

= Miscellaneous solo piano compositions (Rachmaninoff) =

The composer Sergei Rachmaninoff produced a number of solo piano pieces that were either lost , unpublished , or not assigned an opus number . While often disregarded in the concert repertoire , they are nevertheless part of his oeuvre . He composed sixteen such pieces , and all others are lost . Ten of these pieces were composed before he completed his Piano Concerto No. 1 , his first opus , and the rest interspersed throughout his later life . In these casual works , he draws upon the influence of other composers , including Frédéric Chopin and Pyotr Tchaikovsky . The more substantial works , the Three Nocturnes and Four Pieces , are sets of well @-@ thought out pieces that are his first attempts at cohesive structure among multiple pieces . Oriental Sketch and Prelude in D minor , two pieces he composed very late in his life , are short works that exemplify his style as a mature composer . Whether completed as a child or adult , these pieces cover a wide spectrum of forms while maintaining his characteristic Russian style .

= = Works = =

In the autumn of 1885 , the twelve @-@ year @-@ old Rachmaninoff entered the home of Nikolai Zverev to receive private piano instruction and at the end of May 1886 , Zverev took his students to Crimea , where Rachmaninoff continued his studies , hoping to gain entrance to Anton Arensky 's harmony class at the Moscow Conservatory . It was during this time that Rachmaninoff created his first composition , a two @-@ page Étude in F @-@ sharp major (the manuscript is now lost) . After admission to the class , he produced more exercises , the earliest of which is a Lento in D minor ; it is the only surviving piece of ten he is said to have composed .

Now beginning to compose independently , Rachmaninoff 's next project was a group he titled Three Nocturnes , and is regarded as his first serious attempt at writing for the piano . The first nocturne , in F @-@ sharp minor , was written 14 @-@ 21 November 1887 , and has three parts : a beginning and an end in andante cantabile and a central section in allegro . The slower andantes are gentle sections , influenced by Pyotr Tchaikovsky , while the allegro is unnatural and stiff and unusually fast for a nocturne . The second piece , in F major , followed on 22 @-@ 25 November , also contains a slower portion coupled with a quick section . No. 3 , in C minor , took more than a month to compose , dated from 3 December 1886 to 12 January 1887 . With a chordal texture spread over the entire keyboard , it is reminiscent of the music of Robert Schumann . The nocturnes were published posthumously in Moscow in 1949 , but were not assigned an opus number .

The Four Pieces of 1887 are perhaps Rachmaninoff 's first comprehensive works . Each has a clear aim and method to attain it , and all unfold with a fluency significantly more advanced than that shown in the previous nocturnes . The opening Romance , in F @-@ sharp minor , harks back to Frédéric Chopin 's tenderness . The E @-@ flat minor Prelude is an unremarkable but well @-@ thought out piece . The third , a Mélodie in E major , is modestly expressive , but the Gavotte in D major is , although repetitive , the most energetic and vigorous piece . These were published posthumously in Moscow in 1948 , without an opus number .

In 1890 , after vacationing at Ivanovka , his family 's summer residence , Rachmaninoff wrote a letter to Natalia Skalon , a family friend in Moscow , reporting that he had to write a fugue for Arensky 's class , " an unpleasant circumstance however you look at it . " It turned out to resemble a canon more than a fugue , however , and was published in 1949 as Canon in E minor . Although written as an assignment , the piece conveys the impression not of an academic contrapuntal exercise but rather of a vivid outburst . The texture and harmony show enough advancement over his earlier Four Pieces to indicate that he had been sensible not to publish them as his opus 1 .

In 1891 , Rachmaninoff composed his Piano Concerto No. 1 (which became his first official opus) and afterwards in July , a small piece , Prelude in F major , which he revised later to include the cello . It was at this time , in 1892 , that the Morceaux de fantaisie were composed . In 1891 Rachmaninoff also composed his Suite in D minor for orchestra , considered lost until the manuscript was found in 2002 , leading to the discovery that a previously @-@ unattributed composition for piano is a reduction for solo piano of this Suite . The suite is in four movements :

Lento : Allegro moderato in D minor , Lento in B minor , Menuetto in F @-@ sharp major , and Allegro in D major .

He spent much of the next few years writing some of his orchestral pieces , including The Rock (1893) and Caprice Bohémien (1895) . His return to pianistic work in early 1896 was marked by his contribution to Four Improvisations , a collaboration with Anton Arensky , Alexander Glazunov , and Sergei Taneyev . After the Six Moments Musicaux were completed in 1896 , Rachmaninoff composed a single Morceau de Fantaisie in G minor on 11 January 1899 . He subtitled it " Delmo " , however what this means is unknown . It is two pages long and features an emphatic , if not brief , climax . He also produced a Fughetta in F major in February of that year , which is also short and has clean counterpoint . He composed most of his published works in this period , starting with the Chopin Variations .

After the nine Études @-@ Tableaux , Op. 39 , Rachmaninoff composed several minor works in 1917 . The Oriental Sketch is a fast @-@ paced piece littered with sixteenth note figures . The piece was not intended to be associated with the Orient ; the title was given by the publisher . The Prelude in D minor , a dark piece with thick and fast moving chords that repeatedly descend into low register , is a manifestation of his unhappiness with the October Revolution . The manuscript survived and was first published in 1973 . His penultimate piano composition (only his Corelli Variations came later) was a one @-@ page piece entitled Fragments , a brief nostalgic piece from his final days in Moscow . It was first published in the magazine , The Etude , in 1919 .

In 2003 , while researching Rachmaninoff material at the Library of Congress , the Australian pianist Scott Davie discovered a two @-@ page sketch of a previously unknown Rachmaninoff piano piece in D minor . While he was able to make a pencil copy , it wasn 't until later he realized that the sketch was complete . Davie was given permission to make use of the piece by the composer 's great @-@ granddaughter , Natalie Wanamaker Javier , while attending the 2006 International Rachmaninoff Conference in Amsterdam . The piece was recorded and released by ABC Classics on his Pictures from an Exhibition CD . Since then the piece has also been recorded by Vladimir Ashkenazy and released by Decca .