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A STYLISTIC AND PEDAGOGICAL STUDY OF REINHOLD GLIÉRE'S
THREE MAZURKAS, OP. 29
AND SELECTED PIECES FROM TWENTY-FIVE PRELUDES, OP.30

BY

YUNHEE KIM

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts in Music
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Doctoral Committee:

Professor Emeritus Ian Hobson, Chair
Professor Christos Tsitsaros, Director of Research
Professor William Heiles
Professor Charlotte Mattax Moersch

ABSTRACT

This study discusses the following compositions for solo piano by Reinhold Glière (1875-1956): Three Mazurkas, Op. 29 (1906) and selected pieces from the Twenty-Five Preludes, Op. 30 (1907).

Like some of his peers, Glière was a composer and pianist at the same time, and he wrote an extensive number of piano works, especially sets of small pieces. His collections of small pieces include Twenty-Five Preludes, Op. 30, Three Mazurkas, Op. 29, and multiple sets of Morceaux and Romances. His compositions reflect a continuation of the traditional Russian Romanticism, which was inherited from Chopin.

Unlike his large-scale works, Glière's piano compositions have been nearly neglected and unexplored in the scholarly literature. This project provides both a stylistic study and a pedagogical overview of the Three Mazurkas and Twenty-Five Preludes. More specifically, I undertake analysis of the forms, harmonies, melodic content, textures and rhythms of the compositions. Furthermore, I explore various performance issues as well as offer a pedagogical overview of them.

This thesis consists of four chapters. The first chapter serves as an introduction, containing Glière's biography and an overview of his compositions and writing style. The second chapter provides a comprehensive analysis and pedagogical examination of the Three Mazurkas, Op. 29. The third chapter provides a detailed analysis of selected preludes from the Twenty-Five Preludes, Op. 30 and performance considerations that must be confronted on account of Glière's extreme virtuosic writing. The fourth chapter provides a conclusion, summarizing the compositional style in Glière's piano music.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Biography

Reinhold Moritsevich Glière (1875-1956) was a conductor, educator, composer and pianist who was born in Kiev, Ukraