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Dmitri Kabalevsky: A Pedagogical Analysis of Five Sets of Variations, Op. 51 and Easy Variations, Op. 40

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DMITRI KABALEVSKY:
A PEDAGOGICAL ANALYSIS OF FIVE SETS OF VARIATIONS, OP. 51
AND EASY VARIATIONS OP. 40

A Monograph

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts

in

The School of Music

by
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B.M., Elon University, 2010
M.M., Louisiana State University, 2012
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ABSTRACT

This monograph explores the life of Russian born composer, educator, and pianist Dmitri Kabalevsky. The first chapter presents a biography of Kabalevsky with special attention given to how biographical details from his life relate to his pedagogical piano works. The second chapter talks about the “Three Whales” of music: the song, march, and dance. Kabalevsky believed these three genres were the most accessible forms of music and that all music was built upon these vital categories.

The third chapter analyzes Kabalevsky's compositional style and clarifies the specific features of his compositions that make them pedagogically sound and attractive to the teacher and student. The fourth chapter is a pedagogical analysis of Kabalevsky's *Five Sets of Variations* Op. 51, and the fifth chapter is a pedagogical analysis of *Easy Variations*, op. 40, no. 1 and 2.

CHAPTER ONE: BIOGRAPHY

Children have always held a great place in my musical life. For me, there can be neither music nor life without children. I have composed music and written books for them, talked about music and taught at music schools, conducted children's choirs and orchestras.¹

-Dmitri Kabalevsky

Kabalevsky was born in St. Petersburg on December 30, 1904 and died on February 14, 1987. Among piano teachers, Kabalevsky is mainly known for his contributions to the teaching repertoire for children. However, Kabalevsky's contributions to music and music education go far beyond this limited perspective. During his life, Kabalevsky was a versatile musician who worked as a pianist, composer, teacher, pedagogue, lecturer, and politician. In all of these roles, Kabalevsky never wavered in his commitment to improve all aspects of music education for children. As a politician, Kabalevsky used his influence to start children's programs² and improve the state of mass music education. As a teacher, educator, and lecturer, Kabalevsky strove to understand how to captivate students' interest in music and make music accessible to all children regardless of their perceived musical ability. Kabalevsky's philosophy has been passed down to future generations of teachers through his many talks, lectures, books, and articles on music. Finally, as a composer, some of Kabalevsky's earliest pedagogical works were pieces he wrote for his own students.³ His desire to learn how to write effectively for children continued throughout his whole life. Kabalevsky mastered how to captivate students' interest through attractive and pedagogically suitable repertoire.

¹ David Forrest, *Kabalevsky: Musical Views* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2009), 19.

² David Forrest, "The Educational Theory of Dmitri Kabalevsky in Relation to His Piano Music for Children" (PhD diss., The University of Melbourne, 1996), 50, accessed April 18, 2015, <http://hdl.handle.net/11343/38824>. One such organization Kabalevsky started was the Youth Section of the Union of Soviet Composers, an organization that supported concerts for young musicians.

³ Dmitry Borisovich Kabalevsky, *At the Piano with Kabalevsky*, ed. Maurice Hinson (Van Nuys, CA.: Alfred Publishing, 1990), 5.

Balancing all of the aforementioned responsibilities was a formidable task and is the likely reason for Kabalevsky's diminished compositional productivity after the 1950s.⁴ In 1918, when Kabalevsky was 14, his family moved to Moscow and Kabalevsky studied at the Skryabin Music Institute from 1919-1925. During his studies, Kabalevsky made a living teaching piano to children, accompanying students at the Skryabin Musical Institute, and playing for silent films.⁵

In 1925, Kabalevsky graduated from the Skryabin Musical Institute and subsequently began his studies at the Moscow Conservatoire. Several of Kabalevsky's earliest compositions for children date from this period including: *Children's Songs from Pioneer Life* (1925), *Collection of Children's Pieces Op. 3* (1927) and *Piano Sonatinas Op. 13* (1930).⁶ These early collections stemmed from pieces that Kabalevsky composed for his own students and Kabalevsky's concern for what he felt was a lack of appropriate children's repertoire.⁷ Many of his Russian contemporaries also contributed to the children's repertoire including: Shostakovich, Prokofiev, and Khachaturian. Outside of Russian there were many other composers who greatly contributed to children's repertoire, especially Hungarian composers Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály.

Many of his earliest compositions are fervently nationalistic. In contrast to his contemporaries, Kabalevsky was eager to please the government with his compositional style. The fact that some of his earliest compositions would be patriotic works demonstrates his loyalty to the government and desire to please. Kabalevsky was one of the first Russian composers to

⁴David Forrest, "The Educational Theory of Dmitri Kabalevsky in Relation to His Piano Music for Children" (PhD diss., The University of Melbourne, 1996), 7, accessed April 18, 2015, <http://hdl.handle.net/11343/38824>.

⁵ Ibid., 7.

⁶ Ibid., 8.

⁷ Dmitry Borisovich Kabalevsky, *At the Piano with Kabalevsky*, ed. Maurice Hinson (Van Nuys, CA.: Alfred Publishing, 1990), 5.

include political commentary in his works.⁸ These works could perhaps foreshadow his later interest in politics. Later, during World War II, Kabalevsky's music was used as propaganda to increase national morale and pride.⁹

In 1932, Kabalevsky was appointed as a senior lecturer of composition at the Moscow Conservatoire and became a full professor in 1939.¹⁰ Around the same time, Kabalevsky started to join more political organizations. In 1938, he was elected a member of the Presidium of the Organizing in the USSR Union of Composers.¹¹ A couple years later, at age 36, Kabalevsky became a member of the Communist Party.¹² He held several important political positions in the government including the Chief Editor of *Sovetskaya Muzika* (Soviet Music) from 1943-1945 and the Chief of Board of *Feature Broadcasting for the All Union Radio Committee*.¹³

There is little doubt that Kabalevsky's membership in the Communist Party and adherence to Communist Party principles gained him favor within the Soviet government. That he escaped notice during Andrei Zhdanov's anti-formalism campaign epitomizes this preferential treatment. This decree from 1948 originally cited composers such as Kabalevsky, Shostakovich, and Khachaturian as being too formalist and modern in their approach to music

⁸ David Forrest, "The Educational Theory of Dmitri Kabalevsky in Relation to His Piano Music for Children" (PhD diss., The University of Melbourne, 1996), 8, accessed April 18, 2015, <http://hdl.handle.net/11343/38824>.

⁹ Ibid., 16

¹⁰ Dina Daragan, *Grove Music Online*, s.v. "Kabalevsky, Dmitry Borisovich," accessed June 10, 2015, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/14573>.

¹¹ David Forrest, "The Educational Theory of Dmitri Kabalevsky in Relation to His Piano Music for Children" (PhD diss., The University of Melbourne, 1996), 14, accessed April 18, 2015, <http://hdl.handle.net/11343/38824>.

¹² Ibid., 15.

¹³ David Forrest, "The Educational Theory of Dmitri Kabalevsky in Relation to His Piano Music for Children" (PhD diss., The University of Melbourne, 1996), 14-15, accessed April 18, 2015, <http://hdl.handle.net/11343/38824>.

composition. However, Kabalevsky's name was absent from the final decree. It has been speculated that the reason for the omission was a result of his political contacts.¹⁴

As opposed to his contemporaries who continued to push the artistic boundaries of the decree, Kabalevsky's works of this era were highly conservative, populist, lyrical, and democratic. Kabalevsky's youth concertos came from this time period including the *Violin Concerto Op. 48* (1948), the *Cello Concerto Op. 49* and the *Piano Concerto No. 3 Op. 50* (1952).¹⁵ In addition to avoiding the anti-formalist decree, Kabalevsky was awarded various prizes and titles during this decade such as: Hero of Socialist Labor (1944) and Honorary Art Worker of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (1946). He was also awarded the Stalin prize in 1946 for his *String Quartet No. 2, Op. 44*.¹⁶

The 1950s marked a significant decline in Kabalevsky's productivity as a composer. His increased administrative and political activities, as well as his burgeoning interest in mass music education may have accounted for this. At various times in his life, Kabalevsky was involved in the following organizations: Member of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of the USSR, Secretary of the Board of the Union of Soviet Composers, Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Muzyka v škole* (Music in School), Honorary President of the International Society for Music Education, and an Honorary Member of UNESCO's International Music Council.¹⁷

In the 1960s, Kabalevsky's life-long interest in mass music education was at its peak. He became an active member of the International Society of Music Education (henceforth referred to as ISME) and presented several lectures at conferences. Most notably, he presented at the

¹⁴ Francis Maes, *A History of Russian Music: From Kamarinskaya to Babi Yar* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 310.

¹⁵ David Forrest, "The Educational Theory of Dmitri Kabalevsky in Relation to His Piano Music for Children" (PhD diss., The University of Melbourne, 1996), 22, accessed April 18, 2015, <http://hdl.handle.net/11343/38824>.

¹⁶ Ibid., 23.

¹⁷ Dmitry Borisovich Kabalevsky, *Music and Education: A Composer Writes about Musical Education* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers in Association with UNESCO, 1988), 5.

1963 conference in Tokyo and again at the 1966 conference in Interlochen, Michigan.¹⁸

Kabalevsky was the Honorary President of ISME from 1972-1987 after the passing of his colleague Zoltán Koldáy who was the president from 1964-1967.¹⁹ Similar to Kodály, Kabalevsky's main interest was to improve elementary music education. During this decade, Kabalevsky was also solidifying his ideas about music education with two resources intended for children. The first was a series of LP's entitled *What Music Says* (1965) and the second was a children's textbook, *A Story of Three Whales and Many Other Things* (1970).

In the 1970s, Kabalevsky decided to demonstrate the effectiveness of his educational principles by going into the public schools as a teacher of general music courses. Kabalevsky discussed the importance of this decision at a conference in the mid-1970s:

When I decided it was time to sum up my work in the field, I discovered that it was not the summing up, but the beginning of a new stage. I realized that all I had done was merely a preparation for going into general schools not merely as a composer or a lecturer, but as an ordinary teacher of music.²⁰

Kabalevsky's willingness and desire to teach music in public schools in his 70s was a testament to his life-long commitment to music education. That fact that he was willing to demonstrate his principles first hand gives credibility to his method. Too often, administrators and policy makers only make their decisions and changes from an outsider perspective. During this time, Kabalevsky was still working as a professor at the Moscow Conservatory. He eventually gave up this job in order to devote all of his energy to general music education. In particular, Kabalevsky worked to revise and update the existing K-12 music syllabus. As a likely

¹⁸ David Forrest, "The Educational Theory of Dmitri Kabalevsky in Relation to His Piano Music for Children" (PhD diss., The University of Melbourne, 1996), 27, accessed April 18, 2015, <http://hdl.handle.net/11343/38824>.

¹⁹ David Forrest, "Dmitri Borisovich Kabalevsky 1904-1987: Honorary President of ISME 1972-1987," *International Journal of Music Education* 22, no. 2 (August 2004): 150, accessed April 18, 2015, doi:10.1177/0255761404044016.

²⁰ David Forrest, "The Educational Theory of Dmitri Kabalevsky in Relation to His Piano Music for Children" (PhD diss., The University of Melbourne, 1996), 36, accessed April 18, 2015, <http://hdl.handle.net/11343/38824>.

result of his innovative pedagogical principles and enthusiastic promotion, the voluntary adoption of the new syllabus grew exponentially. In 1974, only 25 schools in Russia adopted Kabalevsky's syllabus. By 1978, around 2500 teachers began to use his syllabus. One year later, that number had reached 10,000. Finally, by 1981, Kabalevsky's syllabus was a mandated part of the official school curriculum.²¹

During the 1970s, Kabalevsky returned to writing children's piano music. Several important sets came from this time period including: *Lyric Tunes* Op. 91 (1971), *Children's Dreams* Op. 88 (1971), and *Thirty-Five Easy Pieces* Op. 89 (1973).²² It is interesting to note that both Kabalevsky's earliest works and latest works were composed for children and corresponded to times in his life when he was working intensively with them. Early in his career he was teaching piano lessons, and towards the end of his life he was working with children in the public school.

During the 1970s, Kabalevsky's administrative activities were still going strong. He remained an active member of ISME and even organized the 1970 conference in Moscow.²³ In addition to his work with ISME, Kabalevsky established the Laboratory of Musical Education at the Scientific-Research Institute of Schools. This organization was a platform for Kabalevsky to test his new program. He supplemented the new music syllabus with lesson plans, recordings, and texts for each lesson.²⁴

Even towards the end of his life, Kabalevsky remained a tireless supporter of music education. He continued to be involved in organizations and attend conferences. His written

²¹ Jon Becker, Marina Goldin, and Ludmilla Leibman, "From Tsars to Whales: Dmitry Kabalevsky and Russian Music Education," *The Quarterly* 4, no. 3 (Autumn 2010): 54, accessed April 18, 2015.

²² David Forrest, "The Educational Theory of Dmitri Kabalevsky in Relation to His Piano Music for Children" (PhD diss., The University of Melbourne, 1996), 31, accessed April 18, 2015, <http://hdl.handle.net/11343/38824>.

²³ *Ibid.*, 31

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 35.

regrets about being unable to attend the 1986 ISME conference in Austria exemplify his life-long commitment to education. In his own words:

I am deeply sorry that a sudden illness has unexpectedly destroyed all my plans and deprived me of the possibility of being with you today and taking part in discussing the problems so significant for all of us.²⁵

At his funeral, Kabalevsky's ISME colleague and friend Sir Frank Callaway expressed Kabalevsky's contributions to music education: "Dmitri Kabalevsky was a unique personality in international music and music education for he was a distinguished composer, teacher, and educator simultaneously, whose greatest happiness was to write music for children."²⁶

²⁵ David Forrest, "The Educational Theory of Dmitri Kabalevsky in Relation to His Piano Music for Children" (PhD diss., The University of Melbourne, 1996), 38, accessed April 18, 2015, <http://hdl.handle.net/11343/38824>.

²⁶ Ibid., 39.

CHAPTER TWO: "THE THREE WHALES OF MUSIC"

Kabalevsky's educational philosophy was articulated in his many articles, books, and lectures on music. Of all of the resources available, there are the three main sources that summarize his philosophy. The first was a series of talks given to children entitled *What Music Says* (1965). The second was a textbook called *About the Three Whales and Many Other Things* (1970). The third helpful resource for extracting Kabalevsky's teaching philosophy was a book published posthumously entitled: *Music and Education: A composer writes about musical education* (1988).

