

ABSTRACT

Title of Document:

**DISSIMILAR CONTEMPORARIES:
SELECTED PIANO MUSIC OF SERGEI
RACHMANINOFF AND SERGEI
PROKOFIEV**

Heekyung Yoon, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2008

Directed By:

Professor Larissa Dedova

School of Music

Virtual contemporaries, Sergei Rachmaninoff and Sergei Prokofiev were pianists, steeped in the traditions of Russian pianism; recordings of both pianists-composers playing their own works are available. Although the composers can be perceived as having little in common, in fact both composed in classical forms, both had a strong lyrical sense and both had an unbreakable connection with their Russian heritage.

Rachmaninoff was the last great representative of Russian late Romanticism as well as one of the finest pianists of his generation. He cultivated a sweepingly passionate and melodious idiom, with pronounced lyrical quality, expressive breath and structural ingenuity. Prokofiev, on the other hand, tried to push the Russian Romantic traditions to a point of exacerbation and caricature before experimenting with various kinds of modernism. Stressing simplicity, he helped invent Neo-Classicism. His melodies are essentially tonal with wide skips and sweeping long lines. Harmonically, he used triadic harmony full of dissonances, strange inversions, unusual spacings, and jarring juxtapositions. Writing in classical forms, he incorporated rhythmic vitality and lyrical elements into his music.

I have chosen to perform five works by each composer, written in a variety of genres, including the sonata, the toccata, variations, the concerto. I also have divided the pieces into three recital programs to show the idiosyncratic characteristics of the composers. I have endeavored to select pieces based on the technical and artistic challenges that they offer, thereby allowing me to grow as a pianist and an artist. My goal is to gain a thorough understanding of not only the pieces but also the musical styles of both composers.

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RACHMANINOFF AND SERGEI PROKOFIEV

By

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Advisory Committee:
Professor Larissa Dedova, Chair
Professor Mikhail Volchok
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Professor Santiago Rodriguez

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Prokofiev
Sonata for Violin and Piano in D minor, Op. 94 bis.....25:00

Rachmaninoff
Concerto No.2 in C minor, Op.18.....35:00

CD 2

Prokofiev
Visions of Fugitives, Twenty Pieces for Piano, Op.22.....15:00

Tocatta in Dminor, Op.11.....7:00

Rachmaninoff
Sonata in B flat minor, Op.36(Original Version 1913).....30:00

CD 3

Prokofiev
Tales of an Old Grandmother, Op.31.....6:00

Sonata No.2 in D minor, Op.14.....18:00

Rachmaninoff
Variations on a Theme of Chopin in Cminor, Op.22.....25:00