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Sofia Gubaidulina: Chaconne for solo piano in the context of her life and work

Kadisha Onalbayeva-Coleman

Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College

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**SOFIA GUBAIDULINA: *CHACONNE* FOR SOLO PIANO IN THE
CONTEXT OF HER LIFE AND WORK**

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

Kadisha Onalbayeva-Coleman

B.M., National Conservatory, Kazakhstan, 1999

M.M., University of New Orleans, 2005

M.M., University of New Orleans, 2006

May 2010

*This monograph is dedicated to my Mother and my Father, Farida and Altynbek Onalbayev,
who both passed away during my course of studies in the United States in 2006 and 2007*

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the selected: Sofia Gubaidulina: *Chaconne* for Solo Piano in the Context of her Life and Work. The first chapter provides a brief biography of Sofia Gubaidulina and an overview of her most important compositions. Chapter Two contains an overview of the solo piano works of Gubaidulina. Chapter Three examines the selected piano composition *Chaconne* from a formal and stylistic perspective.

INTRODUCTION

In the month of May 2003, I was given the opportunity to participate as a composer and pianist in *Mus-Transit*, an international festival of contemporary music held in Russia and Tatarstan. This journey to the city of Kazan (Tatarstan region of Russia) opened up a new world for me, especially by introducing me to the works of composer Sofia Gubaidulina. In 2006, I started to work on Gubaidulina's *Chaconne* (1962) in order to perform it in one of my solo piano recitals, and soon thereafter I decided to write my monograph about Gubaidulina. The *Chaconne* is one her first works to become well known in the West and it will be the focus of this thesis, along with an overview of her piano music and works in general. Gubaidulina's life and work are both very interesting to me, because she is a female composer who made her career during a period in which the Soviet Union did not encourage women to compose music, and because her music draws on religious themes and ideas. Both of these aspects of her career were highly unorthodox in the Soviet world of the 1950's to 1980's, and call for some investigation of her life, as well as of her compositions.

Sofia Asgatovna Gubaidulina was born in Chistopol in the Tatar Republic of the Soviet Union in October 24, 1931. After instruction in piano and composition at the Kazan Conservatory, she studied composition with Nikolai Peiko at the Moscow Conservatory, pursuing graduate studies there under Vissarion Shebalin. Until 1991, she lived in Moscow and since then, has made her primary residence in Germany, outside Hamburg. Despite the fact that she held the highest stature among women composers while living in the Soviet Union, her concert works received relatively few performances and they were often criticized within the Soviet Union. This was due to the previously mentioned prejudice that existed against women

composers and because of her consistent use of religious themes in her works. She had many experiences in the Soviet system while she lived in Kazan during the Stalin era and she studied in Moscow when Khrushchev was in power. During the Brezhnev period she was a nonconformist member of the composers union and it was not until the Gorbachov regime that she was allowed to travel and finally immigrated to Germany when the Soviet Union began to collapse.

It was not until 1981 that she became noticed outside the Soviet Union when her *Offertorium: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra* (1980) was premiered in Vienna by violinist Gidon Kremer with the *Österreichischer Rundfunk* (Austrian Broadcasting) Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Leif Segerstam. The work was dedicated to Kremer who continued to perform her *Offertorium* with various orchestras around the world and this brought international attention to her music.

Gubaidulina's compositional output includes symphonic and choral works, two cello concerti, a viola concerto, seven solo piano works, four string quartets, a string trio, works for percussion ensemble, and many works for nonstandard instruments and distinctive combinations of instruments. Her scores frequently explore unconventional techniques of sound production. Since 1985, when she was first allowed to travel to the west, her works were performed at festivals in Berlin, Helsinki, and Holland, at the U.S. Library of Congress, and by major symphony orchestras in Chicago, Boston and New York, as well as many other organizations and ensembles. Her major triumph in the recent past was the 2002 premiere of the monumental two-part cycle, *Passion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ According to St. John*, commissioned respectively by the International Bachakademie (Stuttgart) and the Norddeutschen Rundfunk (Hamburg).

Gubaidulina made her first visit to North America in 1987 as a guest of Louisville's *Sound Celebration* where she attended the world premiere of *Pro et Contra*, a work commissioned by and performed by the Louisville Orchestra. She also participated in Boston's *Making Music Together* that same year and later took part in Vancouver's *New Music* (1991) and Tanglewood (1997).

In January 2007, Gubaidulina was the first woman composer to be spotlighted by the BBC during its annual "composer weekend" in London. Among her most recent compositions are *Feast During a Plague* (2005), a work jointly commissioned by the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra which was conducted in Philadelphia by Sir Simon Rattle and in Pittsburgh and New York by Sir Andrew Davis. Two years later the violin concerto *In Tempus Praesens* was unveiled at the 2007 Lucerne Festival by violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter with the Berlin Philharmonic under the baton of Sir Simon Rattle.

Gubaidulina's international stature as a composer can be seen from the following list of her affiliations and awards: she is a member of the Academia der Künste in Berlin, the Freie Academia der Künste in Hamburg, the Royal Music Academy in Stockholm, the German order *Pour le mérite*, and in 2004, she was elected as a foreign honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. She has been the recipient of the Prix de Monaco (1987), the Premio Franco Abbiato (1991), the Heidelberger Künstlerinnenpreis (1991), the Russian State Prize (1992), and the Spohr Pries (1995). Her most recent awards include the prestigious Premium Imperial in Japan (1998), the Sonning Prize in Denmark (1999), the Polar Music Prize in Sweden (2002), the Great Distinguished Service Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany (2002), and the Living Composer Prize of the Cannes Classical Awards in 2003.

Despite the difficulties Gubaidulina experienced early in her life and career she was able to overcome many obstacles to eventually achieve international stature as a composer. She is now well-known and her music is widely performed throughout the world. The search for spiritual and moral roots has pushed her up to and beyond the boundaries of human injury from years of terror (KGB), illness, politics, war, and religion.

When she was about five, the summer before Sofia entered music school, her family spent time in Nizhny Usslon, a village on the other side of the Volga River from Kazan. They stayed at lodgings on a farm where Sofia noticed an icon of Christ in a corner. This was during a time of state repression of religion and her parents did not know it was there and Sofia did not know who was represented on the farmer's icon. Sofia comments: "For a long time I had been praying in our Kazan courtyard – a completely irrational prayer; but suddenly I understood the connection between my prayer, and that icon. It wasn't some sort of mystical experience; it was simply the same thing. All excited, I asked my mother: "Who is that? Who is that?"¹ In an interview, she recalled:

Being naive, I blurted out everything to my parents, and when they realized I was religious they were horrified. This is forbidden! So I started hiding my emotional, religious life from the grownups, but it continued to thrive within me. Music naturally blended with religion, and sound, straightaway, became sacred for me.²

It would seem for Gubaidulina, sound and religion became one in the same. When interviewed by Vera Lukomsky in September, 1998, Lukomsky asked her about religious concepts used in her concertos, and Gubaidulina made the following very significant statement about the subject:

¹ Kurtz, Michael, and [translated by Christoph K. Lohmann]. *Sofia Gubaidulina A Biography*. ed. by Malcom Hamrick Brown. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press), 2007, p.14

² Maria Bogatyryova "Ot bednosti nichego khoroshego ne byvaet" [Nothing good comes from poure] (interview with Sofia Gubaidulina), *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, July 26, 1991, p.4

V.L.: Many of your concertos incorporate religious concepts. For example, the piano concerto *Introitus*, the violin concerto *Offertorium*, and cello concerto *Detto-2* suggest themselves as three parts of the *Proprium Missae* (Introit, Offertory [Sacrifice] and Communion). In *Offertorium*, the main theme gradually ‘sacrifices’ itself completely, but finally is resurrected and, transfigured, ascends to heaven. Do these concertos use Catholic religious concepts, atypical for Russian music?

S.G.: They are neither Catholic nor Russian Orthodox; they are outside church liturgy. I mean they are conceptually not strictly orthodox: they are my fantasy. Actually, all my works are religious. As I understand it, I’ve never written non-religious pieces. But the Orthodox Church is not interested in us contemporary composers, or in our music. The Church uses only old music that has been accepted and consecrated. So we do not write religious works, but only as our own fantasy. We never aspire to bring them to the church. And I don’t aspire to either. But I strongly want to participate. I feel a great desire to realize my religious needs within art. All my works are my fantasy – this is how (in the ideal) I imagine my Eucharist. The feast of the Eucharist means a lot to me. I cannot live without it, I come to church especially to experience this grace...³

Her *Piano Sonata* of 1965 was a major work showing the big contrast between large dissonant masses of sound and passages of seemingly religious calm that were to become characteristic of her work. Though composed during the 1960’s, this work and the *Chaconne* were not recorded until 1995. In the late 1960’s Gubaidulina was part of an experimental improvisation and electronic music group called *Astreja*. Her compositional interests have been stimulated by the tactile exploration and improvisation with Russian, Caucasian, and Asian folk and ritual instruments collected by the *Astreja* ensemble, of which she was a founder, and also by her rapid absorption and personalization of contemporary western musical techniques. This latter technique is also characteristic of other Soviet composers of the post-Stalin generation. Her work was also inspired by her attraction to Russian orthodox Christianity during her years in Moscow; this experience led her to discover the mystical properties of music.

³ Vera Lukomsky, ‘The Eucharist in my fantasy’: Interview with Sofia Gubaidulina (Sept.1998) p. 29-35,

This focus of this monograph is to examine the *Chaconne* for solo piano by Sofia Gubaidulina by providing a structural analysis with overviews of performance techniques and possible religious influences found in the work.

CHAPTER ONE

SOFIA GUBIDULINA: HER LIFE IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Childhood and Youth, 1932-1949

Sofia Gubaidulina is the youngest of three daughters of Asgad Masgudovich Gubaidulin and Fedosia Fyodorovna Elkhova and grew up in a big and loving family. Asgad was a Soviet geodetic engineer who was also Muslim and a member of the intelligentsia and Fedosia was a school teacher. The Gubaidulina family moved from Chistopol to the city of Kazan in 1932. Kazan is the capital of the Tatarstan Republic of the Russian Federation and is located on the Volga River approximately 545 miles southeast of Moscow. At that time, the city had a population of about 250,000, and was an industrializing city full of newly arrived immigrants from the countryside. Of the sixty Orthodox churches, all but two had been closed, destroyed, or were in use by the Communist Party.

During the 20's and 30's, Sofia's family and others in the region suffered deprivations. Stalin's collectivization began in 1927 and continued until the late 1930's and was an effort to force agricultural surplus from the peasants to sell abroad in an effort to fund Soviet industrialization. This process of removing wealthy private farmers (Kulak) and forcing peasants from their farms on to collective farms encountered resistance and eventually led to a disruption of agricultural production. This eventually resulted in the disastrous famine of 1932-33 in which estimated deaths numbered in the millions.

The Tatar region in Russia where Gubaidulina was born was as heavily affected by the famine as much as any other region of the Soviet Union. My family, too, lived in this region,

both my great-grandfather (Temir Temireev) and grandfather (Kirgizbya Temireev) were taken away and killed during the political purges of the same time period in Kazakhstan. It was not uncommon for children under the age of two to be doomed to starvation, Sofia's father's income was below average and barely sufficient to feed the family. For years life for her family was hard, but Sofia lived in her own world; when the family went out, she liked to stay at home with her dreams and imagination. Her family called her Sonechka, one of the affectionate names used for Sofia. At age five, she and her sister Ida began piano lessons with Ekaterina Leontieva, who was a piano teacher and lived across the street from her family. At that time it was apparent that she was very gifted musically so her family submitted applications to the Music School where especially gifted children took intensive music lessons. Sofia later remembered the day when she was introduced to the cellist Ruvyn Lvovich Poliakov, head of the department of the Music School who studied at the St. Petersburg Conservatory:

Everything was fine except for my age-I was only five. I suddenly felt a terrible danger to wait a whole year at that time seemed a catastrophe to me. Maybe that instant was so dramatic because I already knew even then that music was my salvation. But Poliakov was very understanding and said, "All right, let's give it a try."⁴

She continued studying with Ekaterina Leontieva at the Music School; Leontieva taught her to love Bach, Mozart and Beethoven. Songs, etudes, scales and arpeggios were taught with dedication and high professionalism which she loved and honored. During the first month their mother took the girls to their lessons at the Music School, but later they went on their own. The school became a holy temple for Sofia, who felt that she was pushing open the door to a world of musical sounds. Sofia's parents were not musicians but they heartily supported her musical

⁴ V. Gorkin " V prekrasnom i yarostnom mire muzyki" [In the beautiful and savage world of music] (interview with S. Gubaidulina), *Komssopmpletz Tatarii*. (March 8, 1981), p. 2.

studies and when she was six, bought a baby grand piano made by *Slessar*, a local manufacturer. The day it was delivered was a very memorable day for Sofia. She made very fast progress in her piano lessons and in two years she was playing in a Bach festival with her sister. At that time Sofia was not only demonstrating good technical skill, but also an excellent ear and imagination and started composing a number of piano pieces. At this time her parents bought a new *Eberg* grand piano. At age ten Sofia wished to be a composer herself.

