



Two Preludes Op. 67

by Alexander Scriabin

Edited by Peter Billam

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Two Preludes, Alexander Scriabin op.67, 1912-3

Danilewitsch quotes Scriabin: "my melody is a decomposed harmony, and my harmony is condensed melody." Indeed, the harmony notes are not a subset, selected for lower tension, of the melody notes; they are all of them. The euphony desirable in longer notes is attained by careful spacing; this in turn encourages some arpeggiation, that further blurs the border between the harmonic and melodic realms. The following observations on the harmonic and rhythmic construction are mostly gleaned from Manfred Kelkel's book *Alexandre Scriabine: Sa vie, l'ésotérisme et le langage musical dans son oeuvre*, Éditions Honoré Champion, 7 quai Malaquais, Paris, 1978.

At the time of Op. 67, Scriabin was using the eight-note scale 1+2+1+2+1+2+1+2 semitones. Since the pattern repeats every three semitones, it has only three distinct transpositions. In the second movement, the first bars are made from *C Db Eb En F# G A Bb*; in bar 1 *Db* and *En* are omitted, in bar 2 the first half has *En* and *G* omitted, and the second half has *G* and *Bb* omitted, a simple rising pattern.

In the slower first movement, this eight-note scale is expanded to a nine-note scale. In the first bar, an *Ab* is added on the barline. In bar 15, using the second transposition *C# D E F G G# A# B*, an *F#* is added on the barline, and the scale-note *G* is omitted in bar 15 but mentioned in bar 16. By simple changes of this kind, Scriabin maintains harmonic rhythm, and harmonic movement from bar to bar.

Both movements are 35 bars long. The rhythmic structure of the first is most easily read by counting the left hand chords in eighth-notes: there is a six-bar phrase and its repetition, then a four-bar phrase and its repetition a semitone down, then a six-bar phrase and its repetition six semitones down extended to eight bars.

6 bars: 3+2, 3+2, 3+7, 3+7; 6 bars: 3+2, 3+2, 3+7, 3+5+2

4 bars: 8+2, 10; 4 bars: 8+2, 10

6 bars: 3+7, 3+17

8 bars: 3+2, 3+2, 3+5+2, 3+17

last bar: 5

The sections of the second movement are counted in bars. First there is a ten-bar section (4+2+4), then a twelve-bar section (4+2+4+2), then a recapitulation of the ten-bar section (4+2+4), and then a three-bar conclusion.

In this edition the notes are right but many expression marks are not, partly through the constraints of my music-typesetting software *muscript*. Long slurs have been omitted, and the arpeggiation symbols are missing. If you're considering playing these pieces, make sure you consult Peters or Dover or some other more authoritative edition. The fingering is editorial only; it may help, but can be ignored.

Two Preludes, Op. 67 (1912–1913)

Andante

pp vague, mystérieux

2

The first system of the musical score for the first prelude. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 5/8. The music begins with a piano (pp) dynamic and is marked 'vague, mystérieux'. The first measure contains a half note chord in the bass and a dotted quarter note chord in the treble. The second measure is similar. The third measure features a half note chord in the bass and a dotted quarter note chord in the treble, with a '2' above the treble staff indicating a second fingering. The system ends with a fermata over the final chord.

5 2

The second system of the musical score. It continues from the first system. The treble staff has a slur over the first two notes, with a '5' above the first note and a '2' above the second note. The bass staff continues with half note chords. The system ends with a fermata over the final chord.

10

The third system of the musical score. It continues from the second system. The treble staff has a slur over the first two notes, with a '10' above the first note. The bass staff continues with half note chords. The system ends with a fermata over the final chord.

3 5 4 1 3 2 1 15

cresc . . . déchirant

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

The fourth system of the musical score. It continues from the third system. The treble staff has a slur over the first three notes, with a '3' above the first note. The bass staff continues with half note chords. The system ends with a fermata over the final chord. The dynamic marking 'cresc . . .' is placed above the bass staff, and 'déchirant' is placed above the treble staff. Fingering numbers are provided for several notes: '2' under the first bass note, '1 3-2' under the second and third bass notes, '3 2 1' under the first three treble notes, and '5 2 1 5' under the final treble notes.

Musical score system 1, measures 1-4. The system includes a treble and bass clef. The treble clef has a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. The bass clef has a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music features a descending melodic line in the treble and a supporting bass line. Performance markings include *dim . . .* and *cresc . . .*. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. A dynamic marking of *pp* is present at the end of the system.

Musical score system 2, measures 5-8. The system includes a treble and bass clef. The treble clef has a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. The bass clef has a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music features a descending melodic line in the treble and a supporting bass line. Performance markings include *pp*. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Musical score system 3, measures 9-12. The system includes a treble and bass clef. The treble clef has a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. The bass clef has a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music features a descending melodic line in the treble and a supporting bass line. Performance markings include *pp*. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Musical score system 4, measures 13-16. The system includes a treble and bass clef. The treble clef has a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. The bass clef has a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music features a descending melodic line in the treble and a supporting bass line. Performance markings include *pp*. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Musical score system 5, measures 17-20. The system includes a treble and bass clef. The treble clef has a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. The bass clef has a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music features a descending melodic line in the treble and a supporting bass line. Performance markings include *molto accel . . .* and *molto ritard . . .*. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

No. 2

Presto

pp inquiet

10

15

cresc. . .

mf

Musical score for measures 6-19. The piece is in 4/4 time. The right hand features chords with accidentals (sharps and naturals) and fingerings (4, 2, 1). The left hand has a steady eighth-note accompaniment with fingerings (5, 2, 4, 5, 2, 3, 5, 1, 2, 4, 5, 1, 2, 4, 2). A *dim . . .* marking is present in measure 10.

