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Selected Twentieth-Century Bagatelles for Piano

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SELECTED TWENTIETH-CENTURY BAGATELLES FOR PIANO

By

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ABSTRACT

The first appearance of the term "bagatelle" is in the beginning of the eighteenth-century, with most of the early works traced back to simple dances. Later, Ludwig Van Beethoven elevated his bagatelles, expanding them in many ways, reflecting his compositions of the late period. The Romantic composers also wrote bagatelles, and some works present a similarity to the nineteenth-century character piece.

Twentieth-century bagatelles demonstrate a variety of musical styles and characters. They still contain some of the traditional aspects, for example, each piece is relatively short with different moods and qualities. On the other hand, several composers began to experiment with new compositional and performance techniques, and created their own individualities. The nationalistic composer, Béla Bartók addressed the folk element in *Fourteen Bagatelles*, Op. 6. Alexander Tcherepnin's *Bagatelles*, Op. 5, based on the Russian tradition, has gained great popularity in the piano repertoire. Ernst Von Dohnányi is strongly associated with the Romantic tradition in *Ten Bagatelles*, Op. 13. Meanwhile, two Americans wrote works using twelve-tone technique: Peter Lieberson's *Bagatelles* and George Rochberg's *Twelve Bagatelles*. Flor Peeters utilized a style of church music in *Ten Bagatelles*, Op. 88, and William Bolcom exhibited French titles in *Nine Bagatelles*.

Despite the short history of the bagatelle, it has been established as one of the popular compositions in the twentieth-century. The purpose of this treatise is to reveal the value of the bagatelle as a significant part of the piano repertoire. The author reviews the historical background, discusses various bagatelles by Beethoven, and focuses on those twentieth-century bagatelles shown in the list of musical examples, with regard to musical styles and performance practice.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Historical Background of the Bagatelle

Bagatelle means 'trifle' in French and implies something unimportant or insignificant. It "also refers to a game something like billiards, played with four to nine balls on a flat table with cups at the corners." In music, a bagatelle is a short and light piece, typically for keyboard with no specific form.

In the eighteenth-century, the earliest bagatelle was by a French composer, François Couperin. He used the name "Bagatelle" in his tenth Ordre for harpsichord, in which a rondeau was entitled Les Bagatelles. The term also appeared for a collection of dances by the French publisher Boivin. Ludwig Van Beethoven was the first to use the term for short piano pieces in his Bagatelles pour le Pianoforte, Op. 33. Several short pieces, as well as Op. 119 and 126, were also composed as bagatelles. Beethoven's works are not simple trifles but are deep, complex and expressive, and have greatly influenced the nineteenth-century character piece. Carl Wilhelm Maizier published a set of Musikalische Bagatellen that combined dance pieces with songs, and Johann Nepomuk Hummel composed Six Bagatelles for Piano, Op. 107.

During the nineteenth-century, Franz Liszt wrote Bagatelle without Tonality, S. 216a the year before his death. It was originally intended as a fourth Mephisto Waltz and employs all twelve chromatic tones and demonstrates an early exploration into atonality. Bedřich Smetana, a Czech composer, wrote sets of bagatelles for piano as well. Camille Saint-Saëns wrote Six Bagatelles for Piano, Op. 3. Jean Sibelius composed two sets of bagatelles for piano. Carl Nielsen, the Danish composer and a contemporary of Sibelius, wrote Humorous Bagatelles, Op. 11. The work was dedicated to his children and each piece is reminiscent of scenes from a child's life. Historically, bagatelles were

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2 Ibid.
3 S. number is from the Humphrey Searle Thematic Catalogue of the Works of Liszt.
written exclusively for solo piano, but Antonín Dvořák deviated from the norm and composed *Bagatelles for Two Violins, Cello and Harmonium*, Op. 47.


Many bagatelles composed in the twentieth-century have titles, as well as specific performance techniques and notations. Thus, these works are more interesting interpretively and technically. Furthermore, there are numerous pedagogically fascinating bagatelles that allow performers to express a variety of different moods and characters.
Beethoven's Bagatelles

"...chips of marble from the workshop, some rough and unpolished, others fashioned with skill and affection." 5

Beethoven (1770-1827) composed what are probably the best-known bagatelles. He first gave the term its fame with three sets, Op. 33, 119 and 126. Additionally, he wrote several pieces without opus numbers, which were published posthumously and were very similar to his bagatelles in character. They are WoO 52, 53, 54, 56, 59 and 60. WoO 59 is *Fur Elise*, a popular piece rarely recognized as a bagatelle.

The first set, Op. 33 consisting of seven bagatelles, was composed in 1782 and published in 1803 by the Viennese Bureau d'Arts et d'Industrie. Op. 33 was not planned as a set having any special unity. Beethoven combined little sketches he wrote during the Bonn years, which he did not use for piano sonatas or exercise pieces. 6 As a result, Op. 33 presents scherzo, etude, dance and lullaby-like pieces in the classical style.

It is interesting that Beethoven marked '*Con una certa espressione parlante*' ('With a certain speaking quality of expression') in the sixth piece. The term, '*parlante*' means 'speaking' in Italian, in this case it is a speech-like playing style. Later on, Bartók used the same performance technique for his works, particularly for the slow pieces. The only difference is that Bartók utilized the equivalent term '*parlando*' instead of '*parlante*' (Examples 1.1 & 1.2).

EXAMPLE 1.1 Beethoven: *Bagatelles*, Op. 33, No. 6, mm. 1-6

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6 Lockwood, 395.
EXAMPLE 1.2 Bartók: *Improvisations on Hungarian Peasant Songs*, Op. 20, No. 3, mm. 1-3

Forty years after Op. 33, Beethoven completed Op. 119 consisting of eleven bagatelles, and it was published by Maurice Schlesinger in Paris in 1823. As Lockwood has observed:

Some aspects of the Op. 119 show Beethoven thinking about how to order them effectively and establish a modest degree of unity in the set, but what appeals most about the collection is found not in the set as a whole but in the single pieces. These bagatelles show Beethoven's ability to convey a sense of completeness within the smallest boundaries.  

In a pedagogy book by Fredrich Startke, the last five pieces from Op. 119 used the German word 'Kleinigkeiten' ('Trifle') rather than the French term. Beethoven preferred German terms and titles in these years to express his patriotic spirit. Another example is the title, 'Hammerklavier' for his Piano Sonata Op. 106.

Composed in 1824, Op. 126 has six bagatelles. Each is longer and more expressive than most of those contained in Op. 119. Beethoven referred to this opus as 'Ciclus von Kleinigkeiten' ('Cycle of trifles') in the early sketches, so it seems evident that all six pieces were intended for performance as a set. Charles Rosen, the American pianist and music theorist, comments "Opus 126 is a genuine cycle, and that when compared with Beethoven's earlier bagatelles, its pieces have such weight that they are no longer miniatures."  

Op. 126 was composed soon after completion of the Ninth Symphony and his late piano sonatas, and displays the more profound pianistic effects of his late period. Some of the movements in his late piano sonatas and bagatelles, e.g., the tenth piece from Op. 119

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7 Ibid., 397.
8 Ibid., 398.
and the second piece from Op. 126 present scherzo-like fast tempos. In addition, certain bagatelles from Op. 126 show delicate figurations such as arpeggiated cadenza-like passages through several octaves, which appear in his late piano sonatas, particularly in Op. 109, 110 and 111. The first piece features meter and rhythm changes followed by a long cadenza-like figure with long trills. This effect breaks the strict classical form and anticipates the later Romantic interest in a free style (Examples 1.3 & 1.4).

