

2014

Fusion of Classical Virtuosity and Jazz Techniques in the Etudes of Nikolai Kapustin: Eight Concert Etudes, OP. 40, and Five Etudes in Different Intervals, OP. 68

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FUSION OF CLASSICAL VIRTUOSITY AND JAZZ TECHNIQUES
IN THE ETUDES OF NIKOLAI KAPUSTIN:
*EIGHT CONCERT ETUDES, OP. 40, AND FIVE ETUDES IN DIFFERENT
INTERVALS, OP. 68*

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For the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts in

Music Performance

School of Music

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2014

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Marina Lomazov for her love and continual support of my work, both pianistically and intellectually, over the course of my academic career here at the University of South Carolina. I am grateful for her guidance in helping me develop and refine my ideas for this topic.

In addition, I am extremely thankful to Mr. Bert Ligon who selflessly devoted his time and invaluable expertise in jazz and piano to help me with my research, analysis, and formation of musical examples. His insightful ideas made it possible for me to better understand Kapustin and his music as well as launch my initial process of analytical writing.

Most importantly, I am deeply indebted to my mentor and advisor, Dr. Danny Jenkins, for his patience, supervision, and advisement in helping me with my research from the very beginning of the process through the final completion of the document. He has been more than generous with sharing his time in reading and critiquing my work. This project would not have come to fruition if it were not for his constantly challenging me to foster, improve, and refine my arguments.

Finally, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to all my friends and family in Canada, Taiwan, California, Utah, and Columbia who have encouraged and supported my musical endeavors with love and understanding throughout all these years.

I am incredibly fortunate to have had all these individuals in my life who have supported me in one way or another. I could not have done it without you.

ABSTRACT

Delighting audiences and attracting attention from pianists and fusion composers the world over, Kapustin's distinct and imaginative unification of classical construction and jazz idiom is inspiring and a "breath of fresh air" to traditional repertoire. Kapustin's piano etudes, in particular, are a considerable contribution to standard etude repertoire that remains understudied. Kapustin's etudes are innovative and noteworthy in that his fusion of classical form with modern idioms of jazz and rock, combined with the technical demands expected of a standard study, have not been previously characteristic of the genre. The lack of thorough research and related literature on his works, combined with the difficulty of obtaining his compositions in the West, make this study relevant and a pertinent start to shed more light on the composer and make his works more approachable for contemporary pianists and jazz connoisseurs alike.

The two sets of etudes included in this study are Kapustin's Eight Concert Etudes, op. 40 (1984) and *Five Etudes in Different Intervals*, op. 68 (1992). These two sets of etudes, representative of Kapustin's unique style, will be examined as a novel, and hopefully accessible, addition to the pianist's etude repertoire. This analysis is a limited, and by no means exhaustive survey of Kapustin's etudes for piano. The purpose of this study is to facilitate further understanding of Kapustin's works and his mature writing style, and to discuss how these etudes contribute to the existing piano etude repertoire, thus promoting their future accessibility and performance. With the positive reception of

Kapustin's music of late, public awareness of his eclectic and original compositional style—the musical marriage of classical formal structures and jazz-based melodic and rhythmic idioms within the Russian pianistic tradition—has greatly increased. Hopefully, as the reputation of his etudes grows, these newfound treasures will only help encourage and expedite the publishing of more of Kapustin's works, introducing more people to his music and establishing him more as a mainstream composer. His compositional brilliance is a profound addition to piano literature and deserves to be fully recognized and preserved for the future.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

I. Introduction

Russian pianist and composer Nikolai Kapustin's works have secured a firm place in contemporary piano literature within the last decade. As with many other composers, Kapustin underwent a standard education as a pianist, studying Clementi, Bach, Mozart, Chopin, and other common-practice composers, and was inspired by this repertoire. Also in common with most pianists, Kapustin originally saw himself headed for a career in classical music, becoming a virtuoso performer. Nonetheless, he was even more captivated by jazz when he was first exposed to it at age 16. It was not until his early twenties, however, that he saw the importance of jazz and also realized that he much preferred composing to performing.

Kapustin's early interest in jazz spurred him to explore the possibilities of classical virtuoso pianism and forms with improvisational jazz styles. This distinctive blend of two styles gave rise to such works as the *Suite in the Old Style*, op. 28 (1977). Deeply steeped in the sound world of jazz improvisation, the composition was simultaneously modeled on baroque keyboard suites of Bach: each movement is a stylized dance or a pair of dances in strict binary form. His Twenty-Four Preludes, op. 53 (1988), follow the key sequence set forth in Chopin's Preludes, op. 28, and are as

virtuosic and ambitious as those of Chopin, Scriabin, and Rachmaninoff. Another example of Kapustin's love for classical formal structures and his admiration for his predecessors is his set of Twenty-Four Preludes and Fugues, op. 82 (1997), inspired by the preludes and fugues of Bach.

Kapustin's compositions, almost all of which have hitherto been unobtainable in the West, are becoming more acknowledged and available to meet the growing interest in his music as well as positive response to the few recordings of his works released in recent years. With the positive reception of Kapustin's music of late, public awareness of his eclectic and original compositional style—the musical marriage of classical formal structures and jazz-based melodic and rhythmic idioms within the Russian pianistic tradition—has greatly increased. As a result, prominent pianists are also beginning to program more of his works, giving Kapustin's music an even higher level of visibility.

Kapustin's piano etudes, in particular, are a considerable contribution to standard etude repertoire. Unfortunately, for many reasons, mostly in part due to their intimidating technical difficulties, they remain among the lesser known of the composer's works as well as within the general piano etude oeuvre. Of course, it is difficult to surpass the definitive contributions to the etude genre from composers such as Chopin, Liszt, and Brahms. However, Kapustin's etudes are innovative and noteworthy in that his fusion of classical form with modern idioms of jazz and rock, combined with the technical demands expected of a standard study, have not been previously characteristic of the genre. The intellectual artistry involved in his etudes does not lie merely in his ability to integrate the definitive elements of classical and jazz musical styles in addition to

technical virtuosity, but also in his gift to capture the essence of the two styles and produce witty humor to our ears that brings a smile to our faces.

The two sets of etudes included in this study are Kapustin's Eight Concert Etudes, op. 40 (1984) and *Five Etudes in Different Intervals*, op. 68 (1992). These two sets of etudes, representative of Kapustin's unique style, will be examined as a novel, and hopefully accessible, addition to the pianist's etude repertoire. Through harmonic, formal, and stylistic analyses, I will attempt to investigate Kapustin's amalgamation of jazz traditions with the classical etude genre and the ways in which he pushes stylistic boundaries and demonstrates his command of both classical technique and jazz idioms. This analysis is a limited, and by no means exhaustive survey of Kapustin's etudes for piano. The purpose of this study is to facilitate further understanding of Kapustin's works and his mature writing style, and discuss how these etudes contribute to the existing piano etude repertoire, thus promoting their future accessibility and performance among pianists as well as bring the composer to the forefront of contemporary piano literature.

II. Literature Review and Need for Study

Present scholarly research on Kapustin and his works is not comprehensive and consists of only two dissertations, both of which do not discuss his piano etude output. The primary resource for much of the information about Kapustin and his works are found in these dissertations and a handful of journal articles.

In 2007, University of Cincinnati's Jonathan Edward Mann wrote a D.M.A. dissertation titled, "Red, White, and Blue Notes: The Symbiotic Music of Nikolai

Kapustin.” In this preliminary research, Mann discusses the ways in which Kapustin synthesizes classical form and jazz texture and whether Kapustin’s music is classical or jazz. He supports his claims with in-depth analyses of three specific solo piano works: Sonatina, op. 100, Prelude No. 9 in E Major, op. 53, and Fugue No.1 in C Major, op. 82.

From the University of Arizona, Randall Creighton’s 2009 D.M.A. dissertation, “A Man of Two Worlds: Classical and Jazz Influences in Nikolai Kapustin’s Twenty-Four Preludes, Op. 53” is a study on Kapustin’s stylistic features and influences. As the second scholarly work on Kapustin, the document includes a close examination of the score of his Twenty-Four Preludes that reveals Kapustin’s methods of thematic organization, variation of scoring, thematic transformation, and improvisatory techniques. Thanks to Creighton’s extensive study, we have access to valuable biographical information from the composer himself through an interview conducted via email.

Martin Anderson also wrote a short but informative classical music review in *Fanfare* titled, “Nikolai Kapustin, Russian Composer of Classical Jazz,” where he briefly introduces readers to Kapustin’s compositional style and the ways in which he has distinctively blended the classical and jazz idioms.

In brief, Kapustin remains an understudied composer. Furthermore, most of his works have yet to be published. Due to the lack of thorough research and related literature on his works, information on Kapustin’s etudes, a pervasive genre of the general pianistic tradition and a remarkable part of his compositional output, also remains limited. Therefore, the need for this study, as limited as it may be, is relevant and a pertinent start to shed more light on the composer and make his works more approachable for contemporary pianists and jazz connoisseurs alike.

III. Chapter Overview

This document consists of six chapters. After the introductory chapter, the second chapter offers biographical information about the composer and his works as well as background information on the reception and evolution of jazz in the Soviet Union, specifically how the social, cultural, and political atmosphere under which Kapustin composed influenced his musical writing.

Chapter three encompasses a survey of Kapustin's distinctive assimilation of jazz procedures and techniques within the loose confines of tonality and classical formal structures, including his melodic and harmonic language and individual pianistic devices. Some jazz terminology and mainstream compositional processes will be provided in this third chapter as well to familiarize readers with a brief overview of the jazz vernacular and how Kapustin utilizes these tools in his writing.

Chapter four focuses on the various technical aspects of Kapustin's etudes and the ways in which they parallel and/or differ from those of other classical etude composers who precede him. Moreover, it will examine the means by which Kapustin enhances previous etude traditions in order to establish his own "Kapustian" idiosyncratic methods, inspirational to subsequent composers.

Next, the fifth chapter of the document engages the methodology of an exclusive case study that solely examines Kapustin's compositional approach to one etude: op. 40, no. 1 "Prelude." The sixth and final chapter will serve as the conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO

NIKOLAI GIRSHEVICH KAPUSTIN

I. Education and Influential Figures

Nikolai Girshevich Kapustin was born in 1937 in Gorlovka, Ukraine. He started playing the piano at the age of seven but it was not until 1949, at age 12, that Kapustin began his first piano lessons. “My very first teacher was a violinist who tried to teach me piano,” recalls Kapustin.¹ He went on to study for three years with a “real teacher” named L. Frantsuzova, who was a student of Russian composer and professor, Samuel Maykapar (1867–1938) at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. According to Kapustin, Maykapar’s graduate diploma at the conservatory was signed by composer Alexander Glazunov (1865–1936) himself. Kapustin, in his email message to Jonathan Edward Mann, reminisces how jazz was forbidden in the early 1950s:

...in the early '50s it was completely prohibited, and there were articles in our magazines that said it was typical capitalistic culture, so we have to throw it away and forget about it. Rachmaninov was prohibited; even writers were prohibited, like Dostoyevsky, Yesenin, Akhmatova—all prohibited. Even Shostakovich—he was not [prohibited] but there were articles saying that it was terrible music. So not only jazz: it was typical for every kind of culture.²

¹ Biographical information about Kapustin was drawn from the composer’s personal email message to Jonathan Edward Mann in “Red, White, and Blue Notes: The Symbiotic Music of Nikolai Kapustin” (D.M.A. diss., University of Cincinnati, 2007), 23–36.

² Martin Anderson, “Nikolai Kapustin, Russian Composer of Classical Jazz,” *Fanfare* Sep-Oct 2000, 96.

With no formal training, Kapustin composed his first piano sonata in 1950. Not having heard jazz, the sonata was in an “academic style,” and he did not consider the work to be “serious” enough. In 1952, after three years of studying with Frantsuzova, Kapustin finally relocated to Moscow and began studies with Avrelian Rubakh, a pupil of Felix Blumenfeld (1863–1931). Among some of Blumenfeld’s more prominent students include renowned pianists Simon Barere (1896–1951) and Vladimir Horowitz (1903–89).

The year Josef Stalin died, 1953, marked a definitive turning point for Kapustin: he heard jazz for the first time. It was then that Kapustin’s newfound yet unyielding interest in jazz was first ignited. “At first my friends and I could hear jazz only on the radio. I do not remember which jazz artist I heard first. It could be Glenn Miller or Louis Armstrong.”³ He remembers being captivated by jazz immediately when he was first exposed to it. Although he never considered himself a “jazz” musician, this first encounter with jazz set into motion Kapustin’s career path as a symbiotic composer of the classical and jazz traditions. “I thought I was going to be a virtuoso classical player, but at 20, 21, 22, I understood that jazz was very important. And I didn’t like performing; composition was more interesting.”⁴ Kapustin adds, “I knew it was something for me. I understood that I had to combine the two musics—I had that idea from my youth.”⁵ The post-Stalin thaw saw the rejuvenation of jazz in the Soviet Union. Stalin’s rule had profoundly isolated Soviet jazz aficionados from the bebop phenomenon that took America by storm in the 1940s. Hence, Soviet musicians, including Kapustin, sought out

³ Mann, “Red, White, and Blue Notes,” 28.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Anderson, “Nikolai Kapustin,” 94.

foreign influences and meticulously studied each and every sound just as they had done in the 1920s.

Kapustin went on to study at the Moscow Conservatory and graduated with a diploma in piano performance from the class of 1961 studying under famed pianist Alexander Goldenweiser (1875–1961), who was a pupil of Paul Pabst (1854–97) and Alexander Siloti (1863–1945), student of Franz Liszt (1811–86) and cousin of Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873–1943). Goldenweiser was also a classmate of Sergei Rachmaninoff and Alexander Scriabin (1872–1915). Together with Heinrich Neuhaus (1888–1964), nephew to Blumenfeld and teacher of famous pianists Sviatoslav Richter (1915–1997), Emil Gilels (1916–85), and Radu Lupu (b. 1945), Goldenweiser has been considered one of the most prestigious piano pedagogues in the USSR.⁶ According to Kapustin, his relationship with Goldenweiser was pleasant but unconstructive. When asked about Goldenweiser’s influences on him, “I went to him when I was 18. [Goldenweiser] was a very interesting person—he remembered Rachmaninov and Medtner, so it was very interesting to speak with him. But as a teacher he gave me nothing, because he was very old—he was already 81.”⁷ To this day, however, Kapustin still credits his first formal teacher, Avrelian Rubakh, for helping him develop his skills. “I had another teacher, a great teacher, but nobody knows about him—Avrelian Rubakh. He was a student of Blumenfeld.”⁸

⁶ "Goldenweiser, Alexander." *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*. *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed November 2, 2013. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/O011432>.

⁷ Anderson, “Nikolai Kapustin,” 94.

⁸ *Ibid.*

Rubakh took an interest in jazz and helped cultivate Kapustin's fascination with the new music of jazz. Kapustin recalls celebrating his sixteenth birthday in 1954 at Rubakh's house and "play(ing) jazz, still rather clumsily" for the whole evening.⁹ A vital part of Kapustin's jazz education during this time was comprised of transcribing solos from the radio.

It was difficult to get hold of recordings in the early 1950s, but some Soviet people still had an opportunity to travel abroad and brought back recordings. But we mainly tape-recorded 'Music USA' on the radio. At the same time I began transcribing jazz improvisations by leading jazz pianists that I heard on the radio.¹⁰

By 1956, Kapustin was hungry for more.

For four years I studied so hard that I feel I was at the same level [as Rubakh], so these four years were critical for me. It was he who took me to [Alexander] Goldenweiser. I played him the Liszt *Don Giovanni* Fantasy; he liked how I played and asked Rubakh, "Where did you find such a pianist?"¹¹

Interestingly enough, Rubakh is connected to the man who is believed today to be Russia's first jazz pianist, Alexander Tsfasman (1906–71). Tsfasman was the leading jazzman of the Stalinist era and in 1928 the first Russian to make jazz recordings. Both Rubakh and Tsfasman studied with Blumenfeld, and all three men were Ukrainian. Kapustin did not meet Alexander Tsfasman until the 1960s. Tsfasman eventually became an artistic mentor to Kapustin and remained a great influence on his musical philosophies and endeavors. Kapustin greatly appreciated Tsfasman's elegance and easy-going style as well as his perfect finger technique. Tsfasman, like Kapustin, fell under the spell of jazz after studying for six years under Blumenfeld at the Moscow Conservatory. He

⁹ Mann, "Red, White, and Blue Notes," 29.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid, 30.

maintained that the Soviet Union must borrow from other cultures, especially in the case of music, in order to progress. Tsfasman became known as the first professional Soviet jazzman, the first popular soloist in Soviet jazz, and the first Soviet to acquire praise from an American jazz musician. Even under the watchful Communist radar, Tsfasman was the first to help fellow musicians hone their craft and interest for jazz by often providing jam sessions at the end of concerts. Well-versed in the styles of stride masters James P. Johnson (1894–1955) and Fats Waller (1904–43), Tsfasman embraced the bravura runs of Art Tatum (1909–56) and sparser textures of Bud Powell (1924–66) after World War II.

While at the Moscow Conservatory, Kapustin immersed himself in classical literature and achieved technical brilliance while absorbing a broad view of the capabilities of music. In common with many composers, Kapustin studied Clementi, Bach, Mozart, Chopin, and other common-practice composers, and was inspired by this repertoire. Still, he grew increasingly aware of the significance of jazz as a compelling form of musical communication. Although he originally intended to pursue a career in classical music as a virtuoso performer, his continuing involvement and experiment in jazz, however, made it more difficult to maintain his classical conservatory regimen. Concurrent with his awareness of the importance of jazz, he realized that he preferred composing to performing. In 1957, Kapustin made his compositional and performing debut at the Sixth International Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow (also known as the VIth World Youth Festival) with his *Concertino for Piano and Jazz Orchestra*, now catalogued as his op. 1. Sponsored by a post-war government that wanted to break free from Stalin's xenophobic legacy, this event attracted over 30,000 young adults from

around the world to perform and compete and made jazz a national headline. The Soviet government turned to bandleader Yuri Saulsky to bring together Moscow's best jazz musicians, including Kapustin. The concertino was performed publicly for the first time with the composer as soloist. Kapustin remembers the festival and its outcome:

I was 19 years old at the time. Saulsky did not teach me anything; he taught the orchestra to play together and in the right style. Five musicians from the big band, including myself, decided to create a jazz quintet (tenor sax, trombone, bass, drums, and piano). I was the only professional musician among this group, so naturally I was chosen the leader. The quintet performed for a couple of months at the restaurant "National," but I played with them only during the first month, since it was hard to combine work and study. Once somebody from the American Embassy recorded us, and this recording was played on "Voice of America." It was nice to hear our names announced by Willis Conover himself.¹²

In 1961, upon completion of his studies at the age of 23, instead of venturing out in search of a classical concert pianist's life, Kapustin formed a jazz quintet, played with Yuri Saulsky's Band in Moscow, and went on to serve as pianist and arranger with Oleg Lundstrem's Symphony Orchestra of Light Music (1961–72), the Television and Radio Light Orchestra and Vadim Lyudvikovsky (1972–77), and The State Cinematography Symphony Orchestra (1977–84). From 1961–67 he toured throughout the Soviet Union and abroad with Lundstrem's "Big Band" Jazz Orchestra.¹³ It is presently the oldest surviving jazz orchestra in Russia. Kapustin also composed for the ensemble, which explains why his compositional output during the 1960s was seemingly dominated by the orchestral/big band genre.¹⁴ Lundstrem focused on American arrangements and original works orchestrated in the styles of Glenn Miller (1904–44), Count Basie (1904–84), and

¹² Mann, "Red, White, and Blue Notes," 31.

¹³ A performance video of the *Toccata*, op. 8 featuring Mr. Kapustin with Oleg Lundstrem is available at <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUYiD7VGBXY>>. Please note that "Lundstrem" is used in some references, including YouTube; others use the alternate spelling, "Lundström."

¹⁴ See Appendix A for complete works list.

Duke Ellington (1899–1974). It was during his years with the Lundstrom band that Kapustin truly solidified his jazz education.