One important aspect of Kabalevsky's educational philosophy was articulated in his book *About the Three Whales and Many Other Things*. According to an ancient Slavic tale, the earth was supported on the backs of three whales. Corresponding to the symbolic three whales that supported the earth, Kabalevsky believed the foundation of all music rested on the symbolic "musical whales" of the song, march, and dance.²⁷ He believed that students should to be introduced to these three genres from the very first lesson in school. Kabalevsky argued that,

The song, the dance and the march are the commonest, the most popular and the most democratic realms of music. Many millions of people have never been to a professional musical performance and do not even suspect the existence of written music and of music as a profession, but it will be difficult to find one among them who has not sung a single song in his life, or danced, or taken part in a procession with music, even if only the rhythmic beating of folk drums.²⁸

Kabalevsky believed that the genres of the song, dance, and march were a natural starting place for children because they likely had already encountered these genres in daily life.

²⁷ Dmitry Kabalevsky, *About the Three Whales and Many Other Things: A Book about Music*, ed. David Forrest and Mariya Kabalevskaya, trans. Ashhen Mikoian (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2009), 3.

²⁸ Dmitry Borisovich Kabalevsky, *Music and Education: A Composer Writes about Musical Education* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers in Association with UNESCO, 1988), 23.

It is perhaps even more insightful to note how Kabalevsky introduced the concept of “the three whales of music”. In his book, *Music and Education*, Kabalevsky explained how to introduce the “three whales of music”.

One significant aspect of this most important moment in the first lesson is the words 'march', 'dance', and 'song' are first uttered not by the teacher but by the pupils. This does more than just catch their interest and give them some external, purely playful satisfaction; what is highly important is that it gives them confidence in themselves ('it turns out that we already know something'), it makes them feel important ('we are bright') and, equally, significantly, it makes them trust and have feeling for the teacher ('he makes it all clear and it is interesting to learn from him').²⁹

The inquiry-based mode of instruction that Kabalevsky implored teachers to implement from the very first lesson is presently called discovery learning. Discovery learning is a student-directed method of instruction where students find out the answers and come to conclusions on their own with guidance from the teacher. While this method can sometimes seem circuitous and time-consuming, the above quote espouses the many benefits of this mode of instruction including building one's self-efficacy, ingraining concepts better, and instilling motivation and passion for the subject matter.

It is in Kabalevsky's philosophy of the “three whales of music” that one can find a connection between his educational philosophy and his compositional style. Many of his pedagogical compositions contain pieces that have the title of song, dance, or march, or the compositional style clearly evokes one of these genres. Consistent with his belief in introducing the “three whales” to students in general music, it seems evident that he believed songs, marches, and dances were also a logical starting place for beginning piano students. This link between the “three whales” and Kabalevsky's compositional style is so strong that scholar David Forrest used this connection as the basis of his dissertation. In his study, he attached the labels of song, dance,

²⁹ Dmitry Borisovich Kabalevsky, *Music and Education: A Composer Writes about Musical Education* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers in Association with UNESCO, 1988), 25.

march, and toccata to many of Kabalevsky's easier piano pieces including: *Thirty-Five Easy Pieces*, Op. 89; *Twenty-Four Easy Pieces*, Op. 39, *Thirty Children's Pieces*, Op. 27, *From Pioneer Life*, Op. 14, and *In the Pioneer Camp*, Op. 3/86.³⁰

Kabalevsky saw the "three whales of music" as the foundation of a house from which students could continue to learn about other genres of music.³¹ He discussed how students would frequently return to these genres yet each time from a more sophisticated perspective. He mentioned that: "The 'going back' should never be mere repetition, but may be likened to a man climbing a mountain, who looks back on reaching a new height and sees things that he had not previously noticed."³²

While there are many examples demonstrating the use of the song, the dance, and the march in Kabalevsky's works, one work that epitomizes this connection is Kabalevsky's *Four Rondos*, Op. 60. This work is titled as follows:

- No. 1 *March*
- No. 2 *Dance*
- No. 3 *Song*
- No. 4 *Toccata*

This set is an important example not only because the "three whales" are grouped into one opus, but also because each piece epitomizes its respective genre. In Kabalevsky's easier compositions, typically each piece will fit into one of the "three whales". A great example of this is the *March* from op. 60 (See Figure 1-1).

³⁰ David Forrest, "The Educational Theory of Dmitri Kabalevsky in Relation to His Piano Music for Children" (PhD diss., The University of Melbourne, 1996), v, accessed April 18, 2015, <http://hdl.handle.net/11343/38824>.

³¹ Dmitry Borisovich Kabalevsky, *Music and Education: A Composer Writes about Musical Education* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers in Association with UNESCO, 1988), 23.

³² *Ibid.*, 38.

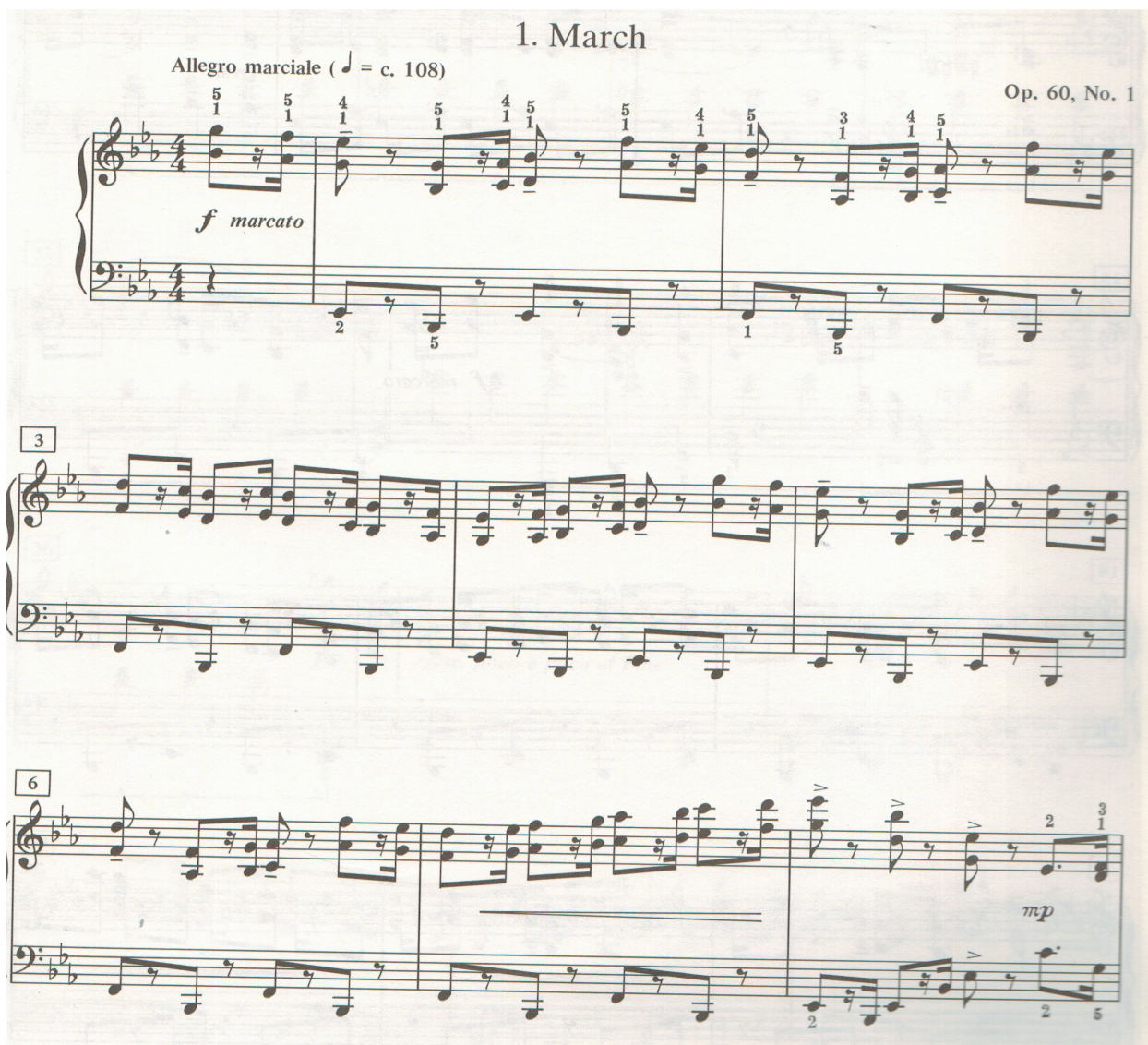


Figure 1-1. Op. 60, no. 1 *March*³³

In this piece, the allusion to a march is evident in two primary ways. First, the right hand plays a dotted-eighth sixteenth rhythm that is very march-like and stays throughout the entire piece. In addition, the left hand plays mostly intervals of fourths or fifths often on tonic and dominant harmonies. This could represent a tuba player or the brass section of a marching band.

³³ Dmitry Borisovich Kabalevsky, *At the Piano with Kabalevsky*, ed. Maurice Hinson (Van Nuys, CA.: Alfred Publishing, 1990), 51.

CHAPTER THREE: COMPOSITIONAL STYLE

Consistent with the work of his Russian contemporaries, Kabalevsky music was filled with nationalistic pride. This can be seen in the many patriotic songs that represent the idealized Soviet people. Some of Kabalevsky's earliest works contained nationalistic titles including: *We Shall Not Be Conquered*, *National Avengers*, and *The Great Motherland*.³⁴ His nationalist style was also manifested in the way that he used folk tunes in many of his works.

In terms of harmony, Kabalevsky was more conservative than his Russian contemporaries such as Khachaturian, Prokofiev, and Shostakovich. However, in spite of his conservative approach to harmony, there are a few harmonic quirks observed in many of Kabalevsky's works making his music unique and memorable. The first technique frequently seen in Kabalevsky's compositions is the use of major subdominant harmonies in minor keys (See Figure 3-2). Another harmonic technique is the use of half-step voice leading at final cadences. Sometimes, this creates a $Vii^0 \rightarrow I$ cadence instead of the more frequently seen $V \rightarrow I$ cadence (See Figure 3-1). In other cases, Kabalevsky uses the bII^6 (Neapolitan) $\rightarrow I$ relationship at final cadences.



Figure 3-1. Op. 51, no. 5: Variation 6, last 6 measures³⁵
*Example of half-step voice leading at final cadence

³⁴ James Bakst, *A History of Russian-Soviet Music* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1966), 330.

³⁵ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 31.

Op. 51, No. 5
(1952)

Theme

1 Andantino

p cantando

IV6 iv6 V VI IV

Figure 3-2. Op. 51, no. 5, Theme

*Note the use of the IV harmony in measures 5 and 7

In terms of melody, part of Kabalevsky's charm likely comes from what editor Maurice Hinson refers to as "lyrical, broad, [and], emotionally evocative melodies."³⁶ This combined with his unique treatment of traditional harmonies contributes to his overall appealing style. Kabalevsky's melodies, especially those that are folk song quotes or evoke folk songs, generally have a narrow melodic range. This makes many his melodies very singable. According to author Suellen Lindsey, the narrow melodic range observed in many of Kabalevsky's works is likely the result of Kabalevsky's attempt to write music for the Russian people who would want singable

³⁶ Dmitry Borisovich Kabalevsky, *At the Piano with Kabalevsky*, ed. Maurice Hinson (Van Nuys, CA.: Alfred Publishing, 1990), 7.

melodies.³⁷ Also, it is very common in Kabalevsky's pieces to observe the use of melodies played in unison, often several octaves apart.³⁸

One special characteristic of Kabalevsky's compositional style is that he generally keeps the same compositional aesthetic whether he is composing for children or adults. This is likely the reason that students and teachers alike find his music so appealing. One such compositional characteristic noted throughout all levels of his compositions is the rapid oscillation of major and minor harmonies. This technical device can be seen in all levels of his compositions. At each higher level, this technical challenge becomes more sophisticated (See Figures 3-3, 3-4 and 3-5).



Figure 3-3. *Op. 39, no. 2 Clowns* (measures 1-4)³⁹
Magrath Level: 3



Figure 3-4. *Prelude no. 1 in C major, op. 38* (Measures 1-6)⁴⁰
Magrath Level: 9

³⁷ Suellen Lindsey, *A Study of the Solo Piano Music of Dmitri Kabalevsky*, Master's thesis, Eastern Illinois University, 1964, 19.

³⁸ Dmitry Borisovich Kabalevsky, *At the Piano with Kabalevsky*, ed. Maurice Hinson (Van Nuys, CA.: Alfred Publishing, 1990), 7.

³⁹ Dmitri Kabalevsky, "Kabalevsky Clowns," *Kabalevsky Clowns*, accessed May 29, 2015, http://www.pdmpiano.org/epdm_p174_Kabalevsky_Clowns.html.

⁴⁰ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Concert Pieces* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 8.



Figure 3-5. Sonata no. 3 in F major, op. 46⁴¹
Level: 10+ (beyond Magrath's leveling system)

Part of what makes much of Kabalevsky's music accessible to the student is the clarity of texture observed in all levels of his output for piano. This clarity helps the performer to know what voice needs to be projected. In some places where Kabalevsky's writing sounds thick, the note reading remains uncomplicated and easy to grasp. In addition to a clear texture, Kabalevsky's compositions often contain simple triads, typically in root position or first inversion, often moving in parallel motion.⁴² This is a significant feature of Kabalevsky's music that makes it accessible especially for young students who are not used to frequent hand positions changes and are accustomed to keeping the hand within a five-finger pattern. When triads are played in parallel motion, the performer can keep the same shape of the hand for each chord allowing them to place their attention on other challenges that may be present in the work. In addition to alleviating various technical challenges, parallel motion triads can also minimize the reading challenges of a given piece. Below are several examples through different levels of Kabalevsky output that demonstrating the use of parallel triads (See Figures 3-6 to 3-11).

⁴¹ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Complete Sonatas Op. 6, Op. 45, Op. 46* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1998), 81.

⁴² Dmitry Borisovich Kabalevsky, *At the Piano with Kabalevsky*, ed. Maurice Hinson (Van Nuys, CA.: Alfred Publishing, 1990), 10.



