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Poised between two worlds : Nikolai Kapustin's Piano Sonata No. 1 and the classical and jazz tradition

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POISED BETWEEN TWO WORLDS: NIKOLAI KAPUSTIN'S
PIANO SONATA NO. 1
AND THE CLASSICAL AND JAZZ TRADITION

A Dissertation

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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ABSTRACT

The music of Nikolai Kapustin is a roller coaster ride of syncopation, hemiolas, glissandos and perpetual motion. Born in Russia at a time when the communist government forbade such creative foreign elements as improvisation and jazz, Kapustin brought to life an innovative style of music that melded classical and jazz elements into a unique, emotive sound that leaves the listener breathless.

The focus of this study is Kapustin's Piano Sonata No. 1, Op. 39. This study goes through a detailed analysis of the sonata as a whole as well as each individual movement. It also includes a brief biography of the composer, describing the restrictive environment in which Kapustin's creative genius flourished.

There are many characteristics that distinguish Kapustin's music, primarily his incorporation of jazz into classical forms. Other elements unique to Kapustin are his use of hemiolas and syncopations, ambiguous harmonies and meters, depictions of jazz ensembles, as well as writing a majority of his music in perpetual motion. Some of the elements of this piece remind the listener of such compositions by Rachmaninoff, Gershwin and Chopin, and even the snare and bass drums of a rock band. I will discuss how each of these characteristics can be seen in each movement.

I hope this paper will encourage a new generation of musicians and music lovers to explore the kaleidoscopic sounds of Kapustin.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The music of Nikolai Kapustin has many features that make it unique and strikingly different from the music of previous composers. Being a Russian pianist who was classically trained and who also played in jazz bands, Kapustin brings a distinct mixture of Russian, classical, and jazz characteristics to his music. Although several other composers, such as Ravel and Gershwin, have combined classical and jazz elements in their music, Kapustin has done it in a way that no composer has yet done. His Piano Sonata No. 1, Op. 39 showcases this unique blend of Russian, classical and jazz music in a very virtuosic and captivating style.

Biographical Information

To understand a composer's music, it is helpful first to investigate specific influences of certain people and events on his or her life. There are many different factors that shaped the way Nikolai Kapustin composed music. Knowing these main influences will give insight into his music and help the reader understand the unique blend of classical, jazz, and Russian elements that make up Kapustin's music.

Nikolai Kapustin was born in 1937 in Gorlovka, Ukraine to parents who were not musicians, but who wanted their children to study music. When Kapustin was five years old, his older sister began studying the violin, so Kapustin was enrolled in violin lessons as well. He had wanted to study piano, but because of his sister, he started with the violin instead. Their violin teacher, Ivanovich Vinnichenko, heard seven-year-old Kapustin playing Clementi's Op. 36 and realized his interest in piano was greater than the

average child's. Vinnichenko brought Kapustin to study piano with Lubov Frantsuzova who taught at the preparatory school for the Moscow Conservatory.

At this time in Ukraine, Joseph Stalin was the Soviet leader and had banned jazz from public places. He imposed strict boundaries on musical content and originality. Before Stalin, jazz had been tolerated and many jazz bands had formed in Russia. However, in the cultural sphere, Stalin had a fear of anything that was not strictly Russian and put an end to jazz at the time, disbanding all public jazz ensembles and forbidding jazz to be played¹. When Kapustin began music lessons, classical music and Russian music were the only genres allowed in the Soviet Union and were therefore the only music to which he was exposed.

When Kapustin was about eleven years old, he began composing his own music on the piano. However, he did not ever receive formal compositional training, only piano lessons. He started experimenting with his first piano sonata when he was 13; however, it was not something he considered seriously at that time. His work before the discovery of jazz was in a purely academic style, nothing contemporary. He wrote more as an exercise. His piano teacher, Frantsuzova, focused mainly on musicality in playing and neglected technical training. Kapustin developed a great appreciation for the classics, as Frantsuzova had Kapustin play many Beethoven and Mozart sonatas, pieces from Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier, and Rachmaninoff's Prelude in C# minor. In 1952 Kapustin auditioned for and was accepted into preparatory school of the Moscow Conservatory.

At the Conservatory, his teacher was Avrelian Rubakh. Rubakh was a student of Felix Blumenfeld who had also taught the famous pianist, Vladimir Horowitz. Another

¹ Jonathan Mann, "Red, White, and Blue Notes: The Symbiotic Music of Nikolai Kapustin," (D.M.A. diss., University of Cincinnati, 2007), 25.

one of Blumenfeld's students was Alexander Tsfasman, the first Russian jazz pianist. Kapustin had a strong connection with Rubakh and liked that he taught technique as well as musicianship. Under his tutelage, Kapustin's facility at the piano grew immensely and he worked on progressively more difficult pieces as his technique improved. While taking lessons with Rubakh, he continued to compose his own music. Kapustin was exposed to jazz music for the first time while attending the conservatory preparatory school. By this time, Stalin had died and jazz was once again allowed to be performed. Kapustin heard jazz being played on "The Voice of America" program on the radio. By hearing jazz at this impressionable stage of his life, Kapustin became so interested in it that he wanted to try to incorporate jazz into his own music.

After completing the preparatory program, Kapustin entered the Moscow Conservatory at age 18. He then began to study piano with Alexander Goldenweiser. However, Kapustin did not think much of Goldenweiser's teaching. Goldenweiser was 81 years old, and although he had a strong connection to the Russian School, and had known Rachmaninoff personally, offered little help to Kapustin during their lessons².

Kapustin began to combine classical and jazz elements in his own music career. In 1956, he began playing piano in a jazz big band orchestra. He also began writing music that incorporated jazz. Kapustin made his debut as a soloist with his Piano Concerto Op. 1 at the Sixth International Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow in 1957. This piece is a concerto written for piano and jazz orchestra. At this time, Kapustin began improvising more and eventually started a jazz quintet with several of his friends from the jazz orchestra. They played in different venues around Moscow and eventually were broadcast on "Voice of America," the radio program that had initially introduced

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

Kapustin to jazz while he was in preparatory school. Kapustin then composed music at the piano for his jazz ensemble to perform, but found that he preferred the way the arrangements sounded on piano to the way they sounded when the jazz band performed them.

Kapustin's student years drew to a close upon his graduation from the Moscow Conservatory in 1961. When he had begun his study at the Moscow Conservatory years earlier, Kapustin had aspired to become a virtuoso classical pianist. However, around the age of 21, he realized he enjoyed jazz music and composing more than he enjoyed performing³. Instead of touring as a solo virtuoso pianist, he spent the next 11 years touring the Soviet Union with Oleg Lundstrom's Jazz Orchestra. During this time, he wrote many works for jazz orchestra and for solo piano. After touring with Oleg Lundstrom's orchestra, he continued to serve as a pianist and arranger for the Television and Radio Light Orchestra of Vadim Lyudvikovsky (1972–1977), and later for The State Cinematography Symphony Orchestra (1977–1984).

In 1980, Kapustin premiered his Piano Concerto No. 2 in Tchaikovsky Hall in Moscow. However, this was to be his last major solo performance. He decided to stop performing in public and focus solely on writing music. The first piece Kapustin published was his Toccata, Op. 36. In addition to having several other pieces published, Kapustin also worked on recording solo piano albums.

From the beginning, Kapustin's compositions have always focused on the synthesis of jazz and classical elements. According to Jonathan Roberts in his dissertation, *Classical Jazz: The Life and Musical Innovations of Nikolai Kapustin*, "The

³ Anderson, 94.

guiding force throughout Kapustin's life has been his obsession (he [Kapustin] has referred to it as his '*idée fixe*') with classical-jazz amalgamation." Kapustin was not interested in being a jazz pianist because ultimately he did not like improvisation. What he preferred was writing music that sounded improvisatory. Because his music was written out and was not improvised, it was allowed in the Soviet Union during a time when true jazz was not.

