finding rather than inventing various images of the theme. “Such meditation should, without doubt, suggest the sound-world of the composition and the lines of form of a given theme,” he writes. The

\textsuperscript{75} Nikolai Medtner, \textit{Povednevnaia rabota}, 41–6.
\textsuperscript{76} Nikolai Medtner, \textit{Povednevnaia rabota}, 62.
\textsuperscript{77} Nikolai Medtner, \textit{Povednevnaia rabota}, 63–4.
composer advises to notate the imagined immediately and in any way possible, be that with notes, words, or graphically. 78

Medter declares: “Let us care not about the “interesting”! It is the last thing needed in art.” 79 He says that the value of a work of art is determined by its theme and the potential of formal development that theme has (it is not important how long the form might be) rather than by ‘interesting’ tricks. His advice is to never think about getting one’s works published or get distracted by thinking about the external and the trite. It is also necessary to fight one’s own doubts and negativity. Medtner emphasizes the importance of imagination in any artist’s work, the need to imagine the end result of a project before it is complete and also the need to rise above the everyday reality when it hinders artistic progress.

The composer writes that the deepest and most musical thoughts cannot be a result of a conscious effort of the logical mind. Instead, they “fall from above as an unexpected gift.” The subsequent work with them (their development), though conscious, is meaningful only so long as the composer’s consciousness is full of a “belief in the theme” (vera v temu). 80

Medtner’s Style: Early Critical Views in English

One early critique of Medtner’s style is Ernest Newman’s 1915 article in Musical Times. 81 Newman writes that Medtner is proof that it is possible to work in the ordinary harmonic idiom and yet be original without clichés or imagined singularity. The composer’s “mastery of device was in excess of his invention” 82 in his young years, Newman suggests, thus

78 Nikolai Medtner, Povsednevnaia rabota, 65.
79 Nikolai Medtner, Povsednevnaia rabota, 66–9.
80 Nikolai Medtner, Povsednevnaia rabota, 73–4.
81 Newman, 9–11.
82 Newman, 9.
some of Medtner’s earlier works may have excess notes and be somewhat dry. Medtner’s superb pianism sometimes made him emerge too much into pianistic detail but as he matured, these faults subsided. Newman’s article is vague on some very interesting points—the critic cannot seem to take a stand on whether the composer’s music has Russian nationalistic traits or folk-like flavors to it, and also remains undecided on the much-debated issue of Medtner’s stylistic similarity with Brahms.

In 1922, Alfred J. Swan wrote a short article about Medtner, describing a few of the composer’s works and commenting on his style. Swan calls Medtner’s style “firm, rigid, somewhat uncouth,” and says that his thought is “concentrated, severe, ascetic, graphical rather than steeped in color.” Swan notes Medtner’s characteristically striking use of rhythm. He names Schumann and Brahms among the composer’s influences, but says that Medtner’s powerful individuality prevents pronounced similarities. Swan calls Medtner a “great songwriter” and refers to the First Piano Concerto as Medtner’s “most sublime work.”

Another early review of Medtner as composer was written in 1924 by Henry Gerstlé. Gerstlé firmly refutes the notion that Medtner is a “Russian version” of Brahms, arguing that the similarities between the two composers are insignificant. About Medtner’s so-called “old-fashioned” style, he says: “What is new today may be hopelessly outmoded ten years from now. On the other hand, a composer with an original idea may employ a common chord in a way that sounds entirely new and beautiful.” Gerstlé writes that at the foundation of Medtner’s style are his extraordinary technical equipment, his passion for perfection, his emotional sincerity and

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84 Swan, 617.
85 Swan, 619.
87 Gerstlé, 500.
88 Gerstlé, 501.
depth of imagination. He notes Medtner’s preference for dense textures that sometimes obscure the melody. Gerstlé understandably calls Medtner a “composer for musicians,” one whose music is difficult to play and to internalize. Yet, as soon as one gets sufficiently familiar with Medtner’s music, it appeals to both the heart and the mind. Medtner’s unity of thought and sense of proportion are remarkable; his sonata forms are original and flexibly fit his ideas. Gerstlé calls Medtner’s method of composition “painstaking” yet comments on the “ease and naturalness” of his employment of various complex compositional devices. He also points out that the composer’s endings are well managed.\(^9^9\) Indeed, in Muza i moda, Medtner wrote that at the time musical compositions were often not finished but interrupted; these unfortunate works were composed by people who were more businessmen than artists (Medtner notes that he adopted this point of view from his mentor Sergeĭ Taneev).\(^9^0\)

The Russian music critic Leonid Sabaneev wrote three articles about Medtner and his music, two in the late 1920s and one in 1936.\(^9^1\) According to Sabaneev, Medtner is not a contemporary composer and exists in isolation from modern art trends. Completely absorbed in his art, he has no regard for the practical and the showy. “He might be a prophet of the future, when art will be purified of all that’s incomprehensible, shallow, overly complex, turbulent,” Sabaneev writes.

To Sabaneev, Medtner’s ancestry lies mainly in the Western tradition, and he is basically out of place in the history of Russian music, though he was influenced by Taneev and some others (unnamed in the article). While many Russian composers were guilty of dilettantism, the

\(^{89}\) Gerstlé, 502.

\(^{90}\) Nikolai Medtner, Muza i moda, 68.


\(^{92}\) Sabaneev 1927, 328.
critic writes, Medtner was an absolute master.\textsuperscript{93} His forms are more complex than those of any of his contemporaries, and they are perfectly shaped. The whole sometimes gets obscured with an abundance of details, Sabaneev adds. He also writes: “Stern, ascetic, and colorless—such is Medtner. His temples are always constructed of the same granite, hard, durable, grey.”\textsuperscript{94}

According to Sabaneev, Medtner is neither a melodist nor a colorist; he works with rhythm and the highest forms of tonal reaction. His melody is of the abstract type, akin to that of late Beethoven. Interestingly, Sabaneev notes that Medtner thinks “polytonally and polyrhythmically,”\textsuperscript{95} while Medtner, in his own writings, speaks against polytonality with great zeal. Probably, Sabaneev uses the term referring to Medtner’s dense textures.

Sabaneev calls Medtner “undoubtedly original, in spite of producing nothing ultramodern, sensational or utterly unexpected.” He continues, “Medtner is a serious talent; it is none of his business to provide musical smiles, jokes, or sarcasms; his operation are confined to the sphere of moods, either painful or philosophically profound.”\textsuperscript{96} Medtner defied the fashionable taste and believed in art for art’s sake. His compositions seem “impressed with the seal of eternity.”\textsuperscript{97}

In his 1941 review of Medtner’s music, the English critic Sydney Miller points to some of the same characteristics of Medtner’s style as Sabaneev does, offering some new points about it as well.\textsuperscript{98} Miller emphasizes both Medtner’s strong connection with the German classical tradition and his “Russianness,” saying that the merging of the two traits is “individual and

\textsuperscript{93} Sabaneev 1927, 330.
\textsuperscript{94} Sabaneev 1927, 331.
\textsuperscript{95} Sabaneev 1927, 332.
\textsuperscript{96} Sabaneev 1928, 209 (emphasis original).
\textsuperscript{97} Sabaneev 1927, 334.
distinctive.” The author also notes Medtner’s beautifully pianistic writing that one can feel under the hand. Like some other Medtner reviewers, he finds Medtner melodies rather “Beethovenian”—made of short fragments, suitable for development and manipulation.

Miller says that Medtner’s style changed very little over the years; the composer wrote surprisingly mature music even in his youth. The only slight changes that happened overtime to Medtner’s style were, according to Miller, a certain lightening of texture and the inclusion of the element of humor. Medtner handled sonata form with great skill—it was the perfect mold for his large works, giving him a chance to use his scholastic mind. In conclusion, Miller says something that, although said seventy-five years ago, may be applied today:

The pianist of today, surrounded by the treasury of great music accumulated during the past two hundred years, shows a certain reluctance to venture outside those golden walls. Those who wish so to venture will find in Medtner a vast, fertile, and relatively unexplored field. That he is less widely known that many contemporaries of far inferior merit is perhaps because intellectual subtlety and avoidance of sensual appeal always take longer to make in impression than luscious romanticism, flamboyance, or violent iconoclasm; but the quality of his work augurs a growing and enduring interest when many of the ephemerae of today will have become merely names.

After Medtner’s death in 1951, a number of memorial publications appeared. An interesting overview of Medtner’s three piano concertos was written by Richard Holt. Whereas most critics agree that orchestration is not Medtner’s strength (the composer himself admitted that orchestration was a difficult and tedious process for him), Holt argues that his orchestration is excellent. According to Holt, Medtner chooses one or more individual instruments to skillfully put them in counterpoint with the piano. Also, Holt praises the

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99 Miller, 362.
100 Miller, 363.
101 Miller, 393.
102 Miller, 394.
103 Miller, 395.
composer’s “striking and expressive” woodwind coloring, his “plastic handling of the material,” and his “rhythmic piquancy and diversity.”

About Medtner’s themes, Holt writes: “Medtner once stated that in his concertos, the themes resemble characters in a drama” He explains how Medtner subtly changes his themes, combines and juxtaposes them in various ways to achieve great variety. Holt also analyzes Medtner’s use of color, saying that it is not an important objective in Medtner’s music—at least, not the kind applied as a maquillage from the outside to hide poverty of thought. Medtner’s color lies in the potentialities of harmony: “In that sense, his music is really colorful.”

Another posthumous critique of Medtner as composer was written in 1951 by Arthur Alexander. Alexander calls Medtner a “master writer” for the piano, akin to Chopin. Medtner’s contrapuntal technique is superb, his melodies are memorable and individual, and his rhythms are varied and original. About the composer’s “old-fashioned” style, Alexander says this:

Medtner came too late and too soon, it may be said that he came too late to enjoy the full success of his work as one of the great Imaginative-Romantics, and too soon to see music-lovers tire of that particular type of composition (lately fashionable but already beginning to show signs of wear and tear) much of which is arid, scrappy, and without a recognizable melodic line, architecture, or cumulative rhythm.

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105 Holt, 195–6.  
106 Holt, 198.  
107 Holt, 200.  
109 Alexander, 4.
Chapter Three: The Theories of Georgii Konius and Iuri Tiulin

The Relevance of Konius’s and Tiulin’s Theories to the Music of Medtner

In this study I examine Medtner’s music through the lens of the theories of two Russian music scholars who were both part of Medtner’s circle of communication and who both played important roles in his life. Georgii Konius was Medtner’s teacher at the Moscow conservatory, \(^{110}\) and their families became friendly afterwards, revolving in the same musical circle (as mentioned previously, Medtner dedicated several of his works to Georgii’s brother Lev). Although there is no proof that Konius’s theories had influenced Medtner in any direct way, it was been suggested that another student of Konius, no less a figure than Alexander Scriabin, had tried to compose with his teacher’s method in mind. \(^{111}\)

The connection between Medtner and the music theorist and composer Iuri Tiulin was somewhat different. Tiulin was married to the daughter of Medtner’s cousin, the painter Viktor Karlovich Shtember, and he met with the composer in an informal setting on several occasions during Medtner’s stays in his cousin’s house in Saint Petersburg. \(^{112}\) The Shtember family was highly musical: both Viktor Karlovich and his wife were amateur musicians, and their son Nikolaï was a gifted pianist, Medtner’s student at the Moscow conservatory. \(^{113}\) On Medtner the composer, Tiulin writes that he was a devout traditionalist, but not a conservative—meaning that Medtner did consider the search for novelty an important part of creative work, yet approved only of such novelty in music composition that did not break the link with the classical

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\(^{111}\) Kholopov, et al, 408, n31.

\(^{112}\) For Tiulin’s account of these meetings, see Iuri Tiulin, “Vstrechi s N. K. Metnerom” (Meetings with Nikolaï Medtner), in Zarui Apetian, ed., Vospominaniia, stat’i, materialy (Recollections, articles, materials), (Moscow: Muzyka, 1981), 110–17.