Figure 3-6. *Op. 39, No. 12 Scherzo*⁴³
Magrath Level: 1



Figure 3-7. *Op. 27, No. 12 Toccatina*, measures 1-4⁴⁴
Magrath Level: 3



Figure 3-8. *Op. 27, No. 18 Sonatina*, measures 1-8⁴⁵
Magrath Level 5

⁴³ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Kabalevsky Easy Pieces: 24 Pieces for Children, Op. 39; 35 Easy Pieces, Op. 89* (New York: Schirmer, 1974), 6.

⁴⁴ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *30 Pieces for Children (op. 27)*, ed. Joseph Prostakoff (New York: Schirmer, 1968), 18.

⁴⁵ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *30 Pieces for Children (op. 27)*, ed. Joseph Prostakoff (New York: Schirmer, 1968), 30.



Figure 3-9. *Op. 27, No. 17 Meadow Dance* (measures 1-4)⁴⁶

Magrath Level: 6

*Note the use of root position triads to mitigate the technical challenge of leaps in the left hand



Figure 3-10. *Sonata no. 3 in f major, Op. 46, I (Exposition)*⁴⁷

Level: 10+

⁴⁶ Ibid., 29.

⁴⁷ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Complete Sonatas Op. 6, Op. 45, Op. 46* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1998), 64.



Figure 3-11. *Sonata no. 3 in f major*, Op. 46, III (Development)⁴⁸
Level: 10+

In summary, many of the traits discussed in Kabalevsky's piano music contribute to the undeniable charm and accessibility of many his works. The editor Maurice Hinson has provided an overview of ten traits of Kabalevsky's writing; some of which has been already discussed (See Table 3.1). Many of the traits that make Kabalevsky's music attractive and accessible can be found in the *Five Sets of Variations*, op. 51 and the *Easy Variations*, op. 40. Both these works will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Table 3-1⁴⁹

1. Octatonic (unison) writing
2. Strong rhythmic usage
3. Alternating rapidly between major and minor
4. Wrong-note technique
5. Impressionistic tendency (use of a major 7th chords)
6. Quartal harmony
7. Use of folk tunes
8. Use of folk rhythms
9. Use of modes
10. Parallel triads

⁴⁸ Ibid., 84.

⁴⁹ Dmitry Borisovich Kabalevsky, *At the Piano with Kabalevsky*, ed. Maurice Hinson (Van Nuys, CA.: Alfred Publishing, 1990), 7-10.

Kabalevsky on Composing

At the 1963 ISME conference in Tokyo, Japan, Kabalevsky gave a lecture entitled, *The Composer and Music for Children*.⁵⁰ This brief but poignant lecture pointed to the principles Kabalevsky believed composers needed to follow in order to write quality music for children. At the core of his philosophy was the notion that children deserved the same quality of music as adults. He began the lecture by quoting the writing of Maxim Gorki who said, "How should books for children be written? ... 'The same for adults, only better!'"⁵¹

In addition to writing high quality music, Kabalevsky believed that being a good composer was only one aspect to writing effective children's pieces. He believed that one must also be an educator and teacher. He elaborated by explaining that:

The composer will ensure that the music is good and lively, the educationist will ensure that it is educationally reasonable, As for the teacher, he must not lose sight of the fact that music, like any art, helps children to see the world and nurtures their education by developing not only their artistic tastes and the creative imagination, but also their love of life, of mankind, of nature and their country; it arouses their interest and a feeling of friendship towards the peoples of other countries.⁵²

Kabalevsky stated that too often the balance of the three elements of composer, educator, and teacher was not quite right. He explained that:

Pieces which are useful from the technical point of view, are sometimes without artistic interest. Pieces which are interesting from the artistic point of view prove to be too far from the children's psychology, too far from the children's real interests and from the education problems that arise in the field of music education. It also happens that pieces which are otherwise excellent turn out to be quite useless from an educational point of view.⁵³

⁵⁰ Edward O'Connor, "Music and Education: A Composer Writes about Musical Education by Dmitri B. Kabalevsky," review of *Music and Education: A Composer Writes about Musical Education*, *Music Educators Journal* 75, no. 8 (April 1989): 16.

⁵¹ Dmitry Borisovich Kabalevsky, *Music and Education: A Composer Writes about Musical Education* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers in Association with UNESCO, 1988), 120.

⁵² Dmitry Borisovich Kabalevsky, *Music and Education: A Composer Writes about Musical Education* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers in Association with UNESCO, 1988), 120.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 120.

On a deeper level, Kabalevsky believed that in order to write music effectively for children, one should care about children and spend time with them. When asked why the delicate balance of composer, educator, and teacher was lacking, Kabalevsky argued that: I am absolutely convinced that the answer to this is that there are many people who write music for children but few who know and love children in the way anybody who sets about composing for them should know and love them.⁵⁴ Kabalevsky further emphasized this necessary connection to children by reiterating that: "I am profoundly convinced that any composer must not only transmit to children a part of his talent, of his art and his experience, but must also give them a part of his heart."⁵⁵

In order to write effective pieces, Kabalevsky believed that composers ought to know the vocal characteristics children and their singing style.⁵⁶ This is likely the reason why many of his compositions are either based on folk melodies or contain folk elements. It also explains the inclusion of the song as one of the "three whales of music". Kabalevsky also believed that children's pieces should fit perfectly under the hand and be completely idiomatic to the keyboard. The story Kabalevsky's tells about Anton Rubinstein accurately summarizes his commitment to idiomatic writing for children:

One day, a pupil of Anton Rubinstein asked him which fingering he should use for a particularly difficult passage. 'Play it with you nose, if you like,' replied the master, 'it is all the same to me!' Actually, when we compose for adults, we do in fact rely a little on this 'nose'. But the question becomes more complicated where children are concerned: thus everything has to be absolutely precise and worked out in detail; no unnecessary notes, no difficult turns of phrase; there are only ten little fingers, not yet very skillful, and no question of 'nose'!⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Ibid., 120.

⁵⁵ Dmitry Borisovich Kabalevsky, *Music and Education: A Composer Writes about Musical Education* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers in Association with UNESCO, 1988), 121.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 120.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 121.

Many educators agree that Kabalevsky wrote effective teaching pieces. While it can be hard to objectively know what makes a good teaching piece, I believe there are four elements that make Kabalevsky's compositions effective teaching pieces. In many respects, Kabalevsky self-imposed the principles he discussed in his lecture entitled *The Composer and Music for Children*. His pieces are effective for children because:

1. They are idiomatic for the piano
2. They are pedagogically sound
3. They are attractive sounding
4. They contain a rhythmic vitality

The first reason why Kabalevsky's teaching pieces are effective is that they are idiomatic for the piano. Kabalevsky himself said that in writing for children that, "Everything has to be absolutely precise and worked out in detail; no unnecessary notes, no difficult turns of phrase."⁵⁸ In the op. 40, no. 1 variations, one great example of idiomatic writing can be observed in the 6th variation (See Figure 3-12). Here a running triplet passage is effortlessly passed from the right hand to the left hand.



Figure 3-12. Op. 40, no. 1, Variation 6⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Dmitry Borisovich Kabalevsky, *Music and Education: A Composer Writes about Musical Education* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers in Association with UNESCO, 1988), 121.

⁵⁹ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 3.

Idiomatic writing is especially important for children because it can create the effect of passages that are sound much more flashy and difficult than they are to execute. These kinds of pieces are very motivating for students and can help provide them with a renewed interest in the piano. Presently, those works with the ability to recapture a student's interest towards the piano are called pupil savers. Kabalevsky's teaching pieces contain many examples of pieces that could be labeled pupil savers. Another pupil saver, *Clowning* (See Figure 3-13), is a highly idiomatic work sounding much more difficult than it is to play.



Figure 3-13. Op. 27, no. 6 *Clowning*⁶⁰

Another reason why Kabalevsky's music is so successful for children is due to the fact that many of the works are pedagogically sound. Typically, each composition has just the right number of technical requirements to be challenging at a given level without overwhelming a student. Finding these pieces should always be the goal of a teacher, but choosing appropriate repertoire often proves to be a teacher's most challenging task. Kabalevsky's shorter and easier

⁶⁰ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *30 Pieces for Children (op. 27)*, ed. Joseph Prostakoff (New York: Schirmer, 1968), 14.

works are pedagogically sound because each piece is intended for a specific technical or musical challenge. A prime example of what constitutes a pedagogically sound composition is the *Toccatina* op. 27, no. 7 (See Figure 3-14). In this piece, one technical and musical challenge is to play a legato left hand underneath staccato right hand chords. In the right hand, even though the chords are jumping around, all of them are written in first inversion.



Figure 3-14. Op. 27, no. 12 *Toccatina*⁶¹

In the more challenging pieces such as Op. 40 and Op. 51 variation sets, Kabalevsky makes the pieces manageable by relegating different technical and musical challenges to different variations so that each variation taken on its own still has one primary technical or musical focus. In these sets, each piece has multiple technical and musical challenges, but the slight break in between each variation gives the student a chance to shift gears and prepare for the next challenge.

⁶¹ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *30 Pieces for Children* (op. 27), ed. Joseph Prostakoff (New York: Schirmer, 1968), 18.

The third reason why Kabalevsky compositions make good teaching pieces is due to the fact that he wrote attractive sounding pieces. It is evident Kabalevsky believed that motivating students through attractive sounding works was crucial. Kabalevsky said, "The methods needed are ones capable of helping to solve the root problem of music teaching in school, which is how to make music interesting and attractive to the children".⁶² He further emphasized that cultivating pupils' interest was vitally important in all subjects.

Kabalevsky's music is attractive for children in part because he often uses folk melodies as a basis for his compositions. This is accomplished in two ways. In some pieces, Kabalevsky bases entire compositions off of a folk melody (See Figure 3-15).



Figure 3-15. Op. 51, no. 3, Theme⁶³

In other pieces, the allusion to a folk melody is less overt. For example, all of the 24 Preludes for Piano, Op. 38 are based on folk songs, but often in a more subtle way.⁶⁴ In the

⁶² Dmitry Borisovich Kabalevsky, *Music and Education: A Composer Writes about Musical Education* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers in Association with UNESCO, 1988), 20.

⁶³ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 20.

following example from Op. 38 no. 5, the folk melody oscillates between the hands in the context of the thick three-part texture (See Figure 3-16).



Figure 3-16. *Prelude in d major*, Op. 38, no. 5⁶⁵
 *Melody noted with *tenuto* markings

The use of folk melody is attractive to students for a number of reasons. First, students love to play music they recognize. By incorporating folk melodies into his piano works, young Russian students would be playing pieces that had been sung to them or that they had sung themselves. Some folk melodies are also attractive to children because they have a narrow melodic range and therefore are easily singable. In example 3-15, the melody only spans the range of a minor 6th and outlines a d minor descending scale. In composing for children, Kabalevsky stated that, "Above all, the composer must know the vocal characteristics of

⁶⁴ Dmitry Borisovich Kabalevsky, *At the Piano with Kabalevsky*, ed. Maurice Hinson (Van Nuys, CA.: Alfred Publishing, 1990), 9.

⁶⁵ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Concert Pieces* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 20.

children, those of children's choral singing as well as the technique of the instrument for which he is composing."⁶⁶

Contemporary American piano pedagogues and method book authors also understand the importance of including domestic and foreign folk melodies as well as pieces that students recognize in beginning piano study. A brief look at one popular method, *Piano Adventures* by Faber and Faber, demonstrates this trend. Nearly half of the pieces in the Primer Level textbook contain songs familiar to young children (See Table 3.2).

Table 3.2
List of Folk Songs, Children's Songs, and Recognizable Songs in *Piano Adventures* Primer Level

Piano Adventures Primer Level Lesson Book⁶⁷

- Pg. 22-23: Old MacDonald Had a Song
- Pg. 26: Merrily We Roll Along
- Pg. 30: Ode to Joy
- Pg. 33: Alouette
- Pg. 49: Russian Sailor Dance
- Pg. 55: Yankee Doodle
- Pg. 67: Bells of Great Britain

Piano Adventures Primer Level Performance Book⁶⁸

- Pg. 20: Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star
- Pg. 25 Are You Sleeping?
- Pg. 30 Rain, Rain, Go Away

Another element that makes Kabalevsky's music attractive for children is the frequent use of programmatic titles used to inspire children's imaginations. Programmatic titles can be observed all the way from levels 1-8 of Kabalevsky's compositions. Kabalevsky's programmatic pieces tend to conjure up the image of their titles. A prime example of this is Op. 39, no. 20

⁶⁶Dmitry Borisovich Kabalevsky, *Music and Education: A Composer Writes about Musical Education* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers in Association with UNESCO, 1988), 120.

⁶⁷ Nancy Faber and Randall Faber, *Piano Adventures: Lesson Book - Primer Level*, 2nd ed. (Ann Arbor: Dovetree Productions, 2011).

⁶⁸ Nancy Faber and Randall Faber, *Piano Adventures: Performance Book - Primer Level*, 2nd ed. (Ann Arbor: Dovetree Productions, 2011).

Clowns (See Figure 3-17). In this work, the rapid juxtaposition of major and minor evokes archetypal images of the sad and happy clown and the light staccato left hand could represent the light-hearted, friendly nature of the clown.



Figure 3-17. Op. 39, no. 20 *Clowns*⁶⁹

Little Hedgehog Op. 89, no. 15 (See Example 3-18) is another popular programmatic work. In this piece, the hands play one white key apart the entire piece. In this work, the half-step between the B and the C create a dissonance the sounds sharp to the ear and takes the listener by surprise. Using the imagery of the pointy spikes of a hedgehog could help the student to play this piece in the right character and understand the function of the quirky dissonance.



Figure 3-18. Op. 89, no. 8 *Little Hedgehog*⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Kabalevsky Easy Pieces: 24 Pieces for Children, Op. 39; 35 Easy Pieces, Op. 89* (New York: Schirmer, 1974), 13.

⁷⁰ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Kabalevsky Easy Pieces: 24 Pieces for Children, Op. 39; 35 Easy Pieces, Op. 89* (New York: Schirmer, 1974), 25.

The final element that makes Kabalevsky's pieces attractive is the rhythmic vitality present in many of his works. The rhythmic interest observed in his pedagogical works makes sense when one considers “The Three Whales” philosophy of the song, dance, and march. In the dance and the march, often the rhythmic steadiness is even more important than the notes. In the example below, it is evident that the rhythmic accuracy is most important element of this piece. (See Figure 3-19).