Kapustin had remained relatively unknown to the western world until his music was recorded. Nikolai Petrov recorded Kapustin's Piano Sonata No. 2 and the Intermezzo from Eight Concert Etudes, Op. 40 (Olympia OCD 273 and MKM 157) in 1992. Two subsequent recordings released by the renowned Hyperion Records have done much to make his music more well-known to the general public. The first recording was released in May 2000 and was recorded by pianist Steven Osbourne. The second recording was released in June 2004 and was recorded by pianist Marc-Andre Hamelin. These recordings contain his etudes, preludes, sonatas, variations, bagatelles, and a suite.

Kapustin's music is sometimes considered "third-stream"⁴ music, as it is a mixture of both classical and jazz elements. However, Roberts argues that Kapustin's music is not third-stream because what he has created is truly a genre of its own. Third-stream or "crossover" music is music that begins in one genre (usually classical) and crosses over into a different genre (usually jazz). Roberts says that Kapustin is equally rooted in both jazz and classical music, and therefore his compositions combine classical

⁴ "Third Stream" is a term coined in 1957 by composer Gunther Schuller to describe a musical genre that is a synthesis of classical music and jazz.

and jazz in a unique way. Kapustin “utilizes the structure of classical music and the style of jazz, all while maintaining a distinct Russian quality.”⁵

Following is an analysis of Kapustin’s Sonata No. 1, in which we will explore the classical, jazz, and Russian elements that make Kapustin’s music so singular.

⁵ Jonathan Roberts, “Classical Jazz: The Life and Musical Innovations of Nikolai Kapustin,” (D.M.A. diss., University of Alabama, 2013), 2.

CHAPTER 2: PIANO SONATA NO. 1, OP. 39 “SONATA-FANTASIA”

Overview of the Sonata

There are several aspects that are unique to Kapustin’s compositional style. Kapustin’s music in general is characterized by constant, almost perpetual motion, and his Piano Sonata No. 1, op. 39 is no exception. Although there are places where the rhythm relaxes slightly, especially in the slow movement, most of the piece is written in unrelenting running notes. Another stylistic element is how Kapustin treats harmony; the entire piece is composed of jazz harmonies. Other composers who incorporate jazz would perhaps bring some jazz harmony into a piece that would otherwise be written using traditional classical harmony. However, Kapustin uses jazz harmony throughout, but in the context of classical forms. All of this can be seen throughout the piece as a whole and most vividly in the last movement.

In addition to this, Kapustin likes to use ambiguous harmonies. There are also many instances in the sonata where the listener is uncertain of the harmony. Three of the four movements begin with an unclear key. This is because there is a lack of tonic chord until the entrance of the main theme, which does not appear until the introduction concludes. Ambiguous harmony builds suspense and Kapustin certainly takes advantage of this throughout the sonata.

This sonata is composed of four movements: a fantasy-like first movement, a lyrical slow second movement, a scherzo-like third movement, and a sonata form finale. Throughout the sonata, Kapustin uses unresolved harmonies from one section to the other and extends this practice even between movements. All of the movements, except the

third to fourth movement, end on a note or harmony that resolves into the first measure of the following movement. Each movement begins on a note that is just a half step away from the last note of the previous movement, which makes the sonata feel even more connected from movement to movement. He also likes to use syncopations, hemiolas, and harmony changes on weak beats to hide the meter and down beats of the movement.

There are many places where one can see Kapustin's classical influences in the treatment of themes, instances of similarities to well-known classical composers' music, and other classical compositional techniques. There is also a distinct Russian quality to his music. This can be seen in the general starkness of some passages, as well as in specific compositional techniques. According to Roberts, "Kapustin's linear writing... is a particularly distinctive Russian feature. [He] also makes use of ostinato figures and neighbor-tone melodic decorations which... are techniques associated with the Russian school."⁶ Kapustin is somehow able to incorporate all of these classical and Russian elements into his piece composed entirely of jazz harmonies. The way he is able to accomplish this is unique to Kapustin and the focus of this paper.

First Movement: I. Vivace

Kapustin titles this piece a Sonata-Fantasy. In the first movement, there are aspects of sonata form, but it can also be viewed as a ternary form, or even as a loose arch form. Adding additional layers to these facets, this movement has many fantasy characteristics: it is built around one main theme instead of multiple themes, it has an improvisatory character, and is in a virtuosic style. According to Mami Hayashida in

⁶ Roberts, 6.

From Sonata and Fantasy to Sonata-Fantasy: Charting a Musical Evolution, “Unlike the sonata, the fantasy is an ‘elusive genre,’ often described as formless and boundary-less.”⁷

Although not completely formless, this movement does not follow a fixed form and therefore can be viewed as a fantasy.

The structure of the first movement can be seen in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1. Structure of the first movement

1-26	27-42	43-58	59-78	79-94	95-112	113-121	122-128
Introduction	Theme	Theme	Development	Theme	Theme	Closing	Coda

Although the musical notation is rhythmically very specific, the listener does not sense the down beats in the music. There are very few real down beats at the beginning of a measure, it is this practice that makes it difficult to pick out the time signature. The same can be said for harmonies throughout the movement. Very specific harmonies are implied, but there are many other non-chord tones that make it hard to hear the exact harmony happening in the moment. Because the movement has so many running figures, there are many passing tones that do not belong within the harmony. However, Kapustin writes this music in such a way that the ear can identify the structural notes through all of the filigree around them.

The pace of this movement takes on the character of someone who is asleep and dreaming, then begins to awaken, becomes more animated and finally is very excited.

The introduction section feels unmetered because it lacks down beats and the harmony

⁷ Mami Hayashida, “From Sonata and Fantasy to Sonata-Fantasy: Charting of Musical Evolution,” (D.M.A diss., University of Kentucky, 2007), 32.

changes are placed on weak beats: these are key components of some of Kapustin's distinguishing characteristics. The introduction has a rollercoaster-like character: the lines trace curves up and down, from high to low registers of the piano, with multi-note gestures being passed between the hands. The chords underneath the main line are written in shapes in which the notes are initially placed very close together then gradually grow farther apart (Figure 2.1). This supports the overall crescendo and drive of the line, a sort of graphic crescendo written out in the chord shapes.



Figure 2.1. First movement, mm. 1-2

This movement has a very free-flowing, loose feel that gives an almost measure-less sense to the listener. Yet the music is continuous, with no rests longer than an eighth rest. Although there are not any pedal markings in this movement, there are “let ring” markings throughout (Figure 2.1), especially in the introduction, indicating the sound should be sustained. Pedal may be used at the discretion of the performer.

Kapustin also uses many quartal chords, which create non-functional harmonies throughout the piece. In the jazz piece called “So What,” jazz composers Miles Davis and Bill Evans use a chord with three perfect fourths and a major third. This quartal

chord appears in the very beginning of Kapustin's sonata (Figure 2.1), perhaps as a reference to the jazz composers who influenced him so greatly.

The introduction builds to a slight climax at m. 17, which has several interesting features. The texture of the music changes and the left hand has four-note chords that change chromatically. He also hints at a classical technique in mm. 17-21: the left hand has a passage of running notes while the right hand has chords with a hint of the theme in the top note. Often in a typical jazz piece, the left hand would be playing the chords while the right hand has running notes of melody or improvisation. However, Kapustin inverts it in these measures and gives this passage a more classical character, although he still uses extended jazz harmonies.

The main theme of this movement is composed of four phrases of three measures, four measures, four measures, and three measures respectively. Since the theme remains the same, the structure of the theme remains consistent throughout the movement because the theme remains the same. Although Kapustin changes the setting of the theme each time, the structure is always 3-4-4-3.

The first phrase of the theme begins in m. 27. The melody is in the middle voice and passes between the inner fingers of both right and left hand. The top outer voice has very light, filigree notes in triplets surrounding the melody and the lower outer voice has the supporting harmony (Figure 2.2). The introduction of the theme is still very free-flowing, always moving and pushing forward, but not discernibly rhythmic due to the lack of strong down beats.



Figure 2.2 First movement, mm.27-29

The first phrase ends with a D major harmony in m. 29 (Figure 2.2). D major, the tonic key of the movement, would usually be a more omni-present, especially in the opening of a work in order to establish the key of the piece. Kapustin, however, is able to keep the key and main harmonies of the movement ambiguous up to this point.