EXAMPLE 1.3 Beethoven: Bagatelles, Op. 126, No. 1, mm. 24-30

EXAMPLE 1.4 Beethoven: Piano Sonata, Op. 109 (1st mvt), mm. 11-13

Beethoven's bagatelles draw attention to a new genre, the character piece in the nineteenth-century. Composers of the Romantic period wrote many character pieces, which were significant in expressing their emotional feeling. The character piece stands out as the most important element in Robert Schumann's piano works especially. Pieces such as Papillons, Op. 2 and Carnaval, Op. 9 were inspired by or based on German
literature. Each piece is short and has a different mood and character. The general form is ternary form (A-B-A), and has two contrasting moods. Beethoven's bagatelles are also short and mostly in three-part form. Herbert Brün, a German-born composer, explains that Beethoven's bagatelles, particularly Op. 126 "are often considered examples of a certain kind of piano piece that flooded the salons and recital halls of the nineteenth century: impromptus, serenades, songs without words, musical portraits, character pieces, miniatures, novelties, etudes, and so on. All of these names refer to a kind of piano piece that Beethoven, when he wrote one, called "Bagatelle.""

Beethoven's bagatelles are not just simple piano pieces as suggested in the French meaning. They are much more serious and diversified. Slow pieces are deeply expressive, while other works are technical exercises, like etudes. Although bagatelles are not usually considered a very important part of Beethoven's output as he called them 'Kleinigkeiten' ('Little Things'), it is significant that the late bagatelles of Beethoven are thought by many to be part of the transition to the nineteenth-century character piece.

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9 Herbert Brün, [Web Site], "Beethoven Bagatelles, Op. 126" (22 February 2007), Site address: http://www.msu.edu/~sullivan/BrunBagatelle.html
CHAPTER II
BÉLA BARTÓK-FOURTEEN BAGATELLES, OP. 6

Biography & Musical Style

Béla Bartók (1881-1945), a composer, pianist and research scholar in ethnomusicology, was born in Nagyszentmiklós, Hungary. He began piano lessons from his mother who was an amateur pianist. After his family moved to Pressburg in 1894, he studied piano with László Erkel and harmony with Anton Hyrtl. In 1899, Bartók enrolled at the Royal Academy of Music in Budapest and graduated in 1903. During the time, he studied piano with István Thomán and composition with Hans Koessler. Early on, he became interested in Hungarian folk music as well as Romanian and Slovakian. Traveling and working with his colleague Zoltán Kodály collecting folk songs, they published a collection in 1906.

Bartók became a professor of piano at the Royal Academy of Music in 1907. He toured the United States as a pianist in 1927 and resigned from the Budapest Academy of Music in 1934. The advent of World War II forced him to leave Hungary and move to the United States in 1940, with a research position in folk music at Columbia University, where he earned an honorary Ph.D. During his last years in the United States, he had constant financial difficulties because of his uncompromising character and physical illness. He died of polycythemia in New York in 1945.

Bartók is considered one of the most significant composers of his time. He composed numerous pieces for piano in a variety of styles. The early compositions, for instance *Four Early Pieces*, reveal a strong influence of the German Romantic tradition. His mature works, *Allegro Barbaro* and *Etudes*, Op. 8 explore virtuosity. *Improvisations on Hungarian Peasant Songs*, Op. 20 illustrates Bartók's interest in folk music. His *Sonata* for piano is the exceptional piece where he employed the traditional large forms. *Out of Doors* is revolutionary since he employed a new and unusual indication for performers to use their palms to strike the keys for certain passages in the fourth movement. His unique compositional style features irregular meters, modal scales, cluster chords, dissonant intervals and chords, in addition to extreme chromaticism. He used the twelve different notes of the chromatic scale for melodic figures, but never adopted the
technique of the twelve-tone method. Some pieces incorporated the notation *parlando-rubato* (free, like speaking) and *tempo giusto* (strict tempo). Other twentieth-century composers such as George Rochberg also employed these marks in their works.

**Fourteen Bagatelles, Op. 6**

Bartók wrote a set of bagatelles called *Fourteen Bagatelles*, Op. 6 composed in Budapest in 1908 and premiered in Berlin the same year for Ferruccio Busoni's piano class. This work consists of fourteen miniature pieces, experimental and eclectic in nature.

The opening piece is slow, lyrical and articulated by tenuto marks for the melody. Bartók presents 'dual key signatures,' a different key signature for each hand, demonstrating just one example of his interest in experimentation. Using dual key signatures eventually became one of the writing styles in the twentieth-century; Sergei Prokofiev, for example, also utilized two different key signatures in the third piece of *Five Sarcasms*, Op. 17. Intense focus is needed in performance due to the bitonality, although the music looks simple and short in two-part form. Dual key signatures are employed in only the first bagatelle (Examples 2.1 & 2.2).

EXAMPLE 2.1 Bartók: *Fourteen Bagatelles*, Op. 6, No. 1, mm. 1-5
EXAMPLE 2.2 Prokofiev: *Five Sarcasm*, Op. 17, No. 3, mm. 1-4

Throughout the piece, which is in ABA form, the third bagatelle features a song-like melody and a five-note spinning chromatic ostinato figure. The expressive melody presents a simplicity and economy of theme that is one of Bartók's characteristics. Performers need careful pedaling because of the chromatic ostinato, which should be played as light and evenly as possible. Barbara Nissman remarks, "the third *Bagatelle* recalls another Russian, Sergei Rachmaninoff, and his G-sharp minor Op. 32 *Preludes* (written two years later in 1910)" \(^{10}\) (Examples 2.3 & 2.4).

EXAMPLE 2.3 Bartók: *Fourteen Bagatelles*, Op. 6, No. 3, mm. 7-9

EXAMPLE 2.4 Rachmaninoff: *Preludes*, Op. 32, No. 13, mm. 9-10

Humorous and unpredictable, the seventh bagatelle is "a wonderful example of Bartók's attempt to write out, with his indicated tempo and metronome changes, his exact definition of capriccioso."\(^{11}\) From the very beginning, Bartók specifies frequent tempo changes using ritardando and accelerando as well as metronome marks. He states, "if there is no ritardando or accelerando in front of the metronome mark, the change of tempo is sudden."\(^{12}\) Bitonality is evident in the opening: the left hand plays the black keys, the right hand white keys. In addition, while the right hand has fourths for the downward arpeggiation of the chords, the left hand theme is built in thirds. Downward arpeggiation of the chords appears almost throughout the piece and needs to be rolled very lightly and quickly to support the improvised dance-like melody. The performer requires precise control in playing the chordal-accompaniment pp in the fast tempo (Example 2.5).

Rhapsody-like improvised elements and augmentation techniques make the piece much more exciting. According to Nissman, this bagatelle recalls some other pieces. She comments "the seventh Bagatelle surely must have influenced Aaron Copland's piano piece The Cat and the Mouse, as well as "From the Diary of a Fly" in Book VI of Mikrokosmos, and it also looks toward Bartók's third Burlesque"\(^{13}\) (Example 2.6).

EXAMPLE 2.5 Bartók: Fourteen Bagatelles, Op. 6, No. 7, mm. 1-5

\(^{11}\) Ibid., 45.
\(^{13}\) Nissman, 44.
EXAMPLE 2.6 Bartók: "From the Diary of a Fly" from Mikrokosmos, Vol. 6, mm. 57-61

Melancholy and mournful, the twelfth piece "has been frequently compared to Schoenberg's early romantic compositional style in his Op. 11 piano pieces. Both sets were composed within the same time frame, and their crafting of motivic technique is similar. However, neither was directly influenced by the other."\(^{14}\) It opens with repeated notes, a Bebung-like figure. This vibrato effect for the clavichord was used by Beethoven in connection with tied repeated notes in his Piano Sonata Op. 110. Bartók tried to imitate a Hungarian cimbalom, an instrument similar to the marimba, for the opening. Benjamin Suchoff commented:

Tone color is an important stylistic element in Bartók's piano writing. He considered the piano to be essentially a percussion instrument-somewhat similar to the hammered output of the Hungarian cimbalom-rather than a stringed one, and devised a special notation to indicate which way the piano was to be played.\(^{15}\)

Repeated notes in the opening reappear for each section giving a framework to the form, which is in three parts. According to Bartók's note for playing the improvised repeated A, the performer needs "a gradual acceleration, without a fixed number of repeated notes; each analogous passage to be performed similarly."\(^{16}\) Scales based on chromaticism, repeated notes and rhythm with frequent meter change in addition to tempo changes combine to make this a more challenging piece to play (Examples 2.7 & 2.8).