Figure 3-19. Op. 14, no. 2 *The Drummer*⁷¹

⁷¹ Dmitry Borisovich Kabalevsky, *At the Piano with Kabalevsky*, ed. Maurice Hinson (Van Nuys, CA.: Alfred Publishing, 1990), 24.

CHAPTER FOUR: PEDAGOGICAL ANALYSIS OF FIVE SETS OF VARIATIONS OP. 51

The *Five Sets of Variations on Folk Themes, Op. 51* were written in 1952. These variations vary widely in difficulty and the technical demands made on the student. The easiest variation is in the level 4 range, and the most challenging variation is around a level 7 or 8. Each subsequent variation is more challenging with Op. 51, No. 1 being the easiest and Op. 51, No. 5 being the most difficult. The Op. 51 variations would likely be the first variations that students encounter and they provide a great introduction to more difficult variations. While each variation contains several different technical challenges, each individual variation typically focuses on one or two main technical difficulties. Another defining feature that makes these variations suitable for the young performer is the predictable, square phrase structure. In addition, the phrases are also repetitive making the music more concise, economical, and therefore easier for the student to grasp.

As stated earlier, there are several principles that make Kabalevsky's pieces great repertoire choices for children and these variations embody many of those characteristics discussed earlier. They are very idiomatic for the piano and there are several passages that sound much more difficult than they are to play (see Figure 4-1).



Figure 4-1. Op. 51, no. 2: Variation 5, measures 1-4⁷²

⁷² Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 18.

There are two other elements that make these pieces attractive for children. First, they contain memorable melodies that are also singable. The theme from op. 51, no. 3 exemplifies this idea. Second, many of the variations have a driving rhythm that can be exciting for students to play (see Figure 4-2).



Figure 4-2. Op. 51, No. 4: Variation, measures 1-4⁷³

In general, the Op. 51 Variations are easy to grasp because they contain very clear textures with almost entirely homophonic writing. The only contrapuntal/imitative writing occurs in the most difficult variation, Op. 40, no. 2 in a minor.

In addition to being attractive and judicious repertoire choices, these variations fill an important gap in the teaching repertoire. A survey of the teaching literature from *A Pianist Guide to Standard Teaching* shows almost a complete lack of 20th century variations sets at the late-intermediate level (levels 6-7). The only 20th century variations at this level are written in the table below.

Table 4-1.

Late-Intermediate Variations from the 20th Century⁷⁴

Composer	Title (Year composed)	Level
Frederic Mompou	Three Variations (1921)	7
Frederick Werlé	Variations on a Theme of Paganini	7

⁷³ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 26.

⁷⁴ Jane Magrath, *The Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature* (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Company, 1995), 440, 550.

Guy Maier, who edited an edition of the Op. 51 variations, stressed the teaching value of Kabalevsky's Op. 51 Variations:

Variations offer excellent, concentrated technical and interpretive material to students of all grades and ages. Unfortunately so few sets exist which appeal to young people and are uncomplicated enough for them to play. Therefore, these Kabalevsky sets are life-savers for the teacher.... Not only that, but at least three of the sets are so amusing and "mature" that concert artists will not be able to resist playing them.⁷⁵

In addition, variations can also help students to learn efficient practice techniques.

Variations teach students how to practice by sections. Students can single out individual variations and give themselves weekly goals on what variations they will have mastered each week. Hopefully this principle can transfer to their other repertoire and they can learn better how to practice section by section instead of from beginning to end.

As stated earlier, in Kabalevsky's easier works, such as op. 39 and op. 89, each piece is typically a song, dance, or march without too much ambiguity. In the *Five Sets of Variations*, Op. 51, the distinction between these three important genres of the song, dance, and march becomes more sophisticated. A prime example of the juxtaposition of the three genres can be observed in Op. 51, no. 4, *Seven Cheerful Variations on a Slovakian Folk Song*. Op. 51, no. 4 is a song because it is based on the folk song, yet Kabalevsky makes the character in more of a dance style. In addition, there are a couple of variations that even evoke the march, especially the rhythmically vibrant fourth variation. By learning these variations, students can better know how to shift gears quickly between these three different genres and learn how all the different genres of music can be interconnected. In this way, students can become more well-rounded musicians who can perceive the lyricism and beauty in a march or the lilting dance-like nature of song.

⁷⁵ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Five Sets of Variations*, Op. 51, ed. Guy Maier (Melville, New York: MCA Music, 1954), Foreword.

In the following analysis of *Five Sets of Variations*, Op. 51, an overview of each variation will be provided. Each variation will be briefly discussed in order to address the pedagogical challenges. Issues addressed will relate to technical, rhythmic, reading, and musical challenges. Where deemed necessary, performance suggestions will be given.

Op. 51, no. 1 Five Variations on a Russian Folk Song

Level: 4

Overall Musical and Technical Requirements:

1. Juxtaposition of legato and staccato touches
2. Left hand moving out of five-finger patterns
3. Hands playing in parallel motion
4. Detailed articulation: staccato, legato, accent

As stated before, one of the draws of Kabalevsky's pedagogical compositions is in the way that he often makes the music fit the programmatic title. In his programmatic works, students can use these images to help inspire their performances. Although Op.51, no. 1 lacks a programmatic title, the way that Kabalevsky sets this folk song is indicative that the words of the original folksong were likely considered (See Table 4.2).

The words of the original folk song portray the innocence of youth. In this poem, every stanza ends with the words “who cares?”. In certain places, there are also times where the text seems to make no sense. There are several ways that Kabalevsky portrays the innocent, carefree nature of the poem. This piece is made up of short three-measure phrases as opposed to the more typical four-measure phrase. These phrases seem like they end too early and sound incomplete. In playing the theme and subsequent variations the performer should definitely highlight these short phrases. Another allusion to the light-hearted nature of this work is the staccato writing that occurs in the first three variations.

Table 4-2.⁷⁶
Original Folksong Lyrics to Op. 51, no. 1

<p>Russian: Title: <i>Na gore to Kalina</i> На горе-то калина, Под горою малина. Ну что ж, кому дело, калина! Ну кому какое дело, малина!</p> <p>Там девицы гуляли, Там красные гуляли. Ну что ж, кому дело, гуляли! Да, Ну кому какое дело, гуляли!</p> <p>Калинушку ломали,(цвет с калины срывали) Калинушку ломали,(цвет с калины срывали) Ну что ж, кому дело, ломали! Да, ну кому какое дело, ломали!</p> <p>Во пучочки вязали, Во пучочки вязали. Ну что ж, кому дело, вязали! Да, Ну кому какое дело, вязали!</p> <p>На дорожку бросали, На дорожку бросали, Ну что ж, кому дело, бросали! Да, Ну кому какое дело, бросали!</p>	<p>English: Title: <i>The Mount of Viburnum</i> There is a cranberry on top of the mountain There is a raspberry at the bottom of the mountain Who cares about cranberry? Who cares about raspberry?</p> <p>Girls were walking around there Beautiful ones were walking around there Who cares about them walking around there? Oh, who cares about them walking around there?</p> <p>They damaged cranberries while gathering them They damaged cranberries while gathering them Who cares if they damaged them? Oh who cares if they damaged them?</p> <p>They tied cranberry branches in a bundle They tied cranberry branches in a bundle Who cares about those bundles? Oh, who cares about those bundles?</p> <p>They threw those bundles on the road They threw those bundles on the road Who cares if they threw those bundles on the road? Oh, who cares if they threw those bundles on the road?</p>
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Op. 51, no. 1 is by far the easiest variation Kabalevsky wrote, and would be an appropriate first variation for a student. Part of the appeal of this piece is the fact that the phrases are so short. The theme and variation 1 are broken down into four three-measure basic ideas. In Variation 2, the more standard four-measure phrase appears. The phrases in this movement can

⁷⁶ Ross, Bob. "Translation." E-mail message to author. July 9, 2015.
Translation of poem Na Gore to Kalina received from the website: <http://www.translatebyhumans.com/>

make it easier for a student to conceptualize smaller chunks of music and learn the piece more efficiently. This piece is a good starting variation for the student transitioning from method books because, for much of the piece, the hands do not have to change positions and when they do, the musical material is very predictable. Another element that makes this piece easier for students is the fact that much of the time, each phrase is simply made up of two basic ideas that repeat without only one slight change. For example, in the theme, one can see that measures 4-6 are almost an exact repetition of measures 1-3 and measures 10-12 are almost an exact repetition of measures 7-9 (See Figure 4-3). The only difference is that in measures 3 and 6, there is a leap from C up to F and the corresponding measures 6 and 12 have an octave leap on F's.

Theme:

The image shows the musical score for the Theme of Op. 51, No. 1 (1952) by Dmitri Kabalevsky. The score is in 2/4 time, marked 'Theme Allegro' and 'mf'. It consists of two systems of music. The first system shows measures 1-6, and the second system shows measures 7-12. Measures 4-6 are boxed, indicating repeated material. The left hand plays a 5-finger pattern in the first 6 measures, which is slightly expanded in the next 6 measures. The right hand plays a simple melody with leaps in measures 3 and 6.

Figure 4-3. Op. 51, no. 1: Theme⁷⁷

*Boxes denote repeated material

One can tell this is an accessible work simply by looking at the left hand of the theme. For the first 6 measures of the piece, the left hand stays entirely in a 5-finger pattern. In the next 6 measures, the left hand is only in a slightly expanded hand position of a sixth (See Figure 4-3). The limited hand positions is one of the most important features of this piece to note because one of the most challenging things for students going from method books to classical literature is

⁷⁷ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 14.

how to deal with the increased hand position changes or hand positions that are not five-finger patterns.

Variation 1 and 2:



Figure 4-4. Op. 51, no. 1: Variation 1 measures 1-8⁷⁸

In the first and second variation, the left hand starts to go away from five-finger patterns. Even so, the first variation is still manageable to play. The left hand only plays the notes F, A, B-flat, and C (See Figure 4-4). The most challenging part about these two variations is the juxtaposition of staccato and legato touches.

Variation 3:



Figure 4-5 Op. 51, no. 1: Variation 3⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 14.

The third variation introduces the challenge of unison playing. Pedagogically, it is interesting to note that while Kabalevsky adds a new challenge, he makes all of the other elements more manageable so that the student only has to focus on the one idea. During the unison passages, both the hands stay in a five-finger pattern and have the exact same articulation.

Variation 4:

In the fourth variation, Kabalevsky is once again very specific with the articulation. In the first 12 measures, the right hand plays *tenuto* chords above a more detached left hand. At the end of this variation, the articulation is flipped around.

Variation 5:

Var. 5

1 5 1 3 1 5 2 4 1

1 3 1 4 3 2 1

IV6 iv6 I6/4 1 4 3 2 1

7 1 5 1 3 1 5 2 4 1

4 2 1 3 1 5

mp

15 1 5 1 3 1 5 2 4 1

mf f 2 1 1 2 5

Figure 4-6 Op. 51, no. 1: Variation 5⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 15.

⁸⁰ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 16.

The fifth variation sounds like a coda and an extension of variation 4. The main technical challenge of this variation, like much the rest of the piece, lies in the specific articulation and passing the melody between the hands. In the first four measures, the left hand is more important with the accent at the beginning of each measure with two-note slurs. In this section, we also see the oscillation between a major and minor IV chord with the D-flat in measure 2 of the variation (See Figure 4-6). In measure 5, the melody moves to the right hand with a short cadential pattern.

At the end of this variation, there is a two-measure cadence repeated three times. Although no dynamic markings are given, the performer should make each two-measure cadential passage a little different. One way this could be accomplished is to make each repetition of the cadential passage a little more emphatic and make the loudest repetition occur on the final cadence. I have placed the suggested dynamic markings in measures 14, 16, and 18 in order to demonstrate one such solution (See Figure 4-6).

Op. 51, no. 2 Dance Variations on a Russian Folk Song

Level: 6

Overall: Technical Challenges:

1. Interdependence of hands
2. Legato and staccato articulation
3. Melody switching between left hand and right hand
4. Alberti bass
5. Running 16th note passages

Theme:

Theme
Allegretto

Op. 51, No. 2
(1952)

Figure 4-7 Op. 51, no. 2: Theme, measures 1-4⁸¹

⁸¹ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 17.

The overall character of this piece is light and jovial. In the theme, the right hand plays a staccato running eighth-note pattern above left hand playing staccato chords on the beats one and two. This piece starts off relatively easy as the right hand plays in only two hand positions. This gives the student the opportunity to focus more on the left hand which changes hand positions on every beat.

Variation 1:



Figure 4-8 Op. 51, no 2: Variation 1, measures 1-4⁸²

In the first variation, rhythmic vitality is added to give the piece a more buoyant and lilting feel. The left hand comes in on off-beats while the right hand has the melody in a dotted eighth/sixteenth note pattern. In this variation, to ensure the accuracy of this pattern, the performer can use the left hand to cue the sixteenth note in the right hand as indicated in Figure 4-8.

Variation 2:

This variation is all about contrasts. It starts with a two-measure unaccompanied melody marked *forte* and *marcato* (See Figure 4-9). After this, is two measures made up of two-note slurs in the left hand while the right hand continues with the melody. The technical challenge of this variation is the dealing with switching the pattern. The melody is frequently passed between the

⁸² Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 17.

right hand and the left hand. The hardest change to grasp is the switch of the melody and accompaniment that occurs between measures 3-4 versus 7-8.



Figure 4-9 Op. 51, no 2: Variation 2⁸³

Variation 3 and 4:



Figure 4-10. Op. 51, no. 2: Variation 3, measures 1-4⁸⁴

Variations 3 and 4 are paired together because they contain very similar challenges. Both of these variations have moved to the key of d minor (minor v). In variation 3, the left hand is playing two-note chords on off-beats while the right hand plays a non-thematic based melody (see Figure 4-10). In variation 4, this articulation is switched around and the left hand carries the

⁸³ Ibid., 17.

⁸⁴ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 18.

theme while the right hand plays chords on the off-beats (See Figure 4-11). In measure 5, the melody switches back to the right hand with the left hand once again playing on the off-beats.