In June 22, 1941, some three million soldiers of Germany and her allies began an invasion of the Soviet Union. This war was supposed to be over in a matter of months, but it lasted for four years, and grew into the largest and most costly conflict in all history. It was here, in the vast struggle between the two dictatorships, that the German army was defeated and the outcome of World War II was decided in favor of the Allied powers: the British Empire, the United States, and the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union alone suffered an estimated 27 million dead during the war (some estimates could be much higher). Kazan was spared direct conflict during the war and the population in Kazan increased due to an influx of refugees. Schools stayed in session, although the Music School had to move and became a military hospital. Gubaidulina's family offered their kitchen to some of the refugees, adding six women and children from the city of Voronezh. Food was available only with rationing cards and there were frequent deaths as a result of starvation. When the war ended in May 1945, Sofia's mother promised if she recovered she was going to have Sofia baptized in the Orthodox Church. But because of her mother's status as a wife of a member of the intelligentsia who was also Muslim, she instead had Sofia baptized privately by a neighbor at their home.

At the Kazan and Moscow Conservatories, Her Career and Teachers, 1949 -1962

In May 1946 Sofia graduated from elementary school and entered the Kazan Music Gymnasium which is a four-year program. At this time she began taking her first composition lessons from Nazid Zhiganov, a composer who graduated from the Moscow Conservatory. In the fall of 1949 Sofia started taking piano lessons at the Kazan Conservatory where she studied with Leopold Genrishkovech Lukomsky, who only taught ten days a month in Kazan. Sofia then gave up composition and decided to be a concert pianist.

During this time she studied much of the classical and romantic repertoire and gave a number of solo and concerto performances. Some of her concerto performances included: Mozart's Piano Concerto in C Minor, K-491, Haydn's Concerto in C, Rimsky-Korsakov's Concerto in C-sharp Minor and Saint-Saens' Second Concerto in G Minor, Op.22. During her studies, Lukomsky opened up a new world for Sofia, for he had a large library of both scores and recordings. It was here that she first heard the works of Edison Denisov.⁵ In 1952, she started taking piano lessons from a new teacher, Gregory Mikhailovich Kogan, a member of the piano faculty at the Moscow Conservatory. Like Lukomsky, he spent 10 days a month teaching in Kazan. She made further progress as pianist and some of the literature she learned included Bach's WTC,⁶ Beethoven's Piano Sonatas B-flat Major, Op.106 (*Hammerklavier*) and F Minor, Op. 57, Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Minor, Op.37, and Rakhmaninov Piano Concerto No. 2 in C Minor, Op.18. Kogan gave her excellent advice about practicing and how to learn music. Kogan invited Sofia to Moscow to continue her studies and she accepted the invitation.

⁵ Edison Vasilievich Denisov 1929-1996 Russian Composer.

⁶ *The Well-Tempered Clavier* (*Das Wohltemperierte Klavier* in the original German) BWV 846–893, is a collection of solo keyboard music composed by Johann Sebastian Bach. He first gave the title to a book of preludes and fugues in all 24 major and minor keys. Two volume I -1722, volume II -1742.

At the conservatory she had to make a very difficult decision on whether to study composition or performance. She decided to study composition with Albert Leman (b. 1915), who was both a pianist and a composer, just as was her composition teacher in Kazan. Leman evacuated to Kazan in 1942 when Leningrad was under siege and studied with Mikhail Gnesin.⁷ Sofia continued her composition studies at the Moscow Conservatory in fall of 1954 with Yuri Shaporin, but they were not very successful. After a year she changed her composition teacher. She then studied with Nikolai Peiko⁸ who was an assistant to Dmitri Shostakovich.⁹ Peiko was very well informed on twentieth-century music. Her lessons with Peiko were more challenging than Leman's but both were excellent teachers. She began analyzing and becoming familiar with the music of Schonberg, Mahler, Stravinsky, Taneev, and Rimsky-Korsakov.¹⁰

In 1956 she married Mark Liando, who was a geologist in the Ministry of Metallurgy who arrived in Moscow at the same time as Sofia. In the spring 1959, a few weeks before Sofia's final examination before graduating, Peiko arranged a meeting with Dmitri Shostakovich to listen to the Sofia's final project which was a symphony. She played a transcription of it on the piano and he said: "Be yourself. Don't be afraid to be yourself. My wish for you is that you should continue on your own, incorrect way".¹¹ Part of the final examination was oral and she selected Richard Strauss' *Don Juan*. She also had to submit three other works besides her

⁷ Mikhail Fabianovich Gnesin (1883 – 1957) was a Russian Jewish composer and teacher. His sisters founded the Gnesin State Musical College (now the Gnesin Russian Academy of Music), in Moscow in 1895. He studied at the St. Petersburg Conservatory under Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Alexander Glazunov and Anatoly Lyadov and in 1908 was one of the founders, with Lazare Saminsky and others, of the Society for Jewish Folk Music.

⁸ Nikolai Peiko Russian composer (1916-1995).

⁹ Dmitri Shostakovich (1906 – 1975) was a Russian composer of the Soviet period and one of the most celebrated composers of the 20th century.

¹⁰ Kurtz, Michael, and [translated by Christoph K. Lohmann]. *Sofia Gubaidulina A Biography*. ed. by Malcom Hamrick Brown. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press), 2007, 39

¹¹ _____ p.45,

symphony: *Phacelia* (for piano quintet), two movements for chorus on Russian folk song, and a piano concerto. Her committee consisted of twelve members from various departments, headed by Shostakovich. On June 19, her symphony was performed in the Great Hall of the Conservatory along with all other outstanding composition students by the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Nikolai Anosov.

In the summer of 1958 Sofia and her husband Mark built a house with her father's help. It was located in a Moscow suburb on Ryazan Road,¹² and the couple enjoyed the peace and quiet of their new home. On November 2, 1959, they had a daughter whom they named Nadia, which is the Russian word for "hope". Many changes began happening in Sofia's life; her husband was often away on geological expeditions and she was now busy being a mother rather than being a composer and pianist. Their house only had one stove and was usually cold and dark. They also did not have a telephone and had to rent a grand piano. The house was mostly empty and had only one bookshelf with various books, scores, and a Bible. Gubaidulina remembers this time: "I just sat down and cried then Nadia start crying, so I played Beethoven's "Hammerklavier" sonata and read poems by Pasternak until she went back to sleep".¹³

This was a time of depression and solitude and Sofia was not able to produce either as composer or performer. Her marriage ended in divorce in 1964. She moved back to Moscow to her previous apartment with her daughter Nadia. Sofia continued her aspirantura¹⁴ at the Moscow Conservatory where she enjoyed resuming her work with her professors. It was her

¹² Ryazan it is on the Oka River 196 kilometers (122 mi) south-east of Moscow. Its population is 521,560.

¹³ Kurtz, Michael, and translated by Christoph K. Lohmann. *Sofia Gubaidulina A Biography*. Edited by Malcom Hamrick Brown. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007. (Page 49)

¹⁴ The Candidate of Sciences degree is a first post-graduate scientific degree in many former Eastern Bloc countries, which is awarded for original research that constitutes a significant contribution to a scientific field. The degree was first introduced in the USSR on January 13, 1934, by a decision of the Council of People's Commissar of the USSR. It corresponds to the Doctor of Philosophy degree (Ph.D.) in the USA, the United Kingdom and other countries.

first step as an independent composer. She also worked with a new professor, Vissarion Shebalin,¹⁵ and studied various aspects of contemporary music, but Shebalin died in 1963 before she could complete her candidacy.

The Mature Composer: After the *Chaconne*, 1962-1979

Professor Peiko's instruction focused mainly on thematic compositions and he expected an initial theme to be subsequently developed and varied. But Sofia had opportunities to develop her own musical style and started to experiment with her own musical language which includes her Piano Sonata (1965). For her candidacy she had to submit eight pieces: *The Wave Runner* and *The Magic Flute* (two ballets), *Joker King* (a one act opera), *Igrok* (theater music), *Adagio and Fugue* for violin and large orchestra, and two small chamber orchestra works. During this same time she started experimenting in new ways of creating music by searching for new sounds, using Tatar folk songs and rhythms, and also using electronic instruments. The first piece was [Chetire piesy dlya elektronnix instrumentov], followed by Intermezzo for Eight Trumpets, Sixteen Harps, and Percussion. Her first experience of electronic and synthesized sounds was at the Scriabin museum, housed in the former home of Russian composer Alexander Scriabin (1871-1915).

Electronic music for Gubaidulina was important because it was a new challenge to her as a composer. As a suggestion to all of his composition students, Peiko recommended that they visit his friend Evgeny Murzin, who for the past 30 years had worked with the ANS synthesizer. This photo electronic instrument takes its name from the initials of Russian composer Alexander Nikolayevich Scriabin, whose creative work and ideas about synthesizing the different arts inspired the young inventor Murzin. In 1938, Murzin invented a design for composers based on

¹⁵ Vissarion Shebalin (1902-1963) Russian composer, In the 1920s Shebalin was a member of the ACM - Association for Contemporary Music, Shebalin was a close friend of Dmitri Shostakovich. His students: Auster, Edison Denisov, Grigory Frid, Tikhon Khrennikov, Karen Khachaturian, Aleksandra Pakhmutova.

synthesizing complex musical sounds from a limited number of pure tones; this proposed system was to perform music without musicians or musical instruments. The technological basis of his invention was the method of photo-optic sound recording used in cinematography, which made it possible to obtain a visible image of a sound wave, as well as to realize the opposite goal: synthesizing a sound from an artificially-drawn sound wave.

Sofia was inspired by her encounter with electronic music, and hoped to draw her own graphic ideas; but composing in this way proved more complicated than she expected. She also began working on new piano compositions, her Piano Concerto and the *Chaconne* for solo piano (1962). The *Chaconne* has become one of her most popular works and it was her first commissioned piece and was written for pianist Marina Mdivani,¹⁶ a student of Emil Gilels.¹⁷ Here is one contemporary definition of a chaconne:

Chaconne is defined as a type of musical composition popular in the baroque era when it was much used as a vehicle for variation on a repeated short harmonic progression, often involving a fairly short repetitive bass-line (ground bass) which offered a compositional outline for variation, decoration, figuration and melodic invention. In this it closely resembles the Passacaglia.¹⁸

The introduction of Sofia Gubaidulina's *Chaconne* looks back to historical models, and uses an eight-measure theme consisting of a chord progression that continues in a series of variations, each having different character, drama, and lyricism. The *Chaconne* became her third published

¹⁶ Marina Mdivani is a Georgian virtuoso pianist. 1963 she had her debut in the city of New York at Carnegie Hall, received First prize 1962 international piano competition Long-Thibaud in Paris and fourth prize Tchaikovsky Competition.

¹⁷ Emile Gilels (1916-1985) Russian Pianist.

¹⁸ T. Walker: "Ciaccona and Passacaglia: Remarks on their Origin and Early History", JAMS, xxi (1968), 300–20

score and was recorded by Mdivani. After this, Werner Barfod, director of the Netherlands Eurythmie Ensemble in The Hague, noted the eurhythmies in her *Chaconne* and he gave a performance of this piece. Because of strong support from Peiko she received an opportunity to write film music which resulted in her music *Baby Riazanskie (The Peasant Women of Riazan)* but it was not successful. In 1963 she completed her candidacy and moved on to start her new life.

Sofia Gubaidulina received first prize from the USSR Composers Union for her piece *Allegro Rustic* (1963) for flute and piano. She continued writing film music for two documentaries and one film (*Believe It or Not*) and also received commissions for another film and two cantatas for the orchestra (*Night in Memphis* and *Rubaiyat*, 1968). Her next works could be considered as her more formed or mature composition style and consist of *Five Etudes* (for harp, double bass, and percussion), *Pantomime* (1966), *Sonata for Two Percussionists* and a large work for voice and chamber orchestra. Later she and several of her composition colleagues were commissioned to write electronic music for symphony orchestra and chamber music.

Finally in 1970 Gubaidulina received permission to travel by train to Warsaw to have her works performed at a music festival. Back in Moscow she began working on a commissioned work for the Prague Ensemble (1976) and she also had her *Piano Sonata* and *Concordanza* (for chamber ensemble) both performed at the International Festival of Contemporary Art in Royan, France and the Donaueschingen in Darmstadt, Germany. A new success for her consisted of a work for harpsichord and percussion using percussion instruments from the Mark Pekarsky¹⁹ collection (Asian percussion; Chinese bells, Chinese cymbals and cymbals antiques). She

¹⁹ Mark Pekarsky is professor at Moscow's Tchaikovsky Conservatory and Merited Artist of Russia. Also, has a percussion collection.

continued to have opportunities to travel and have her works performed in Czechoslovakia, Germany, Holland, France, Poland, and Russia.

