

S e r g e i

R A C H M A N I N O V

P R E L U D E S

O p u s 2 3 N ° 1 F # m i n o r



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Sergei RACHMANINOV

1873 - 1943

PRELUDES Opus 23 N° 1 F# minor

The composition of 24 preludes covering all the major and minor keys is a huge challenge and Rachmaninov's contribution was spread over 20 years. As an active and successful stage artist at the piano and on the podium, time for composing was no doubt limited, unlike Debussy who completed his 24 Preludes in less than 6 months.



The ten works which comprise opus 23 were created over two years in the early 1900s whilst staying at the Hotel America in Moscow. Dedicated to his mentor and colleague Alexander Siloti, Rachmaninov believed that these works were far superior to his youthful first prelude, but audiences always clamoured

for the "Bells of Moscow", much to his intense irritation.

This F# minor prelude is marked *Largo*, although at $\text{♩} = 58$ the semiquaver accompaniment will possibly identify as an *Andante*. The mood is typically Russian, with deeply passionate, sombre and melancholy themes, rather like Chopin's opus 28 N° 2 in E minor. I am convinced that the LH tenuto signs refer to the bass line, their position modified in this edition. I have also transferred the lovely chromatic alto melody (**6, 12 & 32**) to the right hand. The opening four bars of the coda (**33-36**) have been radically rewritten by swapping hands and maintaining a repetition of the LH melody.

Given that the composer was born in 1873, an age of great artistic individuality, it is not surprising that he typically performed without wholly respecting the score. His choice of tempi are quite idiosyncratic and this edition reflects some of the more effective deviations, and the editor's preferences, sometimes indicated with an asterisk*. When the composer makes minor alterations to the text for repetition, they are not included in this edition; their absence is hardly audible and they are particularly awkward to memorise. In addition, some of the phrasing, dynamics and agogic markings have been sometimes modified; a zealous student will need to consult the original Russian publication by Gutheil or Robert Threlfall's Boosey & Hawkes 1992 edition. Use of the sostenuto pedal is entirely editorial.

PRELUDE

Op 23 N° 1

* *largo* [♩ = 58]

The first system of the musical score consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4. The piece begins with a piano (*pp*) dynamic, marked with a fermata over the first measure. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some measures containing triplets. A mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic is introduced in the second measure of the system. The system concludes with a fermata over the final measure.

3

5

5

2 1 4 4 1

9

pp

11

13

mf

m.d.

(p)

15

p

(p)

m.d.

17

Musical score for measures 19-20. The piece is in G major (one sharp). Measure 19 features a treble clef with a melodic line and a piano accompaniment of chords and eighth notes. Measure 20 continues the piano accompaniment with a melodic line in the bass clef. A dynamic marking *m.d.* is present at the end of measure 20.

Musical score for measures 21-22. Measure 21 begins with a forte *f* dynamic and features a treble clef with a melodic line and a piano accompaniment of chords and eighth notes. Measure 22 continues the piano accompaniment with a melodic line in the bass clef.

Musical score for measures 23-24. Measure 23 features a treble clef with a melodic line and a piano accompaniment of chords and eighth notes. Measure 24 begins with a fortissimo *ff* dynamic and features a treble clef with a melodic line and a piano accompaniment of chords and eighth notes. A dynamic marking *m.d.* is present at the start of measure 24. A *Sost. Ped* instruction is located at the bottom of the page.

Musical score for measures 25-28. Measure 25 is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The score features a treble clef with a melodic line and a bass clef with a supporting line. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 1, 2, 4, and 5. A fermata is placed over the final note of measure 28. A decorative asterisk symbol (***) is located below the bass staff.

Musical score for measures 27-30. Measure 27 is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The score features a treble clef with a melodic line and a bass clef with a supporting line. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 2 and 2. A fermata is placed over the final note of measure 30.

Musical score for measures 29-32. Measure 29 is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The score features a treble clef with a melodic line and a bass clef with a supporting line. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 2 and 2. A fermata is placed over the final note of measure 32. A small asterisk symbol (*) is located below the bass staff.

31

p

rit

33

pp

mf

a tempo

35

*

37

pp

rit

3

39

f

pp

3