\(^{113}\) Tiulin, 110.
tradition. Tiulin notes that Medtner’s musical language is deeply connected to Russian Romanticism and also contains intonations resembling those found in Russian folk song—often characterized by modality.

In light of these connections just mentioned, I consider it worthwhile to analyze the music of Medtner according to Konius’s metrotectonic method. I also provide comments on the composer’s use of modal elements—as noted by Tiulin—using Tiulin’s analytical method. Prior to the main analysis, that of Medtner’s First Piano Concerto, in the present chapter I offer an introduction to the theories of Konius and Tiulin.

Konius’s Theory of Musical Form—Metrotectonicism

A graduate of the Moscow Conservatory, Georgiĭ Konius studied both piano and composition but, quitting piano performance due to a hand condition, graduated only as a composer. His teachers included Pavel Pabst (piano), Anton Arenskiĭ (composition), and Sergeĭ Taneev (music theory). Soon after completing his studies, Konius assumed a teaching position at the conservatory, giving instruction in harmony and instrumentation. In addition to Medtner and Scriabin, he taught the composers Reinhold Glière and Alexander Goedicke, among others. Fired from the conservatory in 1899 because of a professional conflict with its director, Vasiliĭ Safonov, he taught at the Moscow Philharmonic Society’s School of Music and Drama and later at the Saratov Conservatory. Konius returned to the Moscow Conservatory in 1920 to teach

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114 Tiulin, 111.  
115 Tiulin, 116.
analysis of musical form and composition (he was the head of the composition department). He remained at the conservatory until his death.\textsuperscript{116}

In addition to his pedagogical career, Konius was active as a theorist, composer, and, until 1912, music critic. In his theoretical studies, Konius emphasized proportionality and symmetry in the construction of music using his original theory of metrotectonicism. The term “metrotectonicism” derives from Greek and means “measured construction.” Konius’s analyses were criticized for ignoring issues such as thematic content and tonality, as well as broader historical and philosophical issues.\textsuperscript{117} In spite of this, his method can often help elucidate the presence of a proportional skeletal structure in a musical work.

What follows is a concise explanation of the metrotectonic method as described by Konius in his articles “A metrotectonic solution to the problem of musical form” and “The \textit{Adagio sostenuto} of Beethoven’s Sonata, op. 27, no. 2 from a metrotectonic point of view.”\textsuperscript{118} Konius spent over twenty-five years doing research and analyzed nearly a thousand musical works—ranging from the sixteenth-century compositions of Lassus to those of Konius’s own day (including both Western art music and folk song)—before he accepted the metrotectonic method as valid.\textsuperscript{119}

According to Konius, any good musical work is characterized by a remarkable balance of all its parts. Balance is an important principle that governs the construction of musical form;

\textsuperscript{119} Konius, 87.
both large parts and tiny cells are subject to this principle.\textsuperscript{120} The form of an audible creation is the measurement of its coordinates in time—in the same way as the form of an architectural creation is the measurement of its coordinates in space.\textsuperscript{121}

Konius divides a musical work into parts by looking at the work’s tectonic skeleton, defined as “a system of metrically pulsating accents.”\textsuperscript{122} The parts of a work’s tectonic skeleton may or may not be metrically aligned with musical phrases of the work’s sounding exterior, since each part of the skeleton must necessarily begin on a strong beat. The parts of the tectonic skeleton are called “measures of the highest order,” (Russian takty vyshego poriadka) also referred to as “formations” (postroeniia).\textsuperscript{123} I will use the latter term from this point onward.

Formations may be of various lengths, made of any whole number of so-called “constructive pulse waves” (stroitel’nye pul’sovye volny).\textsuperscript{124} A constructive pulse wave is defined as the largest metric unit which fits into all formations of a given work a whole number of times; a constructive pulse wave is most often equal to one regular measure of the work. Konius explains that he makes his decisions as to how many constructive pulse waves constitute a formation “according to the principle of association.”\textsuperscript{125} This rather vague statement seems to mean that a formation must feature a certain degree of homogeneity with respect to its musical content or serve a specific function within the work.

The boundaries between adjacent formations are often (but not always) defined by cadences. Konius came up with a system of classification for cadences, which is described later

\textsuperscript{120} Konius, 88.
\textsuperscript{121} Konius, 92.
\textsuperscript{122} Konius, 88.
\textsuperscript{123} Konius, 87 and 101.
\textsuperscript{124} Konius, 98.
\textsuperscript{125} Konius, 88.
in this chapter. In his analyses, Konius often shows subdivisions of larger formations; although he does not use a specific term for the resulting parts of formations, in my analyses I will use the term “subformation” to refer to such parts.

A crucial point of Konius’s theory is that all formations, as well as constructive pulse waves, must begin on a strong beat.¹²⁶ The interior structure of a musical work (its tectonic skeleton) is based upon trochaic (two-pulse—strong, weak) and dactylic (three-pulse—strong, weak, weak) metrical units or various combinations of such units (with the possible addition of isolated pulses), resulting in combinatory meters (for example, but not limited to, five-pulse, seven-pulse, or eleven-pulse).¹²⁷ Therefore, Konius’s theory sharply contradicts that of Hugo Riemann, who argued that the basis of all musical structures is upbeat leading into the downbeat (weak-strong), in any meter.¹²⁸ For Konius, constructive musical meters lie exclusively within measures, as opposed to exterior (syntactic) metrical units. A work’s exterior (its sounding fabric) is often shifted from the work’s skeletal base and may therefore feature metrical units that begin on a weak beat.¹²⁹

Konius argues that in music creation, remarkable balance is achieved (often intuitively) by one of the following three ways of ordering a work’s formations and subformations: first, by way of symmetry; second, by way of periodicity, and third, in mixed order (partly symmetrical, partly periodical). He calls this constructive principle “the law of the balance of measures in time” (zakon ravnovesiia vremennyh velichin).¹³⁰

¹²⁶ Konius, 90.
¹²⁷ Konius, 99.
¹²⁸ Konius, 100. To learn about Riemann’s views on metric construction of music, Konius refers his reader to Riemann’s Grundriss der Kompositionlehre, 1897, Seite 16.
¹²⁹ Konius, 88–9.
¹³⁰ Konius, 102–3.
Konius also believes that in any musical work, what happens on the structural level in its first half—prior to the central axis of the work, which is seen when the work is laid out on a metrotectonic graph—will somehow be reflected in the work’s second half. Konius calls this property “the law of reflected measures” (zakon otrazhennyh velichin). This law states that the metrical structure (the order of subformations) of the “reflected” counterpart of a formation is either exactly the same as that of the original formation (“simple reflection” [priamoe podobie]), backwards (“inverted reflection” [protivopolozhnoe podobie]), or reordered (“mixed reflection” [smeshannoe podobie]). For some works, such structural balance will only be made obvious if several metrotectonic graphs, one for each large section of the whole, are made. Also, sometimes a work concludes with a formation that does not have a previously heard counterpart. Konius calls such a formation “the steeple” (shpil’), taking a step further into the realm of architecture.

On Konius’s graphs, formations and subformations that make up the given work are labeled with measure lengths and arranged on a plane in a way that shows the hierarchy of the formations and their parts (subformations) as well as symmetry and balance of the work’s structure. Konius argues that the important idea behind the metrotectonic division of a work into parts is not seeing how those parts are constructed from metrical units but observing the relationship of the parts to one another and to the whole of the work.

Konius lists several benefits of his analytical method. One is an understanding that composers, consciously or unconsciously, apply principles of logic, balance, and precise measurement to even the most lavishly expressive musical works. Another is the possibility of a new musical notation—one that reflects the architectural aspect of musical works, which is better than the usual mechanical way of arranging measures into lines of music. This new way of

131 Konius, 88.
notating music would prevent loss of meaning, illuminate the tectonic beauty of musical works, and make it easier to understand, process, and memorize music; it would also make it possible to create a system of punctuation marks for our musical language.\textsuperscript{132}

Konius argues that his metrotec tonic method allowed him to discover a new way of looking at cadences. For Konius, any cadence, in addition to belonging to one of the commonly known types (such as the perfect or imperfect authentic cadences, deceptive cadence, or half cadence) may be classified as one of the following “chronographic” (\textit{khronograficheskii}) types (according to its position in relation to two adjacent formations).\textsuperscript{133} In the “preceding” cadence (\textit{preduprezhdaiuschaia}), the final chord occurs at the end of the first of two adjacent formations (or subformations). In the “intruding” cadence, (\textit{vtorgaiuschaia}), the final chord occurs at the start of the second of two adjacent formations (or subformations). The markings in Figure 3.1 show how Konius subdivides the opening of the Adagio sostenuto from Beethoven’s Piano Sonata in C-sharp Minor, op. 27, no. 2, (the “Moonlight”), with examples of the above two cadence types.

Lastly, the “central” cadence (\textit{tsentral’naia}) is a special type: it occurs in its own space between two formations as a separate formation. For example, the final chord of a half cadence, prolonged over several constructive pulse waves may be considered a central cadence. Thus,

\textsuperscript{132} Konius, 92–6.
\textsuperscript{133} It is important to note that, while Konius’s divisions of a work into formations and subformations often happen at cadence points, this is not always the case—the start of a new formation or subformation may also be justified by a notable change of texture, rhythm, harmonic stability, or another aspect of the music. Also, sometimes Konius refers to a passing dominant returning right back to tonic or to another similarly questionable harmonic progression as a “cadence.” For instance, in Figure 3.1, the final formation of Section A does not seem to conclude with a cadence; however, Konius argues that it ends with an “intruding cadence.”
Konius calls the fourteen-measure-long standing on the dominant which forms the middle section (Section C) of Beethoven’s Adagio sostenuto a central cadence (See Figure 3.2a).¹³⁴

Figure 3.1: mm. 1–18 of the Adagio sostenuto from Beethoven’s Piano Sonata in C-sharp Minor, op. 27, no. 2 (Konius’s Section A).
Figures 3.2a and 3.2b show Konius’s metrotectonic graphs of Beethoven’s Adagio sostenuto. Figure 3.2a\textsuperscript{135} is a numerical representation of the work’s form, where each number represents a formation or its subdivision (subformation) containing that many constructive pulse waves (measures); the numbers are arranged on a plane in a way that shows the remarkable balance of the work’s structure. Figure 3.2b\textsuperscript{136} includes the musical material of the work; the score’s regular systems are rearranged to show Konius’s division of the music into formations, which are then laid out on a plane in the same way as on the numeric metrotectonic graph. In addition to these two graph types, Konius sometimes represented a given work’s formations as stretches of small empty measures, one for each pulse wave.

\textsuperscript{135} This graph appears in Konius, 105.
\textsuperscript{136} This graph appears in Konius, in the appendix.
Figure 3.2a: Konius’s numeric metrotectonic graph of the Adagio sostenuto from Beethoven’s Piano Sonata in C-sharp Minor, op. 27, no. 2.
Figure 3.2b: Konius’s metrotectonic arrangement of the score of the Adagio from Beethoven’s Sonata in C-sharp Minor, op. 27, no. 2.
Konius explains that the structural pulse wave of the Adagio is a whole note (Beethoven’s one measure). There are sixty-eight waves plus the concluding wave, positioned outside the work’s symmetry. Konius argues that in the Adagio, all formations are in balanced order with respect to not only their durations but also their function. To prove this, he provides an analytical commentary for the graphs, part of which I will summarize here. Konius’s commentary is quite detailed and interesting but, unfortunately, too long to be included in the present discussion in its entirety.