Kapustin may have had Rachmaninoff in mind when he composed the first phrase of the theme; it is very similar to Rachmaninoff's Piano Etude Op. 33 No. 6 in E-flat minor (Figure 2.3). Although he is not quoting Rachmaninoff here, the compositional styles of these pieces are very similar, another instance of Kapustin co-opting classical/Russian influences into jazz harmonies.

In the second phrase, the melody is accompanied by an unusual harmony. Kapustin uses a diatonic descending chord pattern of $v^7 - iv^7 - III^7 - ii^7 - V^7 - I^7$, finally ending on the long awaited D major (Figure 2.4). This is certainly different from

a traditional classical chord progression, which would almost never descend in numerical order like this.



Figure 2.3. Rachmaninoff: Etudes in E-flat minor, Op. 33, No. 6, m. 18

Figure 2.4. First movement, mm. 30-33

The third phrase of the theme goes through a series of modulations, using ii-V-I progressions to briefly establish each key before quickly moving on to the next. Each of these modulations takes place in 1-2 measures. The ii-V-I progression is perhaps the most common progression used in jazz harmony; it is of course widely used in classical music as well. It can be viewed as a progression through the circle of fifths, because the ii chord can be regarded as the V of the V chord, which is in turn a fifth away from the I chord. Kapustin uses chromatic passing notes to link these ii-V-I progressions and fluently modulate from one remote key to the next.

Another compositional technique that Kapustin employs often is repeating the main theme but in a different context, or with a different accompaniment. The next section of this movement contains the exact same theme in the same groups of phrases, but the harmony is changed and this time the melody is an octave higher than it was presented the first time (Figure 2.5). The theme is also broken into two voices, one high soprano and a lower alto. They have a call and response type of exchange, each taking a part of the theme and alternating between the voices.

Kapustin also varies the theme by accompanying it with sixteenth notes this time around instead of triplets. This seems to bolster slightly the structure of the theme, making it less free-flowing than the original occurrence. The rhythmic pulse here retains the toccata-like quality and gives the general effect of a “perpetual motion” movement, another key Kapustin characteristic. Kapustin also alters the theme by introducing a hemiola figure, utterly taking the sense of the pulse away from the listener.

In m. 57, the motive from the introduction serves as a transition between this section and the development (Figure 2.6). The time signature changes here into

compound time of 12/8. This section then starts to develop the first motive of the main theme (Figure 2.6).

The image displays a musical score for the first movement, measures 43-48. The score is written for piano and voice. The tempo is marked "Più mosso (♩ = 132)". The key signature is F# major. The time signature is 12/8. The score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 43-44) shows the piano accompaniment. The second system (measures 45-46) shows the piano accompaniment and the alto voice. The third system (measures 47-48) shows the piano accompaniment and the soprano voice. The piano accompaniment features a complex rhythmic pattern with many beamed notes. The vocal parts enter in measure 45 and continue through measure 48.

Figure 2.5. First movement, mm. 43-48

It begins in F# major and goes through a series of modulations from C major, to G-flat major (enharmonic of F# major). Then it goes through a sequence-like passage, each time intensifying by going to ever higher registers, until the climax is reached at m. 72. This is followed by another hemiola figure, writing groups of 3/8 and groups of 5/8 in the 8/8 time (Figure 2.7).

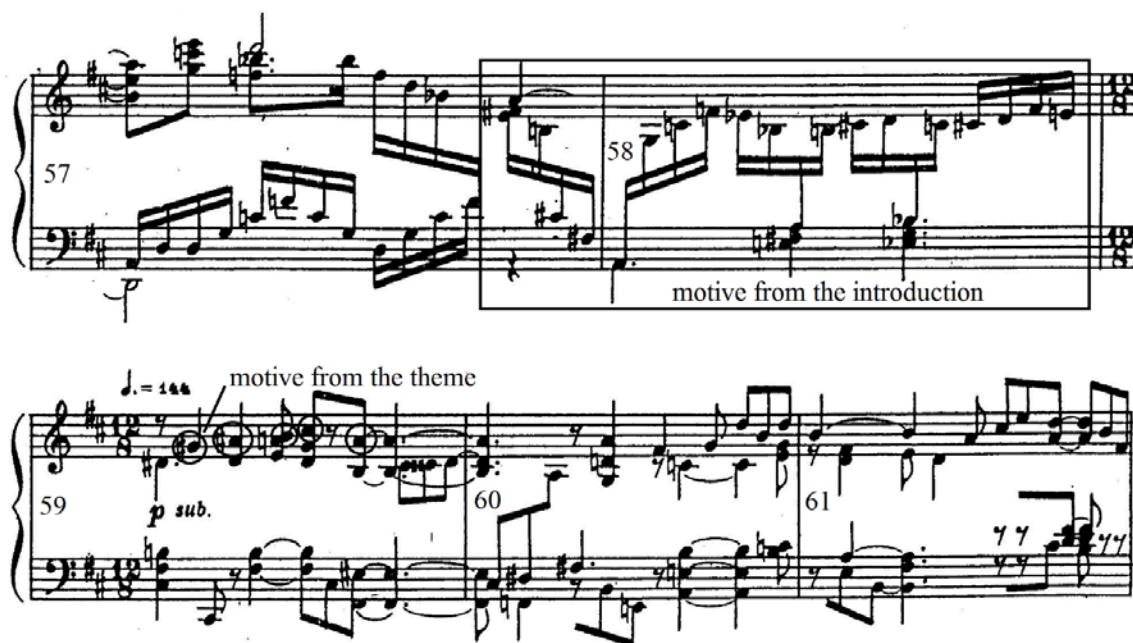


Figure 2.6. First movement, mm. 57-61

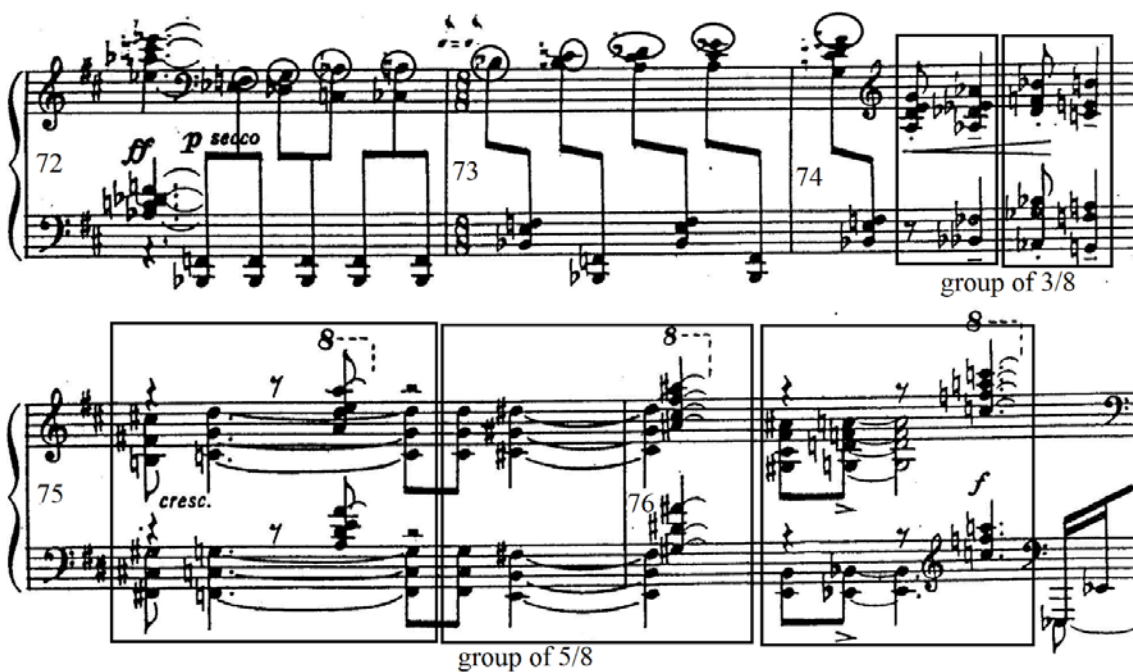


Figure 2.7. First movement, mm. 72-76

Although the pulse feel here is very strong, Kapustin keeps us off balance by changing the groupings continuously. Interesting keys and modes are explored in this section as well; m. 72-74 uses a B-flat Dorian scale in the top line and a chromatic bass line is introduced in m. 74-76 to lead to the retransition of the recapitulation (Figure 2.7).