International Recognition and Exile, 1981-1991

The time between the completion of her violin concerto *Offertorium* and its performance by Gidon Kremer was one of the most productive periods of Sofia Gubaidulina's life. These works helped bring her international attention in the early 1980s. Her compositions during this time include works for symphony and chorus, a cello concerto, seven solo piano works, two string quartets, a string trio, works for percussion ensemble, and many works for nonstandard instruments and distinctive combinations of instruments. Some of these instruments include the *dombra*, which she used in works that featured Tatar folklore. In 1981, her close friend and colleague Victor Suslin immigrated to West Germany and this saw the end of *Astraea*, the group of improvisers consisting of Sofia Gubaidulina (composer), Victor Suslin (composer), and Suslin's son Alexander Suslin (double bass). Their collection excluded traditional instruments, and consisted of only nontraditional instruments. The real reason for this was not to create an ensemble of folk instruments, but to have all members play instruments they had not been taught to play professionally. While growing up in the Tatar Republic, Gubaidulina would have had exposure to instruments like the *bayan* and *dombra*. Thus the musicians were able to avoid the inertia of academic learning and automatism of professional skills; the only thing they had to apply was their intuition. Viacheslav Artyomov who started with them also brought many instruments from his ethnographic trips, included are: *thar* and *kemancha* from Azerbaijan; Chinese and African drums; *zheng* from China; Bengali *gobi chang*; Indian harpsichord and violin; German ocarina and lip-harps; and all kind of bells and *campanulas*. At their weekly

sessions, they played free improvisational music for five or six hours in a row. It was a spiritual experience and different sound, later called “sound love” by Sofia.²⁰

Suslin’s departure in 1981 was hard for her and they did not know if they would ever see each other again. In 1985 Suslin introduced and promoted Sofia’s work in the west. By this time Sofia finished her most successful film score *The Scarecrow* [*Chuchelo*] (1983) and received a Soviet State Prize. In 1986 she started traveling more, going to Austria to the Chamber Music Festival in Lockenhaus. It was there that she saw Suslin and attended a performance of her work, *Perception* (1983), a work which features a new compositional approach.

Her new compositional technique was used in the twelfth movement of *Perception*, where she experimented with the rhythm of musical form, this composition method being the technique of ordering space-time proportions. It does not employ one or another constellation of pitches as building blocks for the composition but rather the proportional relationships of duration between the individual formal parts of the works. As a consequence, their temporal proportions define these relationships and become the basic concept of the work. The overall unity of form is defined by the melodies of particular rhythmic successions, which in practice is an ever recurring dance of numbers. Elaborate proportional calculations, which always contain some musical sound, are deployed and rejected as the work takes shape, until an organically coherent and artistically satisfying result is achieved. A thorough explanation of this approach, accompanied with a detailed analysis of several of Gubaidulina’s works from the 1990s, can be found in *The Numerical Secrets of Sofia Gubaidulina’s Music* by Valeryia Tsenova,²¹ a scholar who is well known for her work on Denisov and Soviet underground music.

²⁰ Sofia Gubaidulina, her personal note from “International Music Festival” by Sofia Gubaidulina Kazan-Moscow, October 2001.

The International Music Festival in Helsinki of 1991 was a two-day concert by great contemporary composers from the Soviet Union which included: Denisov, Gubaidulina, Kancheli, Shostakovich, Stravinsky, and Schnittke. Also, conductor Gennady Rozhdestvensky²² and his Symphony Orchestra of the USSR Ministry of Culture performed along with violin soloist Oleg Kogan. The first evening concert opened with Kogan performing Gubaidulina's *Offertorium* and was followed by the Eighth Symphony in C Minor, Op. 65, by Shostakovich. It was not only a big success for Sofia, but it was landmark event for contemporary music. This led to interviews by music critics and writers, which in turn created more interest in both her and her music.

As time passed, Sofia continued to keep a strong interest in religion. This influence led to one of her more important works, *Seven Words (of Christ on the Cross)* for cello, bayan and string orchestra (1982). This work is a commissioned seven-movement composition dedicated to Vladimir Tonkha²³ and Friedrich Lips,²⁴ who were the premier performers. The titles of the movements are taken from the Seven Words (Christ's last seven phrases on the cross):

Father! Forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing (Luke)
Lady, this is your Son! John, this is your Mother! (John)
Verily I say unto you: today you shall be in Heaven with me (Luke)
Lord! My Lord! Why did you leave me? (Matthew, Mark)
I am thirsty (John)
Hosanna! (John)
Father! Into your hands I give my spirit (Luke)

²¹ Valeryia Tsenova, *The Numerical Secrets of Sofia Gubaidulina Music [Chislovyie тайны музыки Sofii Gubaidulinoi]* (Moscow, 2000).

²² Gennady Nikolayevich Rozhdestvensky [Генна́дий Никола́евич Рожде́ственский] (1931) is a Russian conductor. He has also conducted many of the world's greatest orchestras, including the Berlin Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, and London Symphony Orchestra.

²³ Vladimir Tonkha is professor, head of the department for violoncello, harp and double bass at the Russian Gnesin Academy of Music in Moscow.

²⁴ Friedrich Lips is People's Artist of Russia, professor at the Russian Gnesin Academy of Music in Moscow he is the first performances of about 70 Bayan works of Russian composers.

In this piece, Sofia continued the tradition of the Seven Words as a basis for musical composition used previously by such composers as Heinrich Schütz²⁵ and Joseph Haydn.²⁶ She borrows a small quotation from Schütz from his *I am thirsty*, using it in movements two, three, and five.²⁷

The instrumentation and performance techniques contain a certain symbolism, leading to musical effects that have a theatrical quality: the cello is the *Holy Son*, the bayan is the *Holy Father*, and the strings are the *Holy Spirit*. The first movement starts with the cello and bayan playing melody that has a moaning, wailing quality. In the second movement the *Theme of the Cross* and in the fourth movement, an amazing “heavy breathing” of the bayan turn into a line of suffering, followed by “twinkling chords.” At the end of the sixth movement, the extremely tense sound of the cello beyond the bridge of the instrument culminates in the most dramatic moment of the work. The seventh and last movement transcends the action into light ethereal spheres of Heaven where all themes flow into joyful sounds full of glares and quivering. My personal view is that this was a new experimental work using various sounds and techniques with this unique group of instruments.

Sofia Gubaidulina’s biggest religious influence during the 1970’s was Marina Yudina.²⁸ Yudina was one of the few Soviet artists who openly opposed the Communist regime, resulting in her being banned on several occasions from both teaching and performing on concerts. She might also be considered one of the great Christian thinkers of Russia in the twentieth century.

²⁵ Heinrich Schütz (1585 - 1672) was a German composer and organist.

²⁶ Franz Joseph Haydn (1732 –1809) was an Austrian composer. He was one of the most important, prolific and prominent composers of the classical period.

²⁷ E Restanu and Klopovoi. M.Komposer 1996. Kazan (Tatarstan).

²⁸ Maria Veniaminovna Yudina (1899 - 1970) was an influential Russian pianist. Yudina was one of the few Soviet artists who openly opposed the Communist regime, resulting in her being banned from teaching or performing on stage on several occasions. She can also be considered one of the great Christian thinkers of Russia in the twentieth century.

Yudina became Sofia's godmother and urged her to be baptized in the Orthodox Church. She was baptized on March 25th, 1970 which completed an unfilled promise by Sofia's mother at the end of the war to have her baptized in church. Two years before Yudina's death she wrote about Sofia:

What is so captivating in Gubaidulina is her extraordinary purity in everything, her faith in her creative path, in people, in the beauty and truth of the world; she is absolutely full of honest and guileless intentions, evaluations, projects, deeds, words, and works. So, if I live soon perform one of her remarkable works composed quite recently.²⁹

But she never performed any of her works and Sofia never wrote anything for Yudina. Her death was a big loss for Gubaidulina, as she felt such close spiritual affinity for this brave, deeply religious pianist.

In 1987 Gubaidulina visited the United States for the first time and during this trip she was accompanied by Laure Fay, a musicologist specializing in contemporary Soviet music and consultant to the Schirmer Publishing Company. They went to Louisville, Kentucky to meet with the Louisville Orchestra, which was celebrating its fifteenth anniversary of the festival *Sound Celebration*. Also, the school of music at the University of Louisville had bestowed the Grawemeyer award on H.Birtwistle. Gubaidulina and Stockhausen were both finalists and nine other countries were represented. Lawrence Leighton Smith, the orchestra's music director and Grawemeyer jury member, was so impressed with her entry, *Stimmen...verstummen...*, that he invited her to attend the festival. Sofia made another trip to Boston in 1988 to participate in *Making Music Together*, which was a major cultural exchange program that was created by U.S.

²⁹ Kurtz, Michael, and [translated by Christoph K. Lohmann]. *Sofia Gubaidulina A Biography*. ed. by Malcom Hamrick Brown. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press), 2007, p.87.

conductor Sarah Caldwell and Soviet composer Rodion Shchedrin. That same year Sofia attended the Third International Music Festival in Leningrad where she had the opportunity to meet John Cage and hear his work, *Music for Fourteen*. This was Cage's only visit to the Soviet Union. By this time, Sofia became a well-known composer and began to travel widely, from Tokyo to London, Boston to Hamburg, and Moscow to Amsterdam.

During her last years in Moscow after perestroika her living conditions had become more difficult. In the fall of 1990 there was a major crisis: you could not buy milk, bread, eggs, sugar, etc., without having special coupons rationed to families. Also her unfavorable status as a Christian woman from the Tatar republic and an overall dislike of her music in the Soviet Union made her living conditions even worse. At this time she was very active as composer and was also traveling often to attend performances. She was also receiving commissions outside the Soviet Union. But the frustration about her living conditions such as empty stores and waiting in line for hours to get basic goods had become too much. Also an event in January, 1991 when Red Army soldiers aimed their weapons at citizens in Vilna and Riga had people fearing civil war or widespread violence. Gubaidulina later commented, "It really got to me, and I was unable to write music. It was an either-or proposition for me: either leave Moscow or death – that is, the death of my work and with that the death of my existence."³⁰ When Suslin phoned her at that time he had alarmed at her mental state of anger and deep despair, something he has never experienced. He made urgent arrangements to help her immigrate and during the last week of February, 1991, she left Moscow with two suitcases to participate in concerts in Germany and Canada. She did not return to Moscow but stayed in Hanover, Germany to begin a new life.

³⁰ Kurtz, Michael, and [translated by Christoph K. Lohmann]. *Sofia Gubaidulina A Biography*. ed. by Malcom Hamrick Brown. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press), 2007, p.216.

Sofia's New World, 1991-2000

In the 1980's, conservative government ministers in West Germany refused to accept the term *Einwanderungsland* (country of immigration), objecting to the influx of foreigners and emphasizing the *ius sanguinis* (right of blood) notion of German immigration law. A German citizen had to trace his or her roots back to German ancestry. Therefore, second-generation Italian, Greek, or Turkish immigrants were treated as foreigners in their country of birth. Many of them qualified for their jobs or graduated from German universities, but faced numerous challenges in everyday life. For example, academic scholarship institutions routinely barred "foreigners" from receiving financial support. At the same time, so-called Volga Germans, whose ancestors had migrated to Russia two hundred years ago, received equal status immediately on arrival in Germany. Hans Werner, a professor of Canadian history and Mennonite studies at the University of Winnipeg, chooses to define "integration" as "feeling at home," a point in time when interactions between immigrants and the host society are no longer considered a product of immigration but part of the normal cultural, political, and social life.³¹ Werner has conducted research which includes German and Mennonite migration in the Soviet Union and early Mennonite settlements in western Canada.

Gubaidulina enjoyed her new life in Germany having been born of Soviet immigrants of the third generation which means she could become a citizen. On her sixtieth birthday she made a trip to Helsinki for the premier of her cello concerto. Then she went to Switzerland to attend a performance of her seven works for chamber music at the Sixth International Music Festival

³¹ Werner Hans, *Imagined Homes: Soviet German Immigrants in Two Cities*. (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press), 2007, p.10.

Davos. Finally, after ten years, Sofia and Suslin reunited in Appen, Germany where they revived the *Astraea* ensemble and gave concerts in Tokyo and Shreyan, Japan. After returning from this trip she went to Italy to receive the Franco Addiati Award in Varese, located near Milano. In Italy a few months later, the postmodern opera house performed her *Prayer for the Age of Aquarius: Oratorio-Teatro-Balletto*. The libretto is taken from the fall of man in the Old Testament all the way to the life and work of Christ and even includes a foreshadowing of Christopher Columbus.