Konius calls the first eighteen pulse waves (in this case, equal to the work’s regular measures) “Section A.” It is symmetrical and is made of two nine-measure formations, which are further subdivided according to the harmonic and metric motion and the placement of cadences. The first nine-measure formation begins with a four-measure subformation that confirms the main tonality of the work. An intruding cadence brings about the next, five-measure, subformation; it features the main theme of the work. This subformation is further divided into a two-measure and a three-measure unit (the justification for this being the rhythmic profile of the theme, which consists of two measures with the dotted-rhythm pickup figure and three measures of songful legato) and ends with a preceding cadence. The second nine-measure formation of Section A begins with a five-measure subformation that repeats the main theme. This time, however, Konius divides the subformation into a three-measure and a two-measure unit; he argues that the pickup figure is present in the first three measures while the other two measures feature songful legato. This seems questionable, since the dotted-rhythm pickup is present only in the first two measures. Unless one considers the quarter note on the last beat of the third measure to be the same kind of pickup, Konius’s subdivision seems artificially adjusted for the sake of perfect symmetry of Section A. The five-measure subformation is joined to the next,
four-measure, subformation by an intruding cadence. The four-measure subformation emphasizes B major, closing Section A and going into Section B by what Konius calls an intruding cadence—which seems quite doubtful to me, so I refrain from marking it as such in the annotated score excerpt (Figure 3.1). Refer back to Figure 3.1 to see how Konius subdivides Section A, and to Figures 3.2a and 3.2b to see how this section functions in relation to the other sections and to the whole of the work.

One could criticize Konius’s way of looking at this (and other) work’s structure on the basis of a quite unusual way of subdivision (as many of his contemporaries did, that being the reason why his theory did not find its way into the commonly-used analytical methodology of the Russian theoretical school). Yet, upon contemplation over the possible reasons for Konius’s way of looking at a given musical form, one invariably sees interesting and specific relationships of the parts (Konius’s formations) to one another and to the whole of the work, which justify the sometimes seemingly random subdivisions. The above-described Section A of Beethoven’s Adagio, for instance, becomes more valid as such once we look at its relationship to Section A\(^1\) (in which the musical material of the Section A comes back in the home key and rearranged), as well as at the whole symmetrical way in which the form of the work reveals itself (see Figures 3.2a and 3.2b).

I will now apply Konius’s analytical method to the music of Medtner—his *Tale*, op. 26, no. 3.\(^{137}\) The subdivisions of this work were made by taking into consideration the phrasing, harmonic stability, and cadential movement of the music, and adjusted so as to be based on the structural meter of its tectonic skeleton and not on the metrical characteristics of the exterior sounding fabric. The work’s measures of the highest order were then arranged on a plane in such

\(^{137}\) The complete score of this work is included in Appendix 2 (see pp. 127ff).
a way that shows how the parts of the work are balanced against one another in a quite remarkable way (see Examples 3.3a and 3.3b).

Example 3.3a: My numeric metrotectonic graph of Medtner’s Tale, op. 26, no. 3.
Example 3.3b: My metrotectonic arrangement of the score of Medtner’s *Tale*, op. 26, no. 3.
The work’s constructive pulse wave is equal to one measure; there are eighty-one of them, with the last three placed outside the work’s symmetry—a “steeple.” Section A of the *Tale* consists of the first sixteen measures and contains three formations—a four-measure one, an eight-measure one, and another four-measure one (see the markings in Figure 3.4). It features internal symmetry, made more prominent by the fact that the musical material of its last formation is very close to that of the first. The four-measure formations end with preceding cadences, while the eight-measure one features an intruding cadence. Note the subdivision of the eight-measure formation into smaller units.

Figure 3.4: Section A (mm. 1–16) of Medtner’s *Tale*, op. 26, no. 3.
The next thirty measures (mm. 17–46) of the *Tale* constitute its B section—the middle section of this ternary piece. This section, like the A section, is symmetrical; its formations are thirteen, four, and thirteen measures long. The thirteen-measure formations are subdivided into smaller units, both in the same way. Next comes an interesting formation—the retransition, whose function is to prepare the return of the modified A section (which starts in a different key than the work’s beginning but has the same structure as the first A section). The retransition is eight measures long and would seemingly break the simple and clear symmetrical structure of the work. Nevertheless, it is balanced out by the work’s final formation, the coda. After the coda, the three-measure-long tonic harmony is the work’s “steeple.”

**Tiulin’s Theory of Modes**

Theorist, musicologist, composer, and pedagogue Iuriĭ Tiulin graduated from the Saint Petersburg Conservatory in 1917; he had also studied mathematics and law at Saint Petersburg University. He taught at the conservatory (renamed the Leningrad Conservatory) from 1925 to 1967, after which he moved to Moscow where he taught at the Gnessin Music Institute and later the Moscow Conservatory. Tiulin authored many theoretical, musicological, and pedagogical books and articles.¹³⁸

Tiulin was interested in a more integrated approach to musical analysis (which also reflected the ideological state of current Soviet musicology). He was influenced by Hugo Riemann in his approach to functionality and by Boleslav Yavorsky in his theory of modes, yet he criticized their theories as formalistic and inaccurate.¹³⁹

¹³⁸ Carpenter, 344.
¹³⁹ Carpenter, 354.
In his book *Natural′nye i alteratsionnye lady* (The natural and altered modes) (1971), Tiulin brings up the fascinating issue of mode (lad) mainly in response to twentieth-century innovations in musical language for which analysis based on a traditional major-minor system was inadequate. He argues that, because of the largely overlooked modal basis of the major-minor system and because of the fact that various modes had been infiltrating that system throughout the common-practice period, there was a need for a deeper understanding of the concept of mode, from practical and philosophical points of view, and for a study of its role in both familiar and unfamiliar musical languages. Thus, even music for which traditional analysis seemed sufficient would greatly benefit from a reevaluation from the standpoint of mode.

According to Tiulin, there is no adequate translation of the Russian term lad. Latin *modus* comes close, but the term “modal” is often used—somewhat incorrectly—as an antipode to “tonal functional.” The Western concept of modal music (based primarily on counterpoint), as opposed to tonal music (based on functional harmonic relations) is inaccurate since it understates the modal basis of functional tonality, Tiulin argues. However, for lack of a better term and for familiarity, the word “mode” will be used throughout my discussion as the best translation for Russian *lad*.

In modern Russian music theory, Tiulin writes, mode came to be viewed as a “system of the interrelationships of tones within the octave,” and as an intonation-based (*intonatsionnaia*) system. This means, Tiulin proceeds to explain, that modes appeared and developed in “an unbreakable relationship with the intonation of sounds, with the living musical speech, in unity

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140 Tiulin felt that modes were particularly prominent in Russian music. See Iuriĭ Tiulin, *Natural′nye i alteratsionnye lady* (Moscow: Muzyka, 1971), 4.
141 Tiulin, *Natural′nye i alteratsionnye lady*, 5 and 5n1.
with the common musical language.”

Admitting that the above remark is far from obvious or self-explanatory, he argues that musical language cannot be arbitrary and that all good music, whether folk or art, is based on “common and objective fundamental patterns of musical creation and comprehension (acoustic, psychophysiological, and aesthetic).” Significantly, this is a view somewhat similar to Medtner’s belief in the common, primary, roots of musical art to which all musical creations must maintain a connection (see Chapter Two above).

Tiulin writes that mode is an abstract concept, whereas modal intonation is the specific contextual realization of a mode. The intonation-based connections of the tones of a mode and the attractions of unstable tones toward their stable resolutions—not only those a semitone apart but a whole tone apart as well—are present in the theory of modal attraction but not always realized in practice.

Tiulin rightfully credits the Russian music scholar Boleslav Yavorsky (1877–1942) for raising the issue of mode as a central element for understanding musical construction. Yavorsky’s theory was groundbreaking at the time of its appearance in the early twentieth century and is a topic of fascination and controversy among music theorists in Russia and elsewhere to this day. Yavorsky’s first book outlining his theory of musical construction, called the “theory of modal rhythm” (teoriia ladovogo ritma), is Stroenie muzykal’noi rechi (The structure of musical speech) (1908). His other important publications include Uprazhneniiia v golosovedenii (Exercises in voice leading) (1913), Uprazhneniiia v obrazovanii ladovogo ritma (Exercises in forming modal rhythm) (1915), and Struktura melodii (Structure of melody)

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142 Tiulin, Natural’nye i alteratsionnye lady, 5.
143 Tiulin, Natural’nye i alteratsionnye lady, 5–6.
144 Tiulin, Natural’nye i alteratsionnye lady, 14.

What follows is an overview of Yavorsky’s theory, which I provide for comparison with Tuilin’s modal theory. Yavorsky based his thinking on the twelve-tone division of the octave because to him, diatonicism and traditional functional harmony had exhausted their potential. To Yavorsky, the attraction of unstable tones toward stable ones happened only at a semitone distance. Further, he considered the converging or diverging semitone motion required to resolve a tritone to be at the basis of musical structure.

According to Yavorsky, there are two types of basic structural cells: an unstable tritone and its stable resolution form a “single symmetrical system” (*edinichnaia simmetrichnaia sistema*); two interlocking single symmetrical systems a semitone apart create the “double” (*dvoïnaia*) symmetrical system. Example 3.5 shows the single and double symmetrical systems. Note that the stable tones of a single system, represented by open noteheads, form a major third or a minor sixth while those of the double system form a minor third or a major sixth.

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Example 3.5: Yavorsky’s basic elements of musical structure—the single and double symmetrical systems.

The unstable tones of the single system are denoted as D (dominant) resolving to a T (tonic). The instabilities of the double system bear the indication S (subdominant) leading to a t (subtonic): these latter are unclear, and neither Yavorsky nor Protopopov offer a good explanation of them.\textsuperscript{147} Yavorsky’s double system, which allowed him to account for many more tertian structures than the single system alone would, became an oft-criticized aspect of his theory. To some, including Tiulin, its derivation seemed artificial and untrue to the musical ear.\textsuperscript{148}

From various combinations of two or more symmetrical systems, Yavorsky builds eighteen modes. An elementary combination, one single and one double system that share a stable tone, results in the major or the minor mode (Example 3.6). The combination of all the stable tones is the tonic of the mode; the combination of all the unstable tones is called the “connecting moment” (*soedinennyĭ moment*), which is made up of dominant (D) and subdominant (S) tones.

\textsuperscript{147} For a possible explanation of the harmonic functions of the double system, see Ewell, [2.7].
\textsuperscript{148} Tiulin, *Natural’nye i alteratsionnye lady*, 42.
Example 3.6: The major and minor modes, according to Yavorsky.

Non-traditional modes described by Yavorsky include the “diminished” and the “augmented” modes, the “chain” modes (one of the “chain” modes is shown in Example 3.7), and the “mutable” modes. All of the abovementioned modes can be either simple or “duplex” (*dvazhdy*). A mode is duplex when the converging and the diverging resolutions of the tritone are used simultaneously. All modes are transposable, the number of possible transpositions depending on the nature of a given mode; a mode at a specific pitch level is called a “modal tonality” (*ladotonal’nost’*).\(^{149}\)

\(^{149}\) This term is among several of Yavorsky’s terms adopted and commonly used by Tiulin and other twentieth-century Russian music scholars.
Example 3.7: Yavorsky’s “chain” (теснои) mode, originally called the “major-minor” mode.

While acknowledging its historic value, Tiulin refutes Yavorsky’s method as invalid and artificially construed, arguing that this method is only appropriate for analyzing certain music—Scriabin’s for instance—and is not applicable to all kinds of music, including folk, as Yavorsky suggested.\textsuperscript{150} Tiulin also criticizes Protopopov’s sonatas, composed in accordance with Yavorsky’s system, for a “lack of any artistic value.”\textsuperscript{151}

Yavorsky’s method had little to do with traditional analytical practices of the past. It left no place for traditional harmonic analysis. Tiulin, on the other hand, draws on the legacy of traditional music analysis, making it a point of departure for his system of modes. For Tiulin, “modal” and “tonal” are not mutually exclusive concepts. Tiulin’s connection to the classical tradition, combined with his attempt to explain those elements of music that go beyond the limits of common-practice music theory, make his method a fitting approach to the music of Medtner—a tonal composer whose use of tonality was, however, far from conservative.