Figure 4-11. Op. 51, no. 2: Variation 4⁸⁵

Variation 5:



Figure 4-12. Op. 51, no. 2 Variation 5, measures 1-4⁸⁶

The fifth variation returns to the tonic key of A major. This variation contains an easy left hand accompaniment first built on two-note slurs and then moving to repeating thirds. The right hand is built entirely of running scalar passages that are very idiomatic for the keyboard. What results is an enjoyable variation that sounds more difficult that it is.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 18.

⁸⁶ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 18.

The image displays a musical score for 'The Swan' by Camille Saint-Saëns. It is divided into two systems. The first system shows the piano introduction, with a treble and bass staff. The piano part features a series of sixteenth-note runs in the right hand and a more melodic line in the left hand. The second system introduces a vocal solo for a soprano, indicated by a 'V' in a circle. The vocal line begins with a long, flowing melody, while the piano accompaniment continues with a steady, rhythmic pattern. The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The piano introduction is marked with a 'p' (piano) dynamic, and the vocal solo begins with a 'ff' (fortissimo) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and fingerings, as well as a key signature change from G major to E major (two sharps) for the vocal solo.

Variation 6 starts in the relative key of f-sharp minor. The right hand plays the theme in the key of f-sharp minor while the left hand accompanies with an alberti bass. The main challenge of this variation is in the balance of all of the voices. The right hand plays two-note chords that must be voiced to the top note. The left hand has an alberti bass that should be at much softer dynamic than the melody. In the alberti bass, the performer should bring out the structural bass notes that occur on each down beat while subordinating the upper D and C-sharp (See Figure 4-13). This specific voicing is particularly difficult because the left hand is in the loudest register of the piano. Kabalevsky mitigates this challenge by having the hands stay around the same hand position which gives the student the opportunity to mainly focus on proper voicing. This variation ends with a flashy and exciting scale passage to put the final mark on an overall jovial and light-hearted work.

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Op. 51, No. 3 "Gray Day" Variations on a Slovakian Folk Song

Level: 6

This hauntingly beautiful variation is one of the most effective variations of the entire op. 51 set. Kabalevsky based this variation on the famous Slovak folk song *Dobrá noc, má milá* (Good night, my dear).⁸⁸ Presently, one can find numerous arrangements and transcriptions of this song at different tempi and with different instrumentation. However, an authentic performance of this work must take into account that the original folk song is a lullaby and therefore should be played quite slowly (perhaps quarter note =60).⁸⁹ The tempo marking given for the original folk song is *Pomalú* "slowly" (See figure 4-14).

Throughout this work, Kabalevsky attempts to mitigate the seriousness of the original lullaby. As one can observe from the text, this is not a typical children's lullaby (See Table 4-3). One interpretation of the text could be the sad longing over a lost loved one. The theme is played in the original tempo of the folk song but Kabalevsky doubles the tempo of the folk song in variation one and maintains this tempo through subsequent variations. By doubling the tempo of in variation 1, Kabalevsky drastically changes the character of the entire piece and makes it into more of a dance. This faster tempo remains until the return of the theme in variation 6.

Table 4-3. Original Folksong Lyrics to Op. 51, no. 3⁹⁰

Original Slavic:

Dobrá noc, má milá, dobrá noc,
Nech ti je sám Pánboh na pomoc,
Dobrá noc, dobre spi,
Nech sa ti snívajú sladké sny. (2nd verse variant: nech sa ti snívajú o mne sny).

English Translation:

Good night, my dear, good night
May God help you,
Good night, sleep well,
May your dreams be sweet. (2nd verse variant: may your dreams be about me)

⁸⁸ Ivan Koska, "Kabalevsky Monograph," e-mail message to author, June 8, 2015.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ivan Koska, "Kabalevsky Monograph," e-mail message to author, June 8, 2015.

Dobru noc, má milá ...

p Pomalu.

Do-brú noc, má mi - lá, do brú noc!

mf

Nech ti je sám Pán-bôh na po - moc!

p

Do-brú noc, do-bre spi: nech sa ti

sní - va - jú slad-ké sny.

Figure 4-14. Original Slavic folk song⁹¹

Theme (*Moderato*):

Theme
Moderato (♩ = ca. 85)

Op. 51, No. 3
(1952)

p cantabile

mf

Figure 4-15. Op. 51, no. 3: Theme⁹²

⁹¹ Ivan Koska, "Kabalevsky Monograph," e-mail message to author, June 8, 2015.

As previously stated, one of the main elements that makes Kabalevsky's music attractive for children is the singable melodies. This theme and variations is a perfect example of this. The main theme of this variation is a descending d minor scale starting on scale degree five (See Figure 4-15). The melody of this theme only spans the range of a minor 6th. While this piece is labeled level 6, like op. 51, no. 2, it is significantly more challenging. What separates this variation from the preceding variation is the thicker texture and more involved left hand throughout the entire work. Even in the first eight measures, one can observe a four-voice texture based on the stemming of the notes. In this section, one must carefully voice the right hand so that only the top melody is projected while all of the other voices are subordinated. While Kabalevsky adds the extra challenge of a more contrapuntal, thicker texture, other technical challenges are limited. The first 8 measures contain very few hand position changes. This harkens back to the idea that when Kabalevsky makes one concept challenging, the other technical requirements are limited.

Variation 1 and 2: (Allegretto Giocoso)



Figure 4-16. Op. 51, no. 3: Variation 1, measures 1-8⁹³

⁹² Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 20.

⁹³ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 20.

Variation 3:



In this variation, the main challenge is following the melody. The figure above shows how the melody moves between the hands (See Figure 4-17).

Variation 4:



⁹⁴ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 22.

In this variation, the right hand theme is ornamented by octave leaps. Underneath the right hand are two-note slurs in the left hand going from double notes to a single note. The hardest element of this variation is not the ornamentation of the melody but rather helping the performer to create a longer phrase reminiscent of the theme. The melodic shaping must be the same as the first two measures of the piece. It is more challenging to shape the melody in this variation because it is augmented and ornamented (See Figure 4-18). The best way to execute the right hand is to emphasize the accents at the dynamic level of *forte* and make the ornamental notes *piano*. The suggested dynamic markings written underneath the score will allow the performer to hear the longer phrase from measures 1-7.

Variation 5:



Figure 4-19 op. 51, no. 3: Variation 5⁹⁶

*Note: Omitted octaves in parentheses are Kabalevsky's markings

The fifth variation is the only variation in a major key. In this variation, an ABA structure is given with the outer A sections being in D major and the middle section moving between d

⁹⁵ Ibid., 22.

⁹⁶ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 9.

minor and g minor. This variation oscillates between declamatory chords and unaccompanied scale passages. The overall character of this variation is completely out of context from the rest of the work and this change must be highlighted. It is the only variation marked *forte* and *marcato*.

Variation 6 (Coda):

Var. 6 (Coda)
Moderato

Figure 4-20. op. 51, no. 3: Variation 5→6⁹⁷

The sixth variation could also act as a coda. No new material is presented and it is an exact restatement of the theme. Even though it is the same as the beginning theme, the performer should strive to make sure that this variation is played differently than the theme in order to provide a contrast. The performer should also note that instead of writing *cantabile* (singing), Kabalevsky writes *dolce* (sweetly). In this variation, perhaps the soft pedal can be used in order to make this color change. One interesting thing to note is the attacca between the fifth and sixth variation (See Figure 4-20). On the last chord of the fifth variation, the performer should listen for the decay of the top note A from *forte* to *piano* as a way to know how long to hold the

⁹⁷ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 23.

fermata (See Figure 4-20). I have added dynamics to the passage to show the performer what to listen for. This special detail can allow for a seamless transition to the sixth variation.

Op. 51, No. 4 Seven Cheerful Variations on a Slovakian Folk Song

Level: 6

Overall Technical and Musical Requirements:

1. Off-beat and syncopated rhythms
2. Left hand melody (Variation 3)
3. Parallel motion arpeggios
4. Light/leggiero playing

Theme:

4. Seven Cheerful Variations on a Slovakian Folk Song

Op. 51, No. 4
(1952)

Theme
Allegretto scherzando

The musical score for the Theme of Op. 51, No. 4 is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 1-5) shows a piano (p) in the left hand and a right hand melody starting with a first finger (1) on a dotted quarter note, followed by eighth notes. The second system (measures 6-11) continues the right hand melody with various rhythmic patterns and fingerings (3, 2, 3, 1, 3). The third system (measures 12-15) concludes the theme with a forte (sf) dynamic in the right hand and a final cadence in the left hand. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and fingerings.

Figure 4-21. Op. 51, No. 4, Theme⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 24.

This theme is primarily made up of two triads: G major (measures 1-8) and E minor (measures 12-15). This theme starts quite easily as both hands are only in five-finger patterns. For many students, breaking free from the five-finger patterns is a challenge, and this piece could be a good transition. The left hand starts with an open fifth on G and D (measure 1) followed by another open fifth on E and B (measure 9). This interval seems to emulate the drone sound frequently heard in Slavic folk Music.

Kabalevsky himself relayed to the editor Maurice Hinson that these variations by played, “laughingly, jestingly, and sometimes banteringly.”⁹⁹ One can see the jesting nature of this piece in the way that each variation ends with a sudden *sforzando* instead of with a tapered phrase (See Figure 4-22, measure 16).

Variation 1:



Figure 4-22. Op. 51, no. 4: Variation 1, measures 1-16¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Dmitry Borisovich Kabalevsky, *At the Piano with Kabalevsky*, ed. Maurice Hinson (Van Nuys, CA.: Alfred Publishing, 1990), 13.

¹⁰⁰ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 24.

In the first variation, while the right hand still stays within the two hand positions of G major and e minor, the left hand accompaniment pattern becomes more involved. The open fifth moves from a downbeat drone-like figure to the second beat of every measure giving the piece even more rhythmic interest. After this, the left hand becomes a bouncing figure outlining a G major chord.

In playing this variation, the performer should highlight the contrast seen between measures 1-4 and 5-8, and again between measures 9-12 and 13-16 (See Figure 4-22). In measures 1-4, the dynamic marking is *forte* and marked *marcato*. This drastically changes in measure 5-8 where the dynamic marking is *piano* and marked *leggiero*.

Variation 2:

The image shows a musical score for Variation 2, measures 1-4 of Op. 51, no. 4 by Dmitri Kabalevsky. The score is in 2/4 time, key of G major (one sharp). It shows a piano (p) dynamic. The right hand plays a G major arpeggio starting on the 5th degree (B) in measures 1-4. The left hand plays a G major arpeggio starting on the 1st degree (G) in measures 1-4. The score is labeled 'Var. 2' and '25'.

Figure 4-23. Op. 51, no. 4: Variation 2, measures 1-4¹⁰¹

This variation is the only place in op. 51 that contains an arpeggio. Here, both hands play a G major arpeggio but with the right hand starting on the 5th of the chord. Kabalevsky mitigates this challenge by making the arpeggio only span two octaves so that there is only one hand position change with the thumbs coming together. This variation is also repetitive.

¹⁰¹ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 25.

Variation 3:

In teaching students from beginning to intermediate levels, teachers often search for those pieces with a prominent left hand. This is done in the hope that both of the student's hands will be developed equally. In general, much of the repertoire that students learn is right hand dominant. Yet, it is a vitally important that the hands become more equal and the left hand should be able to play singing melodies.

In this variation, the left hand carries the melody below detached, off-beat chords in the right hand (See Figure 4-24). This variation is very similar to an easier composition of Kabalevsky entitled *Toccatina* (See Figure 4-25).



Figure 4-24. Op. 51, no. 4: Variation 3¹⁰²



Figure 4-25. Op. 27, no. 12 *Toccatina*, Measures 1-14¹⁰³

¹⁰² Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 25.

¹⁰³ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *30 Pieces for Children (op. 27)*, ed. Joseph Prostakoff (New York: Schirmer, 1968),

Variation 4:

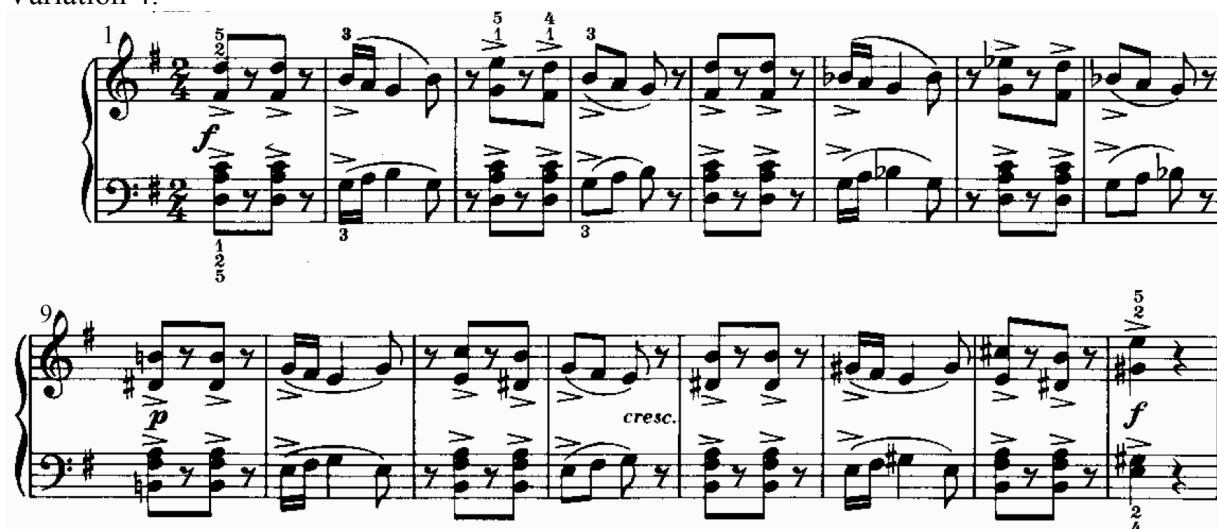


Figure 4-26. Op. 51, no. 4: Variation 4, measures 1-8¹⁰⁴

The primary technical challenge of this variation is the rhythm (See Figure 4-26). This piece is mostly made up of chords and short melodic passages. The hardest element of this variation is the transition from measures 2-3. Instead of playing on the downbeats as in measure 1, both hands have to come in on the off-beat. In order to create the desired effect of this variation, rhythmic precision without any sense of *rubato* is a requirement. In measure 3, the hands have the urge to play on the downbeat because the final eighth note G and B in measure 2 feel like an anacrusis. Keeping the foot tapping on beats one and two throughout the entire variation can be effective way to navigate this challenge. By doing this, the performer can feel exactly how that hands should come in on the off-beats in measure 3.