\(^{14}\) Ibid., 47.
\(^{15}\) Benjamin Suchoff, Béla Bartók: A Celebration (Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2004), 47.
\(^{16}\) Bartók, 45.
Subtitled *Ma mie qui danse* (My Dancing Sweetheart), the last bagatelle contains a four-note motif inspired by Stefi Geyer, the Hungarian violinist, with whom Bartók had a romantic relationship. Initially, he included the motif in his First Violin Concerto (Op. posth) dedicated to her. The main theme of the first movement is based on Bartók's "declaration of love" leitmotiv, D-F#-A-C#\(^{17}\) (Example 2.9). "Stefi's leitmotiv" appears in the opening as melody and reappears toward ending (Example 2.10). The tempo mark, *Presto*, is quite unusual for a waltz that combines a dark mood and sarcastic humor. Bartók orchestrated this bagatelle in 1911 as the second *Grotesque* movement of his orchestral work *Two Portraits*, Op. 5.

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\(^{17}\) Suchoff, 47.
EXAMPLE 2.9 Bartók: Violin Concerto, No. 1 (Op. posth), mm. 1-5

EXAMPLE 2.10 Bartók: Fourteen Bagatelles, Op. 6, No. 14, mm. 179-185

In general, Bartók provides notes and precise indications for the performer, which is very helpful. For example, Sostenuto appears at the beginning of each section in bagatelle #8. Bartók explains sostenuto means a sudden retardation, while ritardando or ritenuto are gradual. He also notes, "the accidentals which are valid only for the notes that lie on the same line or in the same space and, of course, for one measure only. An exception is made only in the case of notes whose value is prolonged, by means of a tie, into the next measure." He included specific tempo markings, using the metronome, and mostly employed three-part form. Additionally, there is an unusual feature that he placed a rest above the bar line, for instance, in the eleventh bagatelle.

Bartók combined his research on folk music of central Europe, interest in twentieth-century technique and traditional structure and procedures in the fourth and fifth bagatelles. He took an actual folk song and filled out the simple modal melody line

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18 Bartók, 18.
19 Ibid.
with rich harmony for the fourth bagatelle. Listening to the actual words of the folk songs will give the performer added direction, particularly in the fourth and fifth bagatelles. Bartók included subtitles for the last two bagatelles based on his four-note lover's motif. *Ten Easy Pieces*, composed in 1908, begins with the motif as well. In *Carnaval*, Op. 9, Schumann also created a similar motive, which came from the letters ASCH, the hometown of Ernestine von Fricken, who was an early love of Schumann. In conclusion, the piano works by Bartók are an excellent introduction to playing contemporary music. *Fourteen Bagatelles*, Op. 6 is enjoyable to play and very accessible for both audience and performers.
Biography & Musical Style

Born in St. Petersburg, Alexander Tcherepnin (1899-1977) was a Russian-born American composer, conductor and pianist. Despite growing up with a musical family, his early formal training was minimal. After the Russian Revolution in 1918, his family moved to the Georgian city of Tiflis, where Tcherepnin continued his studies at the University of Tiflis. "The experience of living in Georgia provided Alexander with ideas for scales and harmonies developed in later works."\(^{20}\) In 1921, they relocated to France for political reasons, and he began studying piano with Isidore Philipp.

Tcherepnin spent three years in China in the 1930s, which presented him with new musical ideas. Marriage to a Chinese pianist, Lee Hsien Ming, influenced many later compositions as well. After moving to Chicago in 1949, he taught at DePaul University for fifteen years. He moved to New York in 1964, after retiring from DePaul University, and began international activity as pianist, composer and conductor. 1967 brought his long awaited homecoming to Russia for a concert tour with the invitation of the Soviet government; he was at last allowed to visit places associated with his youth. A heart attack ended his life in Paris in 1977.

His major works include operas, symphonies, piano concertos and numerous works for solo piano, as well as compositions for ballet and choral music. In general, his music displays the Russian tradition, particularly the influence of Modest Mussorgsky and Sergei Prokofiev. Enriche Alberto Arias notes "Alexander Tcherepnin clearly belongs to the Russian tradition, though he also considered himself a 'Eurasian' composer. Conciseness, contrapuntal textures, and strongly articulated structures are typical of his works."\(^{21}\) Tcherepnin also "invented his own harmonic language by combining minor and major hexachords, pentatonic scales, old Russian modal tunes and


\(^{21}\) Ibid.
Throughout his life, Tcherepnin's extensive travels to many European and other countries contributed to his musical directions.

**Bagatelles, Op. 5**

Tcherepnin wrote a large amount for solo piano music, and *Bagatelles*, Op. 5 is considered his most famous work. Some of the pieces show his experiments with bitonality, harsh dissonance and irregular rhythms. Rhythm is very important in his works. He often used driving and motor rhythms with articulation markings, for example, staccato, wedge staccato and accent marks. The work was dedicated to Maika Kalamkarova, who performed selected pieces in Tiflis, Georgia with the title of *Primitifs*. Tcherepnin premiered *Bagatelles*, Op. 5 with the present name in London in 1922. Of the 10 pieces, each is relatively short, but filled with hints of contemporary techniques. Jane Magrath states "Tcherepnin himself described them as absolutely anti-Impressionistic and anti-eclectic, rather like Prokofiev, but with chromaticism." Composed in St. Petersburg during his teen years as Christmas and birthday gifts, they were combined into the present set on the advice of Isidor Philipp.

The first bagatelle, a march, is the most popular of the set. It is in two-part form with contrasting dynamics; *f* in the opening section and *p* (*una corda*) for the second part. Driving rhythm and repetition are apparent as well as articulation markings throughout. Very athletic and dramatic, it shows the parallel dissonant 2nds with octave doubling. Because of the technical difficulty of martellato octaves, physical relaxation is essential (Example 3.1).

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22 Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, [Web Site], "Alexander Tcherepnin" (2 March 2007), Site address: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Tcherepnin

23 Magrath, 530.
EXAMPLE 3.1 Tcherepnin: Bagatelles, Op. 5, No. 1, mm. 5-8

Toccat-like, the following bagatelle opens with staccatos in parallel eighth-note motion between both hands. Bringing out the first theme based on the chromatic scale precisely, even when it appears in the left hand, is important for the execution. Unlike the first bagatelle, this piece stays in soft volumes such as $p$, $pp$ and $ppp$ as well as alternating meters and tempo changes. In three part-form (ABA'), with lyrical middle section, it is a staccato study piece. Regarding touch or articulation, the notation, wedge staccato implies 'sharper' rather than 'shorter' in addition to 'more energy' and 'slightly louder' according to Tcherepnin. 24 Guy S. Wuelluer explains that "these two types of staccato marks have a distinct and different meaning for Tcherepnin. The composer is extremely careful in the notation of these and any interpretation should reflect these variances of touch" 25 (Example 3.2).

EXAMPLE 3.2 Tcherepnin: Bagatelles, Op. 5, No. 2, mm. 26-28

25 Ibid., 139.
Recalling a playful dance in three parts, the next piece begins as a simple dance but soon new ideas materialize unexpectedly. A drastic change in texture, dynamics and expression with broad registers occurs with the appearance of the new part. The middle section featuring percussive and dissonant chords resembles Prokofiev's writing (Examples 3.3 & 3.4).

EXAMPLE 3.3 Tcherepnin: Bagatelles, Op. 5, No. 3, mm. 42-53

EXAMPLE 3.4 Prokofiev: Five Sarcasms, Op. 17, No. 5, mm. 1-9

Reminiscent of a gentle, rocking lullaby and nocturne, the fifth bagatelle presents almost impressionistic harmonic coloring. The opening is the combination of the interval of a 3\textsuperscript{rd} for melody, requiring legato touch, and the melodic interval of a 2\textsuperscript{nd} for accompaniment. For measures 7-9, 'Ossia' for playing the extended chords in tenths in the
right hand is provided by an unidentified editor in the 1955 Schirmer edition only. Performers who have small hands may follow this option to avoid the rolls for the big chords (Example 3.5). Similar editing is also found in various pieces by Romantic composers, such as Brahms and Liszt. When the opening melody reappears in the left hand, playing the melody with legato using only the thumb for the stretched chords is challenging (Example 3.6).