The system Tiulin describes was developed with respect to certain common laws of musical creation and is subject to those laws in spite of the variety afforded by stylistic, national, and individualistic trends. There are many ways in which music can be composed without losing

\textsuperscript{150} Tiulin, \textit{Natural’nye i alteratsionnye lady}, 41–5.
\textsuperscript{151} Tiulin, \textit{Natural’nye i alteratsionnye lady}, 43n1.
sight of these laws. Tiulin says that listeners need time to get used to any “renewed musical language” (provided it is not completely removed from the abovementioned “natural” laws). Tiulin argues against creating “artificial, hypothetical systems” that ignore or misinterpret the natural laws.\textsuperscript{152}

In art music, the modal basis of music became enriched with numerous complexities coming from the realm of functional harmony, as well as from various combinations of modes and keys. Tiulin addresses the issue of how broadly the concept of mode should be viewed, and proposes the following hierarchy:

\begin{enumerate}
\item Mode in its narrowest sense, a basic structure represented by a “row of tones” (zvukoriad).
\item The “complex mode” (uslozhhnennyi lad), also referred to as a “modal-harmonic system” (ladogarmonichsekaia sistema), which includes chromatic alterations, scale-degree variants, and any infiltrations from other modes. It is not always possible to clearly represent it by writing out a single row of tones.
\item The “expanded modal-harmonic system” (rasshirennaia ladogarmonicheskaia sistema), which includes not only the above two as subordinate elements but also all functional relations among its tones and chords as well as its relations to certain other keys and modes. The expanded modal-harmonic system contains all twelve tones.
\end{enumerate}

Tiulin classifies modes using a seven-scale-degree basis. Alterations create notes that are variants of the seven scale degrees, either replacing or subdividing them (such subdivisions result in modes with more than seven notes yet their basis is still seven scale degrees). Similarly, some folk musics have more than twelve notes to an octave but their modal basis usually contains fewer scale degrees (but not necessarily seven).\textsuperscript{153}

\textsuperscript{152} Tiulin, Natural’nye i alteratsionnye lady, 6–7.
\textsuperscript{153} Tiulin, Natural’nye i alteratsionnye lady, 10–12.
Tiulin describes the following three types of alterations (they often interact in practice yet are theoretically distinguishable):\(^{154}\)

a) Modal alterations, those within the modal tonality, of two kinds: first, those strengthening the attraction of unstable tones toward their resolutions; and second, those filling out the melodic interval of an augmented second. A modal tonality with all its possible alterations makes up a modal-harmonic system (not to be confused with the expanded modal-harmonic system that contains all twelve tones). It is the basis for altered chords of dominant or subdominant nature, some common and some rarely used. Each of the modes in Tiulin’s system is actually a modal-harmonic system.

b) Modulatory alterations (those with characteristics of other, closely related, modal tonalities). Related modal tonalities have to remain subordinate to the main modal tonality; they fill it out with their alterations, resulting in an expanded modal-harmonic system, which is represented by the chromatic scale. The spelling of the tones of the scale is important.

c) Melodic alterations, which are freely chromatic alterations necessitated by melodic movement.

Tiulin limits his study to modes with a diatonic-septatonic basis; the stable tones are not altered and make up either a major or a minor triad. There are forty-eight such modes: twenty-four major and twenty-four minor. These include the six natural modes (those on each of the white keys of the keyboard, or their transpositions), excluding the mode on B, since that collection of tones does not feature a consonant fifth scale degree). Tiulin chooses to call his “natural” modes Ionian (major), Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, and Aeolian (natural minor), the names used throughout history and therefore familiar to any musician. He explains these are the six authentic modes of the twelve (authentic and plagal) modes described by the Swiss music theorist Heinrich Glarean (1483–1563) in his treatise *Dodecachordon* (1547).\(^{155}\)

Tiulin classifies the natural modes as major or minor and as central or auxiliary. He says that the auxiliary modes are inclined toward either the dominant (Lydian and Dorian) or the

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\(^{154}\) Tiulin, *Natural’nye i alteratsionnye lady*, 49–55.

\(^{155}\) Tiulin, *Natural’nye i alteratsionnye lady*, 15.
subdominant (Mixolydian and Phrygian). Example 3.8 shows how Tiulin classifies the natural modes.  

Example 3.8: The six natural modes.

It is important to understand the above classification because Tiulin derives all his altered modes from the six natural ones, adding one or more of the following alterations:

- For major modes: raised or lowered 2\(^{nd}\) scale degree, raised 4\(^{th}\) scale degree, and lowered 6\(^{th}\) scale degree.
- For minor modes: raised 7\(^{th}\) scale degree, lowered 2\(^{nd}\) scale degree, and raised or lowered 4\(^{th}\) scale degree.

Thus he comes up with twenty-four major and twenty-four minor modes, which he divides into groups and lays out in tables, with a numeric indication and sometimes a name for each mode.

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156 As described in Yuriĭ Tiulin, Nikolai Privano, *Uchebnik garmonii* (Moscow: Muzyka, 1964), 20.

157 All the modes from these tables, which appear in Tiulin, *Natural’nye i alteratsionnye lady* , 61–69, as Examples 51–54 and 58–61, are shown in Appendix 1 (see pp. 121ff).
Example 3.9 shows selected modes from Tiulin’s tables of major modes: I (“Ionian”), XI (“Mixolydico-Lydian”), and XXIV (“Melodico-Lydian”). Tiulin writes out the tone row for the mode, with open noteheads representing stable tones; next comes the dominant ninth sonority of the mode (all its unstable tones stacked upon the dominant tone) and its default resolution.

Example 3.9: Selected modes from Tiulin’s tables of the twenty-four major modes.

Tiulin then illustrates how adding chromatic notes to many of his septatonic modes results in eight-note modes; for some of the basic seven-note modes, modifications that result in nine-note modes are possible as well. These are not independent modes but rather expansions of the seven-note modes; they do not feature new scale degrees but provide altered variants of the seven basic scale degrees. Tiulin calls such added complexity “modal super-construction” (ladovaia nadstroika). He provides tables for such derivative modes as well.¹⁵⁸

Tiulin acknowledges the existence of modes other than septatonic and those based on the consonant major or minor triad, briefly mentioning the wholetone and octatonic (the “wholetone-semitone” mode) modes but he says that those modes are beyond the scope of his study. Tiulin

¹⁵⁸ See Tiulin, Natural’nye i alteratsionnye lady, 69–77 (Examples 62–78).
emphasizes that any of the modes he describes are there not to invalidate the major-minor system but to modify and expand it.\textsuperscript{159}

In numerous examples, Tiulin applies his system to excerpts from various composers, including Bartok, Chopin, Franck, Grieg, Medtner, Mozart, Mussorgsky, Schumann, and Stravinsky, among others.

Prior to analyzing these excerpts, Tiulin talks about the subdivision of his modes into three categories:

\begin{itemize}
  \item[a)] “Usual” (\textit{obychnye})—these are the modes on which the traditional major-minor system thrives. They are: the complete minor (natural, harmonic, and melodic minor modes combined); Ionian (major) mode with its alterations that result in harmonic (with lowered 6th scale degree) and melodic (with lowered 6th and 7th scale degrees) major modes; and the ten-note major-minor mode (parallel major and minor modes combined).
  \item[b)] “Unusual” (\textit{neobychnye})—these are the natural modes other than Ionian.
  \item[c)] “Special” (\textit{osoanye})—these are modes that are clearly different from usual and unusual modes, including many of those shown in the tables above. Mainly used by twentieth-century composers, they have not received enough scholarly attention yet.
\end{itemize}

Tiulin then emphasizes the complexity of the way most art music is constructed, noting that prolonged adherence to an unusual or special mode is relatively rare (especially in older music); more often, there are passages that briefly reflect such modes. A common occurrence is the so-called “modal modulation” (\textit{ladovaia moduliatsiia})—the mixing of several modes with the same tonic. Another kind of a modulatory relation between modes is the combination of two modes—for instance, those with relative tonics—into a more complex mode.\textsuperscript{160} Other possible

\textsuperscript{159} Tiulin, \textit{Natural'nye i alteratsionnye lady}, 76–7.
\textsuperscript{160} Such complex modes, originally described by Yavorsky, are commonly referred to as “mutable” (\textit{peremennye}).
combinations of a polymodal or even polytonal sort are still more complex. That is why, Tiulin argues, a musical work can seldom be explained by writing out a single modal scheme.\textsuperscript{161}

Tiulin calls his method the “analysis of a work’s modal-harmonic structure.”\textsuperscript{162} For him, the chord changes of a work reflect the developments and changes of the work’s mode. In the following example,\textsuperscript{163} Tiulin shows how Mozart’s use of “altered” (chromatic) harmony \textit{(alteratsionnaia garmoniiia)} dictates melodic formation that implies unusual and special modes. Tiulin calls this process “indirect modal construction” \textit{(kosvennoe ladoobrazovanie)}.\textsuperscript{164}

In the first measure of Example 3.10a, an altered subdominant harmony in C major (IV\textsuperscript{+8}) results in a transitory Lydian mode in the melody. In the third measure, another altered subdominant chord, known in the West as an augmented sixth chord, the Ger\textsuperscript{6} (Tiulin calls it a “false dominant seventh chord”), causes melodic formations in a special mode, harmonic minor with a raised 4\textsuperscript{th} scale degree (Tiulin’s minor mode XI). Both modes are included into the main mode, a regular major, as subordinate elements (Example 3.10b).

\textsuperscript{161} Tiulin, \textit{Natural’nye i alteratsionnye lady}, 79.
\textsuperscript{162} Tiulin, \textit{Natural’nye i alteratsionnye lady}, 107.
\textsuperscript{163} Examples 3.10a and 3.10b appear in Tiulin, \textit{Natural’nye i alteratsionnye lady}, 80, as Examples 80a and 80b.
\textsuperscript{164} Tiulin, \textit{Natural’nye i alteratsionnye lady}, 81.
Example 3.10a: Mozart, Sonata No.15 in F Major, K. 533, 1st movement, mm. 85–88.

Example 3.10b: The subordinate modes in Mozart’s melody resulting from the use of chromatic harmony.

Next, Tiulin talks about unusual and special modes used more independently by nineteenth and early twentieth-century composers. He points to Chopin’s music as remarkable for its richness in such modes. Tiulin also focuses on the music of Russian composers—Medtner, Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, and early Stravinsky.
In Example 3.11a,\textsuperscript{165} Tiulin shows Medtner’s use of special modes in a song from his \textit{Six Poems}, op. 32. Tiulin explains that the two modes on G that Medtner uses here are the minor mode XV (Phrygian with lowered 4\textsuperscript{th} scale degree) and the eight-tone minor mode VIIa (Aeolian with a subdivided 4\textsuperscript{th} scale degree, including its natural and raised versions). He argues these modes have an “upper-median” derivation from the “directing” mode of E-flat major, since the accompaniment’s harmonies are characteristic of that mode.

Example 3.11a: Medtner’s “Funeral Song” from \textit{Six Poems}, op. 32, mm.1–4.

Example 3.11b: Special modes used in the above excerpt.

\textsuperscript{165} Examples 3.11a and 3.11b appear in Tiulin, \textit{Natural’nye i alteratsionnye lady}, 94, as Examples 98a and 98b.
Now I will apply Tiulin’s method to Medtner’s *Tale*, which I had analyzed above according to the metrotectonic method. I am not arguing against the piece’s standing as a tonal work in the commonly accepted sense of the term. Yet, for certain parts of the work, Tiulin’s method offers an interesting modal-harmonic alternative to a traditional Roman-numeral analysis. I have selected two excerpts from the *Tale* to analyze in terms of their modal content.

The first excerpt, shown in Figure 3.12, contains measures 26 through 37 of the work. The music here is in the E-flat Mixolydian mode—Tiulin’s mode III (shown in Example 3.13). Use of this “natural” mode lends folk-like color to the music, in agreement with the work’s title.