The retransition is a passage of running notes that are composed of the notes from an E-flat-13 chord, the \flat II of the main key of D major. This \flat II chord clearly resolves to a I chord in m. 79 (Figure 2.8). Kapustin also used the \flat II harmony at the end of the introduction; however, that \flat II chord resolved to an implied D major harmony that began the main theme. Kapustin does not imply a harmony at the end of the retransition; he clearly states it.



Figure 2.8. First movement, mm. 77-81

The theme returns after the retransition. This time, it is written in yet another different texture that consists of a supporting bass line and chords that accompany the main theme, now an octave higher than the previous occurrence (Figure 2.8). Because of the chordal setting, the music feels more vertical and rhythmic. Kapustin writes accents over the weak beats, making the rhythm more syncopated and animated.

In m. 95, the melody is yet another octave higher, adding to its building intensity, and marked *brillante* (Figure 2.9). Kapustin now writes the notes using a wider range of the keyboard, still keeping the same three-voice texture but utilizing the extreme highs and lows of the piano. Not content to leave it at that, he also introduces an interesting counter melody in the lower voices between phrases of the main theme.

Figure 2.9 is a musical score for the first movement, measures 93-98. The score is written for piano, with a treble and bass clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The time signature is 4/4. The score shows measures 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, and 98. Measure 95 is marked 'brillante' and features a melody in octaves, indicated by an '8' and a dashed line. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and accidentals.

Figure 2.9. First movement, mm. 93-98

M. 113 begins the penultimate section that combines material from both the introduction and the last phrase of the theme (Figure 2.10). Here Kapustin brings back the fluid rhythms from the introduction to start winding down the piece from the chordal, more rhythmically driving section that preceded it.

The image displays a musical score for the first movement, measures 113-118. The score is written for piano and features a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The tempo markings 'poco rit.' and 'a tempo' are positioned above the staff. The score is divided into three systems, each with a measure number (112, 113, 114 in the first system; 115, 116 in the second system; 117, 118 in the third system). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings (e.g., *mf*, *f*, *ff*). The music transitions from a more fluid, winding section to a more rhythmically driving section.

Figure 2.10. First movement, mm. 113-118

This can also be seen as a sort of false coda. The last phrase of the theme repeatedly interrupts the dying down effect that the material from the introduction imparts to this section. It is as if the theme does not want to leave and yet the introduction material keeps pushing it away. Finally the theme gives up and makes way for the introduction material.

In m. 122 the true coda begins exactly the same way the work began. However, he interrupts this introduction material after two measures with a *quasi glissando*, then uses planing chords, *a la* Debussy, to present the theme one final time (Figure 2.11). Interestingly, he also uses the main motive one last time to end the piece, here in a sixteenth note figure that functions as grace notes to the final D chord (Figure 2.11). The

The musical score for measures 124-128 is presented in two systems. The first system contains measures 124 and 125. Measure 124 is marked with a 'quasi glissando' and a dashed line indicating a sequence of notes. Measure 125 shows a dynamic shift from *f* to *p*. The second system contains measures 126, 127, and 128. Measure 126 is marked 'planing'. Measure 127 shows a dynamic shift from *f* to *ff*. Measure 128 ends with a 'grace notes' figure and an 'attacca' marking.

Figure 2.11. First movement, mm. 124-128

last note of the piece is a sustained D in the bass, which should sound like a conclusive ending to the first movement. However, Kapustin writes *attaca* so the D that should sound conclusive sounds instead as if it needs some sort of resolution. With one note, he is able to both gratify the listener's expectations and also delay gratification until the second movement.

Second Movement: II. Largo

The second movement follows standard classical construction of sonatas and is the slow, lyrical movement of the sonata. This movement is in a very clear cut ternary form; the A sections are largo and have a searching character, while the B section is much quicker and livelier in character. The structure can be seen in Table 2.2:

Table 2.2. Structure of the second movement

Introduction	A section	B section	A section	Coda
1-2	3-20	21-37	38-47	47-51

As previously mentioned, this movement is preceded by the lingering D sustained over from the first movement, which resolves to the C#. This changes the function of D from a stable tonic note to a bII resolving into the first note of the movement. This C# in itself is unexpected as the first note of the movement. Since the key signature has two sharps, usually indicating D major or B minor, C# is somewhat of a surprise.

A two-measure introduction begins the movement and the melody ascends in fourths, developing a quartal sonority. This creates an even more ambiguous harmony

and also adds to the wandering, searching character of this section. Kapustin uses these unsettling, unstable harmonies to create a gloomy atmosphere completely different from the upbeat character of the first movement.

The beginning of this movement is actually very similar to the second prelude in Gershwin's Three Piano Preludes. Not only is the character related in both pieces, but both have a chromatically moving middle voice which creates an ostinato. Interestingly, this ostinato in Gershwin's prelude contains three notes: E, E#, F#, E# (Figure 2.12). The ostinato in Kapustin's second movement of the sonata contains the same three notes, except his are inverted: F#, F, E, E# (Figure 2.13). Perhaps this is a coincidence, or perhaps Kapustin wanted to consciously incorporate something of Gershwin's into his music. Although the chromatic three-note ostinato does not continue much past the introduction, Kapustin continues to use chromatic figures throughout the movement, especially in the A sections. The chromatic notes give a suspension-resolution rise and fall to the phrases while also sustaining the gloomy atmosphere.



Figure 2.12. Gershwin's second prelude from 3 Preludes for piano

The motive of the theme is an ascending half step followed by an upward leap that alternates among three intervals: a minor 7th, a major 7th, and an octave. These leaps

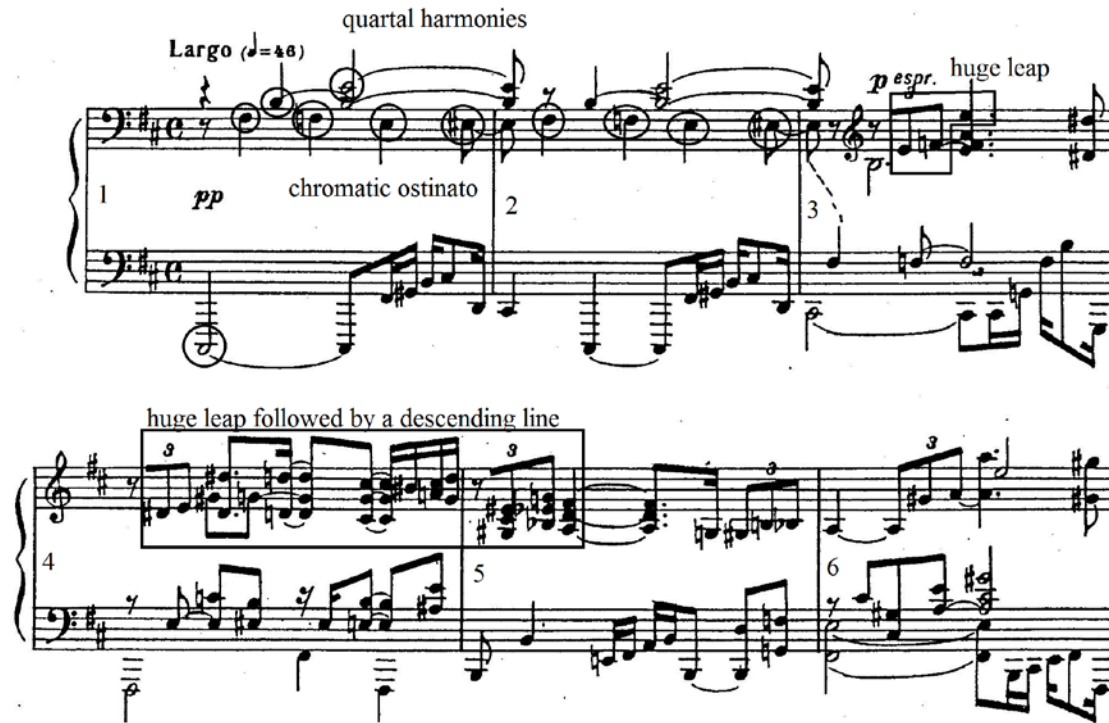


Figure 2.13. Second movement, mm. 1-6

propel the melody lines forward and create the tension that resolves in the following descending line as they progress to the cadence of each phrase (Figure 2.13). Because of the chromatic nature of the motive and its rise and fall, it creates a static atmosphere, it is as if the theme is going nowhere. This motive, set in many different keys, is heard through the entire A sections.