Variation 5:



Figure 4-27. Op. 51, no. 4: Variation, measures 9-16¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 26.

¹⁰⁵ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 26.

Variation 5 is a refreshing contrast to the fourth variation and provides a moment of repose before the more extroverted sixth variation. In this minor variation, the performer must play with a singing tone in the right hand while being aware of the second beat rests in every measure for the left hand. Only a touch of pedal at most should be used at the beginning of each measure. In the last measure of the variation, Kabalevsky writes a breath mark separating the last two chords. The performer can treat the last note of this variation in the tempo and character of the next variation.

Variation 6:

The sixth variation is one of the most exciting variations of this set and is particularly effective after the more subdued, *cantabile* fifth variation. This variation alternates between declamatory scale passages followed by a lyrical right hand above a pulsating left hand. The piece goes back and forth between these two different characters.

Variation 7 and coda:



Figure 4-28. Op. 51, no. 4: Variation 7 and Coda, measures 1-25¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 27.

The seventh variation/coda is the longest and most technically demanding of op. 51, no. 4. In this variation, the right hand has to work to clearly voice the top melody of a three-note chord (See Figure 4-28). Unlike other variations in this set, the left hand of this piece is much more involved and provides a chromatically moving counter-melody. In the first section (measures 1-16), the left hand must voice to the thumb on each note that has an *accent* (measures 1-8) or *tenuto* (measures 9-16). This pattern is suddenly reversed in measure 17, and now the fifth finger contains an accent and must voice the counter-melody. This is a significant technical challenge because the performer only has one chord before this change occurs.

The coda spans from measures 25-40. The final cadence of the piece moves from $bII \rightarrow V7 \rightarrow I$ (See Figure 4-29). The bII chord is played like the opening motive of the piece but this time in different registers of the piano.



Figure 4-29. Op. 51, no. 4: Variation 7 and Coda, measures 26-40¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 27.

Op. 51, No. 5 Six Variations on a Ukrainian Folk Song

Level: 7

Form: Theme and Six Variations

Overall Musical and Technical Requirements:

1. Juxtaposition of legato and staccato touches
2. Passing melody between the hands
3. Light, leggiero articulation in variations 2 and 3
4. Legato double-thirds
5. Three-part texture

Theme:

Op. 51, No. 5
(1952)

Theme

1 Andantino

p cantando

IV6 iv6 V VI IV V

Figure 4-30. Op. 51, no. 5: Theme¹⁰⁸

The theme of this variation starts with the same aesthetic as op. 51, no. 3 *Gray Day Variations on a Slovakian Folk Song*. The legato right hand theme is written in a very narrow range. The melody spans the interval of a minor 7th with most of the notes being around the range of a perfect fourth. Similar to op. 51, no. 3, this song is also a lullaby. The main challenge

¹⁰⁸ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 28.

of this variation is the juxtaposition of the *cantando* right hand with staccato chords underneath. As is the case with many of the Op. 51 variations, the theme has a very square phrase structure. In the theme, the eight-measure phrase is broken down into four two-measure basic ideas. Measures 3-4 are almost an exact repetition of measures 1-2, and measures 7-8 are almost the same as measures 5-6 (See figure 4-30). While it can help the student to have material repeated, in the theme and subsequent variations, the student must read the notes and accidentals very carefully in order to observe the frequent oscillation between F and F-sharp. This rapid oscillation between major and minor is a common characteristic of Kabalevsky's works. While the end result is unique and entertaining music, it also poses reading traps for students.

Variation 1:



Figure 4-31. Op. 51, no. 5: Variation 1, measures 1-4¹⁰⁹

It quickly becomes apparent why this piece is labeled a Level 7 work according to Jane Magrath's leveling system after looking at the first variation. In this variation, the melody is passed back and forth between the hands. Both of the hands are playing chords which makes proper voicing even more difficult. In order to bring out the melody, the performer must voice the thumb of both hands.

¹⁰⁹ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 28.

Variation 2:

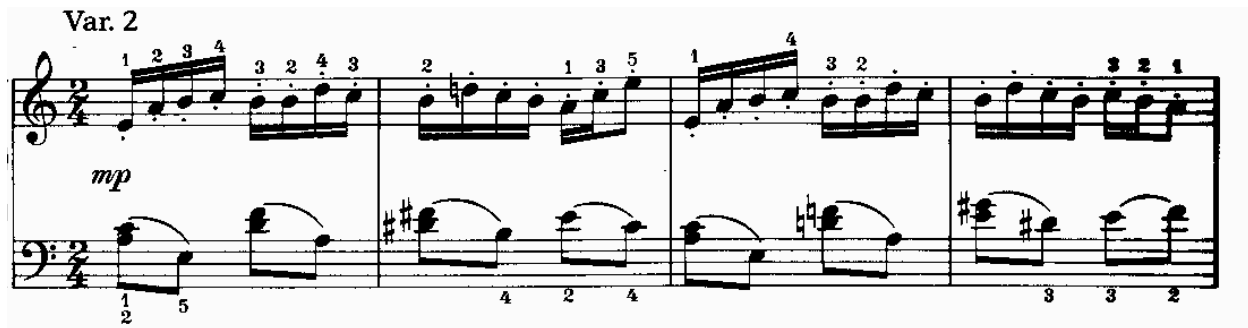


Figure 4-32. Op. 51, no. 5: Variation 2, measures 1-4¹¹⁰

The second variation presents a challenge frequently seen in the Op. 51 variations. The right hand has running, staccato sixteenth notes above a left hand made up of two-note slurs. The most challenging aspect of this variation is to execute the two-note slur while the right hand plays staccato. The best solution is to make the second note of each two-note slur staccato so that the hands leave the keys at the same time. This concept can also be used to coordinate the hands in the third variation.

Variation 3:



Figure 4-33. Op. 51, no. 5: Variation 3, measures 1-4¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 29.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 29.

As stated earlier, one of the aspects of Kabalevsky's compositional style that make his music attractive for students is the highly idiomatic writing that often sounds more difficult than it is. Variation 3 is a great example of that idiomatic writing. In this variation, an eighth-note triplet figure is passed between the hands. The left hand two-note slur fits perfectly with the three-note slur of the right hand. In this passage, since the hands are going in contrary motion, the hands can mirror each other and make the exact same shape. Both hands have a staccato in the exact same place which also helps to coordinate putting the hands together. The end result is an exciting variation for the student that can provide a break from the more challenging surrounding variations.

Variation 4:



Figure 4-34. Op. 51, no. 5, Variation no. 4¹¹²

The fourth variation contains many of the technical challenges of the first variation but on a more sophisticated level. Like the first variation, the melody is passed between the hands.

¹¹² Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 30.

However, in this variation, there is the added challenge of accents. Also, the pattern that stays consistent in the first variation is now broken. In the first four measures, the left hand has down-beat accents while the right hand plays on each off-beat. This pattern flips in measures 5, 7, 9, and 11 (See Figure 4-34). Often times these sudden pattern changes are difficult for students to execute without hesitations in the music.

Variation 5:

A Section (mm. 1-8)
Var. 5

B Section (9-16)

A' Section (17-24)

Figure 4-35. op. 51, no. 1: Variation 5¹¹³
*Boxes denote motive from the main theme

¹¹³ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 30.

The fifth variation moves from tonic to the parallel key of A major. Even though the key has modulated, this section still has elements of A minor with the F-naturals seen in measures 1, 2, 5, and 6 (See Figure 4-35). This variation is in a mini ABA form with the B section modulating to F# minor before going back to A major at the return of the A section. The sheer length of this variation and the fact it is a rounded binary form demonstrates one of the reasons why this Op. 51, no. 4 is the most challenging variation of Op. 51. In this variation, the melody of theme has been deconstructed and we are only presented with a short segment of the theme in measures 3-4 and in measures 7-8. Later, the theme is further fragmented down to three notes (measures 19-20). Finally, at the end, the 7-note motive from the theme is augmented and creates the effect of a written-in *ritardando* (See Figure 4-35, measures 21-24).

The technical challenges of this variation are numerous. The right hand has several passages of legato thirds. While legato third playing can be difficult, Kabalevsky has toned down this challenge by keeping the legato thirds within one hand position. The even more challenging aspect of the right hand is the leaping chords in measures 3-4 and 7-8. Unlike other variations in op. 51, another element that makes this variation stand out is in the difficulty and musical interest given to the accompanying hand. In most of the variations, with the exception of op. 51, no. 4, the left hand accompanies the right hand with simple chords. In this variation however, the left hand has its own interesting part providing a counter melody to the right hand. This creates a three-part texture. This difficulty is particularly pronounced in measures 9-16 when the left hand must hold and bring out each half-note counter melody while at the same time playing the accompanying off-beats.

Variation 6:

Measure 1 2 3 4

The image shows a musical score for Variation 6 of Op. 51, No. 5 by Dmitri Kabalevsky. The score is in 2/4 time and consists of 8 measures. Measures 1-2 are marked 'p' (piano). Measures 3-4 are marked 'poco marcato'. Measures 5-8 are marked 'mf cantando'. The score features complex fingering and double-note passages in both hands. The first system shows measures 1-4, and the second system shows measures 5-8. The score is written for piano and includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Figure 4-36. op. 51, no. 5: Variation 6¹¹⁴

The technical challenge of legato double-notes becomes more pronounced in this variation. Instead of the double notes simply staying in one hand position, there are multiple hand positions and the interval changes in the second measure. In this variation, the theme can be observed in fragments in the left hand (See Figure 4-36, measures 3-4 and 7-8).

This variation is one of the only places in the entire Op. 51 set that contains imitative writing. The piece ends with a fragmented theme dying away and rising imitatively between the hands followed by a written-out *ritardando* (See the 3/4 measure in Figure 4-37). The final cadence contains half-step voice leading which is very typical of Kabalevsky's music. When playing this piece, the performer should highlight and exaggerate the dying away at the end.

¹¹⁴ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 31.



Figure 4-37. Op. 51, no. 5: Variation 6, last six measures¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 31.

CHAPTER FIVE: PEDAGOGICAL ANALYSIS OF VARIATIONS OP. 40, NO. 1 AND NO. 2

The Op. 40 variations would be a suitable repertoire assignment for a student who has mastered *Six Variations on a Ukrainian Folk Song*, op. 51, no. 5. Both variations from op. 40 are appropriately labeled a level 8 according to Magrath's leveling system.¹¹⁶ This is up a level from Op. 51, no. 5 which is labeled a level 7. There are several broad reasons for this rise in difficulty. First, the Op. 40 variations are significantly longer than the op. 51 variations. Op. 40, no. 1 comprises 12 variations and coda. Op. 40, no. 2 only contains five variations, but each individual variation is longer and more technically demanding.

As discussed before, the economy of technical challenges in the op. 51 variations is one of the contributing factors that make these pieces so successful and appropriate for the middle-intermediate student. In those variations, technical challenges are focused and each variation has an obvious technical or musical challenge. This remains the case for many of the op. 40 variations, but some of the variations do not adhere to this sound pedagogical principle.

In addition to having several technical challenges within each variation, these variations also contain various advanced techniques clearly on a different level than the op. 51. One such advanced technique can be observed in op. 40 no. 1 (See Figure 5-1). In this variation, one voice in each hand must sustain a note while simultaneously playing other voices *staccato*. This technique requires more finger dexterity, a wider reach, and close attention to balance and voicing. While this technique is difficult, it is a concept that frequently appears in more challenging piano repertoire.

¹¹⁶ Jane Magrath, *The Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature* (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Company, 1995), 404.



Figure 5-1. Op. 40, no. 1: Variation 10¹¹⁷

Another challenge completely absent the op. 51 variation is the sometimes awkward, non-idiomatic writing observed in op. 40. One example of this is the parallel arpeggios observed in the fifth variation of op. 40, no. 2. Unlike the idiomatic arpeggios of Op. 51, no. 4, these arpeggios rather awkward to play and follow a non-traditional arpeggio fingering (See figure 5-2 versus 5-3).



Figure 5-2. op. 40, no. 2: Variation 5¹¹⁸
Un-idiomatic parallel arpeggios

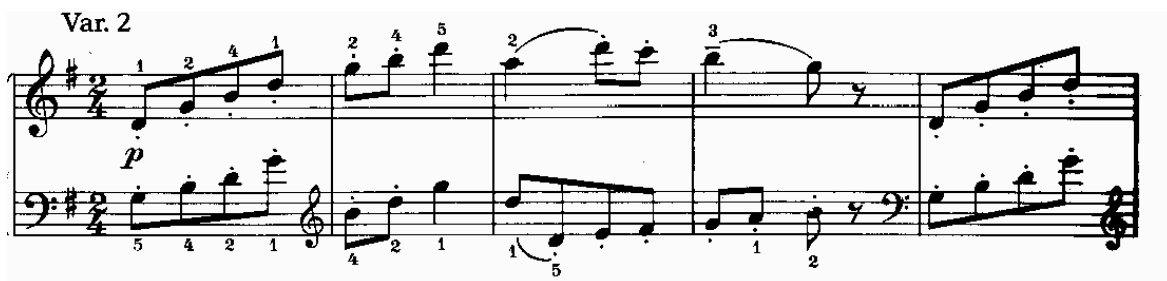


Figure 5-3. Op. 51, no. 4: Variation 2
Idiomatic arpeggio

¹¹⁷ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 4.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

Due to the increased technical challenges, these two variations are very rewarding for the late-intermediate student willing to put forth the effort to learn these pieces.

Op. 40, no. 1 in d major

Magrath Level: 8

Overall Musical and Technical Requirements:

1. Juxtaposition of legato and staccato touches
2. Passing melody between the hands
3. Balanced dynamics between the hands
4. Holding one note in each hand while playing other notes staccato

Introduction:

This piece begins with a 17-measure introduction before the theme enters. One slight difficulty in the introduction is the juxtaposition of legato and staccato. From the very second measure, the student must hold the top A with the fifth finger while playing a chord with the rest of the fingers (See Figure 5-4). The other main challenge is a reading one. One of Kabalevsky's main compositional devices is the rapid alternation between major and minor. Each time the beginning four-measure basic idea comes back it is slightly altered. With the being, said the introduction is relatively easy and gives the student an opportunity to settle into the piece and prepare for some of the more technically demanding variations.