Sofia's first visit with Mstislav Rostropovich was on July 19, 1992. Rostropovich (1927-2007) was a cellist and conductor born in the Soviet Union and is widely considered to have been one of the greatest cellists of the 20th century, a view shared by many of his peers. He was well-known for his commissions of new works which increased the cello repertoire more than any cellist before or since and he personally gave premieres of over 220 works. He conducted Sofia's *Aquarius-Ballet* at the Schleswig- Holstein Music Festival in Neumunster.³²

Sofia worked very hard to complete a number of commissions and also bought a house in Appen. It was mostly empty; but contained a piano, a gift from Rostropovich, who bought it for her at the Steinway factory in Hamburg. Moving into a new country house at this particular time put her under a lot of pressure while trying to write seven new important compositions: *Dancer on a Tightrope* [*Tantsovshchik na kanate*], *Now Always Show* [*Teper vseгда snega*], *Meditation uber den Choral "Vor deinen Thron tret ich hiermit" von J.S Bach, ... early in the Morning*,

³² The Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival is a classical music festival held every year in summer time all over the state of Schleswig-Holstein in Northern Germany. The festival was founded in 1986 by German pianist Justus Frantz and is one of the largest classical music festivals in the world.

Right before Waking ... [.. rano utrom pered probuzhdeniem...], Und: Das Fest is in vollem Gang, the string Quartet No.4 and In Erwartung.

At that time she was invited to the 250th anniversary celebration of Leipzig's Gewandhaus Orchestra, one of Germany's oldest orchestras and her *Offertorium* was chosen for the program. In the year 2000, she was commissioned by the International Bach Academy in Stuttgart for the 250th anniversary of J.S Bach's death. Her *St. John Passion* received its premier performance on September 1, 2000 in by the Marrinsky Opera and Ballet Orchestra conducted by Valery Gergiev.

St. John Passion is written for soprano, tenor, baritone, bass two mixed choirs, organ and orchestra. This ninety minute work consists of eleven parts. This composition was written not for music's sake but for the sense of a word, the emotional sharing of problems of faith, and the fate of the world and mankind. Gubaidulina has added some lines from Revelations (The Apocalypses) to John's, thus bringing her work to a tragic concept: the New Testament comes to the death of Christ, while the Apocalypses end up spilling the seven bowls of wrath. "In The beginning was the Word..." from John's serves as an initial epigraph, like a framework to the whole epic picture. The greatest artists have frequently visualized in their paintings and cathedral frescoes the combination of themes from Christ's Passions and Judgment Day. To quote Sofia:

In my work, I also tried to combine the two scriptures with the aim to make these two kinds of events coexist and intermingle: what happened on Earth through time (the Passion) and what happened in Heaven beyond time (the Apocalypses). The whole piece is based on entanglement of the tale about the Christ's Passions and commentary. It is a kind of a response where questions play the episodes from the St. John's Passions and answers are the reactions to those questions from the Apocalypses by St. John, too.

Exactly reactions, rather than answers! Since the answer is: on the whole, it is the Judgment Day.³³

Another interesting composition is *Hallelujah* (1990) for chorus, orchestra, organ, soloist-treble and color projector. It is in seven parts and the finale cites the melody and text of the Russian hymn *Da Ispolnyatsja Usta*. This music can be compared to a Russian icon or a fresco. Here for the first time, the composer addresses the ideas of light and color both as a visible “row” and a hidden constructive principle. In this work Sofia arranges various combinations of colors and lights; yellow, orange, blue, green, purple, red, dark blue, violet and additionally black and white. For the finale, the solo treble part is enhanced by a light-lilac color. The idea of this piece was to combine color and music.

She stayed committed to writing many commissioned works for soloists, chamber music and orchestras. Many years passed since Gubaidulina immigrated to Germany and her life has dramatically changed in both in the east and west. Today Gubaidulina lives and composes in the small northern German village of Appen. In her approach to musical voices and souls, the composer reveals a certain primary essence of all instruments.

³³ Restaniu, b. Xlopovoi and E. *Sofia Gubaidulina*. Moskow: M. Komposer, 1996.

CHAPTER TWO

AN OVERVIEW OF THE SOLO PIANO WORKS BY SOFIA GUBAIDULINA

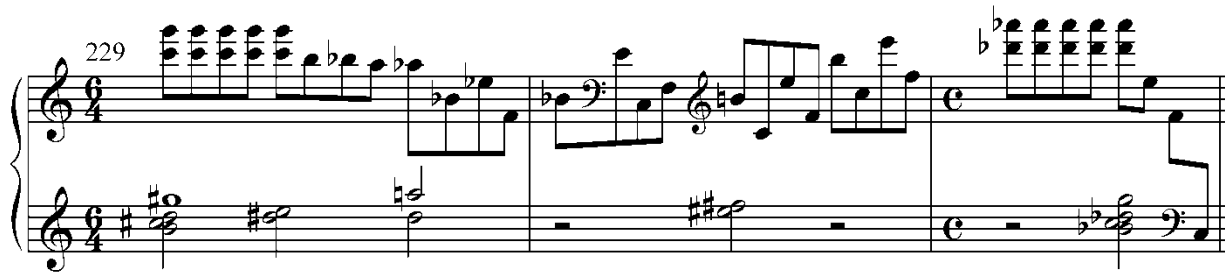
The solo piano works of Gubaidulina share similar characteristics, such as baroque and classical period structures and titles, and are listed chronologically with the date of composition:

1. *Chaconne* (1962)
2. *Piano Sonata* (1965)
3. *Musical Toys* (1968)
4. *Vivente - Non Vivente* (1970)
5. *Toccata-Truncate* (1971)
6. *Invention* (1974)
7. *Light and Darkness (Hell Und Dunkel)* (1976)
8. *Piano Concerto "Introitus"* (1978)
9. *Ritorno perpetuo* (1997)

The *Chaconne*, *Sonata*, and *Piano Concerto*; are works using large forms and *Musical Toys* and *Toccata-Truncate* are examples where she uses smaller structures. These are the mature works Gubaidulina has written for piano and some of her early works are not be included in this listing.

Sofia Gubaidulina has been attracted to a wide variety of sound combinations and effects of both traditional and nontraditional instruments. Along with traditional instruments like the violin, cello, and piano, she gives new spiritual life to non-academic instruments such as the: *bayan*, *dobra* (national Tatar instrument), and multiple oriental instruments such as the Japanese koto and the Chinese zheng, among others. She seems to be trying to search for a new sound on the piano, at times transforming the instrument's tone color, and she also exploits the extremes of

the piano's registers. Her use of dissonance can often be weighted with a relative light pitch density so that the effect, even though dissonant, has a certain clarity and transparency (Example 2.1).



Example 2.1 Gubaidulina, *Piano Sonata*, Movement I, mm. 229-231

Her rhythmic patterns and/or use of register at times seem to be implying another instrument, rather than the piano. The following excerpt from her *Piano Sonata* could be interpreted as an imitation of deep drums with pizzicato cello or bass (Example 2.2).

12

141

p secco

similar to a pizzicato cello

8^{vb}

similar to deep drums, like bass drum with timpani

Example 2.2 Gubaidulina, *Piano Sonata*, Movement I, mm. 141-145

Her approach to the piano is often for sonorous effect that seems to be trying to create an orchestral effect. It is very important to interpret her articulation markings accurately because she is very specific in her notation. Gubaidulina's piano works seem to show other composition

skills as if she is orchestrating for more than just one instrument but she is composing with the resources available through just the one instrument, the piano.

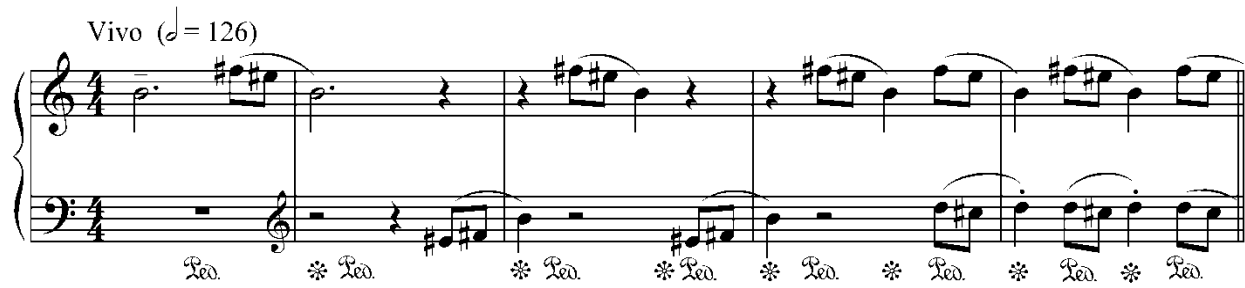
The expressiveness in which she uses various nontraditional instruments sound, harmony, and rhythms also help bring a expressiveness in her solo works for piano. Some examples of nontraditional sounds she used are a glissando performed with a bamboo stick on the piano pegs against a cluster performed on the keyboard (see Examples 2.7), placing the bamboo stick on vibrating strings, plucking the strings, glissando along the strings using fingernail, touching the strings creating a muted effect.

Influences

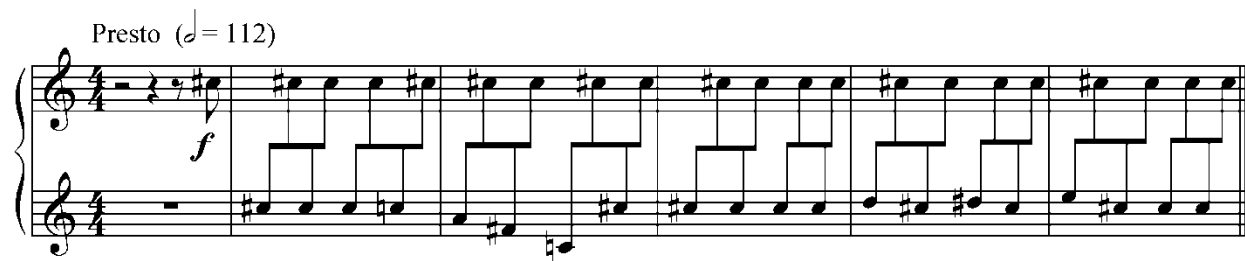
Some of the titles reveal her interest in baroque genres and styles, such as chaconne, toccata, and invention. Some of the techniques she uses in her piano music which show some influence from the baroque style are pedal tones, polyphonic writing using canonic imitation, basso ostinato figures, and toccata style writing. These techniques can be found in movements in her work, *Musical Toys* (Examples 2.3 – 2.6).



Example 2.3 Gubaidulina, *Musical Toys*, No. 6 *Pisnya Ribaka*, mm. 1-7 (pedal tone)



Example 2.4 Gubaidulina, *Musical Toys*, No. 2 *Volshebnya Karusel*, mm. 1-5 (imitation)



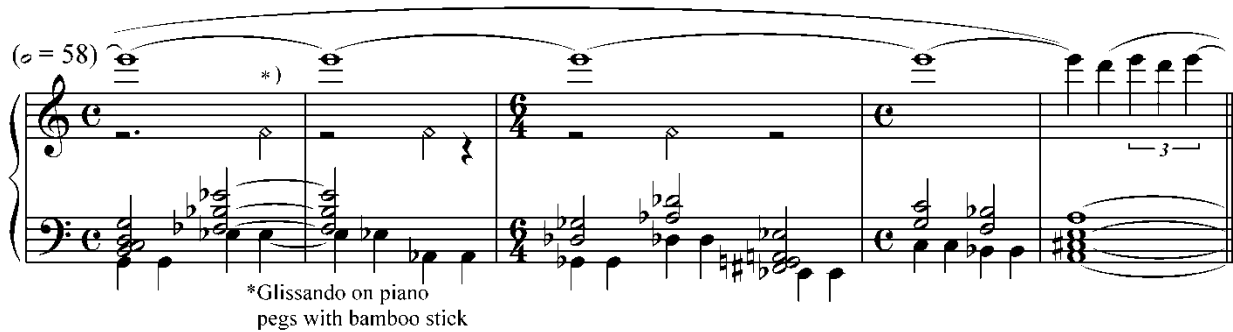
Example 2.5 Gubaidulina, *Musical Toys*, No. 3 *Kyznetch-Koldyn*, mm. 1-6 (toccata style)



Example 2.6 Gubaidulina, *Musical Toys*, No. 4, *Medved-Kontrabasist ya Negritanka*, mm. 1-6 (ostinato)

Music from the classical period also has some influence on her style as seen in her *Piano Sonata* which uses a traditional three movement scheme titled Allegro-Adagio-Allegretto. In this work she uses contrasting themes, such as lyrical and dramatic, which are typical of the classical era. The development of her thematic material also involves thematic transformation which combines a typical romantic period technique with classical style structure. Even though

her piano works draw influence from various historic periods she is still writing in a contemporary pitch language, but it is a language that is usually grounded with a pitch center or pitch centers. She has also developed a personal style on the piano which stresses the variety of sound and tone color possible on the instrument (Example 2.7).