Musical score for measures 20-24. Measure 20 is marked with a large **20**. The right hand has chords with fingerings (4, 2). The left hand continues with eighth-note accompaniment and fingerings (3, 1, 1, 4, 1, 1, 4, 1, 1, 5, 2, 1, 5, 2, 1, 5, 2, 1). A *dim . . .* marking is present in measure 23.

Musical score for measures 25-29. Measure 25 is marked with a large **25**. The right hand has chords with fingerings (4, 2). The left hand continues with eighth-note accompaniment and fingerings (4, 1, 1, 3, 1, 3, 3, 1). A *pp* marking is present in measure 26.

Musical score for measures 30-34. Measure 30 is marked with a large **30**. The right hand has chords with fingerings (3, 1, 4, 2). The left hand continues with eighth-note accompaniment and fingerings (4, 2, 1, 5, 4, 2, 4, 2, 2, 2, 3, 1, 5, 4, 2, 1, 4, 2).

Musical score for measures 35-39. The right hand has chords with fingerings (3, 1, 4, 2). The left hand continues with eighth-note accompaniment and fingerings (4, 2, 1, 5, 4, 2, 4, 2, 2, 2, 3, 1, 5, 4, 2, 1, 4, 2).

Musical score for measures 40-43. Measure 40 is marked with a large **40**. The right hand has chords with fingerings (3). The left hand continues with eighth-note accompaniment and fingerings (4, 4, 1, 3, 3, 2, 5, 1). A *ppp* marking is present in measure 40, and a *cresc . . .* marking is present in measure 42.

Peter Billam was born in London in 1948, studied piano, and lived in Switzerland from 1973 to 1983, where he studied composition, classical guitar, flute and voice, worked as Musical Director of the *Théâtre Populaire Romand*, and as recording engineer, record producer and computer programmer. He moved to Tasmania in 1983, and lectured in composition at the Conservatorium. He founded www.pjb.com.au, becoming the first composer to sell scores on-line, taking scores from Composer to Performer in one immediate step. *Wwww.pjb.com.au* offers a new approach to music publishing. These pieces are **written to be read, made to be played !**

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Arrangements include: By J. S. Bach: *Trio BWV 655*, piano and flute; *Vor deinen Thron BWV 668*, piano; *Fugue in F minor BWV 689*, SATB recorders; *Four Duets BWV 802-5*, keyboard; *Six Preludes and Fugues* from Book I, keyboard; *Flute Sonata BWV 1031* transposed into G major for alto recorder and keyboard; *Flute Sonata BWV 1032* completed by Peter Billam for flute and keyboard, also in C major for alto recorder, and in G major for descant; *Ricercare a 3*, from the *Musikalisches Opfer* for keyboard; *Ricercare a 6*, for sSATBG recorders, or strings, or two keyboards; and *Fuga Canonica in Epidiapente*; from the *Art of Fugue: Contrapuncti 1, 4 and 9* for keyboard, and *Contrapunctus 14* as completed by D. F. Tovey, for keyboard, or for SATB recorders, or for strings; *Passacaglia and Fugue in c* for piano four hands; *Chorales with Descant* for melody instrument and piano; *Cello Suites I, II and III* for flute or alto recorder, *Forty Chorales* for piano, *Der Geist hilft* for SATB-SATB recorders. By Brahms: *Fugue in Ab minor for organ*, for SATB recorders and gamba, in A minor; *Choralvorspiele for organ* plus settings by Isaac, Bach, Praetorius, recorders. *John Carr*, *Divisions on an Italian Ground*, flute or recorder and guitar. Franz Liszt, *Late piano pieces*, G.F. Händel: *Concerto Grosso in A minor* op 6 no 4, harpsichord and recorders; *Recorder Sonata in Bb* no 5, in G for tenor recorder and keyboard. Claudio Monteverdi, *Ecco Mormorar l'Onde*, SSATB recorders. Arnold Schoenberg: *Verklärte Nacht* for piano. Franz Schubert: *Four Songs*, voice and guitar; *Dances*, recorders and guitar, *Dances*, piano 4 hands. Scriabin, *Two Preludes op.67*; *Five Preludes op.74*, piano. Telemann, *Twelve Flute Fantasias*, recorder. Wilbye, *Draw on sweet Night*, SSATTB recorders, and for flute choir. *Twelve Italian Songs*, voice and guitar; *Seven English Songs*, voice and guitar; *Fourteen Folk Dance Tunes*, recorder and guitar; *Bushband Dances*, violin, accordeon and banjo; *Easy Classical Pieces*, Bb trumpet and piano; *Famous Beginnings*, for piano.

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