Pure orchestral compositions are rare guests in my list of works, but there are many concertos for different instruments and orchestra. As to the orchestration techniques[,] these are either classical or jazz-big-band technique. I studied this in practice...when I worked as a pianist at different orchestras. I had a possibility to write for them and then to hear the result. And last but not least: during my already long life I have written an overwhelming amount of arrangements and it was [a] useful thing.¹⁵

II. Compositional Style and Other Influences

Kapustin never considered himself a jazz musician.¹⁶ As a composer, Kapustin's style synthesizes western European classical and post-classical art music with modern idioms of jazz and rock. Kapustin's writing, in brief, bridges the classical-jazz divide. Because of his hybrid fusion of classical form and jazz texture, Gunther Schuller (b. 1925) has deemed his music as "Third Stream," even though Kapustin's never incorporates improvisation, which is characteristic of other Third Stream music.¹⁷ Kapustin's sound world reflects his extensive years of performing experience in jazz combos and big bands, including those led by Russians Yuri Saulsky and Oleg Lundstrom. Regarding his own compositions and the topic of improvisation, Kapustin clarifies:

I have very few jazz compositions that are really jazz.... There is no need to improvise with my music, although it is jazz...you can make improvisation only by creation; you cannot make an improvisation of a sonata.¹⁸

¹⁵ Mann, "Red, White, and Blue Notes," 33.

¹⁶ Anderson, "Nikolai Kapustin," 93–97.

¹⁷ Gunther Schuller, *Musings: The Musical World of Gunther Schuller* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 114–34.

¹⁸ Anderson, "Nikolai Kapustin," 96.

The composer further adds, “I’m not interested in improvisation—and what is a jazz musician without improvisation? But I’m not interested, because it’s not perfect.”¹⁹

The sophisticated style of Kapustin’s writing pays homage to jazz giants such as Art Tatum (1909–56), Oscar Peterson (1925–2007), Miles Davis (1926–91), and Erroll Garner (1923–77). When asked in 2000 about his influences, however, Kapustin mentioned just one man: Oscar Peterson. “He’s No. 1 for me.”²⁰ There are other composers who have written music that combines classical and jazz influences; nonetheless, no one has integrated the two in the manner that Kapustin has. Kapustin uses the raw material of jazz from the twentieth-century to create classical music appropriate for the concert stage that is new and refreshing for contemporary audiences. More importantly, Kapustin’s music is unique in that although his music stems from jazz improvisatory sources, he presents performers with fully notated scores, which provides substantial insight into modern-day jazz performance. In describing the uniqueness of Kapustin’s command of the classical form and informed assimilation of the jazz harmonic and rhythmic language, Stuart Isacoff’s words were: “the organic cohesiveness of the compositions, the technical flair of a pianist/composer, ... [and] the lyricism and adventurousness found in much early twentieth-century Russian music.”²¹ Kapustin primarily uses modulation and developmental models that are grounded in classical music practice while using modern jazz harmonic devices sparingly. Deeply influenced by Miles Davis’s jazz idioms as well as those of other jazz artists from the 1960s onward,

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Smith, “Bridging the Divide,” 55.

²¹ Stuart Isacoff, “Marc-André Hamelin Plays the Wild and Jazzy Music of Nikolai Kapustin,” *Piano Today* 24, no. 4 (Fall 2004): 5.

Kapustin's compositional elements consist of quartal, pentatonic, and diminished harmonies, along with highly chromatic two-voiced textures. Jed Distler has said, in reference to Kapustin's jazz influences, "[h]e hasn't merely appropriated but truly internalized the music's stylistic and textural evolution from Scott Joplin to Keith Jarrett."²² Kapustin's jazz vernacular is frequently unveiled in a contrapuntally dense framework that follows the traditional formal structure of thematic organization, development, and restatement. Mann also summarizes the overall effect of Kapustin's music "in a hypothetical scenario: Art Tatum and Herbie Hancock, having studied counterpoint with Simon Sechter²³ and composition with Sergei Prokofiev, adopted a son, named him Nikolai, and raised him in a musically bilingual household."²⁴

III. Jazz in the Soviet Union

Kapustin was born and raised during the time when Ukraine was a member of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. At the time, the dichotomy between classical and jazz idioms had not yet been so strongly recognized and publicly denounced. In fact, the first jazz concert in the USSR had only taken place fifteen years before Kapustin's birth. Being increasingly aware of the significance of jazz himself, Kapustin's goal was to simply assert the music of jazz as a valid form of musical communication, especially in the Soviet Union.

²² Jed Distler, notes to *Nikolai Kapustin Piano Music*, Hyperion CDA67433, 2004.

²³ Simon Sechter (1788–1867) was an Austrian teacher, theorist, organist, and professor of composition at the Vienna Conservatorium who taught counterpoint to Franz Schubert, Anton Bruckner, and Eduard Marxsen, who later taught Johannes Brahms.

²⁴ Mann, "Red, White, and Blue Notes," 2.

Kapustin came of age in the Cold War Soviet Union, where the state placed restrictions on composers. Due to the fascination with jazz in the late 1920s and early 30s, as evident in Shostakovich's several flirtations with non-Social Realism idioms, and the consequent Zhadanov trials and censorship, prohibitions became even more strict so that no "serious" Soviet composer at the time dared touch jazz.²⁵ In an interview, Kapustin revealed that, unlike Shostakovich and Prokofiev, he was fortunate enough to escape government censorship because his music was not considered avant-garde.²⁶

In Kapustin's opinion, the conservatories frowned upon the idea of jazz even more so than the government. If jazz was not assailed by legitimate musicians' elitism, it was dismissed by their complete ignorance: "Maybe the government looked at jazz with some suspicion, but it seems to me that an attitude to jazz of some professors of conservatories was much worse," said the composer.²⁷ Kapustin also admitted that Alexander Goldenweiser, his professor at the Moscow Conservatory, was actually never aware of the fact that he was playing Beethoven by day and riffing to Duke Ellington at night. "In fact," Kapustin further adds, "I'm not sure he knew what jazz was."²⁸

Jazz was imported into the Soviet Union not by an American, or even a European, but by a native.²⁹ After being captivated by jazz in Paris in 1921 and returning to the Soviet a year later, Russian Futurist poet, Dadaist, Surrealist, editor, and dancer, but non-musician, Valentin Parnakh (1891–1951), was the person whom we credit for bringing

²⁵ "Nikolai Kapustin: Composer & Pianist." <http://www.nikolai-kapustin.info/> (accessed December 8, 2012).

²⁶ Martin Anderson. "Nikolai Kapustin, Russian Composer of Classical Jazz" *Fanfare* (Sep-Oct 2000): 93–97.

²⁷ Mann, "Red, White, and Blue Notes," 23.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Frederick Starr, *Red and Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union, 1917–1980* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 43.

jazz to the Soviet Union. Parnakh saw it as his mission to serve as a crusader on behalf of jazz for Russia. Knowing the extreme measures he would suffer under the Communist anti-jazz regimes, Parnakh carefully laid the groundwork for his crusade of emancipation from conventional sounds before departing for Russia. He was the first person to be able to develop a compelling case for why this “outlandish” music should be fostered under the new Communist regime, and he brought home with him the necessary instruments and music to produce a jazz concert.

In the summer of 1922, when Parnakh arrived in Moscow with his collection of the necessary instruments, he instantly started promoting his campaign in the Soviet press. In several fresh attacks he argued that jazz was “a distillation of modern man’s movements and manners” and he believed the key to jazz dance and music was its “eccentricity,” the vibrant energy and motion released by the “granting of boundless individual freedom to each participant.”³⁰ Placing his propaganda pieces in high profile journals, Parnakh was more concerned with “winning over the cultural avant-garde than in seducing the public at large.”³¹

Parnakh published articles on “The New Dances” and “The Jazz Band” in *Veshch*, an avant-garde émigré journal that was well-known and respected in Russia. The result was the publication of his essay in which he argued that American dance music—jazz—symbolized the optimism and vigor of post-civil war Russia. The word *dzhaz* (jazz) appeared in the same essay in Russian for the first time.

The new American dances, he argued, embodied the spirit of postwar “détente” (he actually used the word) and translated the life of modern man into linear, mechanistic but free movement, just as the nineteenth century’s unfocused

³⁰ Ibid, 45.

³¹ Ibid.

yearnings had coalesced in the swimming movement of the waltz. “All these dances are therefore the expression of a jazz orchestra, of a music of dissonances, syncopations, crashes, soaring brasses, shrieking ratchets, whistles, howls, and alarm sirens all sounding like an alternating current of electricity.”³²

The first jazz concert in Soviet history took place on Sunday, October 1, 1922 in the auditorium of the State Institute for Theatrical Art in Moscow. It was given by Parnakh’s *First Eccentric Orchestra of the Russian Federated Socialist Republic Jazz Band*. The music featured popular American tunes accompanied by a syncopated rhythm band, with no improvisation; the art of improvisation was unknown and remained so for another decade. Parnakh’s concert marked the gradual expansion of jazz in the Soviet Union from elite theaters to the urban public. Up until this time, Russians had perceived jazz as a “manifestation of the urban noise music” which Italian Futurist artists had been calling for since 1913.³³ The new sound was surprisingly well received by Russia’s left-wing avant-gardists. For the first time, jazz represented a new revolutionary elitism as it was music invented *for* the people and not *by* them. Parnakh tried to disassociate jazz from noise and novelty orchestras. He argued that jazz, far from being noise by and for the avant-garde, was popular dance music.

On the other hand, Stalinist hardliners used the rising popularity of jazz to condemn the excess they associated with Vladimir Lenin’s New Economic Policy.³⁴ The

³² Ibid, 44.

³³ Quoted in Donald Drew Egbert, *Social Radicalism and the Arts, Western Europe* (New York: Knopf, 1970) 274; and Reginald H. Wilenski, *Modern French Painters*, vol. 2 (New York: Vintage Books, 1960), 73.

³⁴ Lenin’s New Economic Policy (NEP) restored private ownership to certain parts of the economy, such as farming so that peasants could hire help as well as keep a portion of their surplus after taxes. The NEP helped the Russian economy after World War I, the Bolshevik Revolution, and the Russian Civil War. In 1929, Josef Stalin, assuming power after Lenin’s death in 1924, abolished the policy in due to its capitalist leanings. Information gathered from Starr, *Red and Hot*, 57–62.

NEP legitimized private enterprise funding, which permitted entrepreneurs to open dance studios out of their own homes. Independent jazz combos formed and began competing in a commercial market. As a result, the press heavily criticized and openly condemned this new “barbaric” music and the overtly sexual dances such as the Fox Trot, Charleston, and Boston. Much to the dismay of the Soviet authorities, jazz not only promoted more freedom from classical structures and harmonies, but also embraced social liberation and sexual freedom. Defining jazz and its social role, F. Scott Fitzgerald, who gave the Jazz Age its name, commented:

The word “jazz,” in its progress toward respectability, has meant first sex, then dancing, then music. It is associated with a state of nervous stimulation, not unlike that of big cities behind the lines of war.³⁵

Author Frederick Starr could not have defined jazz better:

Everywhere jazz carried with it a message of social and sexual emancipation. Everywhere it thrust that message before the public at large, without respect for rank or education. Jazz, with its link to unrestrained physical motion and exuberant dance, became the premier symbol of the liberation of the human body. If the Bolshevik ideal of mass culture pertained most directly to the harnessing of collective man’s physical energy through work, the message of American jazz spoke to the individual’s use of his bodily powers on his own time. If the emancipation movement embodied in the October Revolution and the culture it spawned was directed to the perfection of society in some utopian future, jazz epitomized the desire of each human being to express all the passions of the imperfect present—sadness, laughter, love, hate—through a Dionysian blend of rhythm, melody, and dance. No less than the dream of political revolution, jazz promised liberation from what the World War I era English poet Rupert Brooke described as “a world grown old and cold and weary.”... The possible link between American jazz music and this fundamental shift in Western values in the twentieth century was pointed out almost as soon as the audience for the new music began to expand.³⁶

³⁵ F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Crackup*, ed. Edmund Wilson (New York: New Directions, 1956), 16.

³⁶ Starr, *Red and Hot*, 11–12.

Given the negative connotation of jazz, its audience remained small, but nevertheless still existent in Russia. Still, a majority of rich and fun-loving foreigners traveling through Moscow desired for and looked forward to the spread of jazz.

The steady rise of jazz came to an immediate halt in 1928 under Stalin's Cultural Revolution. It would be almost another thirty years before a Soviet listener would see or hear a live American jazz band. The Association of Proletarian Musicians (APM) was formed so as to have an alternative popular music that was still Communist in ideology. Nevertheless, even by 1930, the APM had still produced nothing of significance and what they did create was highly unpopular. Its lack of productivity and popularity thus led to the APM being disassembled in 1932. This allowed jazz to serve as popular entertainment once again. The years 1932–36 saw a relatively jazz-friendly period that thus became known as the Soviet Jazz Age.

Interestingly enough, the jazz culture would have had a much harder time in Soviet history if it were not for the fact that some of the most fervent jazz fans were, in fact, high-ranking Soviet authorities who would have been unlikely sources of patronage. American recordings, which were vital to the development of jazz in the 1930s, were secretly traded by Soviet bureaucrats after their travels abroad. Lazar Kaganovich, First Secretary of the Moscow Party Committee and close associate of Stalin, was one such individual who was a secret jazz aficionado.

The death of author Maxim Gorky, one of the founding fathers of socialist realism, precipitated a severe cultural crackdown in the 1930s. After 1936, jazz in the Soviet Union was condemned and forbidden. That same year, the Communist Party's newspaper, *Pravda*, accused Dmitri Shostakovich of "borrowing from jazz bands their

nervous, convulsive, epileptic music in order to impart ‘passion to his heroine’” in his 1934 opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*.³⁷ Following this incident, jazz bands were dismantled and band leaders were ordered to discard from their set lists of jazz in favor of Soviet tunes. Musicians experimenting with jazz idioms either suffered immense public humiliation or were exiled to the remote provinces. In 1937, the year Kapustin was born, the Great Purge under Stalin (1937–38) was simultaneously taking place and responsible for more than a million deaths, in and outside of concentration camps, targeting not only artists and musicians but all categories of people. The fortunate were censured rather than arrested outright. Musicians like Alexander Tsfasman, for example, were luckily only stripped of his post as director of the Radio Committee Orchestra late in 1947 and were permitted to make “limited solo appearances and to tend his beloved flower garden.”³⁸

In an attempt to promote Soviet popular culture, as an artistic alternative to jazz, state musicians were hired to compose “mass songs,” hymns to socialism that drew from folk material, marches, and, ironically, jazz. Public reception of the mass songs proved to be unfavorable, and ultimately the only songs that actually gained some momentum were those that contained elements of jazz.

Just when jazz was on the verge of extinction, however, the Soviet government established the State Jazz Orchestra of the USSR. This music was allowed to exist only if it met the artistic criteria of what the Communist Party deemed as “proletarian jazz.” Such repertoire included syncopated music by Rimsky-Korsakov or Tchaikovsky, and

³⁷ “Sumber vmeste muzyki,” *Pravda*, January 28, 1936, quoted in Starr, 162.

³⁸ Starr, *Red and Hot*, 215.

more “diluted” jazz by Duke Ellington. Ironically, the nationalization of jazz by the Soviet government kept the music alive.

In 1941, when Hitler invaded Soviet territory, things changed dramatically. With World War II approaching, the Soviet government rapidly assembled army units, many of which included jazz musicians and their ensembles, creating state-sanctioned military jazz orchestras. That year, the three-year-old Kapustin and his family were evacuated from Ukraine to Kyrgyzstan, and his father served in the reserve units. Official, public taste and patronage, as well as the more pressing demands of war, had gradually neutralized the 1944 attacks on jazz by then. In August 1946, postwar renewal of the campaign began through a competition for popular entertainers that was held in Moscow.

By this time, jazz had been heard in the Soviet empire for almost twenty years and had reached the collective consciousness of the public, particularly the younger generation, many of whom were soldiers. In order to boost army morale, jazz was allowed as entertainment to invigorate the troops. The further alliance between American and Soviet forces was a significant boost to the future and well-being of jazz in the USSR. Jazz clubs began to enter the social scene all over Europe, too.

The rise of jazz during this period was short-lived. Unfortunately, as the wartime alliance with the United States disintegrated and the Cold War began by the end of 1946, the Soviet culture became barraged by socialist realism. Disturbed by the growth of jazz culture, the Soviet government attempted to abolish and remove all traces of American influence, starting with jazz. The word *dzhaz* was strictly censored and the State Jazz Orchestra had been ordered not to play jazz. Soviet officials forced the orchestra’s name

change from “State Jazz Orchestra” to the “State Variety Orchestra.”³⁹ Specific musical elements connoting jazz the jazz idiom to Soviet audiences were also banned, such as blue notes, chords based on lowered fifths, and brass vibratos. Bass players were forbidden to play pizzicato, and percussionists had to keep straight rhythms. In 1949–50 saxophonists were also fired from their jazz bands and ordered to surrender their instruments to government officials. For example, Prokofiev’s *Lieutenant Kije* Suite, which calls for the use of a saxophone, was removed from the repertoire. Even dancers were forced to revert to traditional dances such as the polka and the waltz.

During the last years of Stalin’s rule, the Soviet Union had banned jazz completely, both the music and the word itself. Although the Soviet Union regime took on a deeply negative, unreceptive stance on jazz in the early 1950s, the uncomfortable social and cultural climate changed drastically during Khrushchev’s reforms.⁴⁰ By the end of the 1950s, the ban was lifted despite the fact that most of the government officials who had supported it remained in office. As a result of the reforms, jazz music became much more accessible and tolerable by the end of the decade again. Traditional and Dixieland jazz, which had never really been played before, gradually became more accepted. New big bands were formed and scores of new jazz bands were created, many of them exploring bop and the latest modern jazz styles of the day.

As Kapustin was born in 1937, by the time he was active as a composer, the ban on jazz had either eased up or been lifted. Kapustin’s music was kept safe from censorship since it was not improvisatory, but merely a fusion of classical and jazz

³⁹ Starr, *Red and Hot*, 215.

⁴⁰ Wendell Logan, “The Development of Jazz in the Former Soviet Union: An Interview with Victor Lebev,” *Black Music Research Journal*, Vol. 12, no. 2 (Autumn, 1992): 229–30.

influences. Kapustin's musical language does not necessarily recall sounds of the great classical masters. Rather, he uses the language of jazz improvisation without actually improvising. The government therefore never suspected or condemned his music because his compositions demonstrated classical formalities. Hence, unlike many Soviet composers during his time, Kapustin was able to enjoy more freedom and did not emigrate to the United States to escape censure.

Acceptance and immersion into the jazz culture never interested Kapustin. His passion in jazz music lies purely in his desire to understand and master the art in order to improve and strengthen his own compositional methods. Therefore, when jazz was prohibited and since he did not live the typical lifestyle of a gigging jazz musician, Kapustin was still able to always find work in teaching, performing, and composing. After his decade-long tour in 1972 with the Lundstrem band, Kapustin no longer enjoyed improvising and moved outside of Moscow so he could focus solely on composition. Regarding the long years of Soviet censorship, Kapustin himself even said, "I was entirely free; no problems. My music wasn't avant-garde."⁴¹

IV. Compositional Output

It is remarkable that Kapustin's music has remained in relative obscurity for so long. As a composer, Kapustin has been active since the late 1950s. It was then that he established for himself an exceptional reputation as a jazz pianist, arranger, and composer, and made numerous appearances with his own quintet, as well as with the Yuri

⁴¹ Anderson, "Nikolai Kapustin," 96.