EXAMPLE 3.5 Tcherepnin: Bagatelles, Op. 5, No. 5, mm. 7-8

EXAMPLE 3.6 Tcherepnin: Bagatelles, Op. 5, No. 5, mm. 11-12

Mechanistic and etude-like, the seventh piece is an interesting rhythmic study, with the hands in parallel dissonant 2nds and very close together. It features a variety of

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26 Wuelluer, 174.
coloring such as impressionistic, percussive and primitive sounds. Such a fast tempo (*Prestissimo*) with staccato playing in extreme registers throughout the piece is demanding. Strong and well-trained fingers are required as well as careful pedaling of the chromatic scales and dissonances (Example 3.7).

![Example 3.7 Tcherepnin: Bagatelles, Op. 5, No. 7, mm. 1-9](image)

Unification of the set was accomplished by using C minor for the first and final pieces. Interestingly, all bagatelles end with soft volumes. The tonal center in each piece is quite clear, although he utilizes chromatic scales and dissonance, particularly major and minor 2nds. According to Wuelluer, "most of Tcherepnin's form-types derive from the Classical and Romantic periods."\(^{27}\) Three-part form was mostly employed, often with shortened or varied reprises, in *Bagatelle*, Op. 5.\(^{28}\) "Overall, the treatment of the piano is lyrical, though its percussive use (especially in march-like pieces) is part of his artistic profile. This coupling of lyrical and percussive piano writing is common to most of the modern Russian composers (e.g., Prokofiev, Kabalevsky, and Shostakovitch)."\(^{29}\)

*Bagatelles*, Op. 5 is very rhythmic, accessible, and pedagogically interesting. Performers can benefit from playing this collection since the brilliant pieces require the player to develop a rapid finger technique, while the lyrical works need a balance between melody and accompaniment figures. Opera critic Heidi Waleson remarks "*Bagatelles*, Op. 5 have become a staple of the modern repertoire for students and concert

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\(^{27}\) Ibid., 25.  
\(^{28}\) Ibid., 173.  
\(^{29}\) Ibid., 24.
pianists alike."\textsuperscript{30} She also summarizes Tcherepnin's musical style as "Modernist, Russian, Chinese, cosmopolitan in the best Parisian sense, his music translates Eastern language for Western ears, and vice versa."\textsuperscript{31} Between 1958-9, Tcherepnin arranged these bagatelles in two versions at the request of the Swiss pianist Margrit Weber: \textit{Bagatelles for Piano and Orchestra} and \textit{Bagatelles for Piano and String Orchestra}. Despite the addition of other instruments, the piano part remained the same as in the solo version.

\textsuperscript{30} Heidi Waleson, Preface to recording of \textit{Alexander Tcherepnin}, Piano by Martha Braden, (CRI Archival Release, 2002)

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
CHAPTER IV
FLOR PEETERS-TEN BAGATELLES, OP. 88

Biography & Musical Style

Flor Peeters (1903-1986), a Belgian composer, organist and teacher, was born in Tielen. He began piano and organ with H. Quinen and Jozef Brandt during his secondary school years. At the age of sixteen, Peeters studied composition with Lodewijk Mortelman, Gregorian chant and analysis with Jules van Nuffel as well as organ and liturgical improvisation with Oscar Depuydt at the Lemmens Institute in Mechelen. After Depuydt's death in 1925, Peeters became the first organist at the cathedral and a professor of organ at the Lemmens Institute. He also taught organ at the Royal Flemish Conservatory of Music in Antwerp, where he achieved the position of director in 1952. Retiring in 1968, he gave liturgical master classes all over the world until his death in Antwerp. Peeters was the initiator of music pedagogy as a course at Belgian conservatories and was highly regarded as a teacher. As a performer, he gave over twelve hundred recitals throughout Europe, the Philippines, South Africa and the United States.

Peeters is often considered a fairly conservative composer compared to his contemporaries, since he wrote music using a familiar language and classical forms. Although J. S. Bach was his primary influence, César Franck's ideas regarding the use of canon and thematic development are evident in Peeters's work. His fluent melodic line displays the influence of Gregorian chant as well as Flemish Renaissance polyphony and folk melodies. As John Hofmann has observed, "Peeters's musical exposure was not limited to contemporary sounds and the standard symphonic concert repertoire. His weekly cathedral services embodied Gregorian chant and a wide range of polyphonic choral literature from the early Renaissance through the 19th century."\(^\text{32}\)

In the *Sonata quasi una fantasia*, Op. 129, all the thematic material derives from the major 7\(^{\text{th}}\) and minor 2\(^{\text{nd}}\); the opening is the chief example. Strong rhythms, contrasting colors, modal harmony and intense lyricism are all characteristics of his music. He also frequently experimented with polyrhythms, polytonality and complex contrapuntal

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technique. The improvisational-like technique utilized by Peeters is evocative of Charles Tournemire, who was an organist-composer and close friend. For several pieces composed after the German invasion around 1940, he employed severe, dissonant harmonic language to express his rebellion against the occupation. An excellent example is the organ work. *Sinfonia* Op. 48, composed in August 1940 and dedicated to his wife. His early compositions contain late Franckian virtuosity, but his style gradually became more introspective and restrained, approaching neo-classicism by the mid 1950s. After 1966, he also incorporated atonality as well as serialism.

**Ten Bagatelles, Op. 88**

These bagatelles were composed in 1958 and dedicated to Martha and Henry Hinrichsen, head of the publishing firm Peters in Leipzig. The influence of church music is evident in the harmonic language that draws on church modes as well as the elements of Neo-classical and Romantic styles. Each piece is short, featuring mildly dissonant sound based on tonal writing.

The set opens with *Intrata* meaning 'entrance,' or 'beginning,' revealing the influence of J. S. Bach, who also included the term for his compositions. It recalls an energetic march with a strong rhythmic sense. Opening pieces using the treble clef for both hands is a common trait of Peeters, the first as well as the second, sixth and tenth bagatelles in this collection are examples. As a result, more attentive playing is needed in the beginning of the pieces due to the close proximity of hand positions and the occasional crossing over. The texture is hymn-like and the piece is clearly in three-part form, A-B-A' and coda.

In spite of the simple structure with nearly identical rhythm and contour in both hands, performance is awkward because of many accidentals and polytonality. Although the key signature indicates A major, it is difficult to hear the quality of A major throughout the piece on account of the polychordal. For example, the right hand plays the tonic chord in E major while the left hand plays the tonic chord in A major (Example 4.1).
Based on choral writing in four voices, *Preghiera* is the third piece. *Preghiera*, 'prayer' in Italian refers to "an aria in one movement consisting of a prayer, usually offered up by the hero or heroine in his or her hour of danger." A delicate legato touch is needed to capture the spiritual character and flow. Composed in G major, Peeters also employed major and minor 7th chords, even 9th chords, which produce a jazz-like sound, in addition to the interval of a 2nd. These qualities lend added color to the normal hymn-like style (Example 4.2).

**Tarantella**, a dance in rapid 6/8, is next and particularly appropriate for students with technical facility. The form is in three-parts with a coda, using Phrygian and Dorian modes. Some composers in the twentieth-century, Maurice Ravel for example, incorporated modal sound into their works (Examples 4.3 & 4.4).