Contrary to these A sections, the B section (Figure 2.14) is written in a faster tempo with a *piu mosso* marking and it carries with it a new key signature with no sharps or flats. This is unusual because a B section in a ternary form is most typically in the dominant or relative minor of the key of the A section; A minor does not fulfill those functions here for either D major or B minor.

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 21-23) is marked 'Più mosso'. It features a piano part with a treble and bass staff. A bracket labeled 'brass section of a jazz band' spans measures 21 and 22. Another bracket labeled 'whole jazz band playing' spans measures 21, 22, and 23. A third bracket labeled 'rhythm section' spans measures 22 and 23. The second system (measures 24-26) continues the piano part. The third system (measures 27-28) is marked 'rit.' and 'second phrase - more relaxed and free flowing'. It shows a more relaxed piano part with a treble and bass staff. A bracket labeled '8' is at the end of measure 28.

Figure 2.14. Second movement, mm. 21-28

The B section is constructed of two smaller subsections of eight measures and nine measures, respectively. Each subsection can be divided into two smaller phrases. Kapustin depicts the character of a jazz ensemble in the first phrase; the bass evokes the rhythm of the drum, the sixteenth notes conjure up the brass (Figure 2.16). This phrase is the most upbeat part of the movement. The second phrase is more akin to the A section,

more relaxed and free flowing. Even inside of a smaller section, Kapustin contrasts his themes and moods.

This subsection of the two contrasting moods is then repeated, this time in a different key. The first phrase remains unchanged from the first occurrence, aside from the change of key. The second phrase this time acts as a retransition back to the A section. In this last measure of the B section, Kapustin anticipates the return with just a hint of the motive of the theme in the left hand (Figure 2.15). The section closes with a D in m. 37, which then also serves as the \flat II of the C# at the start of the second A section at m. 38. This identically mirrors the way the first A section began, with the D held over from the first movement and at that point resolving to the C#.

Figure 2.15. Second movement, mm. 34-37

The returning A section is identical to the first A section except towards the end. Here Kapustin prepares the coda by repeating the ii-v-i harmony, finally ending on the i in B minor at the start of the coda in m. 47.

The musical score for measures 46-51 of the second movement is presented in four systems. The key signature is B minor (two sharps) and the time signature is 2/4. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. Measure 46 is marked 'B: V' and measure 47 is marked 'I'. Measure 48 has a 'senipre p' marking. Measure 49 has a 'p' marking. Measure 50 has a 'quartal harmony' marking. Measure 51 has a 'morendo' marking. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Figure 2.16. Second movement, mm. 46-51

A traditional coda solidifies the ending key by repeating the V-I harmony. Kapustin, however, does not compose with the expected traditional classical harmony. He instead writes a repeating I-iv harmony in the bass and finally ends on the iv. The melody in the final measure contains the notes of an E quartal chord: E, A, D, F#, creating a coloristic haze (Figure 2.16).

At the conclusion of the movement, Kapustin does not notate *attacca* as he did in a parallel place in the first movement. The fermatas on the last notes, however, do create a sense of sustaining the unresolved harmony and letting it linger in the air. Just as the first movement “resolves” to the second movement, this movement resolves in the beginning of the next movement. Kapustin continues his practice of leaving the listener with a feeling of something unfinished, or left hanging.

Third Movement: III. Vivace

The third movement is a fast movement. In a traditional sonata, the third movement is either a minuet and trio, a scherzo, or a finale if the sonata has only three movements. This third movement could be seen as a finale if the sonata had three movements; however, it has four and so should have more of a scherzo role in the sonata. If one takes a close look at the form, it also appears to be written in a monothematic sonata form. The structure of this movement is shown in Table 2.3.

The structure of this movement is standard. As one can see from the figure, the first and second key areas, as well as the first coda, are all in symmetrical lengths of 16 measures. Only the development and second coda are in sections of asymmetrical

Table 2.3. Structure of the third movement

Exposition			Development	Recapitulation		Coda	
First key area	Transition	Second key area		Transition	Tonic key area	I	Developmental
1-32	33-48	49-64	65-99	100-115	116-131	132-147	148-162
A minor	Modal	F minor	Constantly modulating	Modal	A minor	A major	A major

lengths. This is usually the case, however, since both of the sections are developmental sections.

Kapustin presents another different character in this movement. It is not free-flowing and relaxed like the first, nor gloomy and atmospheric like the second. This movement is more upbeat and cheerful, with much syncopation and a catchy tune.

Unlike the beginnings of the other three movements of the sonatas, this movement starts without an introduction. The bass has the A minor-9 chord and provides the clear tonality of A minor. It also differs from the previous two movements in that it is very rhythmic from the start. The rhythm of the left hand chords depicts the same rhythm one would hear from the bass drum in a rock band (Figure 2.17). The texture of the beginning of the movement is thinner compared to the second movement. It begins with a simple, single-line melody in the right hand with chordal accompaniment in the left hand. However, the simple melody does not last very long. After the first phrase, he thickens the texture by writing more notes in a chordal-texture accompaniment supporting the top melody line. Kapustin uses accents on the weak beats to create syncopation in the same way he uses them in many other instances in the sonata, notably, the recapitulation of the theme in the first movement of the sonata.

The theme is being repeated in m. 17, this time an octave higher than the previous occurrence and also with varied accompaniment once again, just as he did in the first movement. In m. 29-31, Kapustin uses the same rhythmic idea and repeats the last four notes of the theme, but shortens the rhythmic value of the last note of each motive. Usually the shortening of a rhythmic idea propels the music forward; however, Kapustin uses this shortening to bring the section to a close. Instead of having a driving effect, this

rhythm creates almost the opposite, a sort of unclear, yet slowing down to end the A section (Figure 2.18).



Figure 2.17. Third movement, mm. 1-4



Figure 2.18. Third movement, mm. 29-32

In m. 32, Kapustin uses a D-flat dominant bebop scale (D \flat , E \flat , F, G \flat , A \flat , B \flat , B, C, D \flat) to shift into the transition section. He often uses figures like this to transition from one section to another, just as he did in the first movement in mm. 77-78 (Figure 2.8) and m. 94 (Figure 2.9). Kapustin experiments with modal harmony in this section, using modes such as G Dorian, B \flat Dorian, as well as the Aeolian mode. Because he uses modal harmony instead of tonal harmony, these new sounds set this transition apart even more from the first key area.

The second key area of this monothematic sonata enters in m. 50. It still follows a similar chord progression to the first occurrence of the opening key area. Kapustin also adds triplets and a hemiola to make the repeat of the theme more interesting and to add diversity. M. 64 transitions into the development section by using a polyrhythm and a crescendo that propels the closing second key area into the entrance of the assertive music which characterizes the development section.

Kapustin uses many interesting techniques in developing the main theme. He first restates the main theme but in a different rhythmic pattern. The left hand chordal rhythm here depicts the bass drum and the snare drum of the rock band; the low chords represent the bass drum, the higher chords represent the snare drum (Figure 2.19).

The musical score for measures 64-69 of the third movement is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 64-66) features a polyrhythmic texture. The right hand plays a melodic line with a 'main theme in different rhythm' indicated by a bracket. The left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment with low chords labeled 'bass drum' and higher chords labeled 'snare drum'. A crescendo is indicated by a hairpin symbol. The second system (measures 67-69) continues the polyrhythmic texture. The right hand features a 'three syncopated eighth note motive' in measure 67 and a 'four straight eighth note motive' in measures 68 and 69. The left hand continues with a rhythmic accompaniment. The score is written in a key with two flats and a common time signature.