Saulsky's Central Artists' Club Big Band in Moscow. Despite this, Kapustin and his works have only become recognized in the West since the 1990s. Consequently, scores of Kapustin's music remain quite expensive and difficult to obtain. Up until the early 2000s, Kapustin's scores were practically impossible to find and obtain without resorting to surreptitious trading of blurry manuscripts. Fortunately, in the past decade, in response to his prolificacy and recordings released in recent years, publishers in Russia and Japan are now issuing his scores and making them more available through online resources and international commercial websites, such as tutti.co.uk, in order to satisfy the increasing demand and interest in his music.⁴²

Kapustin's compositional output is colossal and continues to grow. His 150 opus numbers to date offer various instrumental combinations in Baroque, Classical, and Romantic genres such as concertos, suites, sonatas, and etudes. They are brilliantly conceived yet still thoroughly approachable and immensely likeable. His piano works, which make up the bulk of his output, are highly pianistic and fit well under the fingers. His earlier days of composition show a predominant interest in the concerto genre. Amongst these earlier compositions are three concertos for piano and orchestra (1961, 1974, 1985), a two-movement concerto for orchestra (1980), a concertino for piano and orchestra (1957), and a concert rhapsody for piano and orchestra (1976). Besides these six concerted works for piano, he has also composed many other works for chamber and large ensembles, including concerti for orchestra and for wind and string instruments. In his later, more recent, compositions, Kapustin directs his attention toward solo piano music. A pianist himself, he has composed prolifically for the instrument and his piano

⁴² The Russian edition is available from A-Ram (Moscow) and the Japanese edition is available from Zen-on Music Co., Ltd. (Tokyo).

works are extremely idiomatic. He has written twenty piano sonatas thus far, a set of twenty-four preludes, a set of preludes and fugues in all 24 keys, and many character pieces, dances, impromptus, suites, and etudes.⁴³

In 2000, Kapustin's music entered the international spotlight when Hyperion Records first released a recording of his solo piano music played by Steven Osborne.⁴⁴ The recording immediately inspired two magazine interviews with the composer himself, one with *Fanfare* and the other with *International Piano Quarterly*. Canadian concert pianist Marc-André Hamelin promoted Kapustin even more when he recorded more of his piano music in 2001 and 2005.⁴⁵ So far, Kapustin's select piano works have only been recorded by pianists Marc-André Hamelin, Steven Osborne, and the composer himself.

V. Reception of Works

Initial public and critical reaction toward Kapustin's music was inconsistent and involved much confusion. Terms such as "crossover," "fusion," and "Third Stream" surround his music. One aficionado, after listening to Steven Osborne's disc, had trouble understanding Kapustin's sound palette:

I wonder how the recording label, Hyperion, decided to put this in the "classical" category. Probably they did so because Kapustin himself called these pieces 'Sonata' or 'Prelude.' But, truth to tell, I'm hard pressed to find very much in the way of easily identifiable classical music procedures here.⁴⁶

⁴³ See Appendix A for complete works list.

⁴⁴ Steven Osborne, *Nikolai Kapustin Piano Music*, Hyperion, CDA67159, 2000.

⁴⁵ Marc-André Hamelin, *Kaleidoscope*, Hyperion, CDA67275, 2001; and Marc-André Hamelin, *Nikolai Kapustin Piano Music*, Hyperion, CDA67433, 2004.

⁴⁶ J. Scott Morrison, "It Doesn't Matter What You Call It," Amazon.com, <http://www.amazon.com/Kapustin-Piano-Music-Nikolai/dp/B00004TARX> (accessed August 1, 2013).

“Fusion,” in jazz history, generally refers to the movement started in the late 60s and 70s by the musical trends of jazz giants Miles Davis (1926–91), Gary Burton (b. 1943), Chick Corea (b. 1941), and Herbie Hancock (b. 1940) in which jazz fused with rock. With the lively swing feel of jazz music coupled with the bombastic beats of rock and roll, a new style was birthed that was popularly successful, technically fulfilling, and academically sound. Similar to when describing music that is Romantic or Impressionistic, the word fusion, usually referred to as a noun, is used as an adjective when Kapustin says, “The interesting thing for me was always this fusion between classical and jazz, classical forms and a jazzy idiom.”⁴⁷ In essence, Kapustin considers his works as fusion music.

Today, fusion composer Kapustin’s works captivate audiences from all over, of various musical disciplines and instrumental backgrounds, with his unique stylistic blend of classical construction and jazz idioms.

⁴⁷ Harriet Smith, “Bridging the Divide,” *Piano Quarterly* 4, no. 13 (Autumn 2000): 55.

CHAPTER THREE

KAPUSTIN'S ASSIMILATION OF JAZZ STYLES AND TECHNIQUES

I. Introduction

In the stylistic transition from ragtime to jazz, the foremost transforming element was the growing sense of movement and freedom, wherein the left hand gradually took on more linear aspects such as walking tenths and octaves and melodic runs.¹ As a result of these musical developments, the right hand became freer instead of being limited to a literal reading of composed ragtime melodies. Melodic lines were treated more freely as pianists began procedures of paraphrasing and improvising. This newly introduced musical phenomenon allowed for the increased use of “swinging” eighth notes and a more liberated approach to rhythm by playing ahead or behind the beat set up by the left hand or bass instrument, now an unmistakable feature of jazz music. These distinct characteristics of jazz can be discovered and heard throughout Kapustin’s music and contributes to the hybrid classical-jazz writing style that he has come to be known for.

Written in 1984, the Eight Concert Etudes, op. 40, are the pinnacle of Kapustin’s broad and inventive compositional style. Containing both lyricism and energetic excitement, these pieces capture a wide range of musical idioms, including styles such as

¹ Barry Kernfeld, ed., *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, 2nd ed, vol. 3. (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2002), s.v. “Piano,” by Lawrence Koch, 282.

ragtime, stride, jazz, blues, boogie-woogie, and even the nonchalant atmosphere of the cocktail bar.

In general, the op. 40 etudes are strongly tonal and display ample evidence of dominant-tonic and relative major-minor relationships. Nevertheless, the harmonic context of these etudes range from fundamental diatonic progressions to chromatic writing which cannot easily be analyzed by traditional procedures. Kapustin supports, but simultaneously deviates from, the standard classical techniques of modulation. This is what sets his writing apart from composers before him and makes it sound “like jazz but not like jazz.”² The etudes that borrow from a jazz vernacular tend to revolve around a clearly defined key center with diatonic progressions and closely related tonicizations and/or modulations (e.g., Etude nos. 1, 2, and 6). Some of the op. 40 etudes begin with tonal ambiguity, move farther from the tonal center, and at times cannot be analyzed by traditional harmonic progression (e.g., Etude no. 4). These two approaches to harmonic organization are ubiquitous throughout Kapustin’s music. Chapter 3 offers an overview of some common and important musical elements that define the music of jazz and analyzes how Kapustin assimilates these techniques into his writing of the Eight Concert Etudes, op. 40 (1984) and *Five Etudes in Different Intervals*, op. 68 (1992).

II. Jazz Chord Voicings

Although in classical repertoire seventh chords often provide enough richness in sonority, they rarely do so in jazz. In fact, in much of standard and modern jazz, most

² Creighton, “A Man of Two Worlds,” 204.

chords involve adding compound intervals which make up upper structure extensions of the ninth, eleventh, thirteenth, as well as chromatic alterations in order to create fuller texture and more resonance. Oftentimes, to utilize these extension chords, some of the basic or usual chord members are consequently omitted. More often than not, the root, third, seventh and the highest extension are used in a four-voice texture. Moreover, chord voicings seldom appear in its original form of stacked thirds and are frequently spread between the hands. Smooth voice leading and inner-voice chromaticism are also common in jazz harmony. Besides dominant and diminished seventh chords, jazz harmony also utilizes major and minor sevenths for additional polarity and tension.

Kapustin's writing shows sophisticated use of all the abovementioned characteristics. Throughout his etudes he incorporates many complex ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth chords, often with chromatic alterations to form augmented, $b5$, $b/\#9$, $\#11$ chords. For example, in the opening of "Reverie," the second etude of op. 40, upper structure chordal extensions and chromatic alterations can be detected instantly (Example 3.1). Here in "Reverie," Kapustin not only uses chromaticism in the upper voice melody, $F-E\flat-F$ in m. 1 and $E\flat-D\sharp-E\flat$ in m. 2, but also uses chromatic voice leading in the inner voices, as seen in m. 3, where the tenor voice features $F\flat$ serving as a chromatic voice-leading neighbor tone to $E\flat$, and $C\flat$ serves as a neighbor to $C\sharp$; with additional chromatic motion ($D\sharp-E\flat$) in the upper voice. In addition to the extended chord voicings seen in Example 3.1, such melodic and harmonic embellishments recur throughout this etude. It is important to note how Kapustin effectively scores the accompaniments for his melodies so that he avoids doublings and maintains a rich texture.

Example 3.1. Etude no. 2, op. 40, "Reverie," mm. 1–4.

Bbm^7
 $Bbm7^b5$

Moderato (♩ = 92)

p

Eb^{13}
 $E^{\circ 7}/Eb$
 Eb^{11b5}

Fb/Ab
 Ab
 Fm^7

Bb^7_{411}

III. Sus Chords and Quartal Harmonies

Sus chords are most often chords in which the major or minor third above the bass is omitted and often replaced by a perfect fourth that may or may not later resolve to the

third. These chords have an open sound. Although the fourth is more commonly used in a sus chord, major seconds are sometimes used as well, creating sus chords of a different character. In both cases, the dissonance formed between the fourth and fifth of the chord, or between the second and the root, produces tension. These chords are markers of jazz.

In the realm of Classical repertoire, the use of quartal, or fourth-based, harmony may be detected as early as in Richard Wagner's "*Tristan* chord," first heard in his opera *Tristan und Isolde* (1859). The chord consists of F \natural , B \natural , D \sharp and G \sharp (built up from the bass) in which the bottom two notes form the interval of an augmented fourth while the upper two form that of a perfect fourth. Despite its layering of fourths, some musicologists might still argue that Wagner's musical language was built on thirds and identify it as a tertian chord functioning as a dominant.³ Regardless, the "*Tristan* chord" is significant in that Wagner's enigmatic, recurring use of it led to it becoming the first chord to be named after and associated with a particular work.⁴ Furthermore, moving away from traditional tonal harmony, Wagner's unorthodox chord, built on fourths, places emphasis on the predominance of sound or structure of musical harmony than its function, a notion that would soon be explored by composers thereafter.⁵ For instance, Alexander Scriabin's (1872–1915) famous "mystic chord," first found in his Sixth Piano Sonata, was also derived from a quartal sonority: C, F \sharp , B \flat , E, A and D. Impressionistic composers such as Claude Debussy (1862–1918) and Maurice Ravel (1875–1937) also

³ Edward Pearsall, *Twentieth-Century Music Theory and Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 17.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Robert Erickson, *Sound Structure in Music* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, Ltd., 1975), 94–5.

explored quartal harmonies extensively throughout their creative periods. Quartal harmonies in jazz became popular in the 1960s with their adoption by pianists such as Chick Corea, McCoy Tyner, and Herbie Hancock.

Possibly inspired by Chick Corea’s unaccompanied improvisations, the fourth etude in op. 40 (“Reminiscence”) spins out similar beautiful melodic lines in the right hand that eventually switch to the left hand in the middle episode. The gorgeous right hand sings over a calm left hand accompaniment that evokes Bill Evans’ atmospheric *Peace Piece*.

Example 3.2. Bill Evans: *Peace Piece*, m. 1–3.⁶

The image shows a musical score for the first three measures of Bill Evans' "Peace Piece". The score is in 4/4 time and features a piano accompaniment in the left hand. The right hand is mostly silent, indicated by a fermata over the staff. The left hand plays a series of chords: Cmaj7, G9sus, Cmaj7, G9sus, Cmaj7, and G9sus. The chords are layered in a way that creates a sense of harmonic ambiguity. The dynamics are marked as *mf* (mezzo-forte).

Although Etude no. 4, “Reminiscence,” is centered around the key area of B major, Kapustin creates a great deal of harmonic ambiguity with his exploitation of quartal harmonies and sus chords throughout (Example 3.3). Here in this specific passage, notice the chordal use of layering fourths in the left hand and how the sus chords meld into each other to create interesting resolutions.

⁶ Andy LaVerne. *Bill Evans: 19 Arrangements for Solo Piano* (New York: The Richmond Organization, 2001), 37.

Example 3.3. Etude no. 4, op. 40, "Reminiscence," mm. 1-3.

Larghetto (♩=60)

p

2

3

3

8

8

8

IV. The ii-V Progression

The ii-V progression is a standard jazz technique that establishes or prolongs key centers. An example of Kapustin establishing a tonal area using ii-V motion, found in Etude no. 2, can be located in Example 3.4. Here, the Bbm⁹ on the downbeat of m. 18 progresses to an Eb¹³ in the second half of the measure, finally resolving to an Abmaj⁷ chord that lasts throughout m. 19, confirming the home key of A-flat major.

Example 3.4. Etude no. 2, op. 40, "Reverie," mm. 18–19.

The musical score for Example 3.4 consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system, labeled '18', shows a right-hand part with a melodic line and a left-hand part with a bass line. Above the first measure of system 18, the chord Bbm⁹ is indicated. Above the second measure of system 18, the chord Eb¹³ is indicated. The second system, labeled '19', shows a right-hand part with a melodic line and a left-hand part with a bass line. Above the first measure of system 19, the chord Abmaj⁷ is indicated. The key signature is three flats (B-flat major).

The ii-V progression is also used in jazz to facilitate modulation. An interesting example of such modulatory technique is exhibited in the eighth etude from op. 40 (Example 3.5).

Example 3.5. Etude no. 8, op. 40, “Finale,” mm. 33–42.

The image displays three systems of musical notation for piano, spanning measures 33 to 42. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. Chord labels are placed above the staves to indicate the harmonic structure:

- System 1 (Measures 33-36):** Labeled with $B\flat m$, $E\flat^7$, Cm^7 , and $D\flat maj^7$.
- System 2 (Measures 37-40):** Labeled with $C\sharp m^7$, F^7 , $Bmaj^7$, and E^{11} .
- System 3 (Measures 41-42):** Labeled with E^{11} and $Amaj^7$.

In this example, Kapustin cleverly modulates from A-flat major to the distant key of B major through the use of ii-V motion enhanced by enharmonic reinterpretation, exhibiting Kapustin’s creative procedures. The $B\flat m$ followed by $E\flat^7$ in mm. 33–34 outlines a ii-V motion in the brief tonal area of A-flat major, relative to the original key of F minor. The A-flat major tonality continues to m. 36 and ends in the subsequent measure when the root of the chord, $D\flat$, is enharmonically reinterpreted as $C\sharp$ in m. 37 in order to formulate the ii chord in B major. This seemingly small alteration is actually functionally

significant for it helps facilitate the ii-V motion in the new key of B major. However, as seen and heard in all his other continually shifting harmonies, Kapustin does not simply stop here. B major then completes a secondary dominant tonicization by serving as the dominant to E major, which is hinted by the E¹¹ at the end of m. 39. The E¹¹ sonority is carried through into m. 40, which finally resolves to an Amaj⁷ chord on the downbeat of m. 41, confirming the new key area of A major. Kapustin, through the driving ii-V motion that becomes enharmonically altered for modulation purposes, has essentially “side-slipped” from the major key of A-flat to A, which is another common jazz technique.

During the Bebop era, artists like Charlie Parker would compose with an abundance of ii-V progressions to keep the harmony perpetually moving. The ii-V progression is also a building block in diatonic settings and usually results in circle of fifths motion around a confirmed key area. Although Kapustin does not write a superabundance of ii-V progressions, he does utilize them successively in the first etude to facilitate smooth tonicization, as shown in Example 3.6.

Example 3.6. Etude no. 1, op. 40, “Prelude,” mm. 17–18.

The musical score for Example 3.6 shows a piano etude in G major. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music begins at measure 17. The chord progression is as follows:

- Measure 17: Gm⁷ (ii/IV)
- Measure 18: C⁷ (V/IV)
- Measure 19: Fm⁷ (ii/^bIII)
- Measure 20: B^b(¹³) (V/^bIII)

The Roman numeral analysis is provided below the staff for each measure. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and articulation marks such as accents and slurs.

Here, Kapustin shifts from the subdominant key to that of the flatted mediant. He uses Gm^7 , the ii chord of the subdominant key of F major, in the first half of m. 17 and progresses to the V of F major in the second half of the measure. This is then followed by Fm^7 , which is the ii of the bIII (E^b major), followed by its dominant, a B-flat sonority, in the second half of m. 18. Kapustin frequently uses ii-V progressions combined with root movement by step to achieve his modulations.

V. Tritone Substitutions

Tritone substitution, another common jazz technique that is used to provide harmonic nuance, can be consistently found in Kapustin's etudes. In jazz, a tritone substitution is the act of substituting a dominant chord with a chord whose root is a tritone away from the original, hence a dominant-seventh sonority built on b^2 . This technique works very smoothly because any dominant-seventh chord contains the same tritone as that dominant-seventh chord whose root is a tritone away, assuming enharmonic equivalence. This technique was first pioneered and used extensively by jazz giant Dizzy Gillespie in the 1940s.⁷ The following example shows Kapustin's use of tritone substitution:

⁷ Walter Everett, "A Royal Scam: The Abstruse and Ironic Bop-Rock Harmony of Steely Dan," *Music Theory Spectrum* 26, no. 2 (Fall 2004): 209.

Example 3.7. Etude no. 3, op. 40, “Toccatina,” mm. 31–34.

Bb⁷ Ab⁷ (TT sub of D⁷ = V⁷ of G)

31

33 G⁷ C⁷ B⁷

In this passage, instead of initiating a circle of fifths sequence and using a D⁷ in m. 32, Kapustin substitutes it with an Ab⁷, the dominant seventh chord whose root is a tritone away from D but which shares the same tritone interval found in D⁷: F# and C in D⁷ enharmonically becomes C and Gb in Ab⁷. This greatly enhances the harmonic flavor of the passage and makes it richer-sounding to the ears.

Another instance of Kapustin’s complex use of tritone substitutions is heard in op. 40’s Etude no. 8 (Example 3.8).

Example 3.8. Etude no. 8, op. 40, "Finale," mm. 46–58.

Chord symbols above the staff: Cm^7 , Fm , Gm^7 , $Abmaj^7$, Bb^7 , Eb , Ebm , D^7 (TT sub of Ab), Cm^7 , Fm , Gm^7 , $Abmaj^7$, A^7 (TT sub of Eb), $Abmaj^7$.

Roman numeral symbols below the staff: vi^7 , ii , iii^7 , IV^M7 , V^7 , I , i .

Shifting from its original key of F minor to E-flat major, established in m. 46 by its submediant chord of Cm^7 , the passage progresses to its parallel minor by the end of m. 51, but does not stay in this modal mixture for long. It is then followed by D^7 , a tritone

substitution of A^b in m. 53. Measures 54–57 follow the same vi-ii-iii-IV progression of mm. 46–49, but this time Kapustin tritone-substitutes the tonic chord of E^b with an A^7 chord in m. 58 in order to tonicize in a different key area than anticipated. This is an example of the improvisatory sound of Kapustin music as he strategically sets up a four-measure harmonic progression that is repeated immediately yet often altered by tritone substitution chords.

VI. Turnarounds

Besides the ii-V, another basic compositional device commonly used in standard jazz is the turnaround, usually the progression I-vi-ii-V-I. Countless jazz standards are powered by this harmonic motion. The turnaround is a technique useful for tonic prolongation. It provides more richness to an otherwise static and dull-sounding tonic chord. In jazz, turnarounds are typically inserted into cadential areas in order to propel the melody back to the head of the tune. Kapustin, very aware of this technique, also incorporates turnarounds into his etudes. Examples 3.9 and 3.10 both serve as examples of how Kapustin assimilates turnaround motion at various cadential points.

Example 3.9. Etude no. 6, op. 40, "Pastoral," mm. 7–10. Opening theme returns in m. 9, one octave higher than original.

7

B \flat = I Gm⁷ = vi Cm⁷ = ii F⁷ = V

9

B \flat = I Gm⁷ B \flat Gm⁷

Example 3.10. Etude no. 2, op. 40, "Reverie," mm. 19–21.

19 $A\flat\text{maj}^7 = I$

20 $A\flat\text{maj}^7 = I$ $Fm^7 = vi$ $B\flat m^7 = ii$ $E\flat^9 = V$

21 $A\flat = I$

VII. Stride

Contrary to many composers preceding him whose output was often defined solely by their use of certain compositional styles, Kapustin incorporates the various stylistic techniques of stride, blues, and boogie-woogie in such a way that they serve only as elements contributing to his writing style instead of defining him as a composer of the genre.