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EXAMPLE 4.3 Peeters: Ten Bagatelles, Op. 88, No. 4, mm. 51-55

EXAMPLE 4.4 Ravel: "Menuet" from Le Tombeau de Couperin, No. 5, mm. 35-39

An energetic work entitled Invention is the sixth piece, a title associated with Bach. The form is in three-parts and the middle section, containing episodic material, is more complicated harmonically, producing an unstable feeling. Many sequences played in parallel motion with both hands require the performer to pay strict attention to fingering in order to play smoothly at soft volumes, as indicated quasi legato (almost legato). Unlike Bach's Inventions, this piece is rooted in a Dorian mode ending with a picardy third and lacking ornaments (Example 4.5).

EXAMPLE 4.5 Peeters: Ten Bagatelles, Op. 88, No. 6, mm. 1-4 & 43-47
The ninth piece is entitled *Tango*, "a dance originating in urban Argentina in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century and became a popular society dance for couples in 1920s Paris."\textsuperscript{34} It is unusual that Peeters used *Tango* as a title in contrast to the more classical titles of the other bagatelles. The melody in the right hand has many sequences while the left hand plays the rhythm of *Tango* in 2/4 meter. Before returning to the opening theme based on Aeolian (A mode), a *glissando* cancels the sharps (Example 4.6).

\begin{align*}
\text{EXAMPLE 4.6 Peeters: Ten Bagatelles, Op. 88, No. 9, mm. 5-9 & 44-47}
\end{align*}

Without virtuosic displays, Peeters's musical style in this collection has many distinguishable characteristics. He integrates old forms and modes as well as new sounds, such as the interval of a 2\textsuperscript{nd} and jazzy extended chords. Peeters utilizes three-part form with changes of material, for instance, textures, keys, meters, tempos, dynamics and moods. Rhythms are straightforward. All three parts are similar in length, unlike many of Beethoven's late bagatelles with a longer middle section. Peeters's use of a half cadence at the end of the middle section helps to solidify the structure of the three-part form. Most of the pieces are founded on dances, and the influence of Bach is evident in the titles, e.g., *Intrata, Minuet, Invention* and *Air*. Sequences often appear for the melody while the accompaniment plays a repeated pattern. *Ten Bagatelles*, Op. 88 is highly accessible for

both performers and audiences and pedagogically beneficial, especially for intermediate students.
CHAPTER V

PETER LIEBERSON-BAGATELLES

Biography & Musical Style

Peter Lieberson (b. 1946), an American composer, was born in New York City. His mother was a ballerina and his father, Goddard Lieberson, was president of Columbia Records. Peter earned a degree in English literature at New York University in 1972 and studied composition with Milton Babbitt privately. At Columbia University, he continued his study with Charles Wuorinen and Harvey Sollberger. Between 1976 and 1981, he studied Tibetan Buddhism with Chogyam Trungpa, a Tibetan Vajrayana Buddhist master, in Boulder, Colorado. Lieberson then moved to Boston to direct Shambhala Training, a meditation and cultural program. Studying with Donald Martino and Martin Boykan, he earned a Ph.D. in composition at Brandeis University in 1981.

With the premiere of his Piano Concerto in 1983, written for Peter Serkin and commissioned by Seiji Ozawa and the Boston Symphony Orchestra for their centennial, Lieberson first gained national attention.\(^{35}\) Steven Ledbetter commented, "the work, a large romantically virtuoso score in three connected movements, reflects the Buddhist concepts of Earth, Man and Heaven."\(^{36}\) Drala, Ziji (Shining out) and Raising the Gaze are some of his other compositions related to Buddhist themes.

On the faculty at Harvard University from 1984 to 1988, he resigned the position to become director of Shambhala Training in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Since 1994, composition has taken up most of his time. He married mezzo-soprano Lorraine Hunt Lieberson in 1999, for whom he wrote Neruda Songs, a setting of five sonnets by Pablo Neruda. A work for mezzo-soprano and orchestra, it has become one of his most popular recorded works in recent years. Peter was awarded the Rapoport Prize, the Ives scholarship of the National Institute of Arts and Letters and the Goddard Lieberson Fellowship, as well as a Brandeis Creative Arts Award.

\(^{35}\) G. Schirmer Inc. and Associated Music Publishers, Inc. [Web site], "Peter Lieberson" (December 2006), Site address: http://www.schirmer.com

Bagatelles

Lieberson's collaborations with Peter Serkin, a distinguished American pianist, have produced piano works such as Fantasy, Bagatelles, Garland, Fantasy Pieces and Scherzo. Consisting of three pieces, Bagatelles was composed in 1985 based on twelve-tone technique. It was commissioned by pianist Andrew Wolf and premiered by Serkin at a benefit concert for the All-Newton Music School in 1985. Wolf and Serkin are both included in the dedication.

Proclamation, the first piece, is filled with an arpeggiated pattern covering a wide range of the keyboard, frequent tempo and meter changes. It opens with a very passionate passage that contains ritardando, accelerando and a tempo (tempo) in the first two measures. Bartók also employed such marks in the opening of the seventh piece of Bagatelles, Op. 6. Presenting intensive expression and chromaticism, this piece is very capricious and adds a hint of fantasy. A brief percussive quality with cross rhythm appears in the middle section. The performer needs acute focus to manage the frequent crossing of hands with huge stretches between notes in a fast tempo, as well as the overall rhythmic difficulty (Example 5.1).

EXAMPLE 5.1 Lieberson: Bagatelles, No. 1, mm. 1-4 & 21-22
Spontaneous Songs, the second bagatelle is a slow work consisting of "a group of short character pieces."

Each section contains a clearly defined musical idea. It begins with single notes in recitativo style with no meter, which contributes to the free style improvisational mood (Example 5.2). Similar to "Music of the Night," from Bartók's Out of Doors, it combines cluster chords in the accompaniment in the left hand against the expressive melody in the right hand. This idea reappears in the conclusion (Examples 5.3 & 5.4).

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The third bagatelle is *The Dance*. Lieberson describes the last piece as a slightly more than three-minute waltz. Very unpredictable and fragmented, it is technically difficult because of the frequent change of registers, chromaticism, alternation between hands and rhythmic complexity, specifically the cross-rhythms (Example 5.5).

One of the distinguishable traits in this work is that the measure numbers are continued between pieces, as he did in Piano Concerto. He may have intended to integrate all of the bagatelles into a large work with continuity between measures. The composer included specific indications regarding tempos, moods as well as pedaling. For

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38 Ibid.
example, he often incorporates notations such as quasi echo, ma sonoro, intensify, appassionato, subito, floating, subsiding, mormorando and secco. This contributes to the production of a variety of colors and sonority. Lieberson briefly used three staves, which is one of the common writing styles of the twentieth-century. Bagatelles by Lieberson is more appropriate for advanced pianists due to the technical demands: big leaps, crossing hands, extreme chromaticism and rhythmic complexity based on twelve-tone technique.
CHAPTER VI
ERNST VON DOHNÁNYI-TEN BAGATELLES, OP. 13

Biography & Musical Style

Ernst von Dohnányi (1877-1960), a Hungarian pianist, composer, conductor and teacher was born in Pressburg, Hungary. At age 17, he moved to Budapest and entered the Royal Academy of Music, later known as the Liszt Academy. Dohnányi studied piano with István Thomán, a pupil of Liszt, and composition with Hans Koessler, a follower of Brahms. The combination of influences is reflected throughout his life; Liszt in his piano playing and Brahms in his composing. A position at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin in 1905 was the first of his teaching career. He also taught piano at the Budapest Academy and accomplished extensive tours of the USA in the 1920s. After World War II, Dohnányi left Hungary in 1948 for political reasons. He was the head of the piano department in Tucumán, Argentina before arriving in Tallahassee, Florida in 1949. For ten years, he taught at Florida State University and died in New York City.

Unlike Bartók and Kodály, his contemporaries, Dohnányi's works contain little interest in Hungarian folk music. American folk music and jazz are the basis for some of his works, including his last orchestral work, American Rhapsody, Op. 47. His preference was a Romantic style rooted in the music of Liszt and Brahms. "He succeeded in blending the 'Brahmsian' preservation of classical form with the Lisztian concept of motivic strands binding together a large-scale work."  

Lisztian influence appeared more in Dohnányi's mature works.