Figure 3.12: Measures 26–37 of Medtner’s *Tale*, op. 26, no. 3.
Example 3.13: The mode prevalent in the above excerpt

![Sheet music](image)

Major mode III (mixolydian) on E-flat

The second excerpt, shown in Figure 3.14, comprises measures 47 through 56 of the *Tale*—the retransition, which prepares the return of Section A\(^1\). The music alternates between two contrasting modes, an F melodic major mode with subdivided (both raised and lowered) 4th scale degree in mm. 47–48 and 51–52, and an F-sharp melodic minor mode (mm. 49–50 and 53–54) with the fourth scale degree raised (B-sharp in the bass) right before the abrupt cut-off. Example 3.15 describes how the note-content of the excerpt is organized into these modes.

Figure 3.14: Measures 47–56 of Medtner’s *Tale*, op. 26, no. 3
Example 3.15: Note-content of the above excerpt and the modes prevalent there.

By using these contrasting modes in alteration, Medtner builds up tension and ambiguity, creating an excellent setting for the return of the main melodic material (see Figure 3.14, m. 55, at *Tempo I*). Section A¹ starts in F-sharp minor—a semitone above the original key—but does not remain there for long, modulating gradually back to the home key of F minor.

Much as Tiulin’s personal interactions with Medtner were not as strong as those of Konius’s, so the insights his theories offer into Medtner’s works are not quite as broad. Still, they are not without significance, and explorations in Medtner’s style can benefit from taking into account the writings of both of these theorists. With this in mind, in the next chapter I shall examine Medtner’s First Piano Concerto in detail, largely from the metrotectonic approach of suggested by Konius, abetted by some aspects of Tiulin’s modal theories where appropriate.
Chapter Four: A Metrotectonic Analysis of Medtner’s First Piano Concerto

Medtner’s First Piano Concerto (see Appendix 2) is a single-movement work running over half an hour. The movement is cast in an extensive sonata-like form, original in design. Additionally, the sections of this lengthy movement may be viewed as five individual movements. The exposition serves as an opening movement; the first subsection of the development is akin to a short Intermezzo movement; the central subsection of the development is like a Variations movement, followed by another Intermezzo-like movement (the third subsection of the development); lastly, the recapitulation with the lengthy coda serves as a Finale. See Example 4.1 below, which shows how each section of the concerto’s single sonata-like movement corresponds to a shorter complete movement within a multi-movement design.

Example 4.1: The five-movement structure within the First Concerto’s single movement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;SONATA-FORM&quot; STRUCTURE</th>
<th>&quot;MULTI-MOVEMENT&quot; STRUCTURE</th>
<th>MEASURE NOS.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exposition</td>
<td>Mvt. I: Allegro</td>
<td>mm. 1 - 201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Mvt. II: Intermezzo 1</td>
<td>mm. 202 - 254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cadenza-like section</td>
<td>Mvt. III: Variations</td>
<td>mm. 255 - 458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Variations</td>
<td>Mvt. IV: Intermezzo 2</td>
<td>mm. 459 - 530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retransition</td>
<td>Mvt. V: Finale</td>
<td>mm. 531 - 581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recapitulation and Coda</td>
<td></td>
<td>and mm. 582 - 741</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The concerto’s melodic material is very much subject to the techniques of motivic development and thematic transformation. The work’s opening motives and its two main theme groups (which I call the A and B groups, with the themes of each group indicated by numbers, such as “Theme A2”) provide a basis for all of the work’s subsequent melodic material.

I will analyze the concerto’s formal structure according to Konius’s metrotectonic method, looking for balance among the large and small parts of the work, as well as for interesting patterns of construction within each part. I will discuss each section of the concerto in detail and show its formal design on a metrotectonic graph. I will also observe the modal-harmonic content of each section and note the most unusual modal-harmonic procedures, referring to Tiulin’s system of the natural and altered modes where applicable. Because Medtner’s use of unusual and special modes in this work is important but sporadic (just like in the above-discussed Tale), this chapter mostly focuses on a metrotectonic analysis of the concerto’s form, with only brief sidesteps into modal-harmonic analysis where the music lends itself to it.

The concerto opens with the piano playing alone for three measures. This introductory material contains two important motives that will be heard throughout the work: one, made of descending leaps that feature the intervals of major seventh and minor and major sixth (henceforth referred to as Motive X), and the other, a syncopated “sighing” motive characterized by a descending semitone motion (Motive Y). Motive Y will later be heard in an ascending version as well. Motives X and Y are marked in Figure 4.2.\(^\text{166}\) The first three measures of the concerto will be regarded as a small introductory formation to the work’s first large formation; they prepare the entrance of the concerto’s first theme.

\(^{166}\) Due to the large dimensions of the concerto, the musical examples and figures in this chapter offer only short excerpts from the score; the entire score of the concerto (two-piano reduction) is included in Appendix 2 (pp.130ff).
Figure 4.2 (mm. 1–4): Two constructively important motives (X and Y) at the concerto’s opening.

In measure 4, the orchestra enters with the first theme (Theme A1) in the tonic key of C minor. Theme A1 is characterized by a lowered second scale degree both in the melodic line and in the accompanying harmony. This allusion to the Phrygian mode plays an important role throughout the concerto.

Theme A1 takes ten measures, and upon reaching the dominant, gives way to another theme, still played by the orchestra. This new theme (m. 14) sounds almost like a continuation of the first theme due to the smooth connection and several similarities between the two themes; it may, however, be considered a separate theme as it will consistently be used independently later.
in the work. It will be referred to as Theme A2. Example 4.3 shows the similarities between Theme A1 and Theme A2. In both themes the melodic line is characterized by descending motion followed by ascending motion (the ascent features the same notes—E flat to E flat up the octave to F to G: in the example, these notes are circled and connected with arrows). Also, the emphasis on Phrygian II that is present in Theme A1 is carried over to Theme A2, which concludes with a deceptive cadence to the key of D flat.

Example 4.3 (mm. 4–20): Themes A1 and A2 (the first theme group).
Theme A2 is followed by eight measures of transitional material (mm. 20–27), which is based on Theme A1 and the leaping Motive X. Here, the piano takes on the leading role (prior to this, it had been accompanying the orchestra). The twenty-four measures described above are the first large formation of the concerto, which follows the short introductory subformation. Refer to Example 4.11 (a metrotectonic graph of the exposition)\textsuperscript{167} to see how the exposition is subdivided into formations and subformations.

Having arrived at the dominant chord (C major) of the subdominant key (F minor), the first large formation leads (by an intruding cadence) into another large formation (m. 28). This new formation is twenty measures long and contains the following subformations: four measures featuring the opening of Theme A1 played by the soloist, in the key of F minor (with a Phrygian inflection), twelve measures in which the theme gets transformed and extended, and lastly—headed back toward C minor—four measures containing a shortened version of Theme A2, now rhythmically augmented.

The home key of the concerto is re-established with an intruding cadence into the next section of exposition (m. 48). It is marked \textit{Poco largamente e poi poco a poco a tempo}. Here, Medtner starts by exploiting the lyrical potential of Theme A2. The way this theme is modified here serves as an example of how the composer achieves great melodic variety throughout the concerto by transforming his themes (Example 4.4).

\textsuperscript{167}Example 4.11 is located on page 92, following the discussion of the entire exposition.
Example 4.4 (mm. 48–51): Theme A2, a new version.

The formation that starts with this theme is twenty-six measures long and is subdivided into two subformations, eighteen and eight measures long. The eighteen measure subformation (m. 48) includes Theme A2 played by the orchestra (shown in the example above) and the same theme played by the piano. Theme A2 is extended and then evolves into Theme A1, which has an altered rhythmic profile and proceeds with increasing dramatic power, headed toward the key of B-flat major.

The eight-measure subformation starts with the arrival of B-flat major (m. 66). Despite the new key, I consider these eight measures to be part of the larger formation (the abovementioned twenty-six-measure formation), which begins *Poco largamente* and is characterized by a gradual speed-up of the tempo: the eight-measure subformation marks the point where the music returns to the original tempo. Here, the orchestra plays two themes in counterpoint, while the piano accompanies the orchestra with the descending semitone motive from the concerto’s opening—Motive Y (as marked in Figure 4.5). One of themes played by the orchestra is based on the first motive of Theme A1. Essentially, this is just another version of the same theme. The other one, however, is different from all previously heard themes; it will be
very important in the concerto’s subsequent sections. I will call it Theme B1—it is one of the
two themes in the second theme group.

Figure 4.5 (mm. 66–73): The first appearance of Theme B1.

This subformation is interesting in its modal-harmonic content. The mode on B flat used here is
shown in Example 4.6. It is a harmonic major mode with a lowered second scale degree—major
mode XVII, according to Tiulin’s tables of the natural and altered modes (these tables are
included in their entirety in Appendix 1; see pp. 121ff).
Example 4.6: an “unusual” mode (Tiulin’s major mode XVII) that is prevalent in the excerpt shown in Figure 4.5.

The twenty-six-measure formation described above closes with a preceding cadence (one of the few preceding cadences at formation borders of the concerto—the tightly-knit piece mostly features continuity-reinforcing intruding cadences), and a new large formation, which has a central location within the exposition, begins (m. 74). The piano takes the lead here, playing Theme B1 cantando, in a new mood (marked Abbandonamente (ma in tempo)) and with a varied rhythm. The theme is further modified to include F flat instead of F, and the harmonization now suggests a tonic of E flat, making the theme sound in the E-flat Phrygian mode (this variant of Theme B1 is shown in Figure 4.5). Eight measures later, the key signature is changed from three flats to two sharps, and Theme B1 is repeated, this time in the B Phrygian mode. This time the theme is extended, taking twice as long. The entire formation, mostly devoted to Theme B1, is therefore twenty-four measures long. It is the central formation of the exposition—as seen from Figure 2, the other formations surround it symmetrically.

The next formation (m. 98) is twenty-six measures long, subdivided into two parts, eighteen and eight measures long. The eighteen-measure subformation starts in F-sharp minor, with a transitory Dorian inflection. It opens with a new theme, which is related to Theme B1. I will therefore refer to it as Theme B2. The common feature of the B themes is the ascending semitone motion followed by descending stepwise motion (see Example 4.7).
Example 4.7 (mm. 74–6 and 98–101): Themes B1 and B2 (the second theme group).

Theme B2 is heard three times over the duration of ten measures: first, in the piano; then, without pause, in the orchestra; and then in the piano again. Theme B2 gives way to Theme B1 played by the orchestra with the piano accompanying (that takes eight more measures). The key areas here, after F-sharp minor, are E minor and B minor. The music of the eighteen-measure subformation is gentle and tranquil.

The other, eight-measure, subformation (m. 116) of the twenty-six-measure formation starts with a sudden urging in of the concerto’s opening theme (Theme A1). It has been a while since this theme was heard, so its effect is remarkable here. The theme is played by the orchestra (forte, risoluto) in the “out-of-place” key of C minor for just two measures and is then picked up by the piano, suddenly back in B minor. It continues in a different way than before, with the descending motive shown in Example 4.8. This motive, though serving as an alternate continuation of Theme A1, features the descending stepwise motion characteristic of the B themes. I will therefore refer to it as Motive AB. This motive seems to have been assigned a significant role by the composer as it reappears on numerous dramatically important occasions throughout the rest of the concerto.
Example 4.8 (mm. 120–122): Motive AB, a new melodic fragment which will be dramatically important from this point onward.

An intruding cadence to B minor marks the start of the next large formation (m. 124). It is rather interesting—the thirty-four-measure formation breaks the symmetry of the exposition’s layout, introduces “new” melodic material, and firmly establishes D major as an important key area. This formation also serves to prepare the final two formations of the exposition, which balance out the concerto’s opening, reflecting the two large formations that follow the introductory three-measure subformation. The internal structure of the thirty-four-measure formation is remarkable as well—it features a symmetrical arrangement of subformations.

The thirty-four-measure formation is structured in the following way. After an orchestral interlude based on Motive AB, which modulates to the key of D major over the course of its four measures, the piano plays a lyrical theme marked *Tranquillo, con molto tenerezza*. The theme is memorable enough to strike the ear as something new, yet it is very much related to both themes of the A group. This theme will be used prominently in the concerto’s development section. I will refer to it as Theme A3 (see Example 4.9).
Example 4.9 (mm. 128–135): Theme A3—a “new” theme related to the themes of the first theme group.