Harlem Stride, or stride piano, is a style commonly known today simply as “stride” and is most directly associated with ragtime. Stride originated in the 1920s and continued in popularity into the 1930s. Originally named for its principal center of development, the African-American enclave of New York City, stride is a style of jazz piano that stemmed from ragtime and is characterized by a relentless leaping, or “striding,” motion over a large span of the keyboard.⁸

Example 3.11. Typical stride piano figuration.⁹



This motion consists of a highly rhythmic drive that is somewhat percussive in nature due to the repeating “oom-pah” pattern: the chord-splitting action of alternating a bass note and a chord in the left hand. Unlike its predecessor, ragtime, stride is less relaxed and much faster and more intense in its rhythmic virtuosity. Often played in a four-beat pulse, the left hand features a single bass note, or the interval of an octave, seventh or tenth on the first and third beats, and a chord on the second and fourth beats. Sometimes this pattern is reversed and the chord is placed on the downbeats while the bass note(s) occur on the upbeats. Stride pianists developed exceptional skills in the accuracy of their leaping left hands. Also different from its ragtime forebear, stride is less concerned with form and places more emphasis on improvisation.

⁸ Mervyn Cooke. *The Chronicle of Jazz* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1998), 46.

⁹ J. Bradford Robinson. “Stride,” *Grove Music Online*.

<<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>> (Accessed 17 January, 2014).

The greatest of the first generation of stride pianists was, without a doubt, James P. Johnson (1891–1955), universally known as “Father of Stride Piano” and best remembered for composing the catchy tune titled “Charleston.”¹⁰ Johnson’s greatest contribution is the manner in which he recast the “straight” feeling of ragtime with a more modern, swinging beat.¹¹ He discovered and engaged the broken tenth interval to introduce more swing in his left hand, as seen in his famous composition *Carolina Shout*.¹² The pianist not only substituted tenths for single bass notes, but also played broken tenths up and down the keyboard. Other famous jazz stride pianists who also popularized and furthered stride piano with their own unique playing styles included Johnson’s student and protégé, Thomas “Fats” Waller (1904–43), as well as Willie “The Lion” (1893–1973) and Art Tatum (1909–56).

Having studied the style of stride piano, Kapustin also employs aspects of stride accompaniment in his writing. An example can be found in the first etude of his *Five Etudes in Different Intervals*, op. 68 (Examples 3.12 and 3.13). Example 3.12 displays Kapustin’s use of the low single bass note on the downbeats in the left hand striding motion. Example 3.13, on the other hand, presents a similar right hand figuration but over a reverse motion of the virtuosic left hand striding in which the chords, instead of the bass notes, appear on the downbeats.

¹⁰ Ibid, 58.

¹¹ Gunther Schuller, *Early Jazz: Its Roots and Musical Development* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 216.

¹² Ibid, 222.

Example 3.12. Etude no. 1, *Five Etudes in Different Intervals*, op. 68, mm. 8–15.

The image displays a musical score for Etude no. 1, consisting of five systems of piano accompaniment. Each system is written for a grand piano, with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor), and the time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into five systems, each starting with a measure number: 8, 10, (8), 13, and 13. The first system (mm. 8-9) features a dynamic marking of *mf* and includes an 8-measure rest in the treble staff. The second system (mm. 10-11) also includes an 8-measure rest in the treble staff. The third system (mm. 12-13) begins with an 8-measure rest in the treble staff. The fourth system (mm. 14-15) starts with a dynamic marking of *f*. The fifth system (mm. 16-17) features a dynamic marking of *mf*. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and dynamic markings such as accents and slurs.

Example 3.13. Etude no. 1, *Five Etudes in Different Intervals*, op. 68, mm. 7–8.

The musical score for Example 3.13 consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The music is in 2/4 time. The right hand (treble clef) plays a syncopated melody with slurs and accents. The left hand (bass clef) plays a steady, rhythmic accompaniment of chords and pedal notes. A 'cresc.' marking is present above the right hand in the final measure.

Kapustin’s seventh etude from op. 40 also fully exploits virtuosic stride piano style with a hint of Joplin’s ragtime influence (Example 3.14). As with its immediate predecessor, ragtime, the left hand here keeps strict time, alternating pedal notes with chords in the “oompah” manner of a marching band, while the right hand plays syncopated “raggy” figures in the treble that are generated from chordal hand positions.

Example 3.14. Etude no. 7, op. 40, "Intermezzo," mm. 83–89.

The image displays a musical score for a piano piece, specifically Example 3.14, Etude no. 7, op. 40, "Intermezzo," measures 83–89. The score is written for piano and consists of four systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The first system (measures 82-83) includes a dynamic marking of *m.s.* (mezzo-soprano) and a breath mark (b) at the end of the first measure. The second system (measures 84-85) features a triplet of eighth notes in the treble staff. The third system (measures 86-87) continues with a triplet of eighth notes. The fourth system (measures 88-89) also features a triplet of eighth notes. The score is characterized by complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes, and a variety of articulation marks such as accents and slurs.

VIII. Boogie-Woogie and Blues

Boogie-woogie, another popular style significant in the evolution of jazz, was essentially inspired by the innovative tradition of the left-hand broken tenths in stride piano. It is an earthy, African-American musical style of piano-based blues that originated as early as the 1870s but came into prominence in the early 1930s during the Great Depression and continued into the early 1940s.¹³ The descriptive term of *boogie-woogie* itself was, in fact, historically used by Rousas Rushdoony in reference to ancient rites in Morocco.¹⁴

Frequently associated with dancing, boogie-woogie generally uses blues chord progressions combined with a repetitive, perpetual left-hand *ostinato* bass pattern. The walking bass line, which is the essence of the boogie-woogie idiom, usually continues throughout a boogie-woogie performance except for occasional breaks (usually two or four bars in length) and is usually characterized by playing eighth notes in a simple 12-bar blues progression.¹⁵ The distinct boogie rhythm is often based on eight beats to the bar and is easily identifiable as it recurs in the bass throughout. Although sometimes in big bands, it is possible to hear boogie-woogie style played when the *ostinato* is not present, in the case of the piano, however, the *ostinato* is always heard in the bass. There are two methods of boogie-woogie piano playing, both of which the right hand is left free for melodic interpretation or improvisation: one in which the left hand plays a walking bass that outlines the chords in a melodic fashion, and one in which the left hand plays

¹³ Paul Tanner and David Megill. *Jazz*, 12th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012), 69.

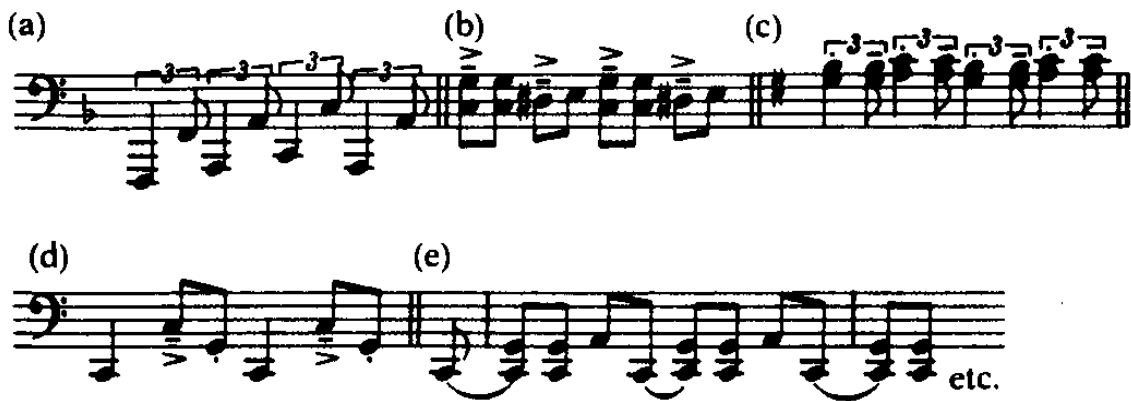
¹⁴ Rousas Rushdoony. *The Politics of Pornography* (Sandtrion City, Sandtrion, South Africa: Valiant Publishers, 1975), 98.

¹⁵ Barry Kernfeld, ed. *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, 282–3.

full, moving chords.¹⁶ Oftentimes in boogie-woogie piano playing, the right hand and left hand can operate so independently that it can sound as if two pianists are performing instead of one. The rhythmic virtuosity of boogie-woogie style has led to the use of the term “8 over 4” due to the eight notes, or eighth-note quavers, that the left hand of the piano plays in common time.

Some typical left-hand boogie patterns are shown in the following example.

Example 3.15. Common left hand boogie patterns¹⁷



- 3.15a. Common walking bass line with rocking motion that becomes more even as tempo of piece increases.
- 3.15b. A pattern played as straight eighth notes or in a more rocking fashion created by triplets.
- 3.15c. “Honky-tonk” accompaniment figure (and its variants) coined from Meade Lux Lewis’s famous *Honky Tonk Train Blues*.
- 3.15d. Derived from Jimmy Yancey’s bass line in *Yancey Stomp*, this is sometimes referred to as “the fives” pattern and is best played keeping the eighth notes slightly uneven with the help of *tenuto* markings.
- 3.15e. A honky-tonk pattern from Pete Johnson’s *Let ’em Jump* with an even subdivision of the beat and is usually played at a faster tempo than the figures from a-d.

¹⁶ Paul Tanner and David McGill. *Jazz*, 69.

¹⁷ Kernfeld, ed. *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, 283.

Throughout “Raillery,” the fifth etude of op. 40, the abovementioned boogie devices may be found in slightly varied forms. For example, instead of the traditional split octaves written in straight eighth notes, Kapustin uses a broken-octave, dotted-rhythm boogie figuration in the left hand accompaniment in mm. 61–67 (Example 3.16).

Example 3.16. Etude no. 5, op. 40, “Raillery,” mm. 61–67.

The musical score for Example 3.16, Etude no. 5, op. 40, “Raillery,” mm. 61–67, is presented in three systems. The first system (mm. 61–63) shows a broken-octave, dotted-rhythm boogie figuration in the left hand, with a 15-measure phrase in the right hand. The second system (mm. 64–66) continues the figuration in the left hand and includes a 3-measure phrase in the right hand. The third system (mm. 67) concludes the passage with a 3-measure phrase in the right hand and a dynamic marking of *mf*. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and dynamic markings.

There are constant “bluesy” and jazz-rock improvisatory figures played in the right hand above these ostinatos featuring riff-like passages in the high treble, single-line melodies, tremolos, and punctuated chords. It is interesting to note the insistent triplet figurations,

as well as the scalar and arpeggiated riffs in the right hand that Kapustin uses against the left hand boogie pattern, create interesting cross-rhythms and dissonances throughout.

The most obvious feature of boogie-woogie style is the eight beats to a measure that are played as an *ostinato*. This recurring melodic figure serves as a structural device that helps hold the etude together. Kapustin's assimilation of driving *ostinati* in the bass shows distinct boogie-woogie blues style and provides the etude with strong rhythmic impetus. Example 3.17 shows how the constant walking bass pattern generates the thematic material as Kapustin subjects the classic twelve-bar blues form to a playful boogie-woogie *ostinato* treatment.

Example 3.17. Etude no. 5, op. 40, "Raillery," mm 45–52. Blues over *ostinato* bass.

The musical score for Example 3.17, Etude no. 5, op. 40, "Raillery," mm 45–52, is presented in three systems. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The left hand (bass clef) plays a constant walking bass line, which is an *ostinato* pattern. The right hand (treble clef) features a melodic line with various rhythmic patterns, including triplets and arpeggiated figures. The score is divided into three systems, with measures 45-47, 48-50, and 51-52 respectively. The first system (measures 45-47) shows the beginning of the piece with a walking bass line and a melodic line that includes triplets. The second system (measures 48-50) continues the walking bass line and the melodic line, which includes a triplet of eighth notes and a triplet of sixteenth notes. The third system (measures 51-52) concludes the piece with a walking bass line and a melodic line that includes a triplet of eighth notes and a triplet of sixteenth notes. The score is written in a standard musical notation style with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs).

In his notes to Marc André-Hamelin's recording of Kapustin's works, Jed Distler describes this etude as "replete with whirling barrelhouse licks, Leonard Bernstein accents that are unpredictable enough to cause an 'age of anxiety' on the performer's part.... Kapustin's sophisticated reharmonizations never detract from the music's earthy core."¹⁸ Suggesting a highly improvisatory boogie style filled with rhythmic virtuosity, this whimsical and energetic etude shows Kapustin's ingenious integration of the boogie-woogie and blues piano styles. With its witty boogie-woogie licks and renewed harmonies, this etude is deceptively virtuosic and can be taxing for the pianist.

IX. Syncopation and Swing

Rhythm is an integral part of jazz. Jazz players will often play in rhythm with the general pulse of a tune but will rarely play exactly *on* the beat. Syncopation and swing make up the fundamental rhythmic structure of jazz. Syncopation is a rhythmic treatment of notes where the accents fall on notes between the beats rather than those on the beat. This displacement of rhythmic stress hence interrupts the regular rhythmic flow giving the music a "ragged" and "off-beat" feel. This element can be found throughout Kapustin's music. The following examples show some of the different ways Kapustin utilizes syncopation in his etudes.

¹⁸ Jed Distler. Notes to *Nikolai Kapustin Piano Music*. Hyperion CDA67433, 2004.

Example 3.18. Etude no. 3, *Five Etudes in Different Intervals*, op. 68, mm. 13–17.

The image displays a musical score for Etude no. 3, consisting of two systems of music. The first system begins at measure 13, marked with a dynamic of *mf*. The second system continues from measure 14 to 17. The score is written for piano, with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The music is characterized by complex rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and various articulations such as accents and slurs. Vertical boxes highlight specific intervals in both hands across several measures. A dashed line above the second system indicates an octave shift for the right hand.

Example 3.19. Etude no. 6, op. 40, "Pastoral," mm. 15–20.

The passage in Example 3.18 is filled with accents on weak beats in both the right and left hand. In contrast to Example 3.18 where Kapustin places accents on the weak beats to elicit a syncopated feel, Example 3.19 features the syncopated rhythm written in the music as the soprano melody line occurs *on* the off beats (m. 15). In addition, Kapustin creates the illusion of triple time as the melodic notes in m. 15 are grouped in three, working against the four sixteenth notes in 4/4. This complex rhythm causes the melody notes to shift constantly and instill irregularity in the pulse. The 3:4 vertical hemiola

cross-rhythm between the two upper voices in the right hand also contributes to a ragged, syncopated feel, particularly in m. 19 where Kapustin adds an accent on the last off-beat. Such multi-strain syncopation formula is very common in not only his etudes but the rest of Kapustin's works in general.

Swing, or swing eighths, is a rhythmic and stylistic trend established by the late 1920s following boogie-woogie. Most jazz has a rhythmic drive, or swing. The style of swing actually originally referred to the music of large dance bands that played written arrangements and did not always “swing” but instead involved jazz performers doing a jazz interpretation of pretty ballads (simple songs usually romantic in nature and uses the same melody for each stanza).¹⁹ In order to deal with the faster tempos, solo piano style became more refined during the swing period, making more use of single bass notes and simple chords (sometimes merely broken tenths or seventh chords used in an “oompah” fashion so as to lighten up the left hand part) and single-note melodic lines.²⁰ Swing is the combination of notes being delayed and accented that yields a unique lilting swing-time momentum to the music. In other words, swing is deeply connected with the concept of syncopation since the swing feel emphasizes the off-beat or weaker pulse as well. Swing eighths, specifically, are a rhythmic figure based on the triplet division of the quarter note. They are referred to as swing eighths because the eighths are played unevenly, or “swung.” Swing eighths are also sometimes notated as eighth-note triplets with a tie between the first two notes. Swing rhythm can also be notated with dotted-eighth and

¹⁹ Tanner and Megill, *Jazz*, 111.

²⁰ Kernfeld ed., *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, 282–3.

sixteenth notes (e.g. left hand figuration of Example 3.19 m. 15). Example 3.20 illustrates one of many examples of Kapustin’s use of syncopation and swing in his etudes.

Example 3.20. Etude no. 7, op. 40, “Intermezzo,” mm. 1–4.

The image shows a musical score for Example 3.20, Etude no. 7, op. 40, "Intermezzo," mm. 1-4. The score is in 3/4 time, marked "Allegretto (♩ = 128) liberamente" and "p". It features a complex rhythmic pattern with many triplets and syncopation. The first measure is circled in red, highlighting a quarter note followed by an eighth note in the right hand and triplets with tied eighth notes in the left hand. The second measure is circled in blue, highlighting a dotted eighth and sixteenth note rhythm in the right hand and triplets in the left hand. The score ends with a "3 a tempo" marking.

Example 3.20 is filled with swing and syncopation. Kapustin engages a combination of uneven swing eighths in the triplet figures. For example, m. 1 features the right hand playing a quarter followed by an eighth while the left hand features triplets with tied eighth notes. Moreover, the dotted eighth and sixteenth rhythm on the third beat of m. 1 is also characteristic of swing as previously mentioned. The abundance of accents on weak beats enhances the syncopated rhythmic treatment and “funk” feel. Example 3.21 exploits further variation of swing and syncopation in the “Intermezzo.” This study, with its charming tune, pays tribute to the generation of American musical theater giants such as Frank Loesser, Cy Coleman, Charles Strouse, and Jerry Herman.²¹

²¹ Distler. Notes to *Nikolai Kapustin Piano Music*.

Example 3.21. Etude no. 7, op. 40, "Intermezzo," mm. 14–23.

The musical score is presented in five systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is G-flat major (three flats) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system (mm. 14-15) begins with a triplet in the treble and a quarter note in the bass. The second system (mm. 16-17) features triplets in both hands. The third system (mm. 18-19) continues with complex rhythmic patterns and triplets. The fourth system (mm. 20-21) shows a change in the bass line with a double flat. The fifth system (mm. 22-23) concludes with triplets in both hands.

X. Double-note Jazz-Rock Figuration

Originating from vocal and guitar-based blues forms, double-note or bent-note techniques are used frequently in jazz and jazz-rock music.²² As opposed to the voice and guitar, the piano cannot physically “bend” pitches. Instead, the piano uses tone clusters, often involving the blue notes of flat third and fifth, to imitate the effect of bent- and double-notes. This technique can be very effective in creating dissonance and tension, especially at a climatic point in jazz-rock music, which ultimately must be resolved. Kapustin makes use of this technique in the end of op. 40, no. 7 (Example 3.22).

Example 3.22. Etude no. 7, op. 40, “Intermezzo,” mm. 98–101.

The musical score for Example 3.22, Etude no. 7, op. 40, "Intermezzo," mm. 98–101, is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 98 to 100, and the second system covers measures 100 to 101. The music is written for piano in G minor (three flats) and 4/4 time. The right hand part is characterized by complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and doublets, and the use of tone clusters and blue notes (flat third and fifth) to create dissonance and tension. The left hand part provides a steady bass line with chords. A dashed box highlights the first three measures (98-100) of the right hand part, showing the use of tone clusters and blue notes. The piece ends with a final chord in measure 101.

²² Creighton. "A Man of Two Worlds," 55.

Kapustin also uses the double-note technique in the context of piano trills or riff-like tremolos to simulate a sizzling rhythmic romp rather than just playing straight chords, another jazz-rock technique (Example 3.23).

Example 3.23. Etude no. 6, op. 40, "Pastoral," mm. 51–56.

The image displays a musical score for Example 3.23, Etude no. 6, op. 40, "Pastoral," mm. 51–56. The score is written for piano and consists of three systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The time signature is 3/4. The score is marked with dynamics: *sfp* (sforzando piano) and *f* (forte). The first system (mm. 51–52) features a double-note technique in the right hand, highlighted by an oval. The second system (mm. 53–54) features a piano (*p*) section. The third system (mm. 55–56) features a double-note technique in the right hand, also highlighted by an oval. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

XI. Summary

Without a doubt, Kapustin's innovative manifestation of 20th-century jazz trends is evident in his *Eight Concert Etudes*, op. 40 and *Five Etudes in Different Intervals*, op. 68. This chapter was, by no means, a comprehensive study of the various jazz techniques used by Kapustin, but merely a brief survey and discussion of some of the most distinctive jazz devices explored in the two sets of etudes. The lush blend of classical and jazz influences have deeply shaped Kapustin's compositional style and have rendered him the unique reputation as a "hybrid," "fusion," or "cross-over" composer. In the next chapter we will examine how Kapustin's etudes uphold virtuoso piano techniques and the ways in which they contribute to the 21st-century etude repertoire.