Although Dohnányi composed a large amount of works for piano including numerous character pieces, many of them remained unpublished or out of print. His works for piano utilize flexible and spontaneous harmonic language, for instance, he employed mixed seventh chords in succession with unexpected resolution. In addition to improvisational quality, his piano pieces also present orchestral treatment; the use of

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the entire range of the piano, parallel moving voices at wide intervals, alternating registers and composition in multiple layers or strands.\textsuperscript{41}

\textit{Ten Bagatelles, Op. 13}

\textit{Winterreigen} (Winter Rounds), Op. 13 was composed in 1905 with the subtitle, \textit{Ten Bagatelles}. When he left Vienna in 1905 to teach at Hochschule für Musik in Berlin, he wrote this piano cycle as a farewell to his friends. \textit{Winterreigen}, a poem by Victor Heindl, Dohnányi's lifelong friend, precedes the work's introduction. Some of the pieces contain references to other composer's styles. The subtitle, "Bagatelles," is a historical allusion to Beethoven, who established the term. This work includes several similarities to Schumann as well. According to Robin Wildstein Garvin, "the first and last movements of Winterreigen are intended to provide a frame for the eight interior movements. This is indicated by their titles, \textit{Dedications} and \textit{Postlude}, and they are the only two movements not dedicated to one of Dohnányi's Viennese friends."\textsuperscript{42} Ten Bagatelles, Op. 13 was premiered in 1906 in Vienna by the composer.

The set begins with \textit{Widmung} (Dedication), and the melody is similar to the opening of \textit{Papillons}, Op. 2 by Schumann\textsuperscript{43} (Examples 6.1 & 6.2). The writing style resembles not only Schumann but also Chopin's nocturnes, with a lyrical melody in the right hand and flowing broken arpeggio accompaniment in the left hand. Typical bagatelle form is three parts with contrasting moods, but Dohnányi employed two parts (A-A'). When the first section returns, the melody is now in octaves. The piece is in E-flat major and has a mildly dissonant sound.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 92.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 116-7.
An Ada (To Ada), the third piece, was dedicated to Ada Mary Thomas, a Norwegian girl who studied piano in Vienna. The opening presents descending chromatic scales with the recurring notes A-D-A from her name in the top voice, and imitates Schumann's use of pitches to spell people's names or initials, particularly in *Carnaval*, Op. 9. Each line is evolved with contrapuntal technique and accompaniment. This work is a beneficial study piece for voicing and requires careful fingering to express all four voices clearly in legato (Example 6.3).
Dedicated to his friend Jan, the sixth piece is *Valse aimable* (Amiable Waltz). It is in three-part form and based on Romantic lyricism featuring arpeggiated chords in the left hand and a tender melody in right hand. Although the title recalls *Valse noble* and *Valse allemand* from Schumann's *Carnaval*, the style of the music is reminiscent of Brahms\(^{44}\) (Examples 6.4 & 6.5).

**Example 6.4** Dohnányi: *Ten Bagatelles*, Op. 13, No. 6, mm. 29-32 & 38-40

**Example 6.5** Brahms: "Intermezzo" from *Klavierstücke*, Op. 119, No. 2, mm. 36-41

*Postludium* (Postlude), the last piece, contains similar musical features from the first bagatelle. This sharing of thematic materials is similar to the structure of Schumann's *Carnaval*, Op. 9. Melodies from the opening and final bagatelles start with either the interval of 5\(^{th}\) or 6\(^{th}\) followed by an ascending step or a half-step in single notes or octaves. The accompaniment consists of an arpeggiated left-hand figure in both bagatelles, but the final piece suggests a barcarolle with its gentle rocking motion (Example 6.6). The last three measures are the notes A-D-E in the top voice. Those letters are written out above the staff, 'Good-bye' in German, appeared in the ending of the poem, *Winterreigen*. Robin Wildstein Garvin notes "Dohnányi explained the meaning of

\(^{44}\) Ibid., 120-1.
the notes A-D-E, ADE as an Austrian slang for ADIEU (Farewell) in the letter to Andry⁴⁵ (Example 6.7).

EXAMPLE 6.6 Dohnányi: Ten Bagatelles, Op. 13, No. 10, mm. 1-3

EXAMPLE 6.7 Dohnányi: Ten Bagatelles, Op. 13, No. 10, mm. 40-45

There are distinct differences between Dohnányi’s bagatelles and those of his contemporaries. Ten Bagatelles, Op. 13 is based on Romantic tradition and contains pieces that are lengthier than most of the ones composed during the twentieth-century. Additionally, his bagatelles are devoid of meter changes and lack the experimentation composers in the twentieth-century attempted. Conversely, some of Dohnányi’s other compositions include random meter changes and improvisational style. Furthermore, he displays the elements of virtuosity and flexibility of form in his bagatelles.

In conclusion, Ten Bagatelles, Op. 13 is an approachable repertoire for pianists as a result of the blend of lyricism and virtuosity, as well as being a valuable study piece. Performers are aided in the interpretation and expression of the music by notes in series based on a person name or ones that are actually spelled out in words above the staff.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 120.
Jane Magrath believes "this collection contains Dohnányi's most accessible selections for early-advanced pianists."\textsuperscript{46}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{46} Magrath, 350.
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CHAPTER VII
GEORGE ROCHBERG-TWELVE BAGATELLES

Biography & Musical Style

George Rochberg (1918-2005) was born in New Jersey and among the Americans who gained prominence in the 1950s. After he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Montclair State Teachers College in New Jersey, he continued his study of counterpoint and composition at the Mannes College of Music in New York, between 1939 and 1942. During this period, he studied with Hans Weisse, Leopold Mannes and George Szell.47 His study was interrupted with his World War II military service. After returning to the United States in 1945, he continued at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia and earned a Bachelor of Music degree in 1947. Rochberg also received a Master of Arts degree from the University of Pennsylvania the following year.

He went to Italy in 1950 on a Fulbright grant. Studying with Luigi Dallapiccola, the great Italian serialist, strongly reinforced Rochberg's decision to pursue the serial method. Rochberg's teaching career began at Curtis, and in 1960, he joined the faculty at the University of Pennsylvania, where he remained for 23 years. Rochberg's career as a composer marks distinct style periods. Each change in style was influenced by a shifting personal or social trend, rather than a merely musical transition. He began in the neoclassical and the nationalistic styles. His early works revealed a vigorous temperament with strong affinities for the idioms of Stravinsky, Paul Hindemith and especially Bartók.48

After World War II, Rochberg turned to the principles of serialism under the tutelage of Dallapiccola. Twelve Bagatelles for piano, the Chamber Symphony for nine instruments, the Duo Concertante for violin and cello, and the Sonata-Fantasia for piano are prime examples of his serial compositions. While the Sonata-Fantasia is a large work and wholly atonal, the Twelve Bagatelles are short, complex and intense. A personal event, his twenty-year old son's death of a brain tumor in 1964, influenced his decision to

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48 Ibid.
abandon serial writing since he felt it was not capable of capturing the composer's grief. Rochberg finally returned to the tonal system in the work, Partita-Variations in 1976. During the 1980s and 90s, Rochberg blended Modernist and Romantic elements. Besides works for piano, he composed opera, orchestral works, chamber music and pieces for voice and/or chorus.

**Twelve Bagatelles**

This work, composed in 1952 and dedicated to Dallapiccola, is among the most frequently played of Rochberg's works. It is his first twelve-tone work with Schoenberg-like concentration and intensity combined with the influence of Bartók and Stravinsky. These bagatelles are based on immense expressiveness, motivic repetition and extremely broad dynamic arrangements. Martha Thomas, a pianist and professor at The University of Georgia states "there is a general alternation of moods, tempi, dynamics, and textures from one bagatelle to the next, which contributes to a general scheme for the arrangement of the Bagatelles." Rochberg premiered this work in a recital at Columbia University in New York City, in January 1953.