Figure 2.19. Third movement, mm. 64-69

In this first phrase of the development, mm. 65-75, Kapustin alternates between two motives: two eighth notes followed by three syncopated eighth notes, and four straight eighth notes (Figure 2.19). In the second phrase, he switches the melody line into the bass clef while the right hand accompanies it with parallel second inversion chords (Figure 2.19). After this, he again uses polyrhythms and chromatic harmony until the return of the motive in m. 83 (Figure 2.20).

Figure 2.20. Third movement, mm. 77-82

The development continues with a section of rapid triplet eighth notes. The contour of these eighth notes depicts waves of ascending lines. It completely ignores any bar lines or the meter because they are not grouped regularly. In addition, the motive of the theme is also hidden within those lines (Figure 2.21). This development section is packed with various developmental ideas and they are presented one after another without any breaks.

Unlike traditional sonata form, the recapitulation starts with a transition section. Like the second key area, it then goes through several modal harmonies to return to the opening key area, A minor. The melody and the bass accompaniment are slightly altered from the first A section; at the end of this section, it changes direction to a different harmony in preparation for the coda.

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 89-91) is in bass clef and features a 'main melody' circled in the upper voice. The melody consists of eighth-note triplets. The second system (measures 92-93) is in treble clef and features a 'veloce cresc.' marking. The third system (measures 94-96) is in treble clef and features a 'hemiola' marking. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and dynamic markings.

Figure 2.21. Third movement, mm. 89-96

Kapustin uses this coda in a way that differs slightly from the traditional coda. A coda in a traditional classical sonata would confirm and emphasize the tonic key of the piece, usually with many repeated V-I progressions. However, Kapustin completely changes the key to A major and continues with many different harmonies over an A pedal. The coda (Figure 2.22) also begins in a new tempo marking: *Piu vivo*. This section has two phrases, one of nine measures and one of seven measures. It is not the

Piu vivo coda section

A pedal throughout the section

rhythmic diminution

Figure 2.22. Third movement, mm. 132-147

typical eight measure phrase because of diminution. The two phrases are similar but part of the second phrase is repeated in diminution; the note values of the second motive are twice as short as the first statement of the motive.

The running bass line of this section contains the notes of an A major chord with non-harmonic notes embellishing it. The character here becomes more animated and energetic, with a sense of urgency building to the end. Kapustin repeats a low A in the bass, which follows the usual role of the coda and gives the listener a sense of the tonic key. However, the harmonies above the A keep changing, contradicting the sense of a tonic key.

At this point, after the first coda section ends, he presents a “coda” to the coda which is developmental in nature. This coda section starts with the marking *stringendo*, indicating it should be played with an accelerating tempo until the end. However, to accelerate from the *piu vivo* tempo in the previous coda section is rather challenging. To add to the difficulty, this section is now written in an even faster rhythm of triplet eighth notes. The melody is held in the top line, with the stride piano style accompaniment in the bass. After three measures of clear, strong first and third down beats, he uses a hemiola once again. The right hand is written in groups of four descending notes taken from the five notes of the motive (Figure 2.23). The left hand also has the motive in quarter notes, which is then doubled in octaves and two octaves lower when it is repeated.

The effect is of tremendous activity as it catapults the listener to the end. Because of all of the running notes, it gives the effect of a large crescendo, both in



Figure 2.23. Third movement, mm. 151-153

volume, motives and themes, and rhythm, rushing to the end of the movement. However, Kapustin evades expectation and winds down the movement by appending a single line melody in the last five measures (Figure 2.24). He brings back the motive one last time, in the same register as the beginning, then diminuendos to the last measure, throwing in a

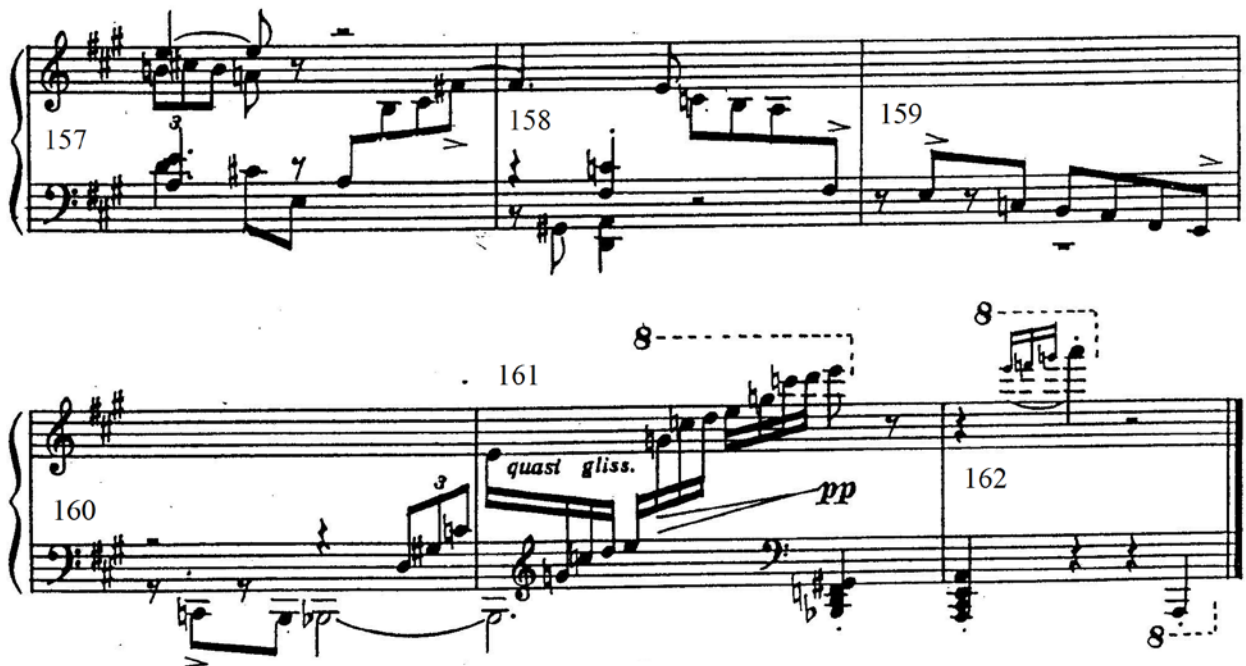


Figure 2.24. Third movement, mm. 157-162

quasi glissando to end the roller coaster effect. The bass has a clear A major chord, but the right hand has an *appoggiatura* that cancels all of the sharps (Figure 2.24). This negates the A major sound, once again ending with a contradictory harmony.

Fourth Movement: IV. Allegro molto

Kapustin unites jazz harmony with classical structure in ways that previous composers had not. Perhaps this can be seen most clearly in the last movement of his Sonata-Fantasy. The last movement is written in a textbook-like sonata-allegro form. The form of the movement can be seen in Table 2.4.

This movement, like many other traditional sonata form movements, begins with an introduction. The introduction itself is a blend of classical and jazz elements. The first two right hand chords imitate the opening two chords of Rachmaninoff's second sonata (Figure 2.25). And the octave running passages which directly follow the chords are reminiscent of the fourth movement of Chopin's second sonata (Figure 2.26). Even though these resonances can be related to other classical composers' pieces, the harmonies are nonetheless utterly jazz; the notes of the opening chords are part of a C bebop dominant scale (C, D, E, F, G, A, B \flat , B, C), and the running notes are part of a C bebop Dorian scale (C, D, E \flat , E, F, G, A, B \flat , C). In addition to this, Kapustin adds yet another major jazz element, that of call and response. The opening ten measures can be seen as left hand calling and right hand responding, like so many jazz tunes.

Table 2.4. Structure of the fourth movement

Introduction	Exposition				Development	Recapitulation				Coda
	Theme I	Transition	Theme II	Closing		Theme I	Transition	Theme II	Closing	
1-21	22-51	52-63	64-95	96-121	121-153	154-163	164-171	172-197	198-223	224-241
	D minor		F major			D minor		D major		



Figure 2.25. Rachmaninoff's Piano Sonata No. 2



Figure 2.26. Chopin's Piano Sonata No. 2, Op. 35, IV. Finale

Kapustin begins this movement without presenting a clear sense of meter, just as he did in the first movement. The entrances of the “call and response” chords and octaves are mostly not on strong beats. In addition, the length between entrances varies, and each set of two chords begins with an accent to further throw off the sense of pulse even more (Figure 2.27). He uses rich tertian harmony as a harmonic misdirection from the F major or D minor sonorities one would expect with this key signature.