CHAPTER FOUR

KAPUSTIN'S ETUDE TECHNIQUES

I. Development and Evolution of the Etude

Spelled with a circumflex, the French word “*Étude*” translates to “study” in English.¹ Since the eighteenth century the etude has served as a significant musical genre in the pianoforte repertoire, providing works in which one or more specific technical skills were woven into the musical material and developed throughout in order to strengthen or master an aspect of keyboard technique. In addition to the increased stabilization of the physical properties of the piano, the rise of the etude in the early nineteenth century was the direct outcome of a newfound fascination with virtuosity. As a result, the musical scene became widespread with methods and instruction manuals that were designed to assist aspiring performers to achieve virtuoso status.

More often than not they are written and intended to be played at relatively fast tempos in order to display the performers’ musical talent and prowess at their instrument, giving rise to the noun, “virtuoso.” In Latin, *virtus* means skill, excellence, or worth and can be used to describe anyone who possesses outstanding technical ability or

¹ The circumflex in Latin normally denotes a missing “s.”

accomplishment in a particular field.² Since the middle of the nineteenth century, the term “virtuoso” has been applied almost exclusively to performers and “carries with it a whiff of disapproval as it resonates the privileging of flash over substance” because players became naturally and progressively more tempted to indulge their ability at the expense of the meaning of the composer.³ Interestingly enough, the word was not always perceived this way and did not apply only to performers. In fact, in its earliest musical incarnation, a virtuoso was someone accomplished in the art, whether theoretically, compositionally, or practically. “Virtuoso,” wrote Sir George Grove, “is a term of Italian origin, applied more abroad than in England, to a player who excels in the technical part of his art.”⁴ In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the term became increasingly associated exclusively with practical musicians who showed superiority or excellence, and with performance rather than composition. Given this concept of virtuosity, idiomatic characteristics of virtuoso etudes consequently include rapid scales and/or arpeggios, long passages of double notes (in thirds, fourths, fifths, sixths), fast octaves in unison or broken form, large skips, crossing of hands in fast tempo, execution of trills or profuse ornamentation in a rapid tempo, division of figuration between the hands, repeated notes, cadenzas, rolled chords, connected melodic work using inner or outer fingers in thick, chordal textures, etc. It is common for piano etudes to focus on one main technical feat; the etudes of Liszt, however, often combined several problematic techniques into one

² Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell, ed., *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2001), s.v. “Virtuoso,” by Owen Jander.

³ Cliff Eisen, “The rise (and fall) of the concerto virtuoso in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Concerto*, ed. Simon Keefe (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 177–78.

⁴ *Ibid.*

piece and his compositions are notoriously difficult for the pianist to master (e.g., Liszt's 12 *Transcendental Etudes*).

The term "etude" was not applied to early didactic works, such as the more than 550 keyboard sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti, the first thirty sonatas of which were named *Essercizi*, or exercises, and which focused on the mastery of specific technical challenges.⁵ Over the years, numerous sonatas of Scarlatti have gone beyond their function as studies and have attained the status of concert masterpieces.

According to Robert Schumann:

Studies are studies: that is to say, one should learn from them something one did not know before.... In a broad sense, every piece of music is a study, and the simplest is sometimes the most difficult. In a narrower sense we require an especial aim in the study; it must improve a certain technicality and lead to the mastery of some particular difficulty, whether this lies in technicalities, rhythm, expression, performance, or what else.⁶

Furthermore, Edith Crawshaw, quoting Dannreuther in his *Studies* article, says studies may be

...divided into two kinds—pieces contrived with a view to aid the student in mastering special mechanical difficulties pertaining to the technical treatment of his instrument, like the excellent pianoforte etudes of Clementi and Cramer; and pieces wherein, over and above such an executive purpose, which is never lost sight of, some characteristic musical sentiment, poetical scene, or dramatic situation susceptible of musical interpretation or comment is depicted, as in certain of Moscheles's "Characteristic Studies" or the Etudes of Chopin, Liszt, or Alkan. The distinction between these two classes of etudes closely resembles the difference recognized by painters between a tentative sketch for a figure, a group, or a landscape, which aims at rendering some poetical idea whilst attending particularly to the mechanical difficulties

⁵ Stewart Gordon, *A History of Keyboard Literature* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1996), 75–77.

⁶ Quoted in Edith Crawshaw, "Franz Liszt and the Development of 19th-century Pianism: A Re-reading of the Evidence," *Musical Times* 71, no. 1045 (March 1930): 233.

accruing from the task in hand, and a mere drawing after casts or from life with a view to practice and the attainment of manipulative facility.⁷

As the title *Etude* so often connotes mere technical skill, pianists frequently approach studies more mechanically than musically, aiming to better one or more technical elements rather than to achieve more musical artistry. Fusing together technique and musicianship has hence been the fundamental framework under which many composers worked. In the early nineteenth century, between 1815 and 1830, the etude primarily served as a didactic piece for technical mastery, as evidenced by the works of Cramer, Czerny, Clementi, Hummel, Kalkbrenner, and Moscheles.⁸ Many works during this time encompassed short compositions in addition to explanations and exercise patterns (e.g. *The Virtuoso Pianist in Sixty Exercises* by Hanon). Nonetheless, such works often lacked detailed guidance yet presented the pianist with page after page of short pieces that emphasized a host of the previously mentioned technical feats.

In the late nineteenth century, however, with the rise of the bourgeoisie and accessibility to print music as well as concerts, composers such as Chopin, Liszt, Schumann, and Brahms, began to write etudes that did not merely serve didactical purposes, but were also appropriate for concert performance. Thus, etudes became more substantial works. Chopin was the first keyboard composer to intend his etudes for use in public performance. By the 1830s Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Liszt started writing concert studies as well. After this period, the concert-study tidal wave was well underway and more composers followed suit. The underlying framework for much etude literature since the nineteenth century, and what makes it even more difficult, is that it requires not

⁷ Crawshaw, "Franz Liszt and the Development of 19th-century Pianism," 233–34.

⁸ Gordon, *A History of Keyboard Literature*, 283.

only the technical precision, but also the utmost sensitivity to the contour of lines, the contrast in dynamics, and the tone colors and moods evoked.

In the twentieth century music and culture became more unsettled as a direct result of the social, political, and economic upheaval and instability in Europe. The rise of new transportation, technology, and communication gave way to new artistic thought and musical innovations. Composers such as John Cage, Olivier Messiaen, György Ligeti, and many others responded to such external social influences as they began writing etudes with atonal, bi-tonal, polytonal, polyrhythmic, and serial textures, as well as incorporating prepared piano and extended piano techniques in order to push the boundaries and elevate the demands of the etude genre. Whereas the etudes of eighteenth and nineteenth centuries present a clear technical problem for performers, the etudes of the early twentieth century primarily offer a challenge to the composer creating them and only secondarily to the performer who must perform them.

Nikolai Kapustin, as a notable figure in the latter part of the twentieth century, is undoubtedly a composer who sets new trends in the piano etude genre, beginning with his integration of the jazz harmonic language as discussed in the previous chapter. This chapter will investigate the ways in which Kapustin approaches the technical demands that are characteristic of the piano etude, the possible influences that make his devices seem similar or different from other mainstream etude composers, and how his two sets of etudes contribute to the contemporary piano etude literature. The *Eight Concert Etudes*, op. 40 (1984) and the *Five Etudes in Different Intervals*, op. 68 (1992) present the pianist with a virtual treatise on twentieth-century virtuoso piano technique, written in an idiosyncratic and often highly amusing vein, that keeps not only the player, but also

listeners, on the edge of their seats from beginning to end. As befits the genre, each etude in the set confronts the pianist with different, and often considerable, technical challenges in various, fascinating ways.

II. *Eight Concert Etudes*, op. 40 (1984)

Traces of the Russian piano tradition as well as idiomatic 19th-century etude writing are seen in the *Eight Concert Etudes*, op. 40. Just as Chopin's mainly focused on a single technical problem in each of his etudes, Kapustin's makes it fairly obvious what technical difficulty the composer intends to explore in each of his *Eight Concert Etudes*. Jed Distler once said the op. 40 studies show "stylistic breadth, formidable technical challenges, and audacious invention" and "more than hold their own with the genre's celebrated benchmarks, from Liszt and Lyapunov to Godowsky's retooled Chopin and Earl Wild's Gershwin transformations."⁹

Chopin's influences may be immediately detected in the second etude of the set. This etude shares not only technical traits of Chopin's writing but also his lyricism. Written in classical ABA form, the outer sections of Kapustin's Etude no. 2 might evoke a modern counterpart to Chopin's op. 10, no. 7, a brilliant double-note toccata study that requires powerful fingers and presents a technical problem for the right hand fifth finger as it must seamlessly articulate the melodic line (Example 4.1). Kapustin's double notes are gentler sounding yet still difficult, alternating between mostly double sixths and double thirds, with occasional seconds and fourths. Both written in compound time,

⁹ Jed Distler, notes to *Nikolai Kapustin Piano Music*, Hyperion CDA67433, 2004.

Kapustin's study is written in 12/8 while Chopin's study is in 6/8. In Kapustin's study, the larger intervals occur on the strong beats whereas Chopin employs them on the weaker beats, making his study inevitably harder because not only does the pianist have to bring out the melody with the fifth finger, he or she must also manage to do so without accents. Kapustin, however, besides using straight eighth notes similar to that of m. 15 in Chopin's op. 10, no. 7 (Example 4.1), also applies more variety in his left hand accompaniment. Examples 4.2a and 4.2b display some of Kapustin's creative differences in the ever-changing left hand pattern.

Example 4.1. Chopin: Etude in C major, op. 10, no. 7, mm. 13–18.

The image shows a musical score for Chopin's Etude in C major, op. 10, no. 7, measures 13-18. The score is in 6/8 time and consists of two systems. The first system (measures 13-15) features a right hand with sixteenth-note chords and a left hand with eighth-note accompaniment. The second system (measures 16-18) features a right hand with sixteenth-note chords and a left hand with eighth-note accompaniment, including a 'p delicato' marking. The score includes various musical notations such as 'cresc.', 'p delicato', and 'Ped.'.

Example 4.2a. Kapustin: Etude no. 2, op. 40, "Reverie," mm. 17-18.

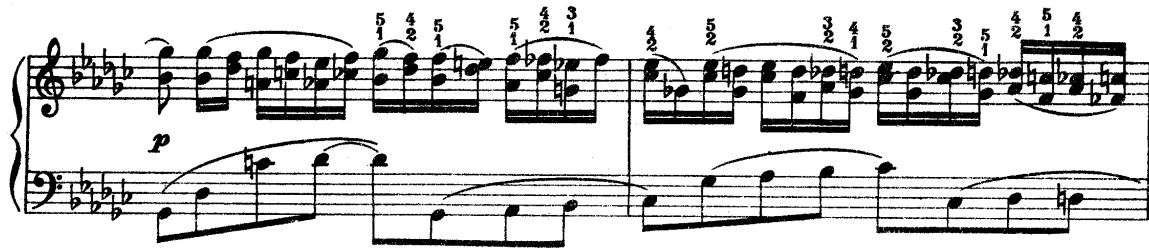
Musical score for Example 4.2a, measures 17-18. The score is written for piano in a key signature of three flats (B-flat major or D-flat minor). Measure 17 features a complex, rapid right-hand passage with many beamed notes and a left-hand accompaniment consisting of a few notes and rests. Measure 18 continues the right-hand passage and features a more active left-hand accompaniment with a melodic line.

Example 4.2b. Kapustin: Etude no. 2, op. 40, "Reverie," mm. 7-9.

Musical score for Example 4.2b, measures 7-9. The score is written for piano in a key signature of three flats. Measure 7 shows a dense right-hand texture with many beamed notes and a left-hand accompaniment with a few notes. Measure 8 continues the right-hand texture and features a more active left-hand accompaniment with a melodic line. Measure 9 continues the right-hand texture and features a more active left-hand accompaniment with a melodic line.

It is also fascinating to note the similarities of Kapustin’s alternating double-note figuration to Rachmaninoff’s Prelude, op. 23, no. 9, shown in Example 4.3, which is also suggestive of Chopin influences.

Example 4.3. Rachmaninoff: Prelude in E-flat minor, op. 23, no. 9, mm. 5–6.



Clearly not limited to only the influences of Chopin and Rachmaninoff, Kapustin’s double note passages, with their added jazz flair, reflect a typical etude device of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

“Reminiscence,” the fourth etude, hints at some Romantic influences as well. Typical of 19th-century virtuosic etude writing, this etude calls for complicated, running figurations that switch between the hands and are sometimes more angular, other times more scalar or chromatic. The lyrical and expressive right-hand melody may also potentially be attributed to Chopin’s *bel canto* style. The sweeping, rhapsodic figures “sound” like improvised jazz. In Kapustin’s no. 4, the A sections keep the right hand very busy with scalar and arpeggiated figures filled with chromaticism and irregular rhythms while the left hand plays melodic chords made up of quartal harmonies. Moszkowski’s op. 72 no. 11 etude is an example of similar virtuosic right hand figurations over a more static, chordal left hand (Example 4.4a).

Example 4.4a. Moszkowski: Etude no. 11, op. 72, mm. 1–4. Typical right hand chromatic figuration of 19th-century.

Presto e con leggerezza (Очень скоро и легко)

Also in ABA form and alternating between 3/4 and 4/4 time, “Reminiscence” appears loosely modeled after a combination of Chopin’s op. 25, no. 11, the “Winter Wind” etude, and his op. 10, no. 12, the famous “Revolutionary Etude.” The A sections of Kapustin’s Etude no 4 can be compared to Chopin’s op. 25, no. 11 in that Chopin’s “Winter Wind” is a virtuosic study for the right hand full of fast complex figurations (hence the whirlwind effect of a passionate and violent winter wind contributing to its nickname) over a strong chordal bass melody, which, at a few places, must switch and master the right-hand figuration (Example 4.4b). Instead of momentarily exchanging textures in some places, “Reminiscence” features a B section that completely reverses the technical process for the left hand with superimposed chords played by the right hand (Example 4.5). Example 4.5 demonstrates how the billowy right hand figuration in Kapustin’s “Reminiscence” descends into the bass and gets spun out by the left hand while the left hand’s original slow, processional-like accompaniment alternates to the

right hand. Despite the fact that this etude is quite slow and marked *Larghetto*, to achieve command of the right hand's clean glittering passages, one must possess great finger dexterity.

Example 4.4b. Chopin Etude in A minor, op. 25, no. 11, "Winter Wind," mm. 41–46. Switches technical difficulty to the left hand and back to the right hand.

The image shows a musical score for Chopin's Etude in A minor, op. 25, no. 11, measures 41-46. The score is written for piano and consists of three systems of staves. The first system is marked *marcato* and *f*. The second system is marked *mf*. The third system is marked *fp espress.*. The score features complex rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and various fingerings are indicated throughout. A double bar line with a repeat sign is present at the end of the third system. The key signature is one flat (A minor), and the time signature is 3/4.

Example 4.5. Kapustin: Etude no. 4, op. 40, “Reminiscence,” mm. 22–25. Exchange of textures from section A to B.

The image displays a musical score for four measures (22-25) of Kapustin's Etude no. 4, op. 40, "Reminiscence". The score is written for piano and consists of four systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs).
- Measure 22: The right hand features a complex, rapid sixteenth-note pattern with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The left hand provides a steady accompaniment of eighth notes. A bracket above the right hand indicates an eighth-note group.
- Measure 23: The right hand continues with a similar sixteenth-note texture. The left hand has a more active role with eighth-note patterns. A slur is present under the left hand's notes.
- Measure 24: The right hand has a more melodic, eighth-note line. The left hand continues with eighth-note accompaniment. A dynamic marking of *mf* is present.
- Measure 25: The right hand features a melodic line with some triplets. The left hand has a more active eighth-note accompaniment, including triplet markings.
The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4.

This common etude technique of the right hand dominating with dramatic and fiery statements over an incredibly active left hand can also be compared to Chopin’s “Revolutionary” etude (Example 4.6).

Example 4.6. Chopin: Etude in C minor, op. 10, no. 12, “Revolutionary,” mm. 1–3.

Allegro con fuoco. ♩ = 160.

f *legatissimo*

Kapustin also evidences idiomatic writing in the etude tradition in Etude no. 7, “Intermezzo,” from op. 40 (Example 4.7). This study again features Chopinesque passages amidst its boogie-woogie and blues stylistic treatment and is an excellent finger study. Proper voicing, continuous melodic connection, and maintaining evenness and sensitivity are all problematic in this seventh etude.

Example 4.7. Kapustin: Etude no. 7, op. 40, “Intermezzo,” mm. 51–55.

The image displays three systems of musical notation for a piano piece. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The first system, starting at measure 50, features a complex melodic line in the treble clef with many beamed notes and a bass line with chords and single notes. The second system, starting at measure 52, shows a treble clef with triplets of eighth notes and a bass line with chords. The third system, starting at measure 54, has a treble clef with a dense, fast-moving melodic line and a bass line with chords. A dashed line above the treble clef in the third system indicates an octave shift.

Kapustin’s writing in this seventh etude might recall Chopin’s double-third etude, op. 25, no. 6, which is amongst one of the hardest of Chopin’s etudes as it requires very independent fingers, especially of the third, fourth, and fifth, as well as rotational flexibility in the forearm and a properly positioned upper arm (Example 4.8). The challenging execution of parallel intervals, especially those of double thirds, sixths, or octaves, remains a common feature of etudes.

Example 4.8. Chopin: Etude in G-sharp minor, op. 25, no. 6, mm. 1–5.

6. *Allegro*. $\text{♩} = 69$.

sotto voce

p

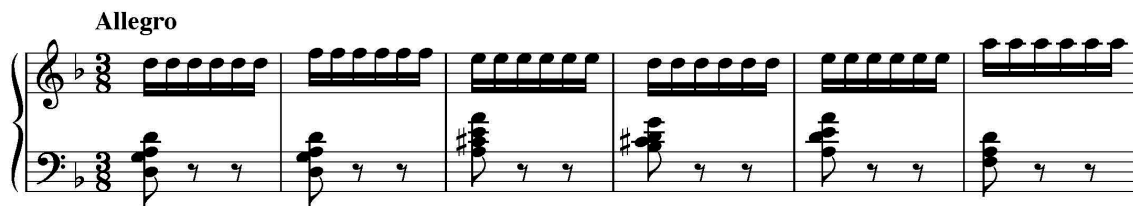
A pioneer of the concert etude tradition, Chopin’s definitive double-thirds etude inspired not only Kapustin but the etude output of composers such as Liszt, Schumann, Brahms, Rachmaninoff, and Scriabin. For example, Liszt’s Transcendental Etude no. 5, “Feux Follets,” shows such influences (Example 4.9) and is considered one of the hardest etudes in the literature and quite possibly the most difficult of the *12 Transcendental Etudes* as it contains more than one technical challenge in addition to the problematic double-note passages. For example, the rapid asymmetrical double-note passages in the right hand accompanied by wide broken intervals in the left are notoriously awkward and difficult to play.

Example 4.9. Liszt: Transcendental Etude no. 5, “Feux Follets,” mm. 32–35.

poco a poco cresc.

With its charming flair that insinuates Piazzolla’s *Liebertango*-like fragments (mm. 23–27), the short “Toccatina” in op. 40 poses some technical problems as well. Its repeated-note passages could be interpreted as a contemporary twist on Domenico Scarlatti’s works, which, as mentioned earlier, were exercises not titled “etudes” but served an equal purpose of tackling one or more specific virtuosic feat. Example 4.10 illustrates Scarlatti’s virtuosic repeated notes in his well-known Keyboard Sonata in D minor, K. 141, one of many that challenges the pianist with fast repeated notes.