With the heading *drammaticamente e con un tempo libero*, the first bagatelle is serious in expression. Two contrasting moods are characterized: a majestic character for the first half and a lyrical, quiet feeling using the terms *dolce, dolcissimo* and *espressivo* for the second half. Dotted rhythms, sudden dynamic contrasts, accents and dissonant intervals contribute to the dramatic atmosphere. Clearly in two parts, it begins with a four-measure opening based on the twelve-tone row, which reappear in harmonic intervals for the next phrase (Example 7.1).

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EXAMPLE 7.1 Rochberg: Twelve Bagatelles, No. 1, mm. 1-8

Martha Thomas notes "an extremely powerful piece, Bagatelle #5, headed Quasi parlando, begins lyrically but becomes very turbulent in the middle of the work."\footnote{Ibid., 70.}

Clearly in three-part form, the fifth bagatelle is the first piece in the set that opens with an expressive melody. There is contrapuntal technique in the first and last sections (Example 7.2). The middle section is dramatic and the stretched thick chords seem to indicate the influence of Stravinsky (Example 7.3).

EXAMPLE 7.2 Rochberg: Twelve Bagatelles, No. 5, mm. 1-3 & 6-7
The sixth bagatelle, *Satirico*, is different from others in the set. It covers a five-octave registral span of the keyboard as well as melodic leaps, which average between one and two octaves. While all the previous pieces begin with a single note, this work opens with percussive quality, combining the interval of a 9th in the right hand and a chord in left hand. In addition, this is only piece having a completely distinct tempo mark, *Vivace* for the last two measures, giving the finale the same hurried feeling that appeared in the first bagatelle (Example 7.4).

The middle section presents the character of *Satirico* with repeated intervals, particularly the interval of 7th and 9th as well as syncopation. Schoenberg also used those intervals in his work, Op. 11. Large hands are needed for performers to hold the tied notes while playing the big intervals (Examples 7.5 & 7.6).

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51 Ibid., 75.
EXAMPLE 7.5 Rochberg: Twelve Bagatelles, No. 6, mm. 15-18

EXAMPLE 7.6 Schoenberg: 3 Klavierstücke, Op. 11, No. 1, mm. 34-36

_Intenso, con un sentimento di destino_ defines the mood of the ninth bagatelle. It is dramatic and "permeated by a double-dotted figure, reminiscent of the Baroque."\(^{52}\) Repeated notes are major feature of this bagatelle, and they function as pedal tones\(^ {53}\) (Example 7.7). The group of repeated notes, tremolo figures, alternating in both hands contributes to a more dramatic sense. This piece is particularly difficult for a pianist with small hands. For example, the performer needs to play two black keys with a thumb at the same time reaching for the interval of a 9\(^{th}\), in addition to the stretched notes in the left hand with triplet rhythm (Example 7.8).

EXAMPLE 7.7 Rochberg: Twelve Bagatelles, No. 9, mm. 1-4

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\(^{52}\) Ibid., 94.
\(^{53}\) Ibid., 95.
EXAMPLE 7.8 Rochberg: *Twelve Bagatelles*, No. 9, mm.5-7

*Twelve Bagatelles* has similarities with some works of Schoenberg, such as the use of concise motivic ideas, the interval of 7th and 9th, wide leaps and chromaticism. Also, there are many meter changes, except in the last bagatelle. The seventh bagatelle has meter changes in almost every measure. Regarding notation, the meters are non-traditionally written out in the space between staves, a feature also found in works by Schoenberg and other twentieth-century composers. Rochberg's bagatelles display twelve distinctive characters and a wide range of moods. Thomas states "the different moods are indicated (more or less specifically) by tempo headings at the beginning of each bagatelle, except for Bagatelle #10, which has no heading." He was very detailed in dynamics and articulation markings, and the sudden change of dynamics including *subito pp* contributes to the dramatic and expressionistic atmosphere. Specific pedaling indications are not given, unlike Bolcom.

The basic structural forms are binary, ternary or rondo. According to Thomas, "various elements create the form, the most easily recognizable element being the fermata as well as retards, which occurs frequently at the ends of phrases and section. Both of these elements are helpful to the performer in projecting the shape of the piece and are easily recognized by the listener." Although each piece is brief, memorization is challenging for the performer due to twelve-tone technique. Observing how the original row develops could be helpful as well as paying attention to the expressionistic gesture.

In conclusion, *Twelve Bagatelles* combines different techniques and moods that should make it a valuable addition to a performer's repertoire. Twelve-tone technique and intense expressionism stimulates and challenges a pianist. Most likely because of the

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54 Ibid., 23-4.
55 Ibid., 24-5

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popularity of the piano pieces, Rochberg orchestrated the work in 1964 and retitled the set *Zodiac (A Circle of 12 Pieces).*
Biography & Musical Style

William Bolcom (b. 1938), the American composer, pianist and author, was born in Seattle, Washington. At the age of eleven, he began composition studies with George Fredrick McKay and John Verrall. Bolcom received his Bachelor's degree from the University of Washington in 1958 and continued his study with Darius Milhaud at Mills College, California during his Master of Arts degree. Studying with Leland Smith at Stanford University, he earned his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in composition in 1964. Bolcom went to the Paris Conservatory in 1965 and studied with Milhaud again, as well as Olivier Messiaen.

After returning from Paris, his teaching career began at the University of Washington and then Queens College, CUNY in the 1960s. He was composer-in-residence at the Yale University Drama School and the New York University School of the Arts. During his time in New York, he was at the forefront of a ragtime revival, a style that he developed through many concerts, recordings and composition of original rags, such as Graceful Ghost. He was named the Ross Lee Finney Distinguished University Professor of Composition at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor in 1994, where he has taught since 1973. Bolcom won the Pulitzer Prize for 12 New Etudes for Piano in 1988. Throughout the years, he has received three Grammy Awards, the Detroit Music Award in addition to the National Medal of Arts in 2006.

His marriage to mezzo-soprano Joan Morris in 1975 greatly influenced his career as a performer. As a pianist, in collaboration with his wife, he has performed and recorded his own works of show tunes, cabaret songs and American popular songs from the early twentieth-century. Steven Johnson states "Bolcom began his career composing in a serial idiom; he particularly admired the work of Boulez, Stockhausen and Berio. In the 1960s, however, he gradually shed this academic approach in favour of a language that embraced a wider variety of musical styles. In most of his mature music he has
sought to erase boundaries between popular and serious music.\textsuperscript{56} The intensive atonality contrasted with ragtime and old popular tunes contributed to his eclectic style.

**Nine Bagatelles**

Composed in 1996, this work was commissioned for the 10\textsuperscript{th} Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. The premiere was at the competition at Fort Worth, Texas, in May 1997. Eleven semifinalists played William Bolcom's *Nine Bagatelles*, including Jon Nakamatsu who won the gold medal. Each piece is relatively short and stands in contrast to each other in many ways, such as tempos and atmosphere, much like other bagatelles reviewed. What distinguishes these from other bagatelles are the titles--some of them in French--that follow each individual piece. According to Bolcom, he inserted the titles at the end as an homage to Debussy, who similarly ended his preludes so that the performer would consider the music more important than the title. In the author's correspondence with Bolcom, he mentioned that the festival director, Richard Rodzinski, specified that it was necessary that whatever "I wrote would be more interpretationally difficult than technical; thus each bagatelle is an interpretational problem to solve."\textsuperscript{57}

The first bagatelle, *the ghost mazurka*, is an homage to Chopin. Very unpredictable with a broad arrangement of dynamics, this piece consists of two alternating sections differing in tempo and character. A wild mood with difficulty in rhythm due to the rests characterizes the first section. The opening is not treated as a dance, but it leads into *Mazurka* in the middle section, and contains excerpts from Chopin *Mazurka*, Op. 33, No. 4 (Examples 8.1 & 8.2). The *Mazurka* ends with a brutal *glissando*, contrasted with the delicate *glissando* that appears at the end.

\textsuperscript{56} The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed., s.v. "William Bolcom," by Steven Johnson.