Example 2.7 Gubaidulina, *Piano Sonata*, Movement I, mm. 251-255

Religious Influences

Every composition is an enormous labor for me," Gubaidulina told Karen Campbell of the *Christian Science Monitor*. At the beginning, she said, she hears in her head "a vertical sound of colorful, moving, clashing chords, completely mixed up and jumbled. It is wonderful and beautiful, but it isn't real. My job is to turn that vertical sound into a horizontal line. Those two lines, horizontal and vertical, make a cross, and I think about that when I compose."³⁴

³⁴ *Christian Science Monitor*, August 27, 1997.

Being a religious person, Gubaidulina finds this connection through the artistic process and has developed a number of musical symbols to express her ideals. She does it through narrower means of intervallic and rhythmic relationship within the primary material of her works, by seeking to discover the depth and mysticism of the sound, as well as on a larger scale, through carefully thought architecture of musical structure. Gubaidulina describes that “musical form is a spirit, since in it musical matter grows transfigured into a symbol, and can interpret any opposition structure as representing the cross”.³⁵ In a religious sense, she relates to the ‘horizontal’ (ordinary, earthly) and ‘vertical’ (spiritual, symbolic, transcendental) as a musical representation for the cross. The following excerpt from her *Piano Sonata* shows possible religious symbols. The representation of the cross can be seen with the melodic motion and the prominent use of the interval of the seventh possibly representing the Seven Words (Example 2.8).

The melodic motion could symbolize the cross

Use of the interval of a seventh could represent the Seven Words

rubato

p

mf

p

7th

7th

8vb

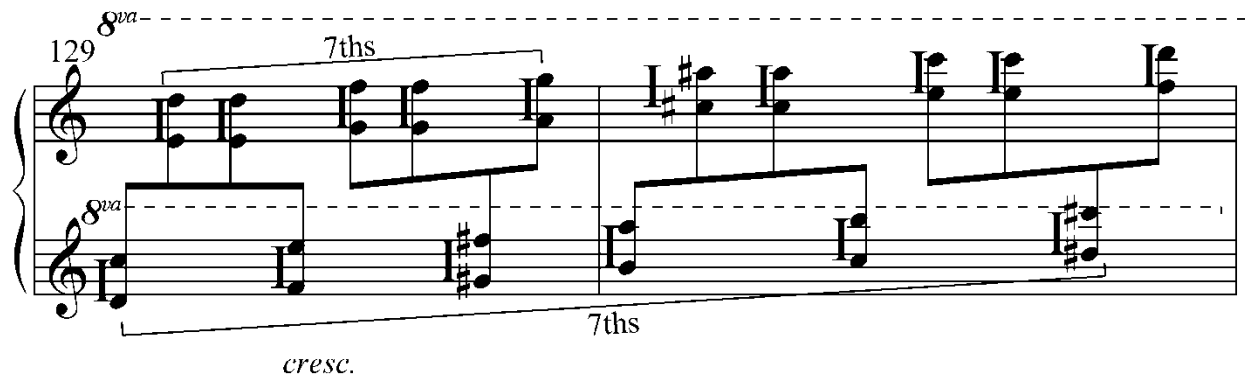
*) Strike the strings in low register with the fingers.

**) Place the bamboo stick on the vibrating strings.

Example 2.8 Gubaidulina, *Piano Sonata*, Movement II, mm.5-6

³⁵ Quote taken from Levon Hakobian, *Music of the Soviet Age, 1917-1987* (Stockholm, Sweden: Melos Music Literature, 1998), p. 287.

I found the following excerpt interesting in that the vertical sound represents spirituality and combined with the symbol of seven (Seven Words) used in parallel clusters with the interval range mostly in sevenths (Example 2.9).



Example 2.9 Gubaidulina, *Piano Sonata*, Movement III, mm. 129-130

The following is Gubaidulina's description of her piano concerto from her interview with V. Lukomsky ³⁶ showing her description of musical symbols/representations in her music:

My Piano Concerto Introitus, for example, is unlike a typical concerto. One could say it is not a concerto at all. The piano part is purely meditative, completely deprived of virtuosity. Everything is meant to sound pianissimo; the pianist listens to an extremely long major tenth, trying to enter into the depth of it. I do not want either virtuosic or assertive passages; I do not want loud chords. My soloist penetrates into the depth of the sound; he/she listens and invites all the others to listen, too. In Introitus I used four different intervallic modes representing four different spaces:

- 1) Micro-intervallic: the quarter-tones of the flute and bassoon. In combination with the strings, the quarter-tones might produce 'inside-the-sound' expressiveness
- 2) Chromatic space – very expressive and dramatic
- 3) Diatonic space – very calm and meditative.
- 4) Pentatonic (in the Coda). I experience this space as the lightest, most elevated, unearthly sphere.

³⁶ Vera Lukomsky, 'The Eucharist in my fantasy': Interview with Sofia Gubaidulina (Sept.1998) pp. 29-35.

These examples and her own descriptions show the core of her musical expression is based on her religious beliefs and her spirituality.

Pedaling and Summary

The rich, full sonority of many of Gubaidulina's piano works naturally raises the question of pedaling. She treats much of her piano writing almost like an orchestral effect, with use of sonority and a variety of tone color both with extended techniques and a creative use of the various registers on the piano. Sofia rarely indicates pedal markings in her scores, leaving its use up to the performer's judgment. For example, there are no pedal markings in the score of her *Chaconne* and there is only one *damper pedal* and a couple of *una corde* (con sordino) pedal markings in her *Piano Sonata*. The *damper pedal* marking in her *Sonata* is located in measure one and this raises doubt as to whether she intended for the entire piece to be under one pedal or should it change periodically according to how she has written certain passages. It is my opinion that the following excerpt in the first movement would not use any pedal based on the precision of her articulation markings (Example 2.10).



Example 2.10 Gubaidulina, *Piano Sonata*, Movement I, mm. 28-30

There appears to be some influence from Beethoven by the way she transitions from movement I to movement II in her *Sonata*. She continues without pause which is very similar to Beethoven's *Sonata*, Op. 109 (Example 2.12) and shows sustain by use of ties. It is unclear as to whether she intended this effect to be used with pedal or with finger sustain (Example 2.11).

The image displays a musical score for the end of Movement I and the beginning of Movement II of Gubaidulina's Piano Sonata. Movement I concludes with a series of tied notes in the right hand, marked *pp* (pianissimo), and a sustained bass line in the left hand. The tempo and mood change to *Adagio* for Movement II, which begins with a *f* (forte) chord in the right hand and a *p* (piano) chord in the left hand. A glissando on the piano is indicated by a wavy line in the right hand. The score includes a tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 58$ and a dynamic marking of *pp*. The transition is marked with a large Roman numeral **II**.

(end of Movement I)

II

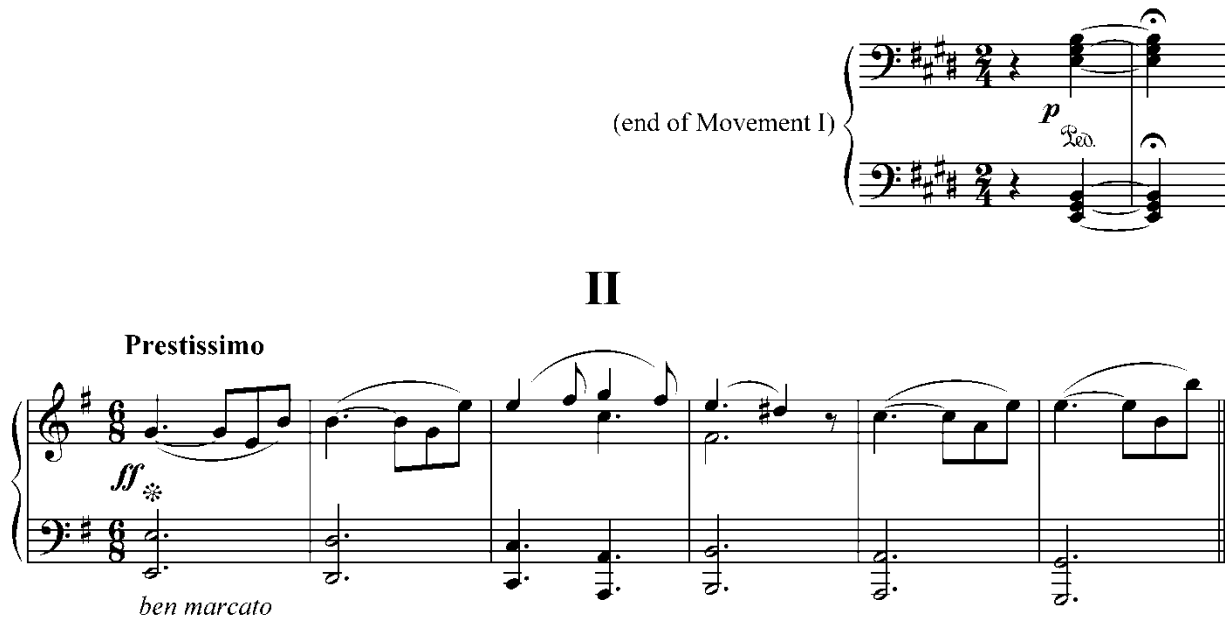
Adagio *)

f *p*

7

**Glissando on piano
pegs with bamboo stick*

Example 2.11 Gubaidulina, *Piano Sonata* (end of movement I and beginning of movement II)



Example 2.12 Beethoven, Piano Sonata, Op. 109 (end of movement I and beginning of movement II)

Sofia Gubaidulina's piano music presents challenges to the pianist not only because of the high level of difficulty but also presents challenges musically to interpret her music intelligently and to bring out the total sound effect of her works. There is no information to my knowledge of her mentioning any influence on her piano writing by any composer. From my own experience in playing her *Piano Sonata*, *Chaconne* and *Musical Toys* they seem similar pianistically to Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and Scriabin which leads me to believe that these particular composers provide a certain amount of influence and inspiration in her piano composition.

CHAPTER THREE

FORMAL AND STYLISTIC ANALYSIS FROM INNOVATIONS IN *CHACONNE*

Sofia Gubaidulina's *Chaconne* [Chakona] (1962) is her first commissioned work and is the only piece that she includes in her list of works from her candidacy at the Moscow Conservatory. Marina Mdivani, a pianist from Soviet Georgia, asked Gubaidulina to write her a work while they were living in adjacent rooms in the student residence. Mdivani was a student of Emil Gilels and had won First Prize at the 1961 International Piano Competition Long-Thibault in Paris and won Fourth Prize in piano at the 1962 International Tchaikovsky Competition. Gubaidulina let herself be inspired by another musician's artistic personality as Marina, according to the composer, "played forceful chords and had a vivacious temperament,"³⁷ performance characteristics that Gubaidulina sought to make the most of in the resulting *Chaconne*, historically a stately sixteenth-century dance for lute or guitar. But only the introduction harkens back to the historical model: an eight-bar theme comprising a chord progression that undergoes variations ranging in styles and contrast.

Chaconne is defined as "a type of musical composition popular in the baroque era when it was much used as a vehicle for variation on a repeated short harmonic progression, often involving a fairly short repetitive bass-line (ground bass) which offered a compositional outline for variation, decoration, figuration and melodic invention. In this it closely resembles the Passacaglia".³⁸

³⁷ Sofia Gubaidulina "Werkeinführung der Chaconne"(Sikorski Music Publishers Archives)

³⁸ New Grove Music Dictionary of America Music, ed. By H. Wiley Hitchcock and Stanley Sadie, with Susan Feder as editorial coordinator, 4 vols. (London and New York: Macmillan, 1986),

The 1990's Werner Barfod, director of the Nederlands Eurythmie Ensemble in The Hague, noted the eurhythmies in her *Chaconne* when he gave a performance of this piece and he said:

Ever new spheres of sound evolve in the Chaconne, leading to ever new spheres of the soul and unexpected layers that captivate the listener as well as the interpreter. The very first chord in its second register encompasses the entire sound range of the piece. Even with its extreme chords registers, its rhythms, tempi, and dynamics, the music nevertheless remains humanly comprehensible and fulfilling. We experience a grappling with human existence, if we completely surrender to its development, a grappling with man himself and his innermost balance, his human center and verticality. It always calls for finding a new position, making new decisions, remaining centered, even if the challengers become especially in its eurhythmic representation.³⁹

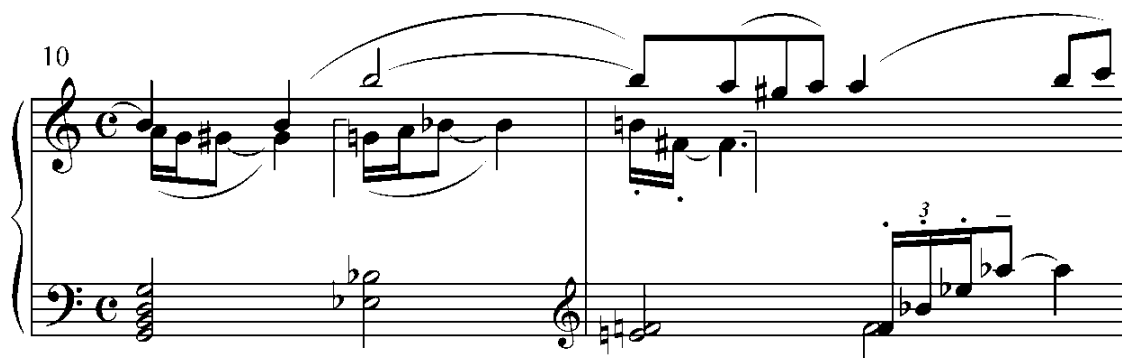
Eurhythm can be defined in the following way:

When performing eurhythm with music (also called tone eurhythm) the three major elements of music, melody, harmony and rhythm, are all expressed. The melody is primarily conveyed through expressing its rise and fall; the specific pitches; and the intervallic qualities present. Harmony is expressed through movement between tension and release, as expressions of dissonance and consonance, and between the more inwardly directed minor mood and the outwardly directed major mood. Rhythm is chiefly conveyed through livelier and more contoured movements for quick notes, slower, dreamier movements for longer notes; in addition, longer tones move into the more passive (listening) back space, quicker tones into the more active front space.⁴⁰

An example of eurhythm can be seen in Variation 1 which has polyphonic textured melodies using a variety of rhythms, quarters, eighths, sixteenths, and triplet sixteenths, layered over a harmony background in half notes that vary in consonance and dissonance (Example 3.1).