There is a lack of a true downbeat until m. 12. Even when a clear downbeat does arrive, it is in a syncopated rhythm, hinting at the rhythm of a motive that will appear

frequently throughout this movement. This leads to a strong arrival of a typical jazz progression of ii-V-I, introducing a hint of the main melody (Figure 2.28).

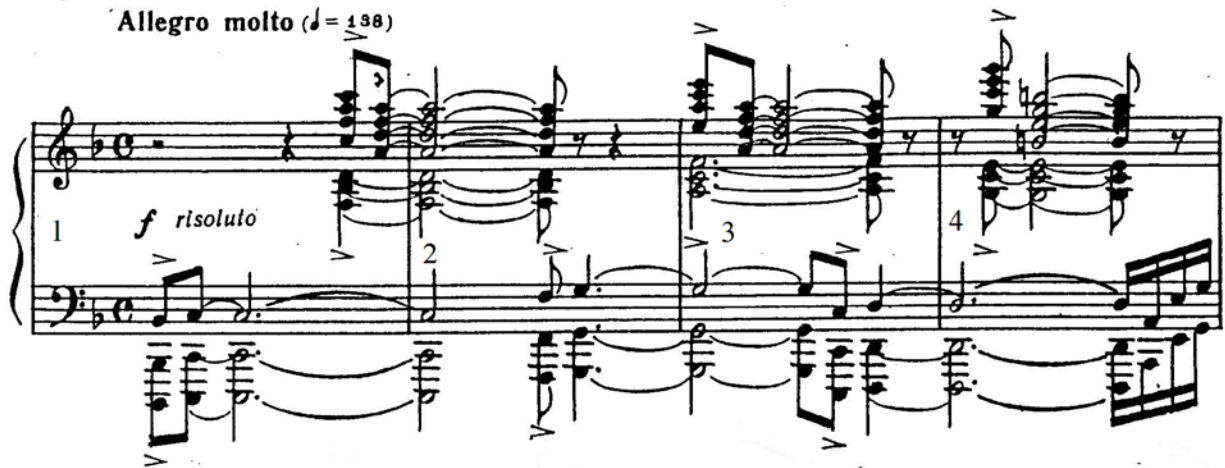


Figure 2.27. Fourth movement, mm. 1-4



Figure 2.28. Fourth movement, mm. 12-14

The introduction has many passages with a single melody line played with both hands in alternation. Kapustin uses these running passages of a single line in different ways throughout the entire piece, sometimes serving as a link between two phrases (m. 14-15), sometimes filling in empty space between longer held notes. At other times he

uses the figure to extend a harmony. In mm. 19-21, Kapustin uses this single line figure as an extension of the final chord of the introduction (Figure 2.29). The final chord does not resolve until the first theme enters; this chord appears as the bII of D, which is enharmonic to the leading note of D. Another example of the pivotal significance of this relationship throughout the work.

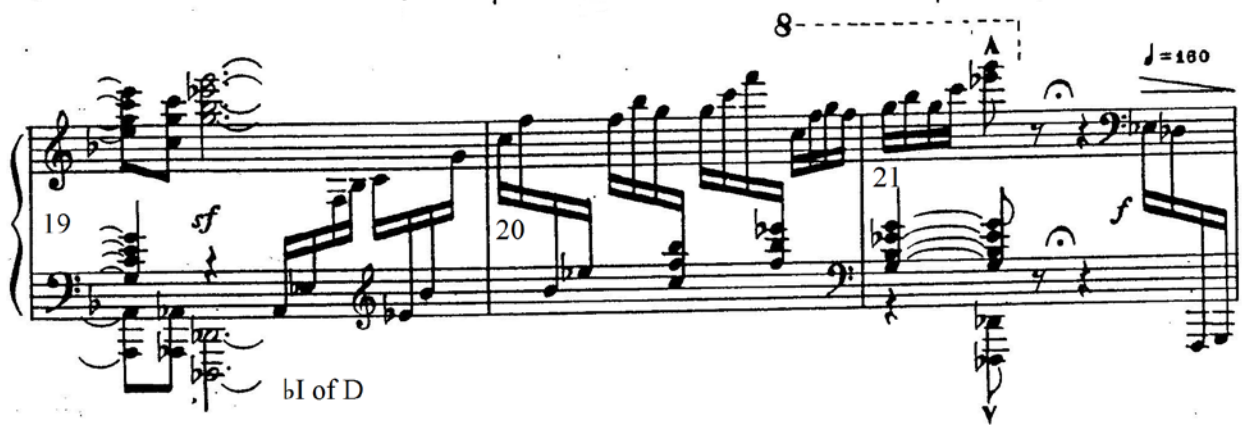


Figure 2.29. Fourth movement, mm. 19-21

The beginning of the main theme is unmistakable. A fermata separates the introduction from the first theme, setting it strikingly apart. After the introduction section, Kapustin writes four measures of vamp which precedes the main theme. These four measures set up D Dorian mode, as well as give a perpetual motion feel to the piece. The character of this theme is very energetic and playful and peppered with many syncopated rhythms. When the right hand has long notes, the left hand takes over the constantly moving sixteenth note passages, making it feel restless even during the longer notes.

The theme can be seen as a sort of antecedent-consequent, question-answer.

Kapustin separates these two parts of the theme by writing them in two different modal harmonies; the first half, or antecedent, is in D Dorian, the second half, or consequent, in D Aeolian (Figure 2.30). M. 33 is an instance of parallel harmony in both right hand

antecedent

26 27

consequent

28 29

Figure 2.30. Fourth movement, mm. 26-29

32 33

juxtaposing regular downbeats with syncopated downbeats

Figure 2.31. Fourth movement, mm 32-33

and left hand, but going in contrary motion (Figure 2.31). This is also known as planing, something that Debussy used to great effect. However, Debussy's planing usually takes place in similar rather than contrary motion. In Kapustin's, each hand does its own thing.

At this point, Kapustin writes chords with open slurs again, as in the beginning of the first movement, and stays on one harmony for a full two measures, which he rarely does, giving the music a rich, lush feel. After this passage, a more pulsing, rhythmic bass takes over, suggesting the rhythm of the bass drum of a rock band. The first theme returns in m. 42. It seems as if Kapustin brings back the theme occasionally to reassure the listener that it is still there, before venturing into other harmonies and improvisatory figures based on that theme.

The transition section begins in m. 52. Just as in a typical classical sonata, it has a long passage of hammer blows of the dominant in the bass. In mm. 52-56, a C in the bass, sets up the key of F major for the second theme. The purpose of a transition section is to drive to the secondary theme. It begins with a *subito piano* followed by a continuous crescendo, building up energy and drive to the medial caesura in m. 63 (Figure 2.32). The medial caesura is very clearly marked with a fermata over a quarter rest. The transition ends in G flat, which is again, the flat 2 of F.

The secondary theme then enters, a quieter, subdued theme. In classical sonatas, the secondary theme often has a gentler character and here Kapustin continues to follow standard procedure. Although it is not a lyrical theme, it is gently playful and clearly more relaxed in character than the first theme. The articulation of the melody alternates between staccato and legato, creating the playful character, but the perpetual motion ceases and note values lengthen (Figure 2.33). In addition, the left hand becomes



Figure 2.32. Fourth movement, mm. 60-67

contrapuntal rather than chordal. Then Kapustin inserts a slightly contrasting eight measures in m. 80-87, bringing back the rhythm and chordal texture from the introduction (m. 14). After this brief contrast, the secondary theme returns.

True to sonata form, the essential expositional closure (EEC) can be found in m. 96. New material follows, beginning the closing section of the exposition. The left hand is very rhythmic and the right hand melody slightly syncopated, but not so much so that it throws off the sense of pulse; on the contrary, this section creates a distinct sense of dance-like pulse. The right hand introduces a new rhythmic motive (Figure 2.34) that can

ritardando e dim.