Figure 5-4. op. 40, no. 1 Introduction¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 1.

Theme:

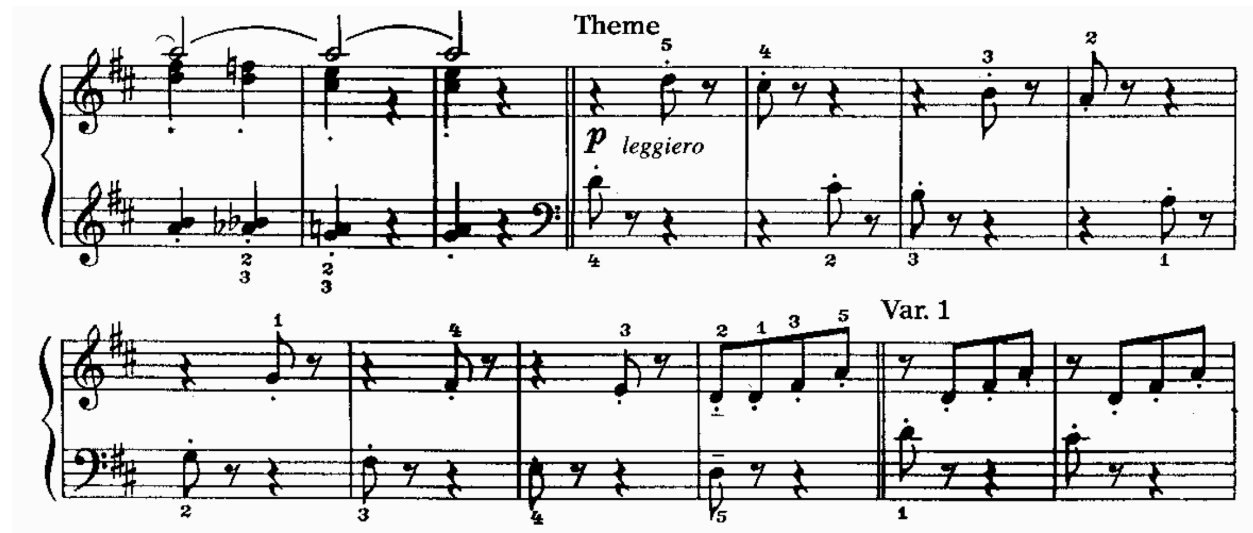


Figure 5-5. op. 40, no. 2: Theme¹²⁰

The theme of this work is a descending D major scale played staccato and alternating between the hands (See Figure 5-5). Because it is so easy to play, the student must choose a strict tempo that will be appropriate for the rest of the work. Starting from the theme, op. 40, no. 1 could strike the listener as somewhat anachronistic with several elements indicating the Baroque style. The theme also acts as a ground bass for the rest of the work. In many of the variations, this descending bass line stays underneath a right hand that becomes more complex and virtuosic in each subsequent variation. The other element that points an older compositional style is the fact that the subtitle labels this piece a toccata: a genre frequently seen in the Renaissance and the Baroque era. This variation could perhaps represent the light, improvisatory, and virtuosic side of the baroque/renaissance toccata.

Like many other of Kabalevsky's pedagogical works, this work is a good example of the "Three Whales of Music" philosophy of the song, march, and dance permeating Kabalevsky's

¹²⁰ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 1.

compositions. In addition to emulating a baroque dance, one can also find a song in the 5th variation with the expressive leaps and longer phrases. Finally, one can find a march in variation 12 with the driving rhythm of dotted-eighth/sixteenth notes.

Variations 1-4 (Dance):

The image displays three staves of musical notation for Variations 2, 3, and 4. Each variation is written for piano in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. Variation 2 consists of 6 measures. Variation 3 consists of 8 measures, beginning with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. Variation 4 consists of 6 measures. The notation includes fingerings, slurs, and articulation marks.

Figure 5-6. Variations: 2-3¹²¹

Variations 1-4 are very similar in their technical and musical challenges. For the majority of these variations, the articulation is a combination of *staccato*, *tenuto*, and two-note slurs (See Figure 5-6, specifically variation 3). Much like the theme of this piece, the student must be very careful not to rush these variations simply because they are easier to play than the subsequent variations.

¹²¹ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 2.

Variation 5 (Song)

Var. 5 *dolce*
pp

Figure 5-7. op. 40, no. 1: Variation 5¹²²
 *Boxes denote descending f# minor scale

This variation is the first major stylistic change in the piece. Everything that came before was in a dance style. This variation is more evocative of a song with the right hand being the singer and the left hand being the accompanist. Several features of this variation point to its vocal characteristics. The first indication is the longer phrase markings. This is the first variation

¹²² Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 2-3.

that Kabalevsky has marked the overall character as legato. The other element that makes this variation vocal is the wide and expressive leaps in the right hand (See Figure 5-7). Kabalevsky's dynamic markings emphasize the expressive nature of these leaps.

One of the primary technical challenges of this variation is in balancing the right hand and the left hand. The left hand must be significantly softer so that one can hear the melody in the right hand. This is especially difficult not only because some of the left hand passagework is awkward but also because the left hand is played in the loudest register of the piano.

In addition, another difficult aspect of this variation is following the longer line of the right hand melody. Although this variation lacks the thematic descending d major scale, in the example above, one can find a descending f# minor scale going from dominant down to tonic (See boxed notes in Figure 5-7). This descending fifth should be heard and brought out because it is reminiscent of the main theme.

Variation 6 (Toccata):

The image shows a musical score for Variation 6 (Toccata) from Op. 40, No. 1 by Dmitri Kabalevsky. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of two systems of music. The first system shows the right hand with wide leaps and the left hand with a descending scale. The second system, labeled 'Var. 6', shows a more complex texture with triplets and a descending scale in the left hand. A box highlights a descending fifth in the left hand of the first system, which is a link between the fifth and sixth variations.

Figure 5-8. op. 40, no. 1: Variation 5→6¹²³
 *Box denotes link between fifth and sixth variations

¹²³ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 3.

This variation is likely to be a student favorite. It fits well in the hand and sounds much more challenging than it is to play. In this variation, a triplet figure is passed between the hands. The triplet figure is idiomatic for the piano and fits perfectly in the hand. Because this variation is a lot easier to play than it sounds, a potential pitfall for the student is to take a tempo that is too fast. A way to counteract this impulse is to maintain the same exact tempo from the more lyrical fifth variation. The last measure of the fifth variation links to the sixth variation, and the triplet figure found in the left hand of variation 5 becomes the tempo of the right hand in the sixth variation (See Figure 5-8).

Variation 7-8: (March):

The image shows the musical score for Variations 7 and 8 of Op. 40, No. 1 by Dmitri Kabalevsky. Variation 7 is marked 'f' and Variation 8 is marked 'p sub.'. Both variations are in 4/4 time and feature a march style with triplet figures. The score is written for piano with treble and bass staves. Variation 7 consists of six measures, and Variation 8 consists of six measures. The triplet figure is a key element in both variations, passed between the hands.

Figure 5-9. op. 40, no. 1: Variation 7¹²⁴

In these variations, the music switches to a much more declamatory march style. In these variations, the rhythm is primary and creates the impression of a snare drum. These two variations are both in the march style, but should be played differently. Variation 7 is marked

¹²⁴ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 4.

forte and is in the key of D major. It is the more extraverted variation. Variation 8 is marked *subito piano* and is in the key of d natural minor. This variation should be much more introverted.

In each of these variations, Kabalevsky puts the theme of the descending d major/minor scale into the bass voice (See Figure 5-9). This presents a voicing challenge as students are used to voicing the top melody of the right hand. The suggested fingering for the left hand in this passage will help allow for proper voicing.

Variation 9:



Figure 5-10. Op. 40, no. 1: Variation 9¹²⁵
 *Circle notes denote descending d minor scale

In the ninth variation, a declamatory driving eighth-note passage is played in unison. Like the previous variation, it is in the key of d minor. This variation is very angular and contains several wide leaps. While cleverly disguised in the texture, there is a descending d minor scale embedded in this variation linking it to the Theme (See Figure 5-10). Kabalevsky does not put accents or do anything to draw attention to this scale because the melodically important notes are

¹²⁵ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 4.

already placed on metrically strong beats. This variation links to the tenth variation in the last two measures.

Variation 10:



Figure 5-11. op. 40, no. 1: Variation 10¹²⁶
 *Note the suggested fingering in measure 6

The tenth variation, while easy to read, is the most technically and musically demanding variation of the twelve variations. The piece up until now has been made up of a two-part texture. In this variation, a four-part texture emerges (See Figure 5-11). There are several technical and musical challenges in this variation. In each hand, there is the juxtaposition of staccato and legato. The top note of both hands must be held above of a staccato passage played with the other fingers. In addition, the staccato notes must be subordinated and the upper voices must be played quite loudly. This is the only way to achieve the desired balance and hear the chromatically ascending line of the upper notes.

¹²⁶ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 4-5.

Variation 10 is the only instance in the op. 40 and op. 51 variations calling for this advanced articulation. While difficult to execute, this articulation helps the student to prepare for the kinds of demands from many more challenging works from the advanced repertoire.

Variation 11:

Figure 5-12. op. 40, no. 1: Variation 11¹²⁷

*Boxes denote where the pattern changes

*Circle shows most difficult pattern change

This light-hearted variation, like variation 6, is bound to be another student favorite. Like the sixth variation, it sounds more difficult than it is to play. The most challenging part of this variation, and any piece in general, is executing the passages where the pattern changes. In the following example, the pattern changes three times in the left hand (See Figure 5-12). First, the

¹²⁷ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 5.

left hand plays an oscillating eighth-note pattern with a two-note chord on each beat. The pattern then switches to a pulsating chord played on beat one. Finally, the pattern switches again, and the left hand plays on off-beats. This switch is the most challenging.

In instances where there is a sudden pattern change, the best way to practice mastering the passage is to first isolate the exact place where the pattern changes. After getting comfortable with the change of pattern, one can then gradually increase the practice segment until one can successfully play from one pattern to the next without any hesitation at the transition.

Variation 12 and Coda (March):

The image shows a musical score for Variation 12, measures 1-12, from Op. 40, No. 1 by Dmitri Kabalevsky. The score is written for piano in 4/4 time, featuring a treble and bass staff. The right hand plays a series of chords and eighth-note patterns, while the left hand plays a complex, oscillating eighth-note pattern. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'più f' and 'f', and various fingering and articulation instructions.

Figure 5-13. op. 40, no. 1: Variation 12, measures 1-12¹²⁸

Variation 12 is a cheerful, virtuosic romp to the end of a light-hearted work. At the onset of this variation, the first two measures contain declamatory chords outlining tonic and dominant

¹²⁸ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 6.

harmonies (See Figure 5-13). This is followed by a 4-note scalar passage in C major passed between the hands. This alternation between declamatory trumpet-like chords and scalar passages last until the coda starts in measure 13.

The primary technical challenge of this final variation has to do with tempo control. The scalar passages observed in Figure 5-13 are very idiomatic and sound significantly more difficult than they are to play. As a result, the student must be very careful not to rush the inner-16th notes of this passage.

Measures 13-28 comprise the coda of the work. In the first part of this coda, the left hand plays a repetitive descending D major scale underneath right hand staccato chords. The difficult element of this variation is at the very end of the work. In the last four measures of the piece, each measure has a quarter-note chord and a rest on the second beat (See Figure 5-14). In this section, the performer must still feel the subdivided pulse of the eighth-note in order to avoid rushing the passage.



Figure 5-14. op. 40, no. 1: Coda¹²⁹

¹²⁹ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 6.

Op. 40, no. 2 in a minor

Magrath Level: 8

Overall Musical and Technical Requirements:

1. Contrapuntal play and melodic imitation
2. Rapid Arpeggios
3. Specific articulation
4. Half-step voice leading

This piece, while labeled at the same level as Op. 40, no. 1, is the most challenging variation Kabalevsky wrote excluding the three variation sets from Op. 87. It is the longest of all the variations studied so far and is the most technically involved. It also contains a more sophisticated writing style. There are four elements that make this variation more sophisticated than any of the other variations discussed thus far. The first is that in this piece both of the hands are treated more equally. Unlike previous variations sets where there has been a clear delineation between the melody and accompaniment, this balance between melody and accompaniment in op. 40, no. 2 is more ambiguous. Second, one special characteristic of this piece that is not often observed in Kabalevsky's pedagogical works is the imitative, contrapuntal writing seen throughout this composition. Third, along with this contrapuntal complexity, this piece is harmonically more sophisticated than the other works observed thus far. This piece contains frequent chromatically moving lines often cleverly disguised in the texture. This subtle writing could easily go unnoticed by the amateur performer.

The fourth element makes this pieces more challenging is the sheer length. There are a few variations from op. 40, no. 2 that could be broken down into variations in and of themselves. Also, while the other variations tend to have one technical focus in each variation, a few variations from op. 40, no. 2 contain multiple technical challenges, and one has to frequently shift gears right in the middle of the variation.

Theme (Dance):



Figure 5-15. op. 40, no. 2: Theme¹³⁰

According to Jane Magrath, this piece by Kabalevsky was “not his most inspired writing.”¹³¹ Part of the reason for this could simply be the unmemorable melody on which this variation is based. As discussed earlier, one of the characteristics that usually make Kabalevsky's music attractive for students is the concise, singable, attractive, and sometimes evocative melodies that provide the basis of his compositions. The melody from op. 51, no. 3 was a good example. The main melody of op. 40, no. 2 is a long, breath-less melody, containing large leaps.

From the onset of theme, one can see that the left hand is going to be more involved than the left hand of the other variations sets. This equalizing of the left hand and the right hand is part of the reason why this piece is more advanced. During the first four measures, the left hand plays a staccato broken octave on beats 2 and 3 of each measure creating a dialogue between the

¹³⁰ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 7

¹³¹ Jane Magrath, *The Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature* (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Company, 1995), 404.

hands (See Figure 5-15). In this section, the performer must take extra care to observe this *cantabile, legato* articulation of the right hand while making the left hand staccato.

Throughout Op. 40, no. 2, with the exception of the third variation, the tempo gradually increases. By the fifth variation, tempo marking is *Allegro Molto*. So that the tempo change to *Allegro Molto* is smooth and logical, one must consider the tempo marking of the beginning *Moderato* very carefully. The performer should take this piece on the faster side of *Moderato* so that the tempo increase makes logical sense. In addition, the time signature of 2/2 indicates a faster tempo because the student should only feel one pulse per measure.