³⁹ Kurtz, Michael, and [translated by Christoph K. Lohmann]. *Sofia Gubaidulina A Biography*. ed. by Malcom Hamrick Brown. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press), 2007, p. 66,

⁴⁰ Ibid.



Example 3.1 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 10-11

Chaconne (1962)

Sofia Gubaidulina's *Chaconne* can be described structurally as continuous variations and somewhat similar to its counterparts of the baroque period. The main theme, as mentioned above, is eight measures in length and is shown in the following example (Example 3.2). The main theme can be broken into three basic elements or motives, two of which can be further subdivided into sub-motives. These will be labeled as Motives A, B, and C. These motives have a variety of function with Motive A serving primarily as harmonic support that supports the pitch center, Motive B adds both rhythmic and melodic elements to the texture, and Motive C adds melodic and harmonic elements and, to a lesser extent, some rhythmic interest. The head motive, Motive A, consists of four half notes with full chord structures using a wide range of the piano's registers. The sound effect of this motive seems to give the combined effect of both bells and organ pedal.

Chaconne (Main Theme)

Andante maestoso $\text{♩} = 42$ Sofia Gubaidulina
(1962)

Example 3.2 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 1-9

It follows a chord progression of Bm-Bm-G-Eflat which are triads major thirds apart (Example 3.3). Pitches not part of individual examples of each motive will be shown in smaller note sizes.

1

Motive A

Motive A

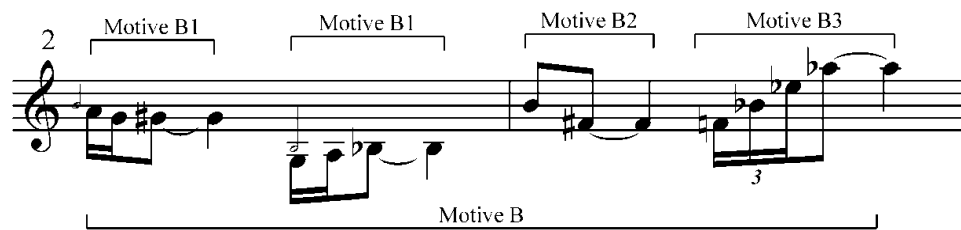
8vb - - - - -

Chord: Bm Bm G E^b

Major 3rd Major 3rd

Example 3.3 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 1-2

Motive B enters during Motive A and basically grows out of the last two half notes of Motive A. This motive can be divided into three sub-motives labeled B1, B2, and B3. B1 is a three-note sixteenth figure of a whole-step followed by a half-step which is repeated. Motive B2 and B3 seem almost like a trumpet fanfare with the downward skip of a fourth in B2 and the four-note rising fourths in triplet-sixteenths in B3 (Example 3.4).



Example 3.4 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 2-3

Motive C could be described as two sub-motives with C1 being a four-note eighth note figure and C2 as a three-note dotted-quarter – eighth. The eighth falls to the next downbeat that seems to complete the motive which causes elision with Motive C2 and the first notes of the third statement of Motive A (downbeat of measure five) (Example 3.5).

The image shows a two-staff musical score in treble and bass clefs. Motive C is shown in the treble staff, divided into Motive C1 (measures 1-2) and Motive C2 (measures 3-4). Motive C1 is a four-note eighth note figure (G4, A4, B4, C5). Motive C2 is a three-note dotted-quarter – eighth figure (C5, B4, A4). The eighth note of Motive C2 falls to the next downbeat, causing an elision with Motive A. Motive A is shown in both staves, starting on the downbeat of measure 5. The notation includes a '4' above the first measure and an arrow pointing to the elision of Motive C (C2) with Motive A.

Example 3.5 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 4-5

The entire theme will be shown below illustrating all of the motivic elements (Example 3.6).

Motive and Sub-Motive Labeling of the Main Theme:

Elision of Motive C (C2) with Motive A

Elision of Motive A with Motive C

Motive C

Motive A

Motive C1

Motive C2

Motive C2 (rhythm variation)

Variation 1

Motive C2

Motive C2 (rhythm variation)

Motive B1

Motive A

Motive B1

Example 3.6 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 1-9

The structural design of the *Chaconne* can be outlined as a main theme followed by seven variations and concluding with a coda, which also functions as a reprise of the main theme.

The length of each variation gradually becomes longer up to Variation 6, but in addition to length, the most intense moments of development in these variations occur in Variation 5, 6, and 7, with the most intensely dramatic moment in the work building to the end of Variation 7 followed by a grand pause. Following this moment, the coda or reprise of the main theme

returns beginning with the identical chord voicing stated at the beginning of the work. The pitch center of the *Chaconne* is B and is harmonized with a B minor chord but it is not traditional B minor. Gubaidulina's pitch language makes use of many chromatic pitches to blur the effect of being within a key and at times there is not a discernable pitch center giving the effect of free tonality and free atonality. A structural outline below will show the measure breakdown and length of each section with the total number of measures shown in parenthesis (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Formal Outline of the Structure of the *Chaconne*

Section	Measures (total)	Pitch Center	Meter
Main Theme	1 - 8 (8)	B	4/4
Variation 1	9 - 16 (8)	B	4/4
Variation 2	17 - 24 (8)	B	4/4
Variation 3	25 - 31 (7)	C & A# in bass	4/4
Variation 4	32 - 48 (17)	B - F# - D	4/4
Variation 5	49 - 97 (49)	F# - B - F#	12/8, 6/4, 4/4
Variation 6	98 - 159 (63)	B - F# - C	4/4
Variation 7	160 - 210 (51)	B - F#	4/4, 6/4
Coda	211 - 230 (20)	B (ends on B octaves)	4/4

The main theme, marked *fortissimo*, begins the work in dramatic fashion, especially with the very first chord (B minor) using the low and high extremes of the piano range. The same voicing also returns again at the beginning of the coda. The large opening chords of Motive A have the effect of an announcement and Motive B seems to answer it like a trumpet fanfare.

Both Motive A and C are used to finish the main theme and they give a more lyrical effect combined with chord structures that become more consonant at the end of the main theme where Gubaidulina uses only major chords in measures 7 and 8.

Variation 1 is marked *forte* and is similar to the main theme and uses all three motives but Motive C enters earlier forming a polyphonic texture with Motive B (see Example 3.1). The rest of the variation is similar to the theme, concluding with material from Motives A and C, but with some extended development of Motive C1. Variation 2 is marked yet another dynamic level softer at *mezzo-forte* and uses the three motives in the same order as the main theme but Gubaidulina adds a basso ostinato in octaves in the left hand (Example 3.7). The eighth-note basso ostinato figure appears to be an extension of the development of Motive C1 at the end of Variation 1 and seems to give the effect of an organ pedal part.



Example 3.7 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 17

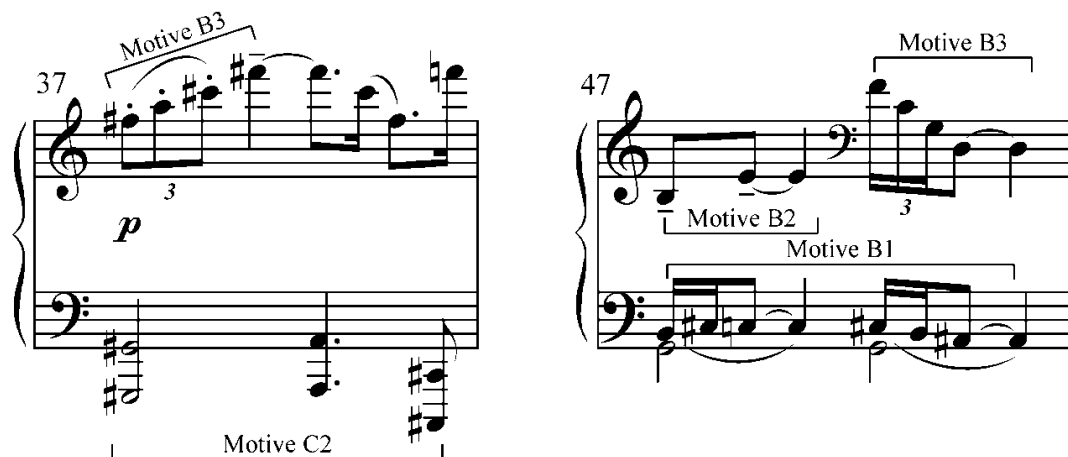
The constant eighth-note rhythm in the basso ostinato in Variation 2 continues in Variation 3 as wide broken intervals in both hands. The dynamic levels, which have gradually become softer in the previous variations takes a sudden drop in Variation 3 with a subito *pianissimo*. Embedded within the fabric of the broken intervals are elements of Motives A and C. There is a crescendo

to *mezzo-forte* which concludes the variation in a similar manner as the main theme (Example 3.8).

The musical score for Example 3.8 shows measures 26-28 of Gubaidulina's Chaconne. The treble staff starts with a measure marked '8va' and '26'. The bass staff starts with a measure marked 'pp'. A bracket labeled 'Motive C2' spans measures 26-28 in the treble staff. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes with various accidentals.

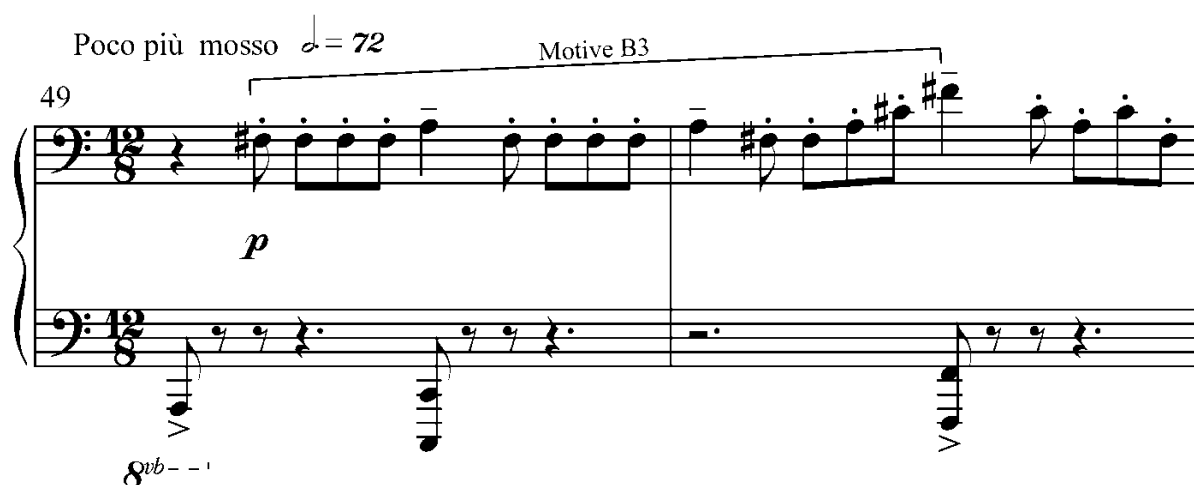
Example 3.8 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 26

Variation 4 begins marked *piano* and it begins the lengthening of the variations and more extended development. It starts with Motive A and B1 elements and then uses Motive B3 (m. 37) as an ascending F-sharp minor triplet that begins a passage using dotted rhythms and triplet figures over a bass derived from Motive C2. This portion of the variation resembles both a swing style and a scherzo. The variation ends by featuring simultaneous statements of Motives B1, B2, and B3 (Example 3.9).