Midway through the theme the music replicates the latter part of Theme A2 (m. 133). The entire Theme A3 takes seven measures. Then, the orchestra comes to the foreground, playing Motive AB as well as various fragments of Themes A1 and A2. That takes twelve measures, during which the piano indulges in virtuosic display. There is a buildup of tension, while the tempo fluctuates—the composer asks now for a *ritenuto* or an *allargando*, now for a *piu mosso* or a *con moto*. After an intruding cadence to C-sharp major (m. 147), seven more measures are devoted to fragmentation of Theme A2. During this subformation, harmonic motion back toward the key of D major is present. Lastly, four measures of the descending-semitone Motive Y prepare the arrival of the next large formation, which begins in a triumphant D major (m.158).

This formation is one of the two formations that are left to conclude the concerto’s exposition. It is twenty-four measures long. The other formation is twenty measures long, so the construction of this final part of the exposition is just like that of its opening. The first one the two formations is divided into two subformations, of fourteen and ten measures. It features
themes of the A group in a contrapuntal arrangement. The orchestra handles most of the thematic material here, while the piano keeps drawing on its technical potential.

While the fourteen-measure subformation stays in the key of D, the ten-measure one becomes more ambiguous harmonically. At the end of this subformation (m.180), the bass descends via an octatonic scale (Figure 4.10). The piano part features leaps based on Motive X. Here, the music crescendos to a fortissimo and seems to be headed toward the key of E-flat. This harmonic motion is important, because E-flat major is the relative major key of the concerto’s home key, C minor, and it would be a more traditional choice for the exposition to be headed there. However, the music falls short of arriving in the key of E-flat, interrupted by the syncopated Motive Y. The key of D will soon be reinforced and kept as the exposition’s final goal.

Figure 4.10 (mm. 179–181): octatonic scale motion in the bass, seemingly directed toward the key of E-flat.
With Motive Y, the final formation of the exposition starts (m. 182). It may be subdivided into three subformations: seven, six, and seven measures long. The first seven-measure subformation leads toward the re-establishment of D major. The other two subformations are in the key of D; they are coda-like and feature mostly pianistic figuration. With that, firmly in D major, the concerto’s exposition ends.

Example 4.11 is a metrotectonic graph of the exposition that makes its remarkable balance of construction clear. Each large formation shown on the graph is subdivided into subformations, with their musical content noted, as described in the above analysis. The graph is also annotated with the exposition’s main key areas.

It is important to remember that the exposition of the concerto’s grandiose single-movement structure may also be viewed as an entire “opening movement.” Those of its features that digress from the usual course of a concerto’s exposition are more easily comprehended precisely from that point of view. The main goal of this metrotectonic analysis of the concerto is to show its structural balance and coherence of form. The clarity that is the result of laying the musical material of the concerto out on metrotectonic graphs should help the reader thoroughly understand the content of the work and its arrangement.
Example 4.11: the exposition: a numeric representation of the metrotectonic structure, with the main key areas noted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure nos.</th>
<th>Length of formations</th>
<th>Key areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>3 Motives X and Y</td>
<td>C minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-27</td>
<td>10 + 6 + 8 A1, A2, Motive X</td>
<td>C minor (Phrygian inflection), modulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-47</td>
<td>20 A1 transformed, extended A2</td>
<td>F minor (Phrygian inflection), modulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48-73</td>
<td>18 + 8 A2 (orch., then piano) and A1 (transformed) and B1, Motive Y</td>
<td>C minor, modulation, B-flat melodic major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74-97</td>
<td>24 B1 transformed B1 transformed, extended</td>
<td>E-flat Phrygian, B Phrygian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98-123</td>
<td>26 B2 and B1 A1 and Motive AB</td>
<td>F-sharp minor, E minor, B minor <em>Cminor</em> B minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>124-157</td>
<td>34 Motive AB (orch.) A3 Motive AB, A2, A1 A2 Motive Y</td>
<td>B minor, D major, modulation, C-sharp major, modulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>158-181</td>
<td>24 A2, A1 fragments A2, Motive X</td>
<td>D major, modulation toward E-flat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>182-201</td>
<td>20 Motive Y, A1 Figuration</td>
<td>D major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The concerto’s development section is complex. It consists of three subsections: first, an improvisatory cadenza-like section; second, a set of five variations; and third, a retransition section. I will describe the characteristics and the structure of each of these sections.

The cadenza-like section (m. 202) is essentially for the piano only. The orchestra’s role is limited to providing three short melodic utterances (at the very beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the section) and a few chords as accompaniment elsewhere. Written without a key signature, this section wanders harmonically before arriving at the dominant of the concerto’s home key of C minor in preparation for the first variation.

The melodic material of this section comes from a developmental treatment of two already familiar motives: the syncopated three-note descending motive is a variant of Motive Y and the leaping motive which follows is Motive X, slightly modified to include the augmented sixth interval. An ascending version of Motive Y is present here as well. The motives are marked in Figure 4.12.
Figure 4.12 (mm. 202–213): three familiar motives at the start of the development section.

The metrotectonic structure of the fifty-three-measure cadenza-like section can be discerned correctly after taking certain metric issues into consideration. In the last of its three orchestral melodic utterances, there is a measure of $\frac{3}{2}$. Because of the placement of melodic material, the three common-time measures before the actual $\frac{3}{2}$ measure also sound like two measures of $\frac{3}{2}$ (Figure 4.13b). A similar thing happens earlier in this section in a similar context—though in the absence of an actual $\frac{3}{2}$ measure—three measures of common time are perceived as two measures of $\frac{3}{2}$ (Figure 4.13a).
Figure 4.13a (mm. 226–228, perceived as two measures of \( \frac{3}{2} \)): the first of the two places of perceived re-barring in the cadenza-like section.

Figure 4.13b (mm. 247–254): the second place of perceived re-barring in the cadenza-like section—mm. 248–251 are perceived as three measures of \( \frac{3}{2} \).
Thus, the cadenza-like section is actually made up of fifty-one, not fifty-three constructive pulse waves (measures), although five of them are longer than the rest. They are arranged in an interesting manner, explained below.

The very first measure of the cadenza-like section (m. 202) lacks a downbeat which, according to Konius, prevents it from acting as the starting measure of a formation. Therefore, the first formation of the section starts on the downbeat of the next measure (m. 203). The formation is twenty-five measures long and is subdivided into three subformations. The first of these is fourteen measures long and is built from the motives shown in Figure 4.12. The second, ten-measure, subformation develops these motives into an upward-rising melody which culminates in a cascade of octatonic passagework. The last measure of this subformation is one of the two perceived triple-metered measures shown in Figure 4.13a and is made up of measure 226 and the first half of measure 227. The second half of measure 227 and measure 228 are also perceived as one triple-metered measure, which contains an orchestral interpolation—the beginning of Theme A1; that one measure is the last subformation of the twenty-five measure formation.

After this short orchestral interlude, the other formation of the section begins. It is similar to the first formation in length and content. It is twenty-five measures long, subdivided as follows. The first, eight-measure, subformation contains Motives X and Y and features trills. In the next twelve measures, Theme A1 is developed; there are two deceptive cadences—to E-flat and A-flat major keys. The last measure of this subformation is perceived as triple-metered and is made up of measure 248 and the first half of measure 249 (see Figure 4.13b). The remaining five measures of the twenty-five measure formation contain the concluding orchestral utterance of the cadenza-like section (the orchestra plays Theme A1). Two of these measures are triple-
metered (the first of the two is the perceived $\frac{3}{2}$ measure made up of one and a half common-time measures, while the second is an actual $\frac{3}{2}$ measure) and the other three are in common time (Figure 4.13b). The arrangement described above is shown in Example 4.14.

Example 4.14: the first subsection of the development (the cadenza-like section): a numeric representation of the metrotectonic structure, with the main key areas noted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure nos.</th>
<th>Length of formations</th>
<th>Key areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>202-228*</td>
<td>(1)+25</td>
<td>D major, modulation, E-flat minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1)+14 + 10 + 1</td>
<td>Motives X and Y, Development, A1 orch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>229-254*</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Modulation, C minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8 + 12 + 5</td>
<td>Motives X and Y, A1, development, A1 orch.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The measure count here is shown without regard of the abovementioned re-barring; the re-barring slightly alters the number of measures (pulses) contained in the formations of this section

The development section continues with five variations, each one having as its basis one or several of the concerto’s main themes. As the themes are closely related to one another, the set of variations approaches in its effect that on a single theme, but it is more exciting musically. The five variations will be discussed one by one, with their internal structure analyzed and shown to be balanced.

The first variation (mm. 255–291) is in C minor and is based on Themes A1 and A2. First, the orchestra introduces the two themes, one after the other, in a simple homophonic fashion. That takes nine measures; but since the first measure lacks a downbeat, this formation must be regarded as starting on the downbeat of the second measure and containing eight measures. This formation, for orchestra alone, is the first of the four formations of this variation.
In the other three, the piano and the orchestra play together contrapuntally, with the themes subjected to canonic treatment. Moreover, the canons are not simple canons; they are mensuration canons, meaning that the voices proceed at different speeds. Figure 4.15 shows such canons in the beginning of the first variation. The entire variation is written in similarly intricate counterpoint.

Figure 4.15 (mm. 255–268): two of the numerous mensuration canons in Variation 1.
Thus, the first variation consists of the introductory formation (where the orchestra plays alone) and three more formations (where the piano plays in counterpoint with the orchestra). These three are arranged symmetrically: an eight-measure formation, a twelve-measure formation, and an eight-measure formation (Example 4.16).

Example 4.16: Variation 1, metrotectonic structure and the main key areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure nos.: Variation 1</th>
<th>Length of formations</th>
<th>Key areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>255-263</td>
<td>(1)+ 8</td>
<td>C minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A1, A2 (orch.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>264-271</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>G minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Canonic treatment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>272-283</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>C minor, F minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Canonic treatment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>284-291</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>C minor, with Phrygian inflections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Canonic treatment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first variation reaches the dominant of F minor, which is the key of the second variation, and proceeds on to the second variation smoothly. Interestingly, the keys chosen by the composer for the five variations closely reflect the progression of keys in the concerto’s exposition: F minor, for instance, was the first new key area after the establishment of tonic key at the work’s opening (refer back to Example 4.11 to see this interesting relationship).

In the second variation (mm. 292–311), the piano has the leading role, playing most of the material. Its only companions come from the orchestra’s wind section: solo clarinet, oboe, and flute provide counter-melodic accompaniment. The variation is based on Theme A2, rendered in a lyrical fashion; it seemingly also contains a “new” theme, marked poco giocoso, which is in fact the same theme with some of its elements inverted and altered (Example 4.17).
Example 4.1 (mm. 299–300): a “new” theme in the second variation—in fact, it is another variant of Theme A2.

The second variation is twenty measures long, and its formations are, like those of the first variation, arranged in a remarkably symmetrical way (Example 4.18). The first one, in F minor, is seven measures long and may be further subdivided into a four-measure and a three-measure subformations. The middle formation, in the key of B-flat minor, is six measures long. The third formation, back in F minor, is seven measures long (like the first one), subdivided into a three-measure and a four-measure subformations.

Example 4.18: Variation 2, metrotectonic structure and the main key areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure nos.: Variation 2</th>
<th>Length of formations</th>
<th>Key areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>292-298</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>F minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 + 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>299-304</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>B-flat minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A2 transformed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>305-311</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>F minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 + 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The third variation (mm. 312–339) opens with an orchestral introduction. The introduction, based on theme B1, starts in F minor and modulates to G minor, which is the key of the third variation. Note that G minor, though not featured in the concerto’s exposition as a prominent key area, is the relative minor of B-flat major, which was an important key in the exposition.