60 61

hammer blows of dominant

8 - - - - -

62 63 64

pp p

a tempo Second theme

medial caesura

65 66 67

contrapuntal left hand

Figure 2.33. Fourth movement, mm. 60-67

be seen from m. 104-110. The closing section finally settles in F major in m. 117, then slowly dies down until m. 120 where the development starts. This dying away effect is the same effect that is heard in a jazz combo when the chorus comes to an end and all of the instruments diminuendo to give way to the bass solo (Figure 2.35). As if Kapustin is transcribing a jazz combo's performance, the development begins with a single line melody played in the lower register of the piano, representing the bassist of the combo. M. 134 slows down as if the solo is coming to an end, then in m. 135 the texture thickens, as if the other members of the jazz combo have rejoined the music.



Figure 2.34. Fourth movement, mm. 104-105

Figure 2.35. Fourth movement, mm.119-127

After this, Kapustin continues the development section by revisiting many different ideas from the exposition. The meter here is once again unclear because he uses so many syncopated rhythms. The music builds with a dynamic crescendo, accompanied

by a graphic representation of a crescendo with the soprano ascending and bass descending to the extremes of the piano (Figure 2.36). Kapustin incorporates a typical jazz style of writing for piano, the stride style bass line in mm. 141-142. A *quasi glissando* passage brings back motivic material from the first theme in m. 28 and the development section ends with a diminuendo.

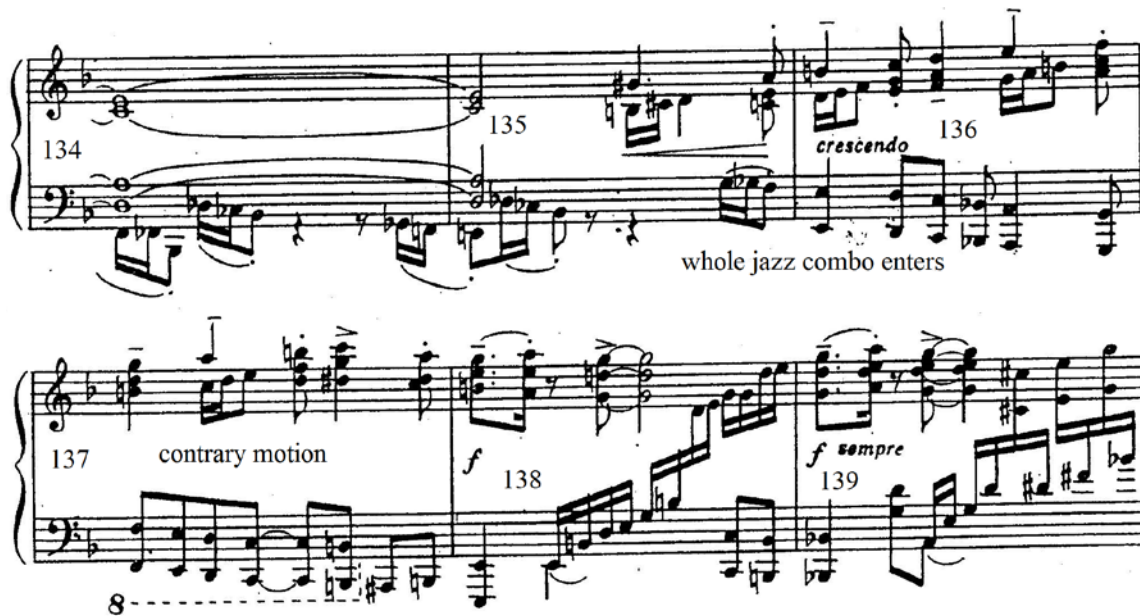


Figure 2.36. Fourth movement, mm. 134-139

The recapitulation at m. 154 brings back everything from the exposition but in a truncated form. The first theme and transition in the exposition are 42 measures long; when Kapustin brings this material back, it is only 18 measures long. There is another very obvious break in m. 171, representing the medial caesura, then the secondary theme begins in m. 172. This is the same material from the exposition, however, it is in the key of D major. This differs from tradition sonata form because the sonata began in D minor.

The second theme remains largely unchanged from that of the exposition. M. 190 strays from the first occurrence of the secondary theme, and also shifts the downbeats to the last eighth note of each measure (Figure 2.37). This technique of shifting the strong beat can be seen in many of Schumann's works, such as the Paganini movement of Schumann's *Carnaval*. Mm. 194-197 return to the secondary theme, then ends with the essential structure closure (ESC) at m. 197. The closing section begins in m. 198, and closely parallels to the closing section of the exposition.

The musical score for measures 188-197 of the fourth movement is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 188-191) shows a piano (p) dynamic and a 'cresc.' (crescendo) marking. The second system (measures 192-194) includes a 'sub. p' (subito piano) marking. The third system (measures 195-197) features an 'ESC' (essential structure closure) marking and a 'poco rit.' (poco ritardando) marking. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. A bracket labeled 'shifted downbeats' spans measures 189-191. A bracket labeled '8' spans measures 192-194. A bracket labeled '8' spans measures 195-197.

Figure 2.37. Fourth movement, mm.188-197

Like traditional sonata form, this movement has a coda that repetitively emphasizes V-I harmony; however, each V-I is preceded by a IV. The rhythmic pattern in the coda is derived from the first theme. It begins with phrases of two measures, then shortens to one measure. This foreshortening increases the sense of urgency and drive to the end. He uses this motive of running parallel octaves for four measures, then changes to parallel chords in both hands, but the chords are just off the beat, offset by one sixteenth note. This technique can be found in many other classical composers' sonatas, especially Beethoven's, as in the first movement of Sonata No. 16 in G major, Op. 31, No. 1. (Figure 2.38). However, the harmonies sound anything but classical. The



Figure 2.38. Beethoven's Piano Sonata Op. 31, No. 1, 1st movement

harmony to the final cadence is vii-vi-IV-I, omitting the expected V-I harmony. The last measure is parallel octaves that outline a D minor harmony. The second half of the movement is in D major and ends in D major. However, the last running passage has F

naturals, shifting the major sound to minor. This parallels his procedure as at the end of the third movement where he changes from A major to it A minor. To the last notes of the sonata, Kapustin's harmonies are unpredictable, perhaps to give the effect of changing his mind at the last moment. However, he ends the sonata in "correct" classical style: the music ends in the same key in which it started.

CHAPTER 3: CONCLUSION

Kapustin's music can be an illuminating topic for study yielding many riches for who either analyze or perform it. As a pianist who has done both, I feel that I can speak to the ingenuity of Kapustin as a composer and pianist. Because Kapustin studied with a teacher who had focused on training his technique as a pianist, he knows how to write music that fits in the hands well and makes pianistic sense. Although this piece has a few similarities to the music of Rachmaninoff, the overall sound and effect is completely different. Yet the demands of Kapustin's sonata are similar to those of a Rachmaninoff sonata. Both require the stamina to play through challenging passages of difficult runs that go on for pages, both have lyrical melodies that need to be brought out amongst the surrounding harmonies, and both contain passages of a very thick texture that requires intricate voicing. This music is not for the faint of heart.

It has greatly helped my performance of this piece to have analyzed it in as much detail as I did, so that I had both intellectual knowledge as well as the tactile knowledge of what was happening throughout the entire piece. Furthermore, this music is at times hard to digest. Due to its dense texture and relentlessness, listeners may be overwhelmed by the waves of sound. It is the performer's duty to decipher the music and present it in such a way that the listener can understand exactly what is happening.

There are several aspects of this sonata that are the crux of Kapustin's compositions in general. The way he is able to seamlessly incorporate so many classical, jazz, and Russian elements into the same piece is intriguing. As has been amply shown, his music is also characterized by perpetual motion, as well as a copious use of hemiolas

and syncopated rhythms. Kapustin's music is also filled with allusions of jazz ensembles; the way that he can portray multiple instruments on a single piano is truly remarkable.

It is my hope that this study will encourage more musicians to study and perform his music so that, in the future, more people will be able to enjoy the innovations that Kapustin brings to a new era of classical music.

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