Example 3.9 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 37 and mm. 47

Like Variation 4, Variation 5 begins marked *piano* but changes to 12/8 meter and begins suddenly faster with the tempo marking *Poco più mosso* (dotted-half = 72). This is the first variation which is more extended in length and is treated much like a development. It is in the style of a toccata which develops the Motive B3 triplet figure first stated in measure 37 previously shown in Example 3.9 (Example 3.10).



Example 3.10 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 49-50

This particular variation could be divided into three sections which could be described as three toccatas. The following table shows the structural design of Variation 5 (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2 Structural Outline of Variation 5

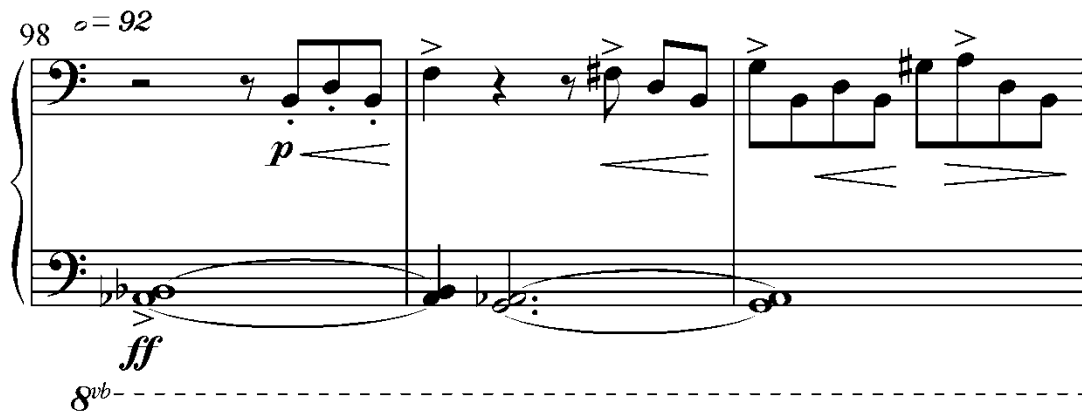
Variation 5	Measures	Meter
Toccata 1	49 - 66	12/8
Toccata 2	67 - 80	12/8, 6/4, 4/4
Toccata 3	81 - 97	4/4

All three toccatas build to a dramatic climax at their conclusion. The second toccata begins subito *piano* while the third toccata continues the dramatic buildup at the end of Toccata 2. Toccata 3 does drop to *pianissimo* at measure 85 and then builds to a climax to end Variation 5 with scale flourishes and chord clusters (Example 3.11).



Example 3.11 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 97

Variation 6 can be described as a fugato which begins with a broken chord idea which appears to be a derivative of the opening toccata theme, which in turn was derived Motive B3. It begins marked piano but over harmonic major seconds marked *fortissimo*, which are the conclusion of the descending scale passage that concluded Variation 5 shown in Example 3.11 (Example 3.12).



Example 3.12 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 98-100

The imitation used in the fugato in Variation 6 is in two voices and begins in a pitch center of B with the subject in the bass, then answered by the soprano in the dominant, F-sharp. The subject/answer is restated in the same order of voices one more time but both are in the pitch center of B (Example 3.12a).

Example 3.12a Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 89-99 and mm. 109-110

In measure 143, Gubaidulina brings back the basso ostinato idea in octaves in a low register which was first presented in Variation 2 (Example 3.7). Rather than linear, she writes this

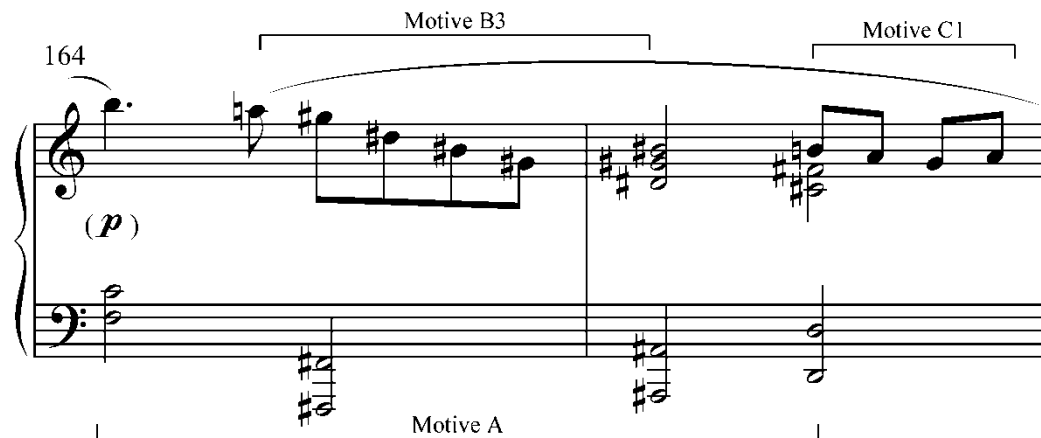
ostinato mostly in broken intervals (Example 3.13) with patterns that appear to be derived from the toccata and fugato development of Motive B3. The tempo broadens near the end of the variation with a *Poco a poco meno mosso* tempo indication at measure 153. The variation ends with the ostinato in the left hand with ideas derived from Motive A in the right hand.

Example 3.13 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 143-144

Variation 7 begins with *fortissimo* B octaves which conclude Variation 6 (elision) and continues subito *piano* with most of the basic motivic material from the main theme but transformed into a less dense texture which gives a more mysterious effect than a dramatic effect (Example 3.14).

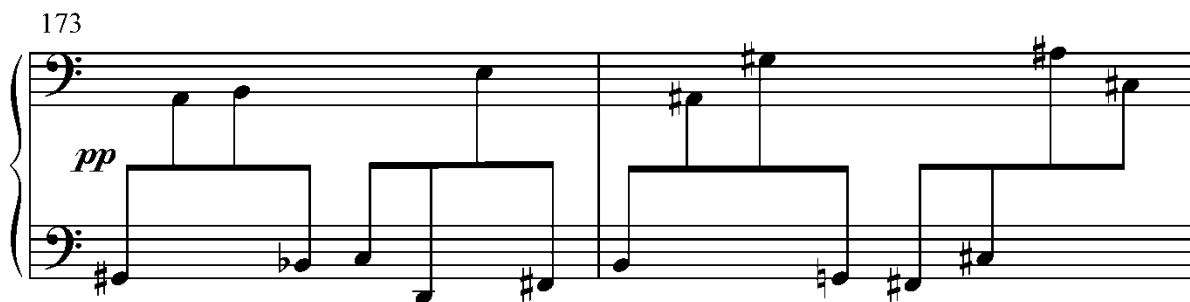
Example 3.14 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 160-161

Gubaidulina continues with free development of Motives B3 and C1 in eighth notes which begin to blend both motivic elements together, forming a continuous combined effect of the two motives. It is supported by a variety of chords and intervals derived from Motive A and C2 (Example 3.15).



Example 3.15 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 164-165

At measure 173, the eighth-note development of Motive B3 and C1 drops to *pianissimo* and loses its harmonic support (Example 3.16)



Example 3.16 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 173-174

It gradually settles into an eighth-note ostinato centered mostly on the pitch F-sharp at measure 177, which is the dominant pitch of B, and is marked *piano* with *dolente* as an expression marking (Example 3.17).

177

Ostinato

p dolente

Motive A (fragment)

Motive C2

* F-sharp, dominant pitch of B

Example 3.17 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 177-178

The ostinato sounds over fragments of Motives A, C2, B (all) and all elements begin to wedge outward covering a more expanded range of the piano. It is at this moment that Variation 7 begins to build to a gradual climax; a climax that builds to the most intense and dramatic moment of the *Chaconne* (measures 209-210). At measure 181, the ostinato settles only on the pitch F-sharp in repeated notes and broken octaves in eighth notes. Underneath the ostinato are elements of Motives A and C2 written in a combination of intervals and chords. Motive B3 is used only at measure 181 (Example 3.18).

181

Ostinato

(*p*)

3
Motive B3

Example 3.18 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 181

Gubaidulina begins to build momentum by using diminution of notes values in the ostinato going from eighths to triplets to sixteenths then finally to thirty-seconds (Example 3.19).

The musical score for Example 3.19 consists of two parts. The first part, starting at measure 189, shows a piano introduction with a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a triplet of eighth notes in the left hand. A wavy arrow points to measure 196. The second part, starting at measure 196, shows the 'Ostinato' section. This section begins with a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a triplet of eighth notes in the left hand. The right hand continues with a triplet of eighth notes, and the left hand continues with a triplet of eighth notes. The section is marked with a crescendo (cresc.) and a dynamic level of piano (p). The section ends with a bracket labeled 'Motive A'.

Example 3.19 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 189 and mm. 196-197

She does not begin a crescendo until the ostinato reaches sixteenth notes in measure 197 and when she reaches thirty-seconds notes at measure 205, there is a tempo change to *Poco meno mosso e marcato* (quarter = 84) and a dynamic level of *forte* is achieved. At measure 205, Gubaidulina begins to neighbor the ostinato (respelled as G-flat) with F which increases the intensity and underneath it there are flourishes of Motive B1 and Motive A in eighth-note harmonic intervals of 4ths and 5ths (Example 3.20).

Poco meno mosso e marcato ♩ = 84

Ostinato

205

f

Motive B1

Example 3.20 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 205

The final climactic moment of the variation is during measures 209 and 210 where the ostinato is played in both hands breaking off in downward chromatic motion that begins to ascend in the right hand white key patterns derived from Motive B3 and left hand eighth notes in seconds on the black keys bolstered by a *crescendo* that pushes beyond *fortissimo*. The meter is changed in these two measures to 6/4 to accommodate extra beats to complete the flourish. Even though there are no tuplet numbers in the score, Gubaidulina saves one last diminution of note values in measure 210 by grouping ten thirty-second notes on each beat (quintuplet thirty-seconds) which increases the attack rate to finish the climax. The last right hand pitch in this upward flourish reaches pitch A7 which seems to point to a return (modally) to B. The last left hand eighth-note pitches are A-flat and B-flat, which is the third time they are given in this measure. Respelled, they are G-sharp and A-sharp which are the sixth and seventh (leading tone) scale degrees of B which creates a voice-leading return to the B minor chord on the downbeat of the first measure of the coda at measure 211 (Example 3.21).

209

Ostinato

descending chromatic run

Motive B3

Motive B3

simile

210

Ostinato

descending chromatic run

8va

A leading to B

A leading to B

(5)

(5)

(grand pause)

Coda

G# & A# (enh.) leading to B

Example 3.21 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 209-211

The Coda functions both as closing section and recapitulation. The return of the main theme at measure 211 is at the original tempo and is written much like the original main theme (Example 3.22).

Tempo I (Andante maestoso)

211

Motive A

Motive B1

Motive B1

Motive B2

Motive B2

Motive B3

Motive C1

Motive C2

Motive C2

Motive A

8va

G# & A# (enh.) leading to B

Example 3.22 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 211-214

The coda continues very similar to the beginning until measure 218, where Gubaidulina combines Motives C2 (right hand) and B3 (left hand) which leads to the last phrase at measure 220 which functions as closing cadential material. At measure 220 Motive 3 continues as the basso ostinato in octaves starting on B's and reminiscent to the one used in Variation 6. Motive C2 becomes a B minor chord sounding on the last half of beat 1 giving it both the syncopation effect of motive C2 and the characteristic high B minor chord used at the beginning of Motive A (Example 3.23).

Example 3.23 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 219-220

The pitch center of B (minor) is now established to the end of the work where the B minor chord sounds seven times. The first four chords repeat at the same octave through measure 225 spaced around 2 measures apart resembling the ringing of bells and the basso ostinato in octaves seem to give the effect of organ pedal which was first used in Variation 1. The last three chords sound one octave lower each time only a few beats apart while the basso

ostinato thins to a single pitch. The work ends in octave B's on pitches B1 and B2 at measure 230 after a *decrescendo* to *piano* (Example 3.24).

Example 3.24 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 228-230

Piano Style and Performance Approaches

Sofia Gubaidulina originally planned on a career as a concert pianist and she was a very accomplished performer. The *Chaconne* presents a variety of challenges and problems for a pianist. From a purely pianistic view, it would require an experienced pianist to be able to both interpret and give an effective performance of this work. In addition to the technique needed to play this work, the pianist must also be knowledgeable enough to make changes in touch in order to create a variety of sound on the instrument to contrast the different character and sound of the variations. During my study and practice in preparing to perform the *Chaconne* I found the following difficulties:

1. Sound Effect/Timbre
2. Pedaling
3. Hand Balance
4. Fingering

5. Metric Interpretation

The extremes in sound effects present a challenge on how well a pianist can control the timbral possibilities of the piano. For example, the pianist must have enough power and control to make the dense *fortissimo* chords in the opening measure (and elsewhere) sound effective and with a clean, even attack. The timbral effect of this passage and similarly voiced chords throughout the work almost seem to imply the sound of a large pipe organ (Example 3.2). A very different timbral effect occurs in Variation 5 (toccata), which requires a staccato-touch which gives an almost pizzicato string effect for this passage (Example 3.25).

