

Российская Музыка Фортепьяно
Russian Piano Music Series



vol. 6 Sergei Rachmaninov
Sergei Dukachev

Russian Piano Music Series, vol. 6: Sergei Rachmaninov

Sergei Rachmaninov (1873-1943)

Variations on a Theme of Corelli, Op. 42 17.18

[1] Theme: <i>Andante</i>	1.00
[2] Variation I: <i>Poco più mosso</i>	0.36
[3] Variation II: <i>L'istesso tempo</i>	0.34
[4] Variation III: <i>Tempo di minuetto</i>	0.38
[5] Variation IV: <i>Andante</i>	0.52
[6] Variation V: <i>Allegro (ma non tanto)</i>	0.23
[7] Variation VI: <i>L'istesso tempo</i>	0.23
[8] Variation VII: <i>Vivace</i>	0.27
[9] Variation VIII: <i>Adagio misterioso</i>	0.59
[10] Variation IX: <i>Poco più mosso</i>	0.57
[11] Variation X: <i>Allegro scherzando</i>	0.37
[12] Variation XI: <i>Allegro vivace</i>	0.22
[13] Variation XII: <i>L'istesso tempo</i>	0.35
[14] Variation XIII: <i>Agitato</i>	0.36
[15] Intermezzo: <i>A tempo rubato</i>	1.15
[16] Variation XIV: <i>Andante (come prima)</i>	0.53
[17] Variation XV: <i>L'istesso tempo</i>	1.21
[18] Variation XVI: <i>Allegro vivace</i>	0.32
[19] Variation XVII: <i>Meno mosso</i>	0.54
[20] Variation XVIII: <i>Allegro con brio</i>	0.33
[21] Variation XIX: <i>Più mosso. Agitato</i>	0.30
[22] Variation XX: <i>Più mosso</i>	0.57
[23] Coda: <i>Andante</i>	1.26

Seven Preludes

[24] Op. 3, No. 2 in C sharp minor	4.10
[25] Op. 23, No. 2 in B flat major	3.36
[26] Op. 23, No. 3 in D minor	3.53
[27] Op. 23, No. 4 in D major	4.31
[28] Op. 23, No. 5 in G minor	3.47
[29] Op. 32, No. 5 in G major	2.51
[30] Op. 32, No. 12 in G sharp minor	2.29

Piano Pieces

[31] Elegie in E flat minor, Op. 3, No. 1	5.09
[32] Melodie in E major, Op. 3, No. 3	4.07
[33] Etude-Tableau in C major, Op. 33, No. 2	1.55
[34] Etude-Tableau in E flat minor, Op. 33, No. 6	1.36
[35] Etude-Tableau in D major, Op. 39, No. 9	3.49

Sonata No. 2 in B flat minor (revised 1931) 18.48

[36] I. <i>Allegro agitato</i>	7.45
[37] II. <i>Non allegro – lento</i>	5.44
[38] III. <i>Allegro molto</i>	5.47

Sergei Dukachev, piano

Live concert recordings

Total CD duration 79.04

Sergei Rachmaninov (1873-1943)

The piano music of Rachmaninov explores the registral capabilities of the modern piano in a fascinating manner. Rachmaninov's artistic idiom is rich in references to traditional Russian music. It is, however, counter-pointed by a progressive chromaticism set in a neo-classical framework. Rachmaninov incorporates haunting melodies, thick chordal textures and distinct rhythmic patterns – all of which are held in a musical architecture marked by astounding economy.

Sergei Rachmaninov inherited his musical ability from his father Vasily, who was a keen amateur musician and a good pianist. In 1885, Sergei studied the piano with Nikolay Zverev in Moscow. Among his early works that achieved success are his opera, *Aleko*, and the 'Prelude in C sharp minor', both written when he was 19. However, several years later he suffered from depression as a result of the disastrous performance of his first symphony. Fortunately, Dr. Dahl, Rachmaninov's psychiatrist, managed to restore his confidence in composing music.

Rachmaninov was a remarkable artist: he excelled in the fields of composing, performing and conducting. His playing indeed, along with the size of his hands, has become legendary. As a composer Rachmaninov is famous for his symphonies, concerti and instrumental music. In addition, his songs and sacred music have recently gained recognition as important areas of his œuvre.

Variations on a theme of Corelli, Op. 42, which is dedicated to the violinist Fritz Kreisler, is one of Rachmaninov's later works. It was composed in America in 1931, the year in which his music was banned in Russia. Despite the ban, having made a name for himself as a pianist-composer in America, Rachmaninov's performance engagements were not jeopardised. In fact,

Rachmaninov performed the *Corelli Variations* no fewer than 15 times, though he claimed that he never once played all the 20 variations in full. Once the ban on his music was lifted in Russia, the *Variations on a theme of Corelli* were warmly received in Moscow. The Variations are actually based on a theme (*La folia*) used by Corelli in his Sonata No.12. Broad, melancholic melodies are supported by the imaginative use of harmony and rhythm. The inner emotions of the composer are well conveyed throughout.

Like Chopin, Rachmaninov wrote preludes in all of the major and minor keys; the ***Prelude in C Sharp minor***, Op. 3 No. 2, is the first of these, composed in 1892. It is part of a larger collection of pieces called *Morceaux de Fantaisie* and marks the beginning of a more individual tone in Rachmaninov's style; indeed it became the epitome of what most people considered Rachmaninov's style to be. It has been published in many forms including arrangements for organ, piano accordion, banjo, military band and even trombone quartet. It was one of his most popular works which gained him much recognition but it became for him a tiresome encore at most of his concerts.

The ***Opus 23 Preludes***, composed in 1901, owe much to the second concerto for their style. The use of thematic material is sparse with many of the initial ideas being very simple but developed to great effect. Perhaps the most popular in this set of ten is the G minor (no. 5); here we can see the simplicity of Rachmaninov's emerging style. The opening and closing sections are derived from the simple alla Marcia idea of the first bar whilst the central section is constructed around a sweeping, lyrical melody so typical of Rachmaninov.

The ***Opus 32*** set of preludes was composed in 1910 and consists of 13 preludes. Here we can notice a further development of Rachmaninoff's ability to construct full scale works from tiny fragments of material. They are arguably the

finest of all his sets of preludes. Although they may be technically less taxing than those comprising Opus 23, the interpretational issues raised by such a complex set are far more demanding. In particular the two preludes on this recording have a rather hazy and ambiguous quality which puts stylistic demands on the performer.

The **Opus 3** works were written in 1892 (though the *Melodie in E major* was revised in 1940) at a prosperous period of Rachmaninov's life. He had recently graduated from the Moscow Conservatory a year early, with honours.

However, Rachmaninov's good fortune seemed to run out in the mid 1890s, when he suffered from ill health resulting in near bankruptcy. He considered that his future might lie in conducting rather than composing, but after short-lived success, he was involved in many disastrous tours, receiving bad reviews and much discouragement from his peers. Fortunately, Rachmaninov soon began composing again after treatment by hypnosis. By 1901 his luck had changed and he continued to produce prodigious amounts of music, including the three *Etude-Tableaux* played on this compact disc.

Rachmaninov composed his **Piano Sonata No. 2** in Moscow in 1913. Seventeen years later, in 1931, he revised the work extensively and brought it to a higher technical standard, coinciding with the period of his world pre-eminence as a piano virtuoso. The second sonata is rarely heard in the concert hall and, as a consequence, the work has neither acquired the "functional history nor the popular associations" of repertory pieces. Together with the enormous pianistic virtuosity required, the sonata is also characteristic for its dense instrumental textures, its "icy clarity of statement" and the "unsoftened black-and-white definition" that he saw in the St. Petersburg snowscapes.

Sergei Dukachev was born in Magnitogorsk, a city in the Ural Mountains on the border between Europe and Asia, where he began to learn the piano at the age of six. At the State Institute of Art in Ufa, Bashkortostan, he studied with distinguished artist Vadim Monastirsky, during which time he won many prizes in competitions in the former Soviet Union, including First Prize in the All Russia Piano Competition in 1985. He subsequently entered the Moscow Conservatoire, taking a postgraduate course in the class of Lev Vlasenko. In 1989, he distinguished himself by being a prizewinner in the International Beethoven Competition in Vienna.

Sergei, a Professor at the State Academy of Art in Ufa, was seconded in September 2005, for one year to teach at Chang-Shin College, Music Department, Masan, Korea. His Russian appointment allowed him to maintain a busy schedule of concerts in many Russian cities. He has played many piano concertos with the Ufa Symphony Orchestra, for example, those of Mozart: No.26 "The Coronation"; Beethoven: No.3 and No.5; and Rachmaninov Nos. 2 and 3 together with the *Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini*. Several Russian composers have written works for him and many have asked him to give first performance of their works, confident of his ability to convey the meaning of the composer and the spirit of the music's cultural background. Many of these works have been recorded for broadcasting on Russian radio and television.

Sergei developed close artistic links with Britain during his years at the Moscow Conservatoire, and in the late 1990s, began a series of annual visits to give concerts in England. His links with the Department of Music at Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, Surrey, England, led to a series of concerts and masterclasses, and to his role as Artist in Residence in early 2000.

In August 2000 he turned for a period of a year to perform and teach in England based in Royal Holloway. Now a sought-after performer in England, Sergei's appearances have included illustrated talks and masterclasses at Royal Holloway and other venues. He has performed the piano concertos of Mozart: No.26 "The Coronation", and Beethoven's "Emperor" Concerto at Royal Holloway; Gershwin and Schumann at St. John's Smith Square, London, and the Grieg piano concerto in Windsor. He has welcomed at venues as far apart as Rye and Shrewsbury, including Cheltenham, Shropshire, Surrey, the Midlands and the North West as well as in London itself.

In the summer 2005 and 2006, he accepted an invitation to join the teaching faculty of the *Fifth and Six Chethams International Summer School and Festival for Pianists* in Manchester, England, where he received the approbation not only of his students and fellow faculty members but also of those who attended his recital during the School.

In Europe, Sergei has performed in Germany. Worldwide, from 2002 until 2005, Sergei has been Professor at the *International Summer Courses* in Brasilia City in Brazil, and in 2008 he was Professor at the *International Festival "Ex Toto Corde"* in Sao Paulo city in Brazil.



Sergei Dukachev

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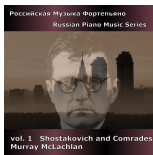
Cover image: The older Rachmaninov looks over the Kremlin walls of his birthplace Novgorod.

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Sergei Rachmaninov

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Russian Piano Music, vol. 6

Sergei Rachmaninov

