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ivan.moshchuk@gmail.com**1917: Modulating the World into a Different Key****ABSTRACT****Background**

Modulation longs for security - as listeners, musicologists, and performers we long for the security of the TSDT functional cycle. At its core, modulation can be simplified to a single event in no more than three chords. However, there also exists the law of reverse effort, which calls to mind the ancient and much-overlooked saying 'whosoever would save his soul shall lose it.' This paper is an exploration of this law in relation to the psychological aspect of modulation, attempting to bridge the divide between the insecurity of disrupted TSDT cycles and the listener's quest for spiritual and intellectual certainty.

The end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century marked an incredible increase of all spiritual forces in Eastern Europe, laying the foundation for a kind of Russian renaissance. In a matter of a few decades, the world at large would be faced with a radically new perception of space and time, transcending from horse drawn carriages to trains, automobiles, and aeroplanes. New alphabets of Art were created - thus the appearance of movements such as Futurism. There were Suprematist artists such as Kazimir Malevich who claimed to have entered 'zero form' and would isolate and harness the energetic properties of color. This was a parallel movement to the historic tradition of Art as theatre, as action, as depicting nature by concept of Aristotle's mimesis. But how did this manifest in music?

Among Malevich's contemporaries were the Russian composers Nikolai Medtner and Sergei Rachmaninoff. Through their work, specifically two piano cycles completed in 1917, the *Forgotten Melodies Op. 38* (Medtner) and *Études-Tableaux Op. 39* (Rachmaninoff), we re-examine the TSDT cycle as a cognitive phenomenon. TSDT primes us not only for the reception of meaning in music, but is also capable of creating its own temporalities. TSDT as a cycle can achieve a cognitive effect on such a level, that the order of the appearance of functions, or syntax, becomes less and less important, and chords can begin to function based on their own, individual energetic properties.

Alexander Scriabin and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov also examined relationships of chords based on properties outside of syntax. Scriabin wanted to associate each chord with a certain color, creating a concept of an instrument that would project color in addition to the music.

A man who did not believe in color associations was Sergei Rachmaninoff. He lived almost exactly during the same time as Malevich. Rachmaninoff began to arrange chords not only based on the proven TSDT cycle, but also for their individual

properties - their individual aesthetic, psychological, and energetic properties, focusing specifically on the subdominant.

The concept maintains relevance in 12-tone music and atonal composition. One of the primary goals of composers of the 20th century was to examine sound and pitch for their individual properties, often limiting themselves to arranging pitch and sound in new ways.

However, one could argue that pitch does not possess the energetic properties on the level of harmony. Rachmaninoff took the existing TSDT, and approached from the other direction. Like Malevich, when he claimed to have 'entered zero form', Rachmaninoff began to approach zero syntax. He used TSDT to the point where the cyclical logic, the expectation, created a cognitive phenomena replacing TSDT, and harmonies began to independently communicate their specific properties, tremendously increasing the amount of content, detail, and energy communicated.

If in the past composers were more attached to particular aesthetics of key areas, for example Mozart's d minor, Beethoven's f minor, the music was still governed primarily by the TSDT cycle. Emphasis was put on cadences that served purely rhetorical functions, maintaining careful balance in the form and the tonal cycle.

Music is fulfilled in each moment of its course. It is the power of the single moment that is exploited with disrupted TSDT cycles that focus on individual properties of harmony. We do not play sonatas in order to reach the final chord as the meanings of things are not simply in ends. This is why content in music cannot be generated by simple dominant-tonic resolutions. However, we may observe that the overwhelming amount of music in our culture is decidedly on its way to a future climax, not knowing what to do with itself when that point is finally reached. Composers such as Brahms and Beethoven often crafted colossal climaxes only to repeat the same chord over and over again, foregoing the moment by being unable to leave it.

Rachmaninoff and Medtner began replacing the concept of form and structure as primary proponents of meaning in music with pure harmony. What if form and structure as such were never the proponents of meaning in music to begin with – what is form? Form is also generated by harmony, the ability to balance harmonies. Through advanced modulatory processes that broke the TSDT cycle, they were able to intuitively point to a new alphabet where the energetic properties of harmony were paramount and the TSDT cycle secondary. It was this system that could point to a direction where the listener's expectation of certain resolution would be replaced with a sublime awareness of the present moment.

Aims and repertoire studied

On the occasion of the centenary of 1917, this paper examines two piano cycles completed during this key year - Nikolai Medtner's *Forgotten Melodies* Op. 38, and Sergei Rachmaninoff's *Études-Tableaux* Op. 39. In addition to applying and contrasting various analytical methods, among them Schenkerian analysis and cognitive musicology, modulation in these works is examined by taking into consideration the perspective, needs, and goals of the Artist-performer. Both of these opuses present distinct challenges from a technical standpoint, however, the true difficulty lies in understanding their ability to disrupt the full functional cycle TSDT and the subsequent effects this implies on the listener.

Methods

Bridging together historical, musicological, and psychological aspects of this repertoire within a framework of Eastern philosophy, modulation is conceptualized and portrayed as a powerful agent of capturing perception of the surrounding time and circumstances of composition. Furthermore, it is then examined from a performance standpoint to explain how the interpretation of modulatory processes affects the audience.

Implications

In 1917, humanity reached an incredibly high degree of insecurity and uncertainty, a point that is perhaps approached once again in 2017. By examining the insecurity of highly complex modulatory processes in the music of 1917 through the work of Medtner and Rachmaninoff, we conceptualize a new perspective of not only this crucial turning point in world history, but also the notion that this insecurity is the result of trying to be secure. This music paves an extraordinary example of a harmonic world where the normal order of things seems completely reversed and common sense turned upside down, and attempts to articulate the paradox of how out of this phenomenon arises a distinct sense of salvation and sanity.

Keywords

Modulation, musical epistemology, musical cognition, tonality, musical praxis.

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