Example 4.10. D. Scarlatti: Keyboard Sonata in D minor, mm. 1–6.



Example 4.11. Kapustin: Etude no. 3, op. 40, "Toccatina," mm. 6–11.

The musical score for Example 4.11, Kapustin: Etude no. 3, op. 40, "Toccatina," mm. 6–11, is presented in four systems. The first system (measures 6-7) features a complex texture with repeated notes in both hands. The second system (measures 8-9) continues this texture, with a piano dynamic marking (p) appearing in the right hand. The third system (measures 10-11) shows the continuation of the repeated-note passage. The score includes various musical notations such as stems, beams, slurs, and dynamic markings.

Possibly building upon Scarlatti's repeated notes, this passage may remind some of Maurice Ravel's flashy *Alborada del Gracioso* with its similar contrapuntal technique. In the "Toccatina," although it is hard to conclude whether or not Kapustin was precisely influenced by Ravel, Example 4.12 indicates the highly suggestive repeated-note passage work.

Example 4.12. Ravel: *Alborada del Gracioso* from *Miroirs*, mm. 182–188.

The image displays a musical score for the piece 'Alborada del Gracioso' from the collection 'Miroirs' by Maurice Ravel. The score is presented in three systems, each consisting of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system (measures 182-188) shows a complex rhythmic pattern in the right hand, primarily eighth and sixteenth notes, with a 'p' (piano) dynamic marking and a fingering of '5' in the bass line. The second system continues the intricate melodic and harmonic development. The third system concludes the passage with a final cadence. The notation includes various articulations such as slurs and accents, and dynamic markings like 'p'.

III. *Five Etudes in Different Intervals*, op. 68 (1992)

While the op. 40 set of concert etudes epitomizes Kapustin's lush jazz style in its most romantic keyboard manifestations, the *Five Etudes in Different Intervals*, op. 68, challenge twentieth-century piano techniques in a satirical, yet still virtuosic, manner. In addition to deep influences like Chopin's revolutionary concert etude tradition, it is conceivable that Kapustin may have been somewhat inspired by Debussy's innovative *12 Etudes* (1915) in writing his op. 68. Like many composers who precede him, each of the twelve etudes of Debussy explores a different technical and musical problem. However, unlike the programmatic titles of Liszt's *Transcendental Etudes* of which some, such as

“Mazeppa,” were added by the composer himself, or the Paganini-themed etudes by Schumann, Liszt, and Brahms that were named after the violin virtuoso himself and hence the titles essentially spoke for themselves, Debussy’s etudes are eccentric in that they are perhaps the first concert studies in the piano repertoire which the composer titled after the technical problem they present, many of which involve an interval.

Written in a set of twelve, modeled after the tradition of etude sets by Chopin, Scriabin, Liszt, and Lyapounov, Debussy’s uniquely descriptive etude titles are as follows, in numerical order:

1. *pour les “cinq doigts” d’après Monsieur Czerny* (five-finger exercise, a take-off on Czerny’s style)
2. *pour les Tierces* (Study in thirds, uses double thirds)
3. *pour les Quartes* (Study in fourths, uses double fourths)
4. *pour les Sixtes* (Study in sixths, very different from Chopin’s treatment of this interval)
5. *pour les Octaves* (Study in octaves, syncopated, chromatic, using whole tones)
6. *pour les huit doigts* (Study for eight fingers, to be played without thumbs)
7. *pour les Degrés* (Study in chromatic steps, perpetual chromatic scales in thirds with diatonic melody)
8. *pour les Agréments* (Study in ornaments, barcarolle-like with many embellishments)
9. *pour les Notes répétées* (study in repeated notes)
10. *pour les Sonorités opposées* (study in opposed sonorities, exploits contrasts of dynamics, touches, accents, etc.)
11. *pour les Arpegges composés* (Study for composite arpeggios, Lisztian technique)
12. *pour les Accords* (Study for Chords, vigorous and taxing chordal activity)

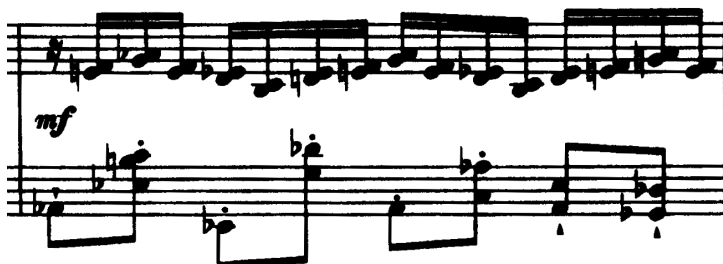
Kapustin’s five etudes, also without descriptive titles like op. 40, recall Debussy’s etude set and are intended for similar intervallic work and serve as a more compact, jazzy counterpart.

1. Study in minor seconds and major sevenths
2. Study in fourths and fifths
3. Study in thirds and sixths
4. Study in major seconds
5. Study in octaves

Comparatively though, each etude is longer as a standalone piece and all require tremendous technical facility and proficient command of the piano.

Despite its exhilarating originality, the technical demands of op. 68, no. 1 are considerable. This etude is dominated by the continuous drive of chromatic seconds in the right hand, requiring an incredible amount of control, with simultaneous large stride-style leaps in the left hand (Example 4.13a). The right hand's persistent minor seconds also prevail over difficult figurations such as neighboring sevenths descending by whole tone with constantly shifting accents that prevent the hands from lining up with the same figuration or harmony more than once (Example 4.13b), and extended broken-chord accompaniment (Example 4.13c). There are also disjunct and syncopated sevenths played by the upper voice over broken ninths of irregular rhythms in the bass (Example 4.13d), which present both a digital and rhythmic challenge. A short middle episode that features the right hand in ninths while the left hand plays repeated staccato chords interjected by broken tenths in the bass also posits particularly difficult technicalities (Example 4.13e). Especially for the pianists who are not blessed with large hands, this etude demands exceptional physical endurance and promises to be taxing. A light touch on the seconds is necessary to execute this study effectively and effortlessly.

Example 4.13a. Etude no. 1, *Five Etudes in Different Intervals*, op. 68, m. 15.



Example 4.13b. Etude no. 1, *Five Etudes in Different Intervals*, op. 68, mm. 53–56.

The musical score for Example 4.13b consists of three systems of piano music. Each system is written for two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The first system is marked with a circled '8' above the treble staff. The music is characterized by complex rhythmic patterns and chromatic intervals in both hands. The first system shows a treble staff with a sequence of eighth notes and sixteenth notes, and a bass staff with a similar rhythmic pattern. The second and third systems continue this intricate musical texture.

Example 4.13c. Etude no. 1, *Five Etudes in Different Intervals*, op. 68, mm. 29–30.

The musical score for Example 4.13c consists of one system of piano music. It is written for two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The music is characterized by complex rhythmic patterns and chromatic intervals in both hands. The treble staff features a sequence of eighth notes and sixteenth notes, while the bass staff has a similar rhythmic pattern. The system concludes with a fermata over the final notes in both hands.

Example 4.13d. Etude no. 1, *Five Etudes in Different Intervals*, op. 68, mm. 59–62.

Musical score for Example 4.13d, Etude no. 1, *Five Etudes in Different Intervals*, op. 68, mm. 59–62. The score is written for piano and consists of two systems. Each system has a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system (mm. 59–60) features a treble staff with a melodic line of eighth notes and a bass staff with a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. Dynamics include *p* (piano) and *f* (forte). The second system (mm. 61–62) continues the melodic and rhythmic patterns, with dynamics *p* and *f*. The piece concludes with a final chord in the bass staff.


Example 4.13e. Etude no. 1, *Five Etudes in Different Intervals*, op. 68, mm. 47–52.

Musical score for Example 4.13e, Etude no. 1, *Five Etudes in Different Intervals*, op. 68, mm. 47–52. The score is written for piano and consists of two systems. Each system has a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system (mm. 47–49) features a treble staff with a melodic line of eighth notes and a bass staff with a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. Dynamics include *sub. f* (sub-forte), *sf* (sforzando), and *sub. p* (sub-piano). The second system (mm. 50–52) continues the melodic and rhythmic patterns, with dynamics *sub. f* and *sf*. The piece concludes with a final chord in the bass staff.

The second piece of op. 68 is simultaneously a study on fourths and fifths (Examples 4.14–4.16). In addition to the already problematic parallel fourths and fifths, Kapustin adds rhythmic complexity: constantly shifting accents (Examples 4.15 and 4.16). One might find this technique familiar from Ligeti's first book of *Piano Etudes* and Nancarrow's *Studies for Player Piano*.

Example 4.14. Etude no. 2, *Five Etudes in Different Intervals*, op. 68, a) mm. 52–53 and b) mm. 61–62. Tricky parallel fifths passages.

a)



b)



Example 4.15. Etude no. 2, *Five Etudes in Different Intervals*, op. 68, mm. 10–14.
Fourths figuration with shifting accents.

Example 4.16. Etude no. 2, *Five Etudes in Different Intervals*, op. 68, mm. 36–41.
Fifths figuration with shifting accents.

Study no. 3 features a rapidly shifting pattern of thirds and sixths in the right hand over left-hand runs and broken octaves. Again, finger prowess and independence as well

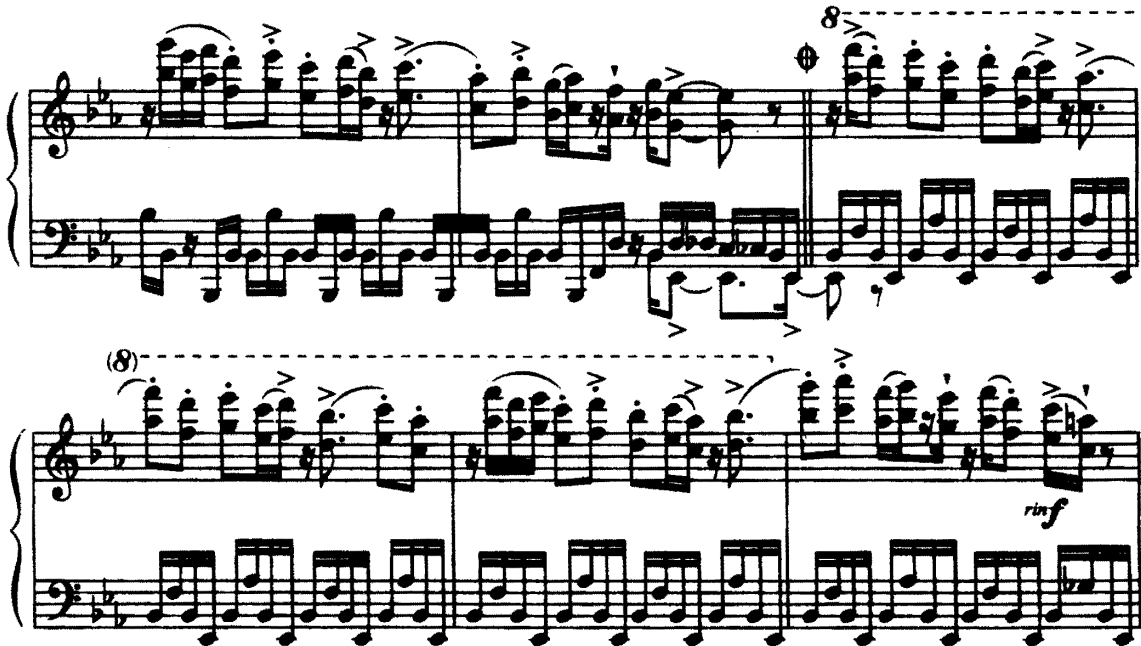
as total arm relaxation is crucial when accessing alternating figures such as this (Examples 4.17 and 4.18).

Example 4.17. Etude no. 3, *Five Etudes in Different Intervals*, op. 68, mm. 40–41. Thirds figuration.



The image shows a musical score for Example 4.17, consisting of two staves. The right-hand staff (treble clef) features a complex, rapid figuration of thirds, with notes beamed together and slurs indicating the intervals. The left-hand staff (bass clef) has a more rhythmic, busy figuration with eighth and sixteenth notes, providing a harmonic and rhythmic foundation for the right-hand part.

Example 4.18. Etude no. 3, *Five Etudes in Different Intervals*, op. 68, mm. 15–20. Sixths figuration over busy left-hand figuration.



The image shows a musical score for Example 4.18, consisting of two systems of two staves each. The right-hand staff (treble clef) features a complex, rapid figuration of sixths, with notes beamed together and slurs indicating the intervals. The left-hand staff (bass clef) has a busy, rhythmic figuration with eighth and sixteenth notes. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf* and *rin f*, and a circled '8' indicating an octave shift. Dashed lines above the staves indicate the continuation of the sixths figuration across the systems.

It is also worth comparing, besides the previously noted influences of 19th-century etude writing, the similarities of Kapustin's usage of thirds and sixths to that of Debussy. Similarly, hints of Debussy's application of the interval of a third (Example 4.19) may be

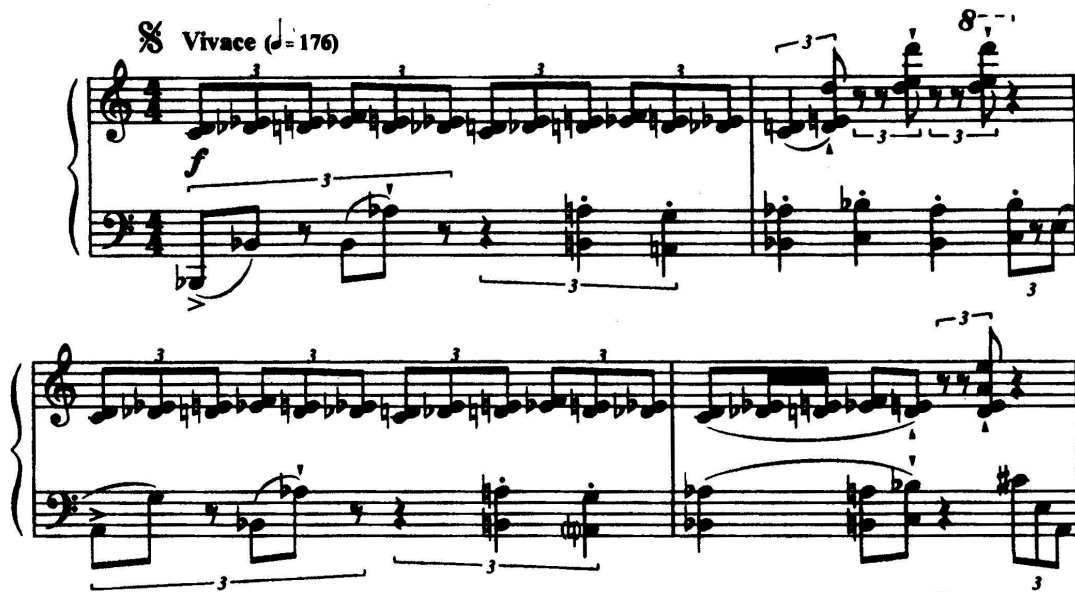
seen in Kapustin's inclusion of thirds. Debussy's thirds etude uses much chromaticism, but Debussy attempts to outdo Chopin by engaging both hands simultaneously in thirds.

Example 4.19. Debussy: Etude no. 2, *Pour les Tierces*, mm. 5–6.



Etude no. 4 revisits the intervals of a second, but this time his is more exclusive about the use of major seconds rather than minor, and incorporates this interval more complex rhythmically. Kapustin adds jazz flavor to the study with syncopated twists and turns and punchy swing that sounds like Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story*.

Example 4.20. Etude no. 4, *Five Etudes in Different Intervals*, op. 68, mm. 1–4.



The fifth and final piece of op. 68 highlights relentless Lisztian octaves. Just as Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No. 6 is legendary for its unyielding octaves (Example 4.21), this etude calls for similar strength and bravura in order for the player to successfully power through from beginning to end.

Example 4.21. Liszt: Hungarian Rhapsody No. 6, mm. 197–211.

The image displays a musical score for Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No. 6, specifically measures 197 through 211. The score is presented in four systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The first system (measures 197-200) shows a continuous eighth-note octave pattern in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand. The second system (measures 201-204) features a dynamic marking of *ff* (fortissimo) and includes accents and slurs. The third system (measures 205-208) continues the octave pattern with various articulations. The fourth system (measures 209-211) includes a first ending bracket over measures 209-210 and a *rinforzando* marking in measure 211. The notation is dense and technically demanding, characteristic of Liszt's style.

Lisztian octaves may be seen throughout Kapustin's op. 68, no. 5, with a jazz twist. With the same virtuosic demands, Kapustin uses parallel and broken octaves, in both hands, packed with chromaticism.

Example 4.22. Etude no. 5, *Five Etudes in Different Intervals*, op. 68, mm. 17–20.

The image shows a musical score for piano, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system has a treble clef on the top staff and a bass clef on the bottom staff. The second system has a bass clef on the top staff and a bass clef on the bottom staff. The music is highly rhythmic and chromatic, featuring many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. There are several triplet markings (indicated by a '3' over a group of notes) and dynamic markings including 'f' (forte), 'sf' (sforzando), and 'p' (piano). A 'cresc.' (crescendo) marking is present in the first system. The score is densely packed with notes, illustrating the virtuosic demands mentioned in the text.

Distler once described this etude as a “tour de force that aims to be the octave study to end all octave studies” and further concluded of its stylistic eclecticism, “its main ingredients superficially resemble Gottschalk’s paraphrases on national themes, the guileless melodic sweetness of Moszkowski’s *La Jongleuse*, the celebrated repeated notes of Liszt’s Sixth Hungarian Rhapsody, the finale of Prokofiev’s Seventh Sonata, Miles Davis’s *So What*, and just about any up-tempo Erroll Garner recording you can name.”¹⁰ What makes this study even more difficult and problematical are the repeated chords in the left hand that play at the same time as the right hand octaves (Example 4.23).

¹⁰ Distler, notes to *Nikolai Kapustin Piano Music*, Hyperion CDA67433, 2004.

Example 4.23. Etude no. 5, *Five Etudes in Different Intervals*, op. 68, mm. 43–46.

IV. Summary

Needless to say, it is nearly impossible to surpass the landmark etudes of Frederic Chopin. They are extraordinary in that many of them surfaced early enough (1830) to be on the cutting edge of the concert-study trend and that they have maintained their preeminence in the genre more than 150 years later. One can agree that it is difficult to compare the etudes of Kapustin, or that of any other composer, to the benchmark etudes of Chopin for they set the highest standard for piano etude technique and artistry. However, Kapustin's scintillating and innovative piano writing in his etudes has gradually established their musical prominence and continue to prove their own individual contribution to the literature of the piano. His personal stamp of lyrical grace balanced with fleeting digital skills, exhaustive energy mixed with elements of surprise,

beauty of classical jazz timbres, contrasting moods, palette of rich harmonies, and bottomless well of thematic resourcefulness seem more than enough to mark his place in the twentieth-century treatise of etude literature and certainly deem his compositional style as uniquely “Kapustian.”

CHAPTER FIVE

A CLOSER LOOK AT ETUDE OP. 40, NO. 1, “PRELUDE”

This chapter is a case study that will examine more closely some of the different compositional techniques and characteristics discussed earlier in chapters 2 and 3 in Kapustin’s “Prelude” of op. 40. This will hopefully provide a more holistic and specific view of Kapustin’s writing style.

With ample rhythmic and harmonic ingredients of jazz, the first etude, titled “Prelude,” is an excellent introductory showpiece to the rest of the op. 40 set. Representative of Kapustin’s mature writing style, the sophisticated musical language of this etude is reflected through Kapustin’s use of chromaticism, techniques of modulation, and infusion of altered and added note chords with intricate voicings.

This etude is clearly tonal. Given this, nonetheless, the opening of the piece is somewhat deceiving in that the key signature suggests the key of C major yet it seems to “falsely” open in the key of E-flat major with the suggestive B \flat ⁷ dominant sonority (Example 5.1).

Example 5.1. Etude no. 1, op. 40, "Prelude," mm. 1–4. Tonal ambiguity.