Poco più mosso $\text{♩} = 72$

staccato/pizzicato effect

49

p

staccato/pizzicato effect

Example 3.25 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 49-50

As mentioned in Chapter Two, Sofia Gubaidulina's lack of pedal markings is in itself innovative in that the pianist must interpret how and where to use pedaling to create an effective interpretation of the music. Determining the use of pedal in the *Chaconne* did not present significant difficulties because of the precise nature of the articulation and phrase markings along with observations of texture and melodic elements. One example is the first portion of Variation 2, where the most appropriate sound effect with pedal was the use of both *damper pedal* and *una*

corde pedaling which gave a more subdued effect to the wide skips in eighth notes and allowed the melodic element to be heard within the total fabric of sound (Example 3.26).

25

pp

va

melodic element emphasized within fabric

damper pedal

u.c.

damper pedal and *una corde* pedaling continues until beat 3 of measure 30

Example 3.26 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 25-26

Another example of pedal interpretation occurs in Variation 5 (toccata) where there are several possibilities in which pedaling could be used. This particular passage occurs from measures 93 through 97, which builds to the climax ending Variation 5. The texture consists of right-hand scale-wise runs (mostly) over gradual, thickening repeated half-note pedal tones in the left hand. The following pedal combinations were possible and all work well musically:

1. No pedal
2. Change pedal on each half-note pedal tone
3. Change pedal on each down beat (every two pedal tones)
4. Play all five measures under one pedal

The most satisfactory musical effect was playing all five measures under one pedal. The additive effect of the sound building to the climax with the pedal down gave the most powerful effect for

the climax and it made the best contrast to the beginning of Variation 6, which does not require pedal because of the staccato markings in the opening pitches (Example 3.27).

93 *f*

97 *ff*

Variation 6 → *p* *ff*

1. (Without Pedal) →

2. ————

3. ————

4. ————

Example 3.27 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 93 and mm. 97-98

Problems with hand balance control are an issue in most of the polyphonic passages where you have to clearly articulate each line and at times with different types of articulations simultaneously, such as staccato and legato (see Example 3.1). Another example occurs in Variation 4 (beginning at measure 37) where two different types of sound are implied, a swing-like right hand, almost like a jazz wind player over a left-hand bass which should be articulated in a heavier manner, like a double bass (Example 3.28).

37 *p*

38 *p*

swing-like effect →

double bass effect →

Example 3.28 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 37-38

Gubaidulina's skill as pianist and her understanding of the instrument shows in her piano compositions. Despite the difficulty of the music, her writing is very idiomatic for the instrument and pitches are written in a logical manner. One particular passage that needed careful fingering notation occurs in measures 57-58 where I found it necessary to switch some pitches to the other hand to make the passage more comfortable to play. An alternate fingering by Professor Michael Gurt is also shown (Example 3.29).

Professor Michael Gurt: 2 1 3

Right hand: 5 3 2 1 2 4 3 2 1 2 1 5 1 5 1 5 1 3 4 3

Professor Michael Gurt: 4 2 1

Left hand: 1 3 2 1 2 4 1 5 3 2 1 5 1 5 4 3 2 1 5 2 3 1 5

Example 3.29 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 57-58

One passage that was challenging from a metric and rhythmic aspect occurs during Variation 5. The change of meter from 12/8 to 6/4 at measure 73 is not a tempo change, but a metric change from a dotted-quarter note pulse to a quarter note pulse and both staying at a metronome marking of 168. This was determined by Gubaidulina's metronome marking of a dotted-half at 84 during the 12/8 meter and her notation of *dotted-quarter note* = *quarter note* at measure 73. Because the eighth note subdivisions of both notes values into three (dotted quarter) and two (quarter), the effect of the meter change has an aural effect or illusion of a slower tempo change at measure 73. It has this effect because the same melodic patterns in eighth notes in

compound meter (12/8) have a quicker attack rate than the eighth notes in simple meter (6/4).

This resembles an effect known as metric modulation (or temporal modulation), a term used to describe this effect in the music of composer Elliot Carter (Example 3.30).

The image displays two musical staves from Sofia Gubaidulina's *Chaconne*. The first staff, starting at measure 67, is in 12/8 time and features a *subito p* (suddenly piano) marking. Above the staff, a tempo indication shows a half note equal to 84 (or a dotted half note equal to 168). The second staff, starting at measure 73, is in 6/4 time. Above this staff, a tempo indication shows a half note equal to 168, with a double bar line and arrows indicating a change from the previous tempo. The notation shows a transition from eighth notes in 12/8 to eighth notes in 6/4, maintaining a consistent pulse.

Example 3.30 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 67 and mm. 73

Religious Symbolism

As composer, Gubaidulina emphasizes the importance of her religious beliefs in her life, as is reflected in many of her pieces: faith and religion build the basis of her compositional work. In her own words she says, “Actually, all my works are religious. As I understand it, I’ve never written non-religious pieces.”⁴¹ To this writer’s knowledge, there is nothing mentioned by Gubaidulina herself concerning religious symbolism in the *Chaconne*, however, it might be assumed that the symbolism is present based on Gubaidulina’s own words that all of her music is religious. As mentioned in Chapter Two, certain numbers do have religious significance and in

⁴¹ Vera Lukomsky ‘The Eucharist in my fantasy’: Interview with Sofia Gubaidulina (Sept.1998) p. 32.

music, they could be used to represent intervals, pitches, pitch and chord groupings, among others. Three numbers that appear prominent in this work that do have religious significance are 3, 4, and 7 with their symbolism listed below (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3 Religious Symbolism of the Numbers 3, 4, and 7

Number	Religious Symbolism
3	The Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)
4	Represents the 4th Day of God's creation of Heaven and Earth. It also represents the four elements (earth, air, fire, and water) and the four regions of the earth (east, west, north, south)
7	The Last Seven Words (phrases) of Christ

In the beginning of the main theme, the head motive (Motive A) consists of four chords using triads that are major thirds apart. Both the triad, three pitches arranged thirds apart, and the interval between the triads all represent the number three. She also adds an interval of a seventh to the second B minor triad. Motive B1 consists of three pitches and Motive B2 consists of two pitches descending by a perfect fourth and Motive B3 consists of four pitches all ascending by perfect fourths (Example 3.31).

Adds 7th to the triad
 Motive B1 = 3 pitches
 Motive B2 = Interval of a 4th
 Motive B3 = 4 pitches at intervals of a 4th apart
 Motive A = 4 Chords
 Chord: Bm Bm G Eb
 Major 3rd Major 3rd
 Three different triads written a major third apart.
 Both chord structure and chord distance = 3

Example 3.31 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 1-3

At the most climactic moment of the work (measure 210) there is a significant use of the numbers three, four, and seven. Each pattern of thirty-second notes (derived from Motive B3) consists of four notes arranged a perfect fourth apart with each having a fifth pitch which functions like a stepwise passing tone connecting them. The range of the four pitches in fourths is a seventh and the distance between each pattern is by ascending thirds which ascends a total number of seven times. It is also possible that the pitch contour of each pattern is a representation of the Cross (Example 3.32).

Example 3.32 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 210

During the coda, the sounding of the B minor chords occurs a total of seven times before the work ends with octave B's. It is also interesting that the last three chords repeat down one octave (three times) (Example 3.33).

Example 3.33 Gubaidulina, *Chaconne*, mm. 220-228

Many of the sound effects in this work also appear to be imitating the sounds of a church such as large sustained organ-like chords, organ pedal effects, and bell-like effects. The effect of bells and sustained organ-like chords can be seen in Motive A of the main theme (Example 3.3). The basso ostinato in Variation 1 seems to have an organ pedal quality (Example 3.7) and the repeated B minor chords and the basso ostinato in the coda seem to combine as bells and organ pedal (Examples 3.23 and 3.33). The dramatic build toward the climax ending Variation 7 could

also be described as a tumultuous and chaotic ringing of bells (Examples 3.21 and 3.32).

Though folk music is a large part of Gubaidulina's style, this particular work does not seem to be influenced by folk rhythms or have melodic or harmonic elements that resemble folk music.

However, the sounds of the church previously described could themselves be considered a type of folk influence; types of sounds from her youth that she would have heard from churches along with the sounds of traditional folk music.

The *Chaconne* comprises the principal characteristics of her style: contrasting melodic lines, influences from her religious approach to composition, skillful exploration of the sonorities of the piano in a very distinctive way, full texture, rhythmic vitality, influences by east and west composers and virtuoso writing, which is often combined with a single format structure.

CONCLUSION

Sofia Gubaidulina is the most important and successful female composer to emerge from the Soviet Union. She has endured a very difficult journey as a religious female composer in a country that discouraged both female composers and religion and has not only survived, but has grown into a composer of international stature. The *Chaconne* represents the first work that defines her composition style for solo piano and is also the first work of hers that became well-known outside the Soviet Union. Her compositional output encompasses a wide range of traditional and nontraditional instruments, with instrument combinations ranging from solo and chamber works to works for large orchestra and chorus. As seen by her many awards, recordings, publications, performances, and the number of articles and books written about her, Sofia Gubaidulina has now made her presence known internationally.

“Be yourself. Don’t be afraid to be yourself. My wish for you is that you should continue on your own, incorrect way”⁴²(D. Shostakovich)

⁴² Kurtz, Michael, and [translated by Christoph K. Lohmann]. *Sofia Gubaidulina A Biography*. ed. by Malcom Hamrick Brown. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press), 2007, p. 45.

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VITA

Kadisha Onalbayeva was born in Kazakhstan and began her musical training at the age of five. She attended the Jubanov Special School for Talented Children in Almaty, Kazakhstan. While at Jubanov she studied piano and composition, gave piano recitals and was involved in both piano and composition festivals and competitions. Awards include first prize in the Soviet Union's *New Talent* competition, national piano competitions and Central Asia piano competitions. She also participated in international music festivals in Yalta, Germany, Turkey, Russia and Uzbekistan. After graduating from the Jubanov School, Kadisha entered the Kurmangazy National Conservatory of Music. While at the conservatory she studied piano, composition, accompanying, chamber music and pedagogy. She was awarded the *President's Award for Young Artists* and Chevron's *Award for Talented Students* in piano and composition. In addition, she performed often as soloist with the Kazakh Philharmonic Orchestra, National Radio and Television Orchestra, National Opera Symphony Orchestra, National Conservatory Symphony Orchestra, and the National Folklore Orchestra. Her most important piano and composition teachers were Ludmila Lapan, Asuly Dosaeva, Tatiana Sulemenova, Guljamila Kadirbekova, Klara Gospadar, Vladimir Sevidov, Vladimir Krienev, Constance Carroll, Mary Ann Bulla, Jerry Sieg, Grigory Sioles, and Michael Gurt.

Ms. Onalbayeva continued her activities as performer, composer and teacher following her graduation from the conservatory. During this time she received a *Soros Prize* for her work in development of international cultural exchanges. This award paid for her first visit to America in January 2000. This first visit brought Kadisha to New Orleans in January 2000 to participate in the International Jazz Conference. In August 2003, she came to the U.S. and earned her Master of Music in composition from the University of New Orleans in May, 2005 and in May,

2006, completed her Master of Music in piano performance at the University of New Orleans. While at U.N.O. she won the Southeastern Composers' League graduate composition competition for her solo cello work, *Think...Know...After....*

Throughout her career, Kadisha has been a strong supporter of new music. She has continued performances of her music and has participated in international new music festivals as composer, performer and organizer throughout Central Asia, Austria, England, Kazakhstan, Russian, Uzbekistan, and Tatarstan. While in America she has participated in new music activities and performances of her works in Alabama, Louisiana (New Orleans, Slidell, Ruston, and Baton Rouge), South Carolina, North Carolina and Pensacola, Florida. She has been particularly interested in introducing the music of Kazakhstan to America.

Ms. Onalbayeva is on the faculties of Pensacola Junior College (Florida) and the University of Mobile (Alabama) where she teaches piano and composition. She recently received a commission to write a string quartet for *Vintage* at the University of Mobile. She is also scheduled to perform Liszt's *Piano Concerto No. 1* with the University of Mobile Orchestra in the spring of 2011 and she will be performing Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* with the Pensacola Civic Band in the spring of 2011. She is currently a doctoral candidate in piano performance at Louisiana State University where she is studying with Professor Michael Gurt and plans to graduate in May 2010.