The third variation, like the previous two, is lyrical in mood. The piano part based mainly on theme B1, and the orchestra brings in fragments of themes A1 and A2. Midway through the variation, a familiar melody appears prominently, played forte, espressivo— it is Motive AB from the exposition (shown back in Example 4.8). Here, as at its first appearance, this motive is associated with a state of heightened emotion.

The variation is structured as follows: after the ten-measure introductory formation, played by the orchestra alone, there are three more, each one six measures long (Example 4.19). The third formation is quite interesting: the piano plays alone, and there is fast figuration in the right hand with a left-hand movement in seconds and sevenths, which recalls one of the concerto’s opening motives—Motive X (marked in Figure 4.20).

Example 4.19: Variation 3, metrotectonic structure and the main key areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure nos.: Variation 3</th>
<th>Length of formations</th>
<th>Key areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>312-321</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>F minor, modul., G minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B1 (orch.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>322-327</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>G minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B1, fragments of A1 and A2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>328-333</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>G minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>334-339</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>G minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Motive X (pno)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4.20 (mm. 334–339): the last formation of Variation 3, where the bass is derived from Motive X.
Figure 4.21 (mm. 340–346): the orchestral introduction to Variation 4.
The fourth variation (mm. 340–387) also starts with a modulatory orchestral introduction, six measures long and based on Theme A2. Right away, it is clear that the character here is far from the lyrical mood of the first three variations; increased energy and dramatic power replace lyricism. The introduction (shown in Figure 4.21, above) is interesting harmonically: from G minor, it shifts to B-flat melodic major (Tiulin’s major mode VII). Then, a few measures later, a string of chromatic parallel sixth chords leads to the dominant of G minor; the music halts there, and after a fermata, discloses a deceptive resolution of the dominant—the main body of the fourth variation is in E-flat minor. The key of E-flat is yet another key that was important in the concerto’s exposition, as was the opposition between the keys of D and E-flat.

The piano part of the fourth variation is based on Theme A2 and the orchestra part mostly on Theme B1. The orchestra part is much more prominent here than it was in the previous two variations, and the piano part is virtuosic. The forty-eight measure variation consists of four formations in an interesting, nearly symmetrical, arrangement (Example 4.22). The first formation contains the orchestra’s six introductory measures, up to the sudden D major. With the D major, abandoned right away for the sake of E-flat minor, the next, seventeen-measure, formation begins. This formation, rich in texture, modulates to B-flat major. The third formation, also seventeen measures long, features new renditions of both Theme A2 and Theme B1. Theme A2 is transformed into passagework in quintuplets in the pianist’s right hand and Theme B1 undergoes a rhythmic variation. This formation has somewhat thinned out textures, especially in the orchestra part. It moves into the last formation of the variation by a deceptive cadence to C-flat major.

The orchestra starts the last formation with a quiet but extremely clear utterance of Theme B1 in open octaves, in E minor—having reinterpreted the C-flat major chord
enharmonically as B major, the dominant of that key. The piano replies in the next measure, playing the same theme at the distance of a tritone, in B-flat minor. The orchestra repeats its remark, now in the darker E Phrygian mode. The piano starts playing in B-flat minor again, but this time gives up and joins the orchestra in emphasizing the B major chord as a dominant harmony. This opposition between the piano and the orchestra accounts for the dramatic power of this formation. The formation, which would have to contain six measures long to properly reflect the first formation of the fourth variation, is extended to eight measures—the last two measures acting as a “steeple” of sorts\textsuperscript{168}—the orchestra underscores its victory by saying the “final word.”

Example 4.22: Variation 4, metrotectonic structure and the main key areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure nos.: Variation 4</th>
<th>Length of formations</th>
<th>Key areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>340-345</td>
<td>6 A2 transf.</td>
<td>G minor, B-flat harm. major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>D major</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>346-362</td>
<td>17 A2 and B1</td>
<td>E-flat minor, modul.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>363-379</td>
<td>17 A2 and B1, both transf.</td>
<td>B-flat major, modul.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>380-387</td>
<td>8 (6 + 2 &quot;steeple&quot;)</td>
<td>Opposition between E minor/phrygian (orch.) and B-flat minor (pno)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{168} As mentioned in Chapter Three, Konius referred to short formations located outside the symmetry of a work or a work’s section and performing a special function as “steeple” formations, borrowing the term from architecture.
The fifth and final variation (mm. 388–458) is the longest one. It is seventy-one measures long and consists of three distinct sections (large formations). Each section has a different key signature: the first, E minor, the second, no key signature, and the third, F-sharp minor. Note that keys of E minor and F-sharp minor have been used as important key areas in the exposition, while the absence of a key was used at the development’s opening—in the cadenza-like section.

The first, E-minor, section (m. 388) of the fifth variation is twenty-two measures long and is made up of two smaller formations. The first one is eight measures long and features solo piano—a canonic rendition of Theme B1. The other, fourteen-measure, formation has Theme B2 as its basis, first introduced here by the orchestra. The orchestra and the piano then play the theme in dialogue; toward the end of this formation, Theme B1 reappears in the bass.

The two eight-measure formations of the second, sixteen-measure-long, section (which starts in m. 410 and is written with no key signature) of the fifth variation are constructed identically. In each one, first come four measures of brooding trills in the piano’s lowest register and staccato figuration in the pianist’s right hand, both serving as an accompaniment to Theme B1 positioned in the middle voice; the orchestra’s only contribution here are tremolos. Next are two measures of Theme A1 in the piano part accompanied by a fragment of Theme B2 in the orchestra part; then, two more measures in which the orchestra picks up Theme A1 while the piano accompanies.

The third section (m. 426) of the fifth variation starts in the key of F-sharp minor. It is the longest (thirty-three measures) and most complex of the three sections. Both the piano and the orchestra have prominent parts here. The first formation of this section is fourteen measures long and is based on Theme A1. The theme is completely transformed in rhythm and texture here and
has a scherzo-like character. The next formation of this section is eight measures long, consisting of four measures of Theme B1 and four measures of Motive AB. Played by the orchestra, this motive once again highlights a place of dramatic importance—the music modulates to the relative major key, A major.

Had the variation ended here, its construction would have been perfectly symmetrical (Example 4.23). But, there is one more formation, eleven measures long, the purpose of which is to build the tension and momentum in preparation for the next large section of the concerto. This is achieved by showcasing the tritone opposition between the keys of A and E-flat (such an opposition had already played an important role near the end of the fourth variation, the opposing keys being E and B-flat there). In this latter case, E-flat major is the winning key, and this is where the next large section of the work begins.

Example 4.23: Variation 5, metrotectonic structure and the main key areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure nos.: Variation 5</th>
<th>Length of formations</th>
<th>Key areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>388-409</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>E minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B1 canonc (pno)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>410-425</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>B-flat Phrygian, C Phrygian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B1, A1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>B1, A1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>426-458</td>
<td>33 (22 + 11)</td>
<td>F-sharp minor, opposition between A maj. and E-flat maj.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B1, AB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The third and final section of the concerto’s development—the retransition (m.459)—is seventy-two measures long. A symmetrical twenty-six measure formation opens this section. The orchestra plays themes A2 and A3 in counterpoint for nine measures before the pianist’s entrance. These nine measures and the following four measures in which the piano picks up Theme A3 make up the first half of the twenty-six measure formation. The music modulates to the key of D-flat major. The other half of the twenty-six-measure formation starts in D-flat major. It contains the same thematic material as the first half, but has a reverse order of subformations—first come four measures of orchestra playing alone and then nine measures in which the piano first plays solo and then together with the orchestra.

The next formation (m. 485) is short (just six measures) and performs a transitional function. In the piano part, it is characterized by a new, *forte* and pedaled, sonority, upward motion, and chromatic passages in *martellato* octaves. In the orchestra part, Theme A2 is heard. This formation leads to a key change (switching to no key signature).

The following formation (m. 491) is long—thirty-eight measures—and, like the first formation of this section, symmetrical. Its first subformation is fifteen measures long and starts on the dominant of C minor. In it, Themes A2 and B2 and their fragments are developed and intertwined in various ways. The second subformation is eight measures long, goes through the keys of A minor and F minor, and is built from Motive AB and Theme B1. The third and last subformation is, again, fifteen measures long. It brings back Theme A1 and the dominant of C minor in preparation for the recapitulation. The piano is silent during the latter half of this subformation, which makes its entrance two measures before the start of the recapitulation more exciting.
The two measures in which the piano reenters are the last and shortest formation (m.529) of the retransition section. The piano plays a rhythmically augmented version of the concerto’s introductory motive—the leaping Motive X—supported by the orchestra’s sonorous tremolo accompaniment. These two measures seem to perform the same function as the introductory three measures at the very beginning of the concerto but unlike those three, these cannot be considered an introductory formation to the following large formation and have to be considered part of the retransition section, as the tonic key is not yet established in them. Moreover, right at the start of the recapitulation, there are another four measures featuring Motive X and Motive Y and preparing the main theme. So, right after the two-measure formation, the tonic key of C minor finally arrives, and the recapitulation, marked \textit{Tempo I}, begins. Example 4.24 shows the remarkable symmetry within the formations of the retransition section.

Example 4.24: the third and last part of the development (the retransition), metrotectonic structure and the main key areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure nos.</th>
<th>Length of formations</th>
<th>Key areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>459-484</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>E-flat major, D-flat major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13 (9 + 4)</td>
<td>A3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>A3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A3 and A2 in counterpoint</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>485-490</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Modulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>491-528</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>V of C minor, A minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>F minor, V of C minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>AB, B1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>A1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>529-530</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>V of C minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Motive X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Like the exposition, the recapitulation (m. 531) opens with a dramatic preparation for the main theme—a short formation featuring Motive X and Motive Y. It is four measures long (its corresponding formation in the exposition was three measures long). As will be seen, all of the formations in the recapitulation are slightly longer than their counterparts in the exposition. That is because Medtner uses canonic versions of all the themes in the recapitulation. Thus, canon is a rather prevalent technique in the concerto, having been used in some of the variations as well.

In the first large (twenty-six-measure long) formation (m. 535) of the recapitulation, the piano leads with a powerful triple-forte rendition of Theme A1, while the orchestra follows more subtly (piano with crescendo) at the distance of one measure, playing the same theme with a slightly varied rhythm. This canon constitutes the first subformation of the twenty-six-measure formation. Ten measures later, the appearance of Theme A2 (also treated canonically) marks the start of the second subformation. Here, the canon is in three voices, at a half-measure rhythmic distance and at the interval of a fifth (Figure 4.25).

Figure 4.25 (mm. 545–546): a canonic rendering of Theme A2 in the recapitulation.
The second subformation of the twenty-six measure formation is eight measures long (in the exposition, Theme A2 took six measures). The use of canon accounts for the additional measures. Like in the exposition, the next, transitional, subformation in eight measures long and is based on Theme A1 and the leaping Motive X. This time, it brings the music to the key of E minor.

With Theme A1 in E minor, the next formation (m. 561) of the recapitulation begins. It is also its last formation, as the recapitulation section is truncated compared with the exposition. This is so because the exposition plays the role of an entire first movement (when the concerto’s sections are viewed as separate movements) while the recapitulation does not—not without the coda. Combined with the coda, however, it may be viewed as a kind of Finale movement.

So, the last formation of the recapitulation is twenty-one measures long, constructed in the same way as the corresponding one in the exposition: four measures of Theme A1, twelve measures in which the theme gets transformed and extended, and lastly, five measures of Theme A2. Altogether, the recapitulation is just fifty-one measures long (Example 4.26).

Example 4.26: the recapitulation, metrotectonic structure and the main key areas.
The coda (mm. 582–741) of the concerto is very long—it takes one hundred sixty measures and contains a short cadenza for the soloist. After the cadenza, the coda is constructed mostly from formations of the same size (Example 4.27).