The dramatic opening asserts tonal ambiguity throughout the first twelve measures and finally, with the brief but firm insertion of G^{11} at the end of m. 12 (Example 5.2), resolves to C major in m. 13, as the original key signature implied, and thus begins the theme. The first twelve measures of the etude, in essence, serve as an introduction that helps set up the thematic material.

Another noteworthy aspect about the introduction lies in the walking bass line, a characteristic jazz device that uses mostly step-wise motion with goal notes occurring on downbeats. In the etude, it is hard to detect the walking bass line, which descends from $A\flat$ to C, on a first hearing because it unfolds over the extended period of the introductory twelve measures. Kapustin begins the etude with the $A\flat$ in the bass in m. 1 which continues through m. 4, followed by G in mm. 5–7, then $F\sharp$ in m. 8, immediately

followed by $F\sharp$ from m. 9–10, then $E\flat$ in m. 11, $D\flat$ in m. 12, and ultimately reaching C by m. 13, when the theme begins in the home key of C major. This long descent sustains the introductory character over the course of twelve measures, reaching tonal stability in m. 13.

Kapustin, as mentioned earlier in chapter 2, relies heavily on the ii-V progression, standard usage in jazz harmony, to establish key areas. Example 5.2 reveals Kapustin’s usage of the standard ii-V progression in the first etude to establish a temporary tonicization of E-flat major.

Example 5.2. Etude no. 1, op. 40, “Prelude,” mm. 9–12. The ii-V progression.

The musical score for Example 5.2 consists of two systems of music. The first system covers measures 9 and 10. Measure 9 begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two flats, and a dynamic marking of *mf*. The chord above measure 9 is Fm^9 . The bass line starts with a half note $E\flat$ and a quarter note G . Measure 10 continues the bass line with a half note F and a quarter note A . The chord above measure 10 is $B\flat^{11}$. The second system covers measures 11 and 12. Measure 11 starts with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. The chord above measure 11 is $E\flat maj^7$. The bass line starts with a half note $E\flat$ and a quarter note G . Measure 12 features a sequence of chords: $E\flat m^7$, $A\flat^7$, and $D\flat maj^7$. The bass line continues with a half note F and a quarter note A . The third system covers measure 13. The chord above measure 13 is G^{11} . The bass line starts with a half note $E\flat$ and a quarter note G . The key signature changes to C major for measure 13.

The Fm^9 that is prolonged through mm. 9–10 is followed by a $B\flat^{11}$ in the last beat of m. 10, which resolves to $E\flat maj^7$ on the downbeat of m. 11. It is also interesting to note that

Kapustin enriches harmonic nuance to the passage through the use of modal mixture in m. 11 where he switches from $E\flat\text{maj}^7$ to $E\flat\text{m}^7$.

Furthering the discussion of ii-V progressions, Kapustin often uses ii-V motion back-to-back to assist with modulations. An instance of such sequential ii-V motion to accomplish a larger modulatory movement is found in Example 5.3.

Example 5.3. Etude no. 1, op. 40, "Prelude," mm. 33–38. Sequential ii-V motion facilitating modulation.

The musical score for Example 5.3 consists of three systems of piano accompaniment. The first system (measures 33-34) shows a ii-V progression in the key of F major: $G\text{m}^7$ (labeled 'of IV') followed by C , then $A\text{m}^7$ (labeled 'of V') followed by D^7 . The second system (measures 35-36) features a 'V pedal' indicated by three arrows, with chords $G\text{m}^7$, $F\text{maj}^7/G$, F/G , and $D\text{m}/G$. The third system (measures 37-38) shows 'V pedal continued' with chords G , $F\text{maj}^7/G$, C^7 , $F\text{maj}^7$, and $B\flat$. The C^7 chord in measure 37 is highlighted with a box.

Measure 33 features a ii-V gesture in the key of F major, the subdominant key, followed by a sequential motion in which the ii-V is transposed up a whole step in the dominant

key of G major. These brief tonicizations help prepare for the dominant pedal starting at m. 35, which continues through m. 37 in order to bring back the tonic and return to the A section. Kapustin again surprises listeners by suggesting the key of C major, but substituting the simple tonic chord of C with a C^7 chord, which serves as the dominant seventh for the $F\text{maj}^7$ on beat 3, maintaining the constant whirring motion of the piece. Almost replicating mm. 33–37, mm. 61–67 later unfolds in a similar manner in which Kapustin duplicates the progression but resolves it differently in order to conclude the etude.

Kapustin enjoys using a plethora of tritone substitutions instead of simple dominant chords to create an element of surprise and richness in his tonal palette. Examples 5.4 and 5.5 exemplify such instances of tritone substitution technique.

Example 5.4. Etude no. 1, op. 40, “Prelude,” mm. 13–15. Tritone substitution.

The image displays a musical score for Example 5.4, consisting of two systems of piano music. The first system begins at measure 13, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. Above the staff, the chord C^9 is indicated for the first measure. The second measure features a tritone substitution, with A^b and D^b (TT sub of G^7) chords indicated above the staff. The second system begins at measure 15, where the C^9 chord is again indicated above the staff. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of one flat, and various musical symbols such as accents and slurs.

Kapustin recycles this formula similarly later in mm. 28–29 where he momentarily inserts a tritone substitution chord, $D^{\flat 9}$, to inflect a measure that would otherwise be sustained by the dominant chord of C major, G^7 (Example 5.5).

Example 5.5. Etude no. 1, op. 40, “Prelude,” mm. 28–29. Tritone substitution.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system, labeled with measure number 27, shows a treble and bass staff. The treble staff contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The bass staff contains a harmonic accompaniment with chords. Above the staff, the chord G^7 is indicated for the first measure, and $D^{\flat 9}$ is indicated for the second measure. The second system, labeled with measure number 29, shows a treble and bass staff. The treble staff features a sustained chord with a fermata, and the bass staff has a rhythmic accompaniment. Above the staff, the chord $Cmaj^7$ is indicated.

Example 5.6 shows an extended instance of how the application of more than one tritone substitution in the “Prelude” to enhance its harmonic color.

Example 5.6. Etude no. 1, op. 40, "Prelude," mm. 19–22. Extended tritone substitutions.

The image shows a musical score for measures 19-22. Measure 19 starts with a Gm^7 chord. Measure 20 features an $F\#^7$ chord (labeled as a tritone substitution of C^7) and an $E(7)$ chord (labeled as a tritone substitution of Bb^7). Measure 21 begins with an $Ebmaj^7$ chord. Measure 22 contains an $Ebmaj^7$ chord and an F^{11} chord. The score includes treble and bass clefs, various note values, and dynamic markings.

Tonicizing in the subdominant key of F major, m. 19 features a Gm^7 chord followed by an $F\#^7$ chord. This $F\#^7$ chord functions as the tritone substitution of C^7 , the dominant seventh chord of F major, though the $F\#^7$ chord resolves not to F major, as one might expect, but rather to its own tonic, B major. This tritone substitution is followed immediately by yet another: measure 20, beat 3 suggests an E chord, which implies E^7 , the tritone substitution of Bb^7 , the dominant of E-flat major. Kapustin cleverly initiates tonal ambiguity through the sequence of tritone substitutions, and finally arrives at E-flat major in m. 21. There are many more instances of this technique that recur similarly later in the etude.

Perhaps owing to his traditional classical upbringing, Kapustin composes developmental models in mostly four-measure modules. What sets him apart from

common practice music is the manner in which he presents a certain harmonic progression and either repeats it immediately, or brings it back later with slight harmonic alterations or changes of figuration. These embellished alterations make the music sound improvisatory and unexpected. He especially likes to incorporate tritone substitutions for these alterations. Example 5.7 exhibits a typical manner in which Kapustin utilizes this more enhanced technique of tritone substitution in the “Prelude” to embellish an otherwise anticipated repetition of a phrase.

In this example note how Kapustin starts m. 17 and m. 19 in a similar manner with a Gm^7 chord. He, however, does not repeat the second sequence with the C chord as anticipated. Rather, he inserts the previously discussed tritone substitution of $F\#^7$, to increase harmonic nuance, unexpectedly revealing the progression to the distant $\flat III$ of C major. This example serves as a good model of the way in which Kapustin attempts to “spice” up harmonic structure in repetitive phrases throughout the etude.

Example 5.7. Etude no. 1, op. 40, "Prelude," mm.17–22. Phrase repetition embellished and altered by tritone substitution.

17 Gm⁷ C Fm⁷ Abmaj⁷/Bb Abm⁷

19 Gm⁷ F#⁷(=TT sub of C⁷=V/B) B⁷ E

21 Ebmaj⁷ Bb⁹ Ebmaj⁷ F¹¹

Kapustin also makes use of pentatonics in this first etude. A pentatonic scale that is based on the tonic will employ the scale degrees $\hat{1}$, $\hat{2}$, $\hat{3}$, $\hat{5}$, and $\hat{6}$. These notes together make up a distinct tonic triad with an added second (or ninth) and sixth. Art Tatum was among the first jazz pianists who incorporated pentatonic scales and runs in the 1930s. In the 1960s, as musicians began experimenting with harmony, pentatonics became used more chromatically than diatonically. Often, modern jazz pentatonic scales are used in brief patterns that ascend and/or descend by half step or whole step. Moreover, it is

usually quite difficult, almost impossible, to discern the key relationships of these pentatonic patterns. Example 5.8 demonstrates Kapustin’s use of an E \flat major pentatonic scale—E \flat , F, G, B \flat , C—to end the etude with a virtuosic flourish.

Example 5.8. Etude no. 1, op. 40, “Prelude,” mm. 69–70. E \flat major pentatonic scale.

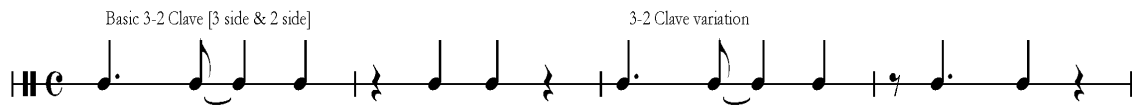
The image shows a musical score for two systems. The first system starts at measure 67 and ends at measure 70. It features a complex, rhythmic pattern in the right hand with many slurs and accents, and a steady accompaniment in the left hand. The second system starts at measure 69 and ends at measure 70. It features a virtuosic flourish in the right hand, marked 'ff' (fortissimo), and a steady accompaniment in the left hand. The score is in 4/4 time and features a virtuosic flourish in the E-flat major pentatonic scale.

Interestingly enough, the music’s uplifting melody and tempestuous groove show traces of Latin and African musical flavors and rhythmic influences. Specifically, the clavé rhythmic pattern can be detected in the etude. *Clavé* is a Spanish word meaning “code,” or “key,” to a mystery or puzzle; it is also the name of the patterns played on claves – two hardwood sticks used in Afro-Cuban music ensembles.¹ Originating in sub-Saharan African music traditions, clavé is a distinct five-stroke rhythmic pattern used for

¹ David Peñalosa and Peter Greenwood. *The Clave Matrix – Afro-Cuban Rhythm: Its Principles and African Origins* (Redway, CA: Bembe Books, 2009), 95.

temporal organization in Afro-Cuban music: some well-known examples include the salsa, mambo, rumba, timba, and Latin jazz, just to name a few. Clavé has two opposing rhythm cells: the first cell consists of three strokes and is the rhythmically syncopated part called the “three-side” or the strong part (also called *tresillo* which comes from the word “tres” in Spanish, meaning “three”); the second cell contains two strokes and is the “two-side” or the weak part of the clavé.²

Example 5.9. Clavé rhythm. Three-side versus two-side.



In North American popular music, the clavé is often a form of rhythmic decoration used as a rhythmic motif or *ostinato* pattern. Below is an example of the clavé rhythmic pattern in the context of sixteenth notes as well as how it is used against the bass line in an excerpt from *Chameleon* by Herbie Hancock.

Example 5.10. Clavé rhythmic pattern in Herbie Hancock’s *Chameleon*.³

Clave shown with 16th subdivision	Clave variation shown with 16th subdivision Note the subdivision: 3+3+3+3+4=16 instead of the usual 4+4+4+4.	Bass line from <i>Chameleon</i> , Herbie Hancock
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² Ibid.

³ *The Real Book: C Edition*, vol. 2, 2nd ed. (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2005), 58.

Example 5.11 illustrates an instance of how Kapustin, similarly, applies a variation of the clave rhythm.

Example 5.11. Etude no. 1, op. 40, "Prelude," m. 18. Clave variation.

The musical score for Example 5.11 consists of four staves. The top staff is a right-hand melody with a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes and eighth notes. The second staff is a piano accompaniment with a complex rhythmic pattern, including chords and a bass line. The third staff is a bass line with a simple accompaniment. The fourth staff is a bass line with a simple accompaniment. The score is in 4/4 time and includes a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The left hand has a complex rhythmic pattern with chords and a bass line. The right hand has a melody with a similar rhythmic pattern. The bass line is a simple accompaniment. The score is in 4/4 time and includes a key signature of one flat (B-flat).

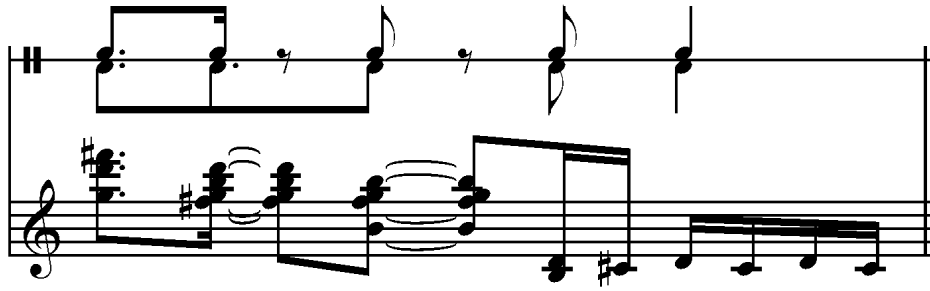
Chord labels: Fm7, A^bm₇/B^b, A^bm7, Gm7

Examples 5.12a and 5.12b offer two other occasions of Kapustin's infusion of the three-side of this Afro-Cuban rhythm pattern in his music.

Example 5.12a. Etude no. 1, op. 40, "Prelude," m. 22, right hand figuration.

The musical score for Example 5.12a consists of two staves. The top staff is a right-hand melody with a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes and eighth notes. The bottom staff is a left-hand accompaniment with a complex rhythmic pattern, including chords and a bass line. The score is in 4/4 time and includes a key signature of one flat (B-flat).

Example 5.12b. Etude no. 1, op. 40, “Prelude,” m. 26, right hand figuration.



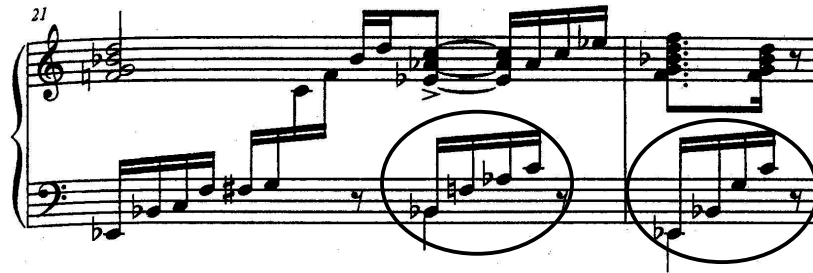
As evident throughout the musical examples in this chapter, extremely virtuosic writing is prominent in the first etude. Kapustin’s treatment of rapid, motoric sixteenth-note rhythms which outline both scalar and arpeggiated figures, execution of inner and outer finger voicings, abundance of syncopated rhythms combined with irregular accents, as well as large leaps in both hands, collectively make up the complex textures and virtuosity of this etude.

Referring back to Example 5.2, the right hand in mm. 9–11 involves an intricate motion that repeatedly alternates a fast figuration between a single note and a triad (see m. 9 beat 2, m. 10 beat 2, m. 11 beat 2). Pianistically, at first glance, one may approach this figuration with one hand using a relaxed hand and wrist in order to rock back and forth between the thumb and the triad. However, rotation around the thumb is often problematic especially in faster tempos. Therefore, to prevent the thumb from possibly locking up and for purposes of efficiency, one might consider splitting the figuration between the hands by allowing the left hand to play the single notes and the right hand to play the triads.

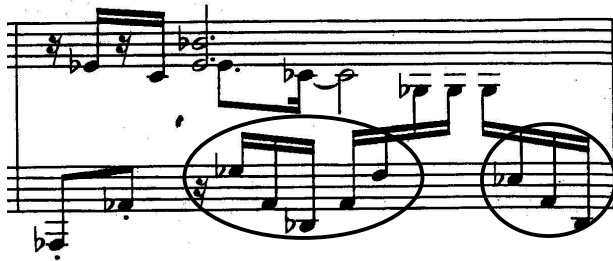
The left hand is also filled with motoric, awkward extended patterns that span bigger than an octave, oftentimes the interval of a 9th, 10th, 11th, or 12th. The simultaneous

need for speed and accuracy could present a problem for one who has small hands. The following examples exhibit some of the different left hand figurations that occur throughout which contribute to the difficulty of the etude.

Example 5.13a. Etude no. 1, op. 40, "Prelude," m. 21–22.



Example 5.13b. Etude no. 1, op. 40, "Prelude," m. 32.



Example 5.13c. Etude no. 1, op. 40, "Prelude," mm. 33–34.



The swirl of perpetual right hand passagework is very Chopinesque, especially as they are emphasized with left hand leaps (Examples 5.14a and 5.14b). Like Chopin,

Kapustin's right hand figures also involve much scalar, chromatic, and neighboring motion. Yet unlike Chopin, Kapustin, being well versed in the jazz vernacular, adds to the difficulty by combining them with complex syncopated rhythms (Example 5.14c).

Example 5.14a. Etude no. 1, op. 40, "Prelude," mm. 49–50. Chopinesque right hand passagework with left hand leaps.

Musical score for Example 5.14a, measures 49–50. The score is in 2/4 time and features a key signature of one flat (B-flat major). The right hand (treble clef) contains a complex, syncopated melodic line with frequent chromatic and scalar passages. The left hand (bass clef) provides a rhythmic accompaniment with several large leaps, including a prominent one-octave leap in the second measure.

Example 5.14b. Etude no. 1, op. 40, "Prelude," mm. 51–56. Perpetual right hand motion over leaping chords and extended figures in left hand.

Musical score for Example 5.14b, measures 51–56. The score is in 2/4 time and features a key signature of one flat (B-flat major). The right hand (treble clef) maintains a continuous, flowing melodic line with frequent chromatic and scalar passages. The left hand (bass clef) provides a rhythmic accompaniment with several large leaps and extended figures, including a prominent one-octave leap in the first measure of the first system.

Example 5.14c. Etude no. 1, op. 40, "Prelude," mm. 41–46.

The image displays a musical score for Example 5.14c, Etude no. 1, op. 40, "Prelude," mm. 41–46. The score is written for piano and consists of three systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is G minor (two flats) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system (mm. 41-42) shows the right hand playing a melodic line of eighth notes while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment of chords and eighth notes. The second system (mm. 43-44) continues this pattern, with the right hand's melodic line moving to the left hand in the third system (mm. 45-46). The notation includes various accidentals (flats and naturals) and articulation marks (accents and slurs).

Kapustin also switches the passagework between the hands, a common etude device used by many composers to break up the monotony of figuration in one hand and to help both hands develop velocity and agility (Example 5.15).

Example 5.15. Etude no 1, op. 40, "Prelude," mm. 23–28.

Marked *Allegro assai*, this show-stopping etude is full of bombastic energy and excitement and requires much pianistic prowess and endurance. Hence, this etude is often programmed at the end of a concert or as an encore. The ingenuity of Kapustin's synthesis of jazz stylistic elements and the classical virtuosic etude genre, within the confines of traditional tonality, is unmistakably one of its kind and renders Kapustin his growing reputation as an innovative and distinguished cross-over composer of the 21st century.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

Delighting audiences and attracting attention from pianists and fusion composers the world over, Kapustin's distinct and imaginative unification of classical construction and jazz idiom is inspiring and a "breath of fresh air" to traditional repertoire. From the early jazz styles of stride and swing to bebop and contemporary jazz-rock, the composer's command and assimilation of jazz pianism and the etude genre is unprecedented. Kapustin's enhanced infusion of borrowed pianistic devices from pre-existing material, his sophisticated scope of harmonic and rhythmic language, combined with keyboard virtuosity, all make his style truly one-of-a-kind and deserving to be on the forefront of today's piano scene.