Variation 1 (Dance):



Figure 5-16. op. 40, no. 2: Variation 1¹³²

The first indication of the aforementioned contrapuntal/imitative writing occurs in this variation. In measure 4-5, the right hand imitates the left hand motive and subsequently takes over the melody (See Figure 5-16). The next instance of imitation occurs between measures 8-9.

¹³² Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 7.

This time, the left hand imitates a short motive played in the right hand a whole-step higher. This passing back and forth of the melody is the main technical challenge of this variation.

Variation 2: *Più mosso* (Dance)

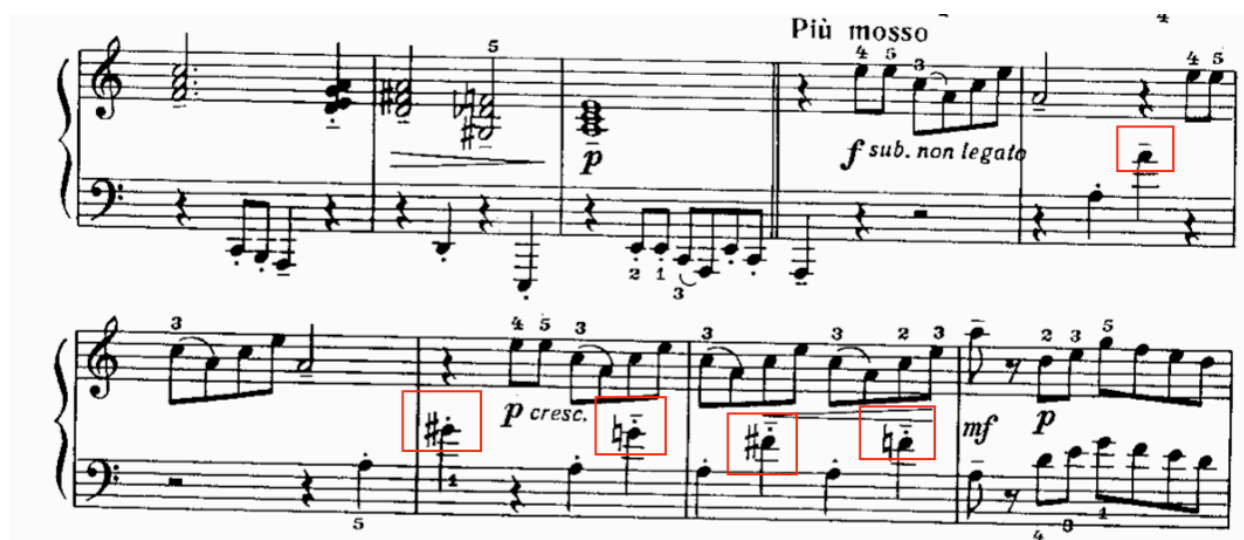


Figure 5-17. Op. 40, no. 2: Variation 2: measures 1-6¹³³
 *Circled notes denote chromatic descent

There is a major character change in this variation. Accompanying the *più mosso* (more motion) indication is the dynamic of *forte* and the performance instruction *subito non-legato* (suddenly not connected). All of these markings give the piece a more dance-like feel than the Theme and first variation.

The most challenging aspect of this variation occurs within the first 6 measures. During this variation, the left hand plays a broken staccato pattern with an emphasis on each upper note denoted by a *tenuto* (see figure 5-17). In this passage, the *tenuto* note is chromatically descending from A down to F and is the most interesting voice. The performer should bring out this note so that the audience can perceive the chromatic descent.

¹³³ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 8.

The last three measures of this variation allow for a smooth transition to the third variation. In the last three measures, *molto ritardando* is written above a chromatically ascending scale from E up to F: the first note of Variation 3. In these measures, the performer should carefully calculate the *ritardando* so that there is no perceived tempo change to the *Andante sostenuto* tempo marking indicated in the third variation.

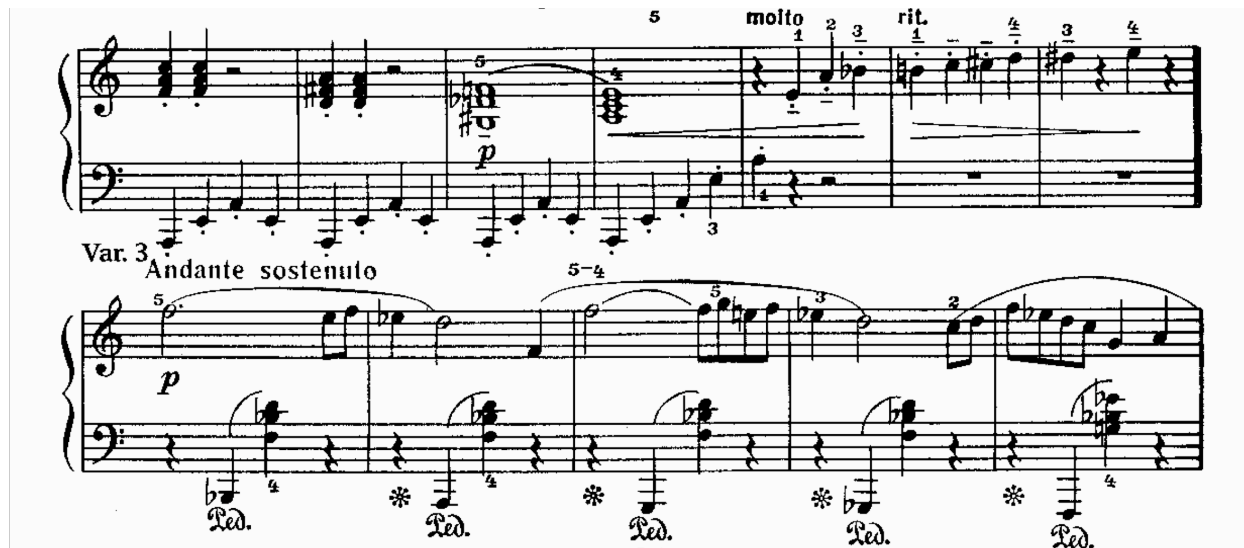


Figure 5-18. op. 40, no. 2: Variation 2-3¹³⁴

Variation 3: *Andante Sostenuto* (Song)

This variation moves to the evocative key of bII. The character of this variation is a song. The use of this key has already been foreshadowed in previous variations by the extensive use of the bII scale degree. The primary technical challenge of this variation is the wide leaps in the left hand (See Figure 5-18). In the first nine measures, the left hand plays a low bass note on beat two and then leaps up to an inverted triad on beat three. Not only does this section have the technical challenge of leaping up to a triad, but also has the added difficulty of reading ledger lines. One can help the student with this reading difficulty by pointing out the diatonic movement of the bass line from B-flat down to F with a G-flat passing tone in measure four. The student

¹³⁴ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 9.

will more easily perceive this diatonic movement if the off-beat pedal indication in the score is observed. The teacher can also point out the student that each time the left hand jumps up, it either lands on a B-flat or E-flat major chord.

Variation 4: Poco piú mosso (March/Song)
A Section

N6 V i N6 V i N6 V

Soloist Tutti

B Section

cantando

mp

ped.

*

Figure 5-19. op. 40, no. 2: Variation 4, measures 3-15¹³⁵

¹³⁵ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 9-10.

While not a full-fledged march, the character of this variation intensifies. Broken down into an ABA form, the A section (measures 1-8) is made of a short two-measure cadential figure outlining the following chord progression: N6→V7→I (See Figure 5-19). In this section, the first two measures are made up of completely contrasting material imitating the rapid oscillation of *soloist* and *tutti*.

The B section (measures 9-20) is marked *cantando* and is a combination of the first and the third variation. It is similar to the song style from the third variation, but with aspects of the contrapuntal writing observed in the first variation.

Variation 5: *Allegro molto*



Figure 5-20 op. 40, no. 2 Variation 5 (Contrary motion arpeggios)¹³⁶

*Note: Playing the arpeggios in contrary motion mitigates the technical challenge because the hands mirror each other

Of all of the variations studied thus far, variation 5 from op. 40, no. 2 is the longest and most difficult. Unlike other variations where a lot of melodic material is repeated, this variation contains many different sections that could be called variations in and of themselves. It contains

¹³⁶ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 11.

several primary technical challenges including: rapid arpeggios played in contrary and parallel motion (see figures 5-20 and 5-21), contrapuntal playing, and two-against-three rhythms.

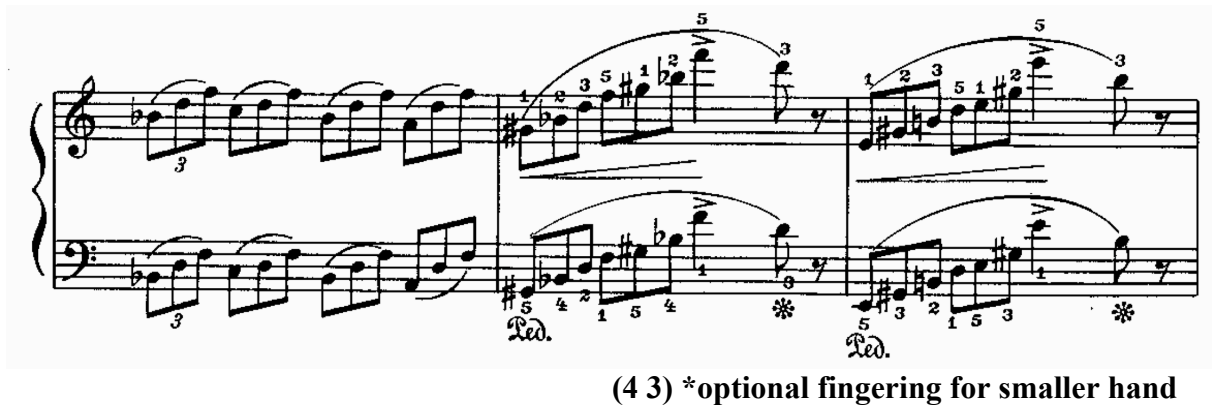


Figure 5-21 op. 40, no. 2 Variation 5 (Parallel motion arpeggios)¹³⁷

The entire last page of this movement, like the ending of op. 40, no. 1, could be considered a new variation or coda. This section is a bombastic ending that sounds as if it could be the music to accompany the Russian circus. The most challenging aspect of this section is the two against three rhythm observed in Figure 5-22. The left hand plays a broken triplet A major arpeggio against declamatory eighth-note chords in the right hand.



Figure 5-22. op. 40, no. 2: Variation 5 (Coda)¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 12.

¹³⁸ Dmitri Kabalevsky, *Dmitri Kabalevsky Complete Variations* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1999), 13.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this paper, the reader has seen Kabalevsky as an educator, politician, and composer. One of the most important contributions of his eclectic musical career was how to improve music education for young students. As an educator, he earned a legacy as someone who intuitively knew how to captivate students' attention and left behind his teaching philosophy in his many lectures, articles, and books about education. In the political realm, Kabalevsky was a tireless advocate for mass music education and developed many organizations for young students. Finally, as a composer, Kabalevsky wrote wonderful teaching pieces that still captivate students today.

In his compositional style, Kabalevsky knew how to captivate students' interest by writing pieces in genres that they were familiar with such as the song, dance, march, and toccata. In his songs, Kabalevsky used well-known, singable folk songs that students would have encountered growing up. In his marches and dances, his pieces contain a rhythmic vitality and excitement. In his toccatas, Kabalevsky was able to write idiomatic virtuoso works that sounded exciting and at the same time were relatively easy to play.

Unfortunately, many of today's students do not have the same familiarity with these three aforementioned genres. Many children now grow up in music-less homes and may not even know what a march or dance sound like. I believe that one lesson that today's teachers can take away from this monograph is the importance of introducing students to the world of music from a young age before they begin formal music study. Many of the musical experiences that children encountered in Kabalevsky's era aren't as prevalent in today's society. Yet, it seems evident that Kabalevsky expected this fundamental musical foundation to be present before

beginning formal music studies. Formally introducing these genres might not have been necessary in Kabalevsky time, but it is becoming more relevant today.

Another vital lesson that today's music teachers can take away from this monograph is the importance of choosing appropriate repertoire for students. One of our main jobs as teachers is to motivate students. A large part of student motivation comes from assigning the right repertoire. In this monograph, I have attempted to elucidate those elements in Kabalevsky's compositions that are attractive for students. I have shown the attractiveness and pedagogical challenges of two very important intermediate teaching sets of Kabalevsky. My hope is that these great variation sets will continue to be taught by piano teachers and that some of his other lesser-known pedagogical works will continue to be explored.

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VITA

Patrick Bachmann started studying piano at the age of 10 in Columbus, Ohio. As an undergrad, he attended Elon University in North Carolina in order to pursue a bachelors degree in Piano Performance. While at Elon, he distinguished himself both as a musician and as a mentor to his fellow students. During his studies at Elon, Mr. Bachmann had the opportunity to play for several famous pianists in masterclass settings. Most notably, he played for Jon Nakamatsu (1997 Van Cliburn Gold Medalist) and Ann Schein. After graduation, he went on to earn a Masters in piano Performance at LSU studying under Michael Gurt.

Mr. Bachmann continued his studies at L.S.U. and is currently working on his D.M.A. in Piano Performance with a minor in Piano Pedagogy. In addition to being a student, Mr. Bachmann works as a Graduate Assistant, teaching group piano to college freshman and sophomores. Mr. Bachmann has also served as a judge and monitor for several local and state competitions. Most recently he was an adjudicator for the GSMTA (Great Shreveport Music Teachers Association) spring competition.

As a teacher, Mr. Bachmann believes that it is of vital importance to be up to date with all of the current research and trends in teaching. He is an active student member of MTNA (Music Teachers National Association) and recently traveled to the 2013 National Conference. He is currently working on his MTNA national certification and plans to be certified by next spring. Throughout his studies, Mr. Bachmann has cultivated a special interest in the area of piano wellness. As an avid bodybuilder who also practices yoga and the Alexander technique, Mr. Bachmann is fascinated to see how all of his unique interests can be combined. He has studied with Sheila Paige and is a regular attendee of the Keyboard Wellness Seminar.