\textsuperscript{57} Personal Correspondence with William Bolcom.
There are some interesting indications by Bolcom regarding performance. When the Mazurka comes back wildly, he specifies: "Bottom note remains A-natural, even on a Bösendorfer." A-natural is the last note in the low register on the regular piano, so this is not a problem in performing. However, there are some notes he indicates to play with 'flats of hands,' which is a twentieth-century performance technique. According to the score, for the cluster notes with 'flats of hands' in left hand, a performer cannot play all the notes on the regular piano (Example 8.3).
EXAMPLE 8.3 Bolcom: *Nine Bagatelles*, No. 1, mm. 39-44

The second piece has a French title that translates *Was it a dream I loved?* It is an excerpt from the poem, *L'aprés-midi d'un faune* (The Afternoon of a Faun) by the symbolist poet Stephane Mallarme, who greatly influenced Debussy's compositions. Debussy's first significant orchestral work, *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* was inspired by the poem. This bagatelle is very short and marked 'slow with rubato.' Unlike the first piece, it is dreamy and lyrical with rhythmic complexity. It is interesting that the last three measures are entitled 'Slow Mazurka' with a little note, 'ghostly' which shows a relationship with the first piece's end. Bolcom's usage of harmonic and melodic intervals of a 2\textsuperscript{nd} throughout the piece is reminiscent of "Footprints in the Snow" from *Preludes Book I* by Debussy (Examples 8.4 & 8.5).

EXAMPLE 8.4 Bolcom: *Nine Bagatelles*, No. 2, mm. 1-4
EXAMPLE 8.5 Debussy: "Footprints in the Snow" from *Préludes Book I*, mm. 1-3

In French, the fourth piece is titled *cycle de l'univers* (cycle of the universe), cycle meaning circle, group, series, or rotation. Bolcom wrote this work on three staves, as Debussy did it in some of his later works. Single notes comprise the right hand and the left hand plays dissonant chords. In the first part, both hands oscillate up and down the keyboard three times with less volume each time. Bolcom employs, *martellato* (hammered) for the right hand. Originally, the term was used in string playing, and eventually incorporated into keyboard writing. *Martellato* also appears in the final piece of *Twelve Bagatelles* by Rochberg and *Suite für Klavier*, Op. 25 by Schoenberg. Bolcom and Schoenberg used it for the melodic line while Rochberg utilizes the effect of hammering for the chords and harmonic interval progression (Examples 8.6, 8.7 & 8.8). Overall, this bagatelle is very rhythmic, dry and obviously cyclical.

EXAMPLE 8.6 Bolcom: *Nine Bagatelles*, No. 4, mm. 1-7
EXAMPLE 8.7 Schoenberg: "Menuett" from *Suite für Klavier*, Op. 25, mm. 34-36

EXAMPLE 8.8 Rochberg: *Twelve Bagatelles*, No. 12, mm. 29-34

The subsequent bagatelle is *la belle rouquine* (the beautiful red head), alluding to the parenthetical subtitle from Debussy's *Prelude Book I*, 'the girl with the flaxen hair.' Throughout this bagatelle, there is an ostinato consisting of intervals of a 5th in the bass, requiring performers to use the sostenuto pedal. Both hands have identical rhythm and contour with the bass ostinato for the entire piece. The opening short motive keeps coming back throughout (Examples 8.9 & 8.10).

EXAMPLE 8.9 Bolcom: *Nine Bagatelles*, No. 5, mm. 1-4
EXAMPLE 8.10 Debussy: "The Girl with the Flaxen Hair" from Préludes Book I, mm. 1-4

Pegasus is the sixth bagatelle, and it is interesting that Bolcom used the mythological 'winged horse' as a title. There is no meter or measure delineation and the effect is reminiscent of the horse running wild. Pegasus is technically more difficult than the others due to the fast passages of triplet rhythm, frequent crossing hands, broad register and sudden changes of dynamic levels. Before the last phrase, Bolcom adds a cluster of 'harmonics' in the left hand. Although mainly a twentieth-century indication meaning 'depress silently,' Schumann utilized harmonics in Carnaval, Op. 9. The performer depresses a few notes at the same time quietly, and then holds the sostenuto pedal. This technique allows the sound of the cluster to linger. Schoenberg also incorporated harmonics in his work Op. 11 (Examples 8.11 & 8.12).

EXAMPLE 8.11 Bolcom: Nine Bagatelles, No. 6
EXAMPLE 8.12 Schoenberg: 3 Klavierstücke, Op. 11, No. 1, mm. 14-16

Bolcom is very careful in his notations regarding performance. For example, he gave specific pedaling indications, such as dry pedal, no pedal, slight pedal in touches and more and more pedal. For large chords, he marked not rolled or fast roll. He also included relax, wild or less aggressive for certain emotional moods. Furthermore, he employed other twentieth-century techniques in performance, e.g., play notes with flats of hands and harmonics.

Nine Bagatelles with subtitles is an exceptionally interesting piece. Bolcom pursues the combinations of old and new, using twentieth-century's flavor but also harkening back to previous composers, particularly Debussy. Each bagatelle is quite short and very characteristic. The work, as a whole piece, is well organized and has a variety of styles.
CHAPTER IX
SUMMARY

Numerous composers have written bagatelles for piano with a variety of musical ideas and styles. The composers of the late nineteenth-century integrated their national dances or folk music. Some bagatelles composed in the twentieth-century present the influence of nationalism from the character pieces of the late nineteenth-century. A number of contemporary composers used folk music or traditional instruments as musical ideas for bagatelles. Other composers provided interesting titles for each piece, stimulating the performer's interest for interpretation as well as musical creativity. Several composers wrote works as an homage to their predecessors. Some are excellent pedagogically and considered valuable teaching works. Furthermore, a few collections of bagatelles addressed a single subject throughout, creating a unified entire set.

In general, bagatelles in the twentieth-century feature a broad range of technical difficulty. A few works are appropriate for early intermediate students, containing titles related to seasons, folk tunes and dances, such as minuet and waltz. There are others, which are extremely difficult to perform because of rhythmic complexity, frequent meter changes, broad registers, stretched chords, frequent change of moods and tempos or rooted in twelve-tone technique.

Most contemporary composers give specific indications or notations for certain emotional moods and new performance techniques, in addition to detailed pedaling. These compositions help the performer in understanding what the composer expects, although individual interpretation can still be a challenge. Moreover, bagatelles are flexible repertoire for performance, since they consist of short pieces. The performer may play individual pieces in lieu of whole collections, depending on the purpose of the performance, e.g., auditions, competitions, master classes or solo recitals.

In conclusion, "Bagatelle" may have begun as an insignificant work for keyboard, but it has gained great popularity. Depending on composers, twentieth-century bagatelles present diversity in many ways: in character, mood, style, idea, and technique. They are also short, formless, and the musical materials are not developed extensively. Many
bagatelles are artistically accessible and contain the potential to be an important addition to the repertoire for pianists.
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Recordings


Scores


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Born in Seoul, Korea, In-Sun Paek began learning piano at the age of seven. She studied with professors Young-Oak, Park and Hyo-Soon Park at the Chung-Ang University, where she received the Bachelor's degree in piano performance in 1994. Before entering graduate school, she devoted three years to private teaching. She pursued her graduate studies with professor Youn-Wha, Lee for a year at the same institution in Seoul. In 1998, she came to the United States and studied at the University of Georgia in Athens. She worked with Dr. Martha Thomas and Dr. Ivan Fraizer and earned the Master's degree in piano pedagogy. After completing her Master's degree, she was employed for two years at the dance department at UGA as a professional ballet accompanist.

In 2003, Ms. Paek began her doctoral program in piano performance at Florida State University in Tallahassee, Florida, where she studied with Professor Leonard Mastrogiacomo. She was awarded the graduate teaching assistantship in studio teaching for two years, as well as group piano teaching for two additional years. Meanwhile, she continued to play for the Tallahassee Ballet Company and also taught privately at Cavatina Music Studio. She received her Doctor of Music degree in piano performance in December 2007.