As his early training embodied the Russian classical piano tradition, Kapustin was well-versed in the technical challenges of the piano medium, being a pianist himself, and extended this deep knowledge into his etude compositions. Demonstrating original music and setting a new artistic trend of "written-out jazz," Kapustin's two sets of etudes challenge the pianist intellectually and physically. Kapustin not only stretches the limits of physical demands but, instead of doing away with the conventions of tonality, extends his harmonic language by fusing classical and jazz elements into his piano writing and taking the classical definition of the etude genre to new heights.

In conclusion, the etudes of Nicolai Kapustin are manifestly a valuable addition to both the piano etude literature and modern piano concert programs. It is hard to understand the relative neglect of his music and that his works have not been more widely disseminated. Hopefully, as the reputation of his etudes grows, these treasures will only help encourage and expedite the publishing of more of Kapustin's works, introducing more people to his music, in turn establishing him more as a mainstream composer. His compositional brilliance is a profound addition to piano literature and deserves to be fully recognized and preserved for the future.

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APPENDIX A

WORKS LIST BY OPUS

- Op. 1:** Concertino for piano and orchestra (1957)
- Op. 2:** Concerto for piano and orchestra No. 1 (1961)
- Op. 3:** Variation for piano and big-band (1962)
- Op. 4:** Chorale and Fugue for orchestra (1962)
- Op. 5:** Piece for trumpet and orchestra (1962)
- Op. 6:** “Rose-Marie,” fantasia for orchestra (1963)
- Op. 7:** Fantasia on three children's songs for orchestra (1963)
- Op. 8:** Toccata for piano and orchestra (1964)
- Op. 9:** *The Trial*, piece for orchestra (1966)
- Op. 10:** *Big Band Sounds* (The Sounds of Big-Band) for orchestra (1966)
- Op. 11:** *Estacade*, for big band (1966)
- Op. 12:** *Aquarium-Blues*, for big-band (1967)
- Op. 13:** Intermezzo for piano and orchestra (1968)
- Op. 14:** Concerto for piano and orchestra No. 2 (1974)
- Op. 15:** *The Forest Story*, for orchestra (1972)
- Op. 16:** Nocturne in G major, for piano and orchestra (1972)
- Op. 17:** Three Pieces for orchestra (1972)
- Op. 18:** Four Pieces for instrumental ensemble (1973)
- Op. 19:** Etude for piano and orchestra (1974)
- Op. 20:** Nocturne for piano and orchestra (1974)
- Op. 21:** Minuet for big-band (1974)
- Op. 22:** Piece for five saxophones and orchestra (1975)
- Op. 23:** *Enigma*, for big-band (1975)
- Op. 24:** March for orchestra (1975)
- Op. 25:** Concert Rhapsody for piano and orchestra (1976)
- Op. 26:** *Day-Break* (Sunrise), for piano (1976)
- Op. 26A:** *Day-Break* (“Sunrise”), for orchestra (1976)
- Op. 27:** Fantasia for jazz quartet (1976)
- Op. 28:** *Suite in the Old Style*, for piano (1977)
- Op. 29:** Scherzo for piano and orchestra (1978)
- Op. 30:** Two-movement Concerto for orchestra (1980)
- Op. 31:** Elegy for orchestra (1980)
- Op. 32:** *The Wind from the North*, piece for orchestra (1981)
- Op. 33:** Piece for two pianos and orchestra (1982)

- Op. 34: *Meridian*, piece for orchestra (1982)
- Op. 35: *Closed Curve*, for orchestra (1982)
- Op. 36: Toccata for piano (1983)
- Op. 37: *The Pleasant Meeting*, piece for orchestra (1983)
- Op. 38: *Presentiment*, piece for orchestra (1983)
- Op. 39: Piano Sonata No. 1, “Sonata-Fantasy” for piano (1984)
- Op. 40: Eight Concert Etudes, for piano (1984)
- Op. 41: Variations, for piano (1984)
- Op. 42: *A Rush Hour*, for ensemble (1985)
- Op. 43: *An April Day*, for ensemble (1985)
- Op. 44: *The Morning*, for ensemble (1985)
- Op. 45: *Motive Force*, toccata for piano (1985)
- Op. 46: Big Band Sounds (The Sounds of Big-Band) for piano (1986)
- Op. 47: *Contemplation* (Meditation), for piano (1987)
- Op. 48: Concerto for piano and orchestra No. 3 (1985)
- Op. 49: Sinfonietta for orchestra (1986)
- Op. 50: Concerto for alto-saxophone and orchestra (1987)
- Op. 51: Overture for big-band (1987)
- Op. 52: *Intrada*, piece for big-band (1988)
- Op. 53: Twenty-Four Preludes, for piano (1988)
- Op. 54: Piano Sonata No. 2 (1989)
- Op. 55: Piano Sonata No. 3 (1990)
- Op. 56: Concerto for piano and orchestra, No. 4 (1989)
- Op. 57: Chamber Symphony for chamber orchestra (1990)
- Op. 58: Andante for piano (1990)
- Op. 59: Ten Bagatelles for piano (1991)
- Op. 60: Piano Sonata No. 4 (1991)
- Op. 61: Piano Sonata No. 5 (1991)
- Op. 62: Piano Sonata No. 6 (1991)
- Op. 63: Sonata for cello and piano No. 1 (1991)
- Op. 64: Piano Sonata No. 7 (1991)
- Op. 65: Berceuse, for piano (1991)
- Op. 66: Three Impromptus, for piano (1991)
- Op. 67: Three Etudes, for piano (1992)
- Op. 68: *Five Etudes in Different Intervals*, for piano (1992)
- Op. 69: Sonata, for viola and piano (1992)
- Op. 70: Sonata, for violin and piano (1992)
- Op. 71: Capriccio, for piano (1992)
- Op. 72: Concerto, for piano and orchestra No. 5 (1993)
- Op. 73: Ten Inventions, for piano (1993)
- Op. 74: Concerto for piano and orchestra No. 6 (1993)
- Op. 75: *Humoresque*, for piano (1994)
- Op. 76: Concerto for double-bass and symphony orchestra (1994)

- Op. 77:** Piano Sonata No. 8 (1995)
Op. 78: Piano Sonata No. 9 (1995)
Op. 79: Piece for sextet (1995)
Op. 80: Theme and Variations, for piano (1996)
Op. 81: Piano Sonata No. 10 (1996)
Op. 82: Twenty-four Preludes and Fugues, for piano (1997)
Op. 83: Impromptu (*Improvisation*) for piano (1997)
Op. 84: Sonata for cello and piano No. 2 (1997)
Op. 85: Concerto for cello and orchestra (1997)
Op. 86: Trio for flute, cello and piano (1998)
Op. 87: Seven Polyphonic Pieces for piano the left hand (1998)
Op. 88: String Quartet (1998)
Op. 89: Piano Quintet (1998)
Op. 90: Concerto for eleven instruments (1998)
Op. 91: Divertissement for two flutes, cello and piano (1998)
Op. 92: Suite for piano (four pieces for piano) (1999)
Op. 93: Introduction and Scherzino, for cello solo (1999)
Op. 94: Ballad for piano (1999)
Op. 95: Scherzo for piano (1999)
Op. 96: *Elegy*, for cello and piano (1999)
Op. 97: *Burlesque*, for cello and piano (1999)
Op. 98: *Nearly Waltz*, for cello and piano (1999)
Op. 99: Duet for alto-saxophone and cello (1999)
Op. 100: Sonatina for piano (2000)
Op. 101: Piano Sonata No. 11, “Twickenham” (2000)
Op. 102: Piano Sonata No. 12 (2001)
Op. 103: Concerto No. 2 for cello and string orchestra (2002)
Op. 104: Concert for two pianos and percussion (2002)
Op. 105: Concert for violin, piano and string orchestra (2002)
Op. 106: Suite for viola, alto-saxophone, piano and bass (2002)
Op. 107: *Variations on “Sweet Georgia Brown,”* for viola, alto-saxophone, piano and bass (2002)
Op. 108: Paraphrase on the theme of Paul Dvořák for piano (2003)
Op. 109: *There is Something Behind That* for piano (2003)
Op. 110: Piano sonata No. 13 (2003)
Op. 111: *Gingerbread Man*, for piano (2003)
Op. 112: *End of the Rainbow*, for piano (2003)
Op. 113: *Wheel of Fortune*, for piano (2003)
Op. 114: *No Stop Signs*, for piano (2003)
Op. 115: Fantasia for piano (2003)
Op. 116: Rondoletto for piano (2003)
Op. 117: *Spice Island*, for piano (2003)
Op. 118: Paraphrase on “Aquarela do Brasil” by Ary Barroso for piano (2003)

- Op. 119:** *Nothing to Loose*, for piano (2004)
- Op. 120:** Piano Sonata No. 14 (2004)
- Op. 121:** *Vanity of Vanities*, for piano (2004)
- Op. 122:** *Two Etude-like Trinkets*, for piano (2004)
- Op. 123:** Paraphrase on “Blue Bossa” by Kenny Dorham for piano (2004)
- Op. 124:** Suite for cello solo (2004)
- Op. 125:** Sonata, for flute and piano (2004)
- Op. 126:** *Divertissement in Four Movements*, for violin, cello & piano (2005)
- Op. 127:** Piano Sonata No. 15, *Fantasia quasi sonata* (2005)
- Op. 128:** Introduction and Rondo for piano solo (2006)
- Op. 129:** Paraphrase on Dizzy Gillespie's “Manteca” for two pianos, four hands (2006)
- Op. 130:** *Countermove*, for piano solo (2006)
- Op. 131:** Piano Sonata No. 16 (2006)
- Op. 132:** String Quartet No. 2 (2007)
- Op. 133:** Six Little Preludes for piano solo (2007)
- Op. 134:** Piano Sonata No. 17 (2008)
- Op. 135:** Piano Sonata No. 18 (2008)
- Op. 136:** Piano Trio No. 1 for violin, cello and piano (2009)
- Op. 137:** *Good Intention*, for piano solo (2009)
- Op. 138:** *Sleight of Hand*, for piano solo (2009)
- Op. 139:** *Holy Cow* for piano solo (2009)
- Op. 140:** *Freeway* for piano solo (2009)
- Op. 141:** Violin Concerto (2009)
- Op. 142:** Piano Trio No. 2 for violin, cello and piano (2010)
- Op. 143:** Piano Sonata No. 19 (2011)
- Op. 144:** Piano Sonata No. 20 (2011)
- Op. 145:** *Triptych*, for two pianos, four hands (2012)
- Op. 146:** Capriccio for piano 4 hands (2012)
- Op. 147:** Concerto for piano and orchestra No. 1 (2nd edition) (2012)
- Op. 148:** *Dialogue*, for solo piano (2013)
- Op. 149:** *Etude Courte mais Transcendante pour piano* (2013)
- Op. 150:** String quartet *Rondo frivole pour quatuor à cordes* (2013)

APPENDIX B

WORKS LIST BY GENRE

Orchestra

Chorale and Fugue for orchestra, op. 4 (1962)
Rose-Marie, fantasia for orchestra, op. 6 (1963)
Fantasia on Three Children's Songs, op. 7 (1963)
The Trial, op. 9 (1966)
Big Band Sounds (The Sounds of Big-Band), op. 10 (1966)
The Forest Story, op. 15 (1972)
Three Pieces for orchestra, op. 17 (1972)
March, op. 24 (1975)
Day-Break ("Sunrise"), op. 26a (1976) [also for piano]
Two-Movement Concerto, op. 30 (1980)
Elegy, op. 31 (1980)
The Wind from the North, op. 32 (1981)
Meridian, op. 34 (1982)
Closed Curve, orchestra, op. 35 (1982)
The Pleasant Meeting, op. 37 (1983)
Presentiment, piece for orchestra, op. 38 (1983)
Sinfonietta, orchestra, op. 49 (1987)
Chamber Symphony for chamber orchestra, op. 57 (1990)

Big Band

Estacade, for big band, op. 11 (1966)
Aquarium-Blues, for big-band, op. 12 (1967)
Minuet for big-band, op. 21 (1974)
Enigma, for big-band, op. 23 (1975)
Overture for big-band, op. 51 (1987)
Intrada, piece big-band, op. 52 (1988)

Piano Concertos

Concerto No. 1, piano and orchestra, op. 2 (1961)
Concerto No. 2, piano and orchestra, op. 14 (1974)
Concerto No. 3, piano and orchestra, op. 48 (1985)
Concerto No. 4, piano and orchestra, op. 56 (1989)

Concerto No. 5, piano and orchestra, op. 72 (1993)
Concerto No. 6, piano and orchestra, op. 74 (1993)
Concerto for piano and orchestra No. 1, op. 147 (2nd edition) (2012)

Other Concertos with Orchestra

Concertino for piano and orchestra, op. 1 (1957)
Variation, piano and big-band, op. 3 (1962)
Piece for trumpet and orchestra, op. 5 (1962)
Toccatà, piano and orchestra, op. 8 (1964)
Intermezzo, piano and orchestra, op. 13 (1968)
Nocturne, G major, piano and orchestra, op. 16 (1972)
Etude for piano and orchestra, op. 19 (1974)
Nocturne for piano and orchestra, op. 20 (1974)
Piece for 5 saxophones and orchestra, op. 22 (1975)
Concert Rhapsody, piano and orchestra, op. 25 (1976)
Scherzo for piano and orchestra, op. 29 (1978)
Piece for 2 pianos and orchestra, op. 33 (1982)
Concerto for Alto-Saxophone and Orchestra, op. 50 (1987)
Concerto for Doublebass and Orchestra, op. 76 (1994)
Concerto for Cello and Orchestra, op. 85 (1997)
Concerto No. 2, cello and string orchestra, op. 103 (2002)
Concert for 2 Pianos and Percussion, op. 104 (2002)
Concert for Violin, Piano and String Orchestra, op. 105 (2002)
Violin Concerto, op. 141 (2009)

Chamber

Four Pieces, instrumental ensemble, op. 18 (1973)
Fantasia, jazz quartet, op. 27 (1976)
A Rush Hour, for ensemble, op. 42 (1985)
An April Day, for ensemble, op. 43 (1985)
The Morning, for ensemble, op. 44 (1985)
Piece for sextet, op. 79 (1995)
Trio for flute, cello and piano, op. 86 (1998)
String Quartet, op. 88 (1998)
Piano Quintet, op. 89 (1998)
Concerto for Eleven Instruments, op. 90 (1998)
Divertissement, 2 flutes, cello and piano, op. 91 (1998)
Duet for alto-saxophone and cello, op. 99 (1999)
Suite for viola, alto-saxophone, piano and bass, op. 106 (2002)
Variations on "Sweet Georgia Brown" for viola, alto-saxophone, piano and bass, op. 107 (2002)
Divertissement in Four Movements, violin, cello and piano, op. 126 (2005)
String Quartet No. 2, op. 132 (2007)
Piano Trio, violin, cello and piano, op. 136 (2008)

Piano Trio No. 2 for violin, cello and piano, op. 142 (2010)
String quartet *Rondo frivole pour quatuor à cordes*, op. 150 (2013)

Solo Instrument

Sonata No. 1, cello and piano, op. 63 (1991)
Sonata for Viola and Piano, op. 69 (1992)
Sonata for Violin and Piano, op. 70 (1992)
Sonata No. 2, cello and piano, op. 84 (1997)
Introduction and Scherzino, cello, op. 93 (1999)
Elegy, for cello and piano, op. 96 (1999)
Burlesque, for cello and piano, op. 97 (1999)
Nearly Waltz, cello and piano, op. 98 (1999)
Suite, cello, op. 124 (2004)
Sonata for Flute and Piano, op. 125 (2004)

Piano Sonatas

Piano Sonata No. 1, “Sonata-Fantasy” for piano, op. 39 (1984)
Piano Sonata No. 2, op. 54 (1989)
Piano Sonata No. 3, op. 55 (1990)
Piano Sonata No. 4, op. 60 (1991)
Piano Sonata No. 5, op. 61 (1991)
Piano Sonata No. 6, op. 62 (1991)
Piano Sonata No. 7, op. 64 (1991)
Piano Sonata No. 8, op. 77 (1995)
Piano Sonata No. 9, op. 78 (1995)
Piano Sonata No. 10, op. 81 (1996)
Piano Sonata No. 11, “Twickenham”, op. 101 (2000)
Piano Sonata No. 12, op. 102 (2001)
Piano sonata No. 13, op. 110 (2003)
Piano Sonata No. 14, op. 120 (2004)
Piano Sonata No 15, *Fantasia quasi sonata*, op. 127 (2005)
Piano Sonata No. 16, op. 131 (2006)
Piano Sonata No. 17, op. 134 (2008)
Piano Sonata No. 18, op. 135 (2008)
Piano Sonata No. 19, op. 143 (2011)
Piano Sonata No. 20, op. 144 (2011)

Etudes/Studies for the Piano

Eight Concert Etudes, op. 40 (1984)
Three Etudes, piano, op. 67 (1992)
Five Etudes in Different Intervals, piano, op. 68 (1992)
Two Etude-Like Trinkets, piano, op. 122 (2004)
Etude Courte mais Transcendante pour piano, op. 149 (2013)

Other Piano Solos

Day-Break (“Sunrise”), op. 26 (1976)
Suite in the Old Style, piano, op. 28 (1977)
Toccatina, piano, op. 36 (1983)
Variations, piano, op. 41 (1984)
Motive Force, piano, op. 45 (1985)
Big Band Sounds (The Sounds of Big-Band), for piano, op. 46 (1986)
Contemplation (Meditation), piano, op. 47 (1987)
Twenty-Four Preludes, piano, op. 53 (1988)
Andante, piano, op. 58 (1990)
Ten Bagatelles, piano, op. 59 (1991)
Berceuse, piano, op. 65 (1991)
Three Impromptus, piano, op. 66 (1991)
Capriccio, piano, op. 71 (1992)
Ten Inventions, piano, op. 73 (1993)
Humoresque, piano, op. 75 (1994)
Theme and Variations, piano, op. 80 (1996)
Twenty-Four Preludes and Fugues, piano, op. 82 (1997)
Impromptu (*Improvisation*), piano, op. 83 (1997)
Seven Polyphonic Pieces, piano left hand, op. 87 (1998)
Suite for Piano (4 pieces), op. 92 (1999)
Ballad, piano, op. 94 (1999)
Scherzo, piano, op. 95 (1999)
Sonatina, piano, op. 100 (2000)
Paraphrase on the theme of Paul Dvoirin, piano, op. 108 (2003)
There is Something Behind That, piano, op. 109 (2003)
Gingerbread Man, piano, op. 111 (2003)
End of the Rainbow, piano, op. 112 (2003)
Wheel of Fortune, piano, op. 113 (2003)
No Stop Signs, piano, op. 114 (2003)
Fantasia, piano, op. 115 (2003)
Rondoletto, piano, op. 116 (2003)
Spice Island, piano, op. 117 (2003)
Paraphrase on “Aquarela do Brasil” (by Ary Barroso), piano, op. 118 (2003)
Nothing to Loose, piano, op. 119 (2004)
Vanity of Vanities, piano, op. 121 (2004)
Paraphrase on “Blue Bossa” (by Kenny Dorham), piano, op. 123 (2004)

Introduction and Rondo, piano, op. 128 (2006)
Countermove, piano, op. 130 (2006)
Six Little Preludes, piano, op. 133 (2007)
Good Intention, piano, op. 137 (2009)
Sleight of Hand, piano, op. 138 (2009)
Holy Cow, piano, op. 139 (2009)
Freeway, piano, op. 140 (2009)
Dialogue, op. 148 (2013)

Piano, 4-Hands

Paraphrase on Dizzy Gillespie's "Manteca", 2 pianos, 4-hands, op. 129 (2006)
Triptych for two pianos, four hands, op. 145 (2012)
Capriccio for piano 4 hands, op. 146 (2012)