Example 4.27: the coda, metroTECTONIC structure and the main key areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure nos.</th>
<th>Length of formations</th>
<th>Key areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>582-638</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>C minor, modul., V of C minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>639-670</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>C minor, C minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>671-674</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>C major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>675-706</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>C major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>707-738</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>C with Mixolydian, Lydian, and Phrygian inflections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>739-741</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>C major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The coda starts with a large formation which includes the cadenza. Its internal structure is as follows. First, eight measures are devoted to Theme A1 and some simple sequential motion. The next subformation (fourteen measures long) features Theme A2. The third subformation
brings back Theme A1 and starts in a way very similar to the first one, but is extended to twenty-one measures and serves the very important purpose of preparing the cadenza. Seven measures into this subformation, Theme B1 makes an appearance, and two measures later, Theme A2 as well. The harmony becomes more complex, with several distant keys touched upon, including the key of D-flat minor. Theme A2 is heard in its entirety and then develops into Motive AB (as mentioned above, this motive has been used throughout the concerto to highlight places of great dramatic tension, such as this preparation for the cadenza). A motion derived from Theme A1 is prominent in the pianist’s left hand.

The cadenza (m. 625) is the next subformation, ten measures long. The cadenza is based on Motive AB, a bass motion derived from Theme A1, and the semitone Motive Y. Following the cadenza, the orchestra reinforces both Motive AB and Motive Y in the last, four-measure, subformation of the coda’s first formation.

The next formation of the coda starts at the Alla breve marking in the music (m. 639). The structure of the coda is quite regular from here to the end of the concerto. There are three thirty-two-measure-long formations, with a short interlude-like formation before the second one, and a “steeple”-like, tonic-reinforcing formation at the very end of the concerto. Each thirty-two-measure formation is subdivided into four eight-measure subformations.

The first thirty-two-measure formation presents Theme A1, marked Lamentoso, in its first eight measures. The next eight measures feature a variant of Theme A2. In the third eight-measure subformation, Theme A1 returns. The final eight measures of the first thirty-two-measure formation bring forth Theme B1, which is combined contrapuntally with the variant of Theme A2. After that, the mode of the music is changed to major (m. 671). Here, four measures
make up a short interlude-like formation in which the orchestra plays the ever dramatically important Motive AB (*espressivo, molto tranquillo*), establishing the new mode and mood.

Next, with the piano coming back in, the second thirty-two-measure formation begins (m. 675). In the first eight-measure subformation, the piano plays Theme A3 and the orchestra accompanies with Theme B1. The next one features a change of the texture, but Theme A3 continues, and the orchestra accompanies it with tremolos. A *crescendo* prepares another repetition of Theme A3, this time played *fortissimo* by the orchestra—that is the third eight-measure subformation. The theme is arranged polyphonically in such a way that its first half is heard simultaneously with the second half. The piano assumes a secondary role here, playing passagework. By the middle of the third subformation (m. 695), a melodic cell gets extracted from Theme A3 and is played over and over again, mostly by the orchestra (Example 4.28). This ostinato motive continues into the fourth subformation and beyond, creating an enchanted atmosphere for the entire last thirty-two measure formation of the coda.

Example 4.28 (mm. 695–6): a “cell” extracted from Theme A3 and serving as an ostinato.

The start of the third (and last) thirty-two measure formation (m. 707), in which the dynamic is *piano* throughout, is marked by the appearance of Theme A2, played by the pianist. Because the music is now in the C major mode, the B flat makes the theme sound Mixolydian (Figure 4.29)—another instance of Medtner’s use of unusual modes in the concerto. The fourth
scale degree of the mode used here is raised and the second scale degree appears in both the raised and the lowered versions. The resulting modes are Tiulin’s modes XXI and XXII (shown in Example 4.30). The orchestra accompanies the theme with the aforementioned ostinato motive.

Figure 4.29 (mm. 707 –10): a new, Mixolydian, rendition of Theme A2 in the coda.
Example 4.30: the two modes that inform the modal-harmonic content of the above excerpt.

Later in the same subformation, the piano plays a variant of Theme A1 (m. 711). During the next eight measures, the piano and the orchestra take turns playing the Mixolydian-sounding Theme A2. The third eight-measure subformation contains no more melody—only the repeated melodic cell shown in Example 4.28. Here, both the piano and the orchestra play it, the piano playing twice as fast as the orchestra. Gradually, the range of the melodic cell narrows down as the dynamic level decreases, and, by the last measure of this subformation, the cell turns into a tremolo on the notes of the C major triad, with the addition of a dissonant B in the bass (m.730).

The last eight-measure subformation is particularly interesting. The tremolo increases in volume from triple piano to triple forte over the course of its first four measures. The piano keeps the same notes, while the orchestra adds the notes of the D-flat major chord, one by one—another case of a Phrygian inflection, by now proven a consistent feature of the concerto’s harmonic language. The added notes form Motive X (Figure 4.31). In the other four measures of this subformation, sonorous waves of pure C major provide a grand conclusion to the concerto. The remaining three measures of the concerto, which come after the three thirty-two-measure formations described above, consist of three low C’s in the piano part, played over a held C major harmony in the orchestra. They are the work’s “steeple” formation and may also be seen as balancing out the very first, introductory, three-measure formation of the work.
Figure 4.31 (mm.729–735): the last appearance of Motive X, at the close of the concerto
Conclusion

Looking back at the above analysis, I would like to explain why such an unusual method of analyzing a work’s form as Konius’s is meaningful and beneficial for the theorist and the performer alike. In Chapter Three, I showed how easily a miniature work (Medtner’s Tale) could be subjected to metrotectonic subdivision and analysis, and how relatively simple it was to make a graph showing balance and symmetry within such a work’s formal structure. The present chapter, dealing with an enormously greater and more complex piece of music—the First Concerto, argued that it was necessary to look at such a work in sections for its inherent balance to shine through the complexities of its form and the intricacies of its musical language. To be sure, there were many elements that simply would not “fit” into any kind of perfectly symmetrical arrangement. Still, the outcome of both analyses is the same: metrotectonic analysis uncovers fascinating underlying patterns of formal design, which are often hidden behind the surface of the music.

In larger works especially, perfect symmetry of arrangement of the musical material is rarely the case—unless one consciously (or subconsciously) looks for such a way of subdivision which creates an illusion of perfect symmetry, often ignoring more obvious structural patterns (as seems to be the case with some of Konius’s analyses). However, I believe that the kind of metrotectonic analysis that is more “honest” and true to the musical ear allows one to see a given work’s structure in a new light, making its formal patterns and balances within those more apparent. For performers too, knowing the metrotectonic subdivisions of a work they are practicing allows to better understand and internalize the work (especially as long and as complex a work as Medtner’s First Concerto).
Granted that metrotectonic subdivision of a work is subjective and even somewhat intuitive (even though the subdivisions are made with certain rules in mind, in large works especially, there are often multiple ways in which one may subdivide), the metrotectonic method opens new perspectives and allows for a fresh look at familiar musical forms. The subjectivity of the method is precisely what makes it appealing, since it allows for a flexibility of interpretation. Konius’s method may be used as a ground for an analysis in which one strives not to ignore obvious structural patterns and still be able to see the balance and architectonic beauty of a musical work’s form. Contrary to the opinion that metrotectonicism ignores many aspects of musical fabric, metrotectonic analysis does not have to disregard the sounding surface of music. Rather than that, the metrotectonic method can show how it lies upon (and often hides) the regularity of the background, “skeletal,” structure.

The study of Medtner’s music from the metrotectonic point of view promises results that may well be fruitfully continued. With regard to Medtner’s small-scale works, it would be interesting to see how many of those have the principle symmetry inherent in their form and to what degree. For the composer’s grand and original sonata and sonata-like forms, metrotectonic analysis could serve the purpose of clarifying the intricacies of their design.

I would like to add a few words about Tiulin’s modal theories. More self-explanatory and much easier to understand than Konius’s metrotectonic method, Tiulin’s way of looking at a work’s modal-harmonic structure helps to alleviate the tendency to see the harmony of a work as block chords, promoting a more linear approach. As emphasized previously, Tiulin’s system enriches traditional (as well as non-traditional) analytical approaches rather than replaces them.
It is therefore very easily applicable to much music, as Tiulin shows in his numerous examples\textsuperscript{169} and as seen from my own brief application of the system to the music of Medtner.

\textsuperscript{169} See Tiulin, \textit{Natural'nye i alteratsionnye lady}, 78 –108.
Appendix 1: Tiulin’s Tables of the Natural and Altered Modes

Major modes

Group A—with one altered tone

I
Ionian

II
Harmonic

III
Mixolydian

IV
Lydian

V
with a lowered II

VI
with a raised II
Group B— with two altered tones
Group C—with three altered tones

Group D—with four altered tones
Minor Modes

Group A—with one altered tone

I

Aeolian

II

Harmonic

III

Dorian

IV

Phrygian

V

With a raised IV

VI

With a lowered IV
Group B—with two altered tones

- VII
- VIII
- IX
- X
- XI
- XII
- XIII
- XIV
- XV

a) With a raised VII
b) Dorian
c) Phrygian
Group C—with three altered tones

Group D—with four altered tones
NARRANTE A PIACERE

mp molto cantabile

SEMPRE CON PED.

PIÙ MOSSO (NON SUBITO)

POCO Ritenuto

CANTANDO

(poco a poco quasi valse)

SEMPRE ACCEL.

CRESC.

TEMPO DI VALSE (SEMPRE ACCELERANDO)

CON PED.
Н. МЕТНЕР
N. MEDTNER

Ор. 33,

КОНЦЕРТ № 1
ДЛЯ ФОРТЕПИАНО С ОРКЕСТРОМ

KLAVIERKONZERT Nr 1

Клавир
Ausgabe für 2 Klaviere

МУЗЫКА • MUSYKA
МОСКВА 1983 MOSKAU
Памяти матери

КОНЦЕРТ № 1
ДЛЯ ФОРТЕПИАНО С ОРКЕСТРОМ
Соч. 33

Н. МЕТНЕР
(1879—1951)

Переложение для двух фортепиано автора

Allegro $\frac{d}{100}$

Piano I
(Фортепиано)

V-ni
$f$ appassionato

Piano II
(Оркестр)

*) На протяжении всего произведения сохранять ось — единицу темпа, но не играть метрономически-ровно.
Poco largamente e poi poco a poco a tempo molto cantando e espressivo
triquillo ma mobile (a tempo)
espress.

triquillo ma mobile (a tempo)

poco più risoluto

m.s.

più f

poco più risoluto

Cl.

Fag.
Molto espressivo

Tranquillo, con molto tenerezza
allargando

poi ritornando al tempo I (Allegro)

sempre più mosso

cresc.

sempre più mosso

cresc.
Molto sostenuto, ma sempre accelerando con gradazione
Ossia

leggierissimo

calmando

tranquillo
dolce, tranquillo

PFCr
*Эту трель можно начать на полтакта раньше.*
Tranquillo, meditamente (ma sempre a tempo)

con sord.
V-e. tenbrogo

espressivo

Piegalissimo

V-ni
dolente

cresc.
Molto cantabile, assoluto

mp cantando

Molto cantabile, assoluto

pp

dim.

mf cantando

Ob.

pp
Tempo risoluto (quasi recitativo)
Molto tranquillo, meditamente

leggissimo
Molto tranquillo, meditamente

P
a tempo (quasi recitativo)

poco con moto

f\textit{risoluto}

poco rit.

poco a

poco accel. e cresc.

poco

marcato
32| Tempo risoluto (Allegro)

P marcato

legatissimo

ten.

P

rinforz.

ten.

rinforz.

PP

rinforz.

dim.

marcato

12008
sempre al rigore di tempo

P subito

marcato, minaccioso

Ossia

sempre al rigore di tempo

sotto
cresc.
sopra

PP
fantastico, ma sempre al rigore di tempo
molto espressivo, ma a tempo

f pieno

molto rítimo
a tempo e poco a poco crescendo

a tempo e poco a poco crescendo

1208
pacatamente, ma sempre a tempo
sempre mancando, ma a tempo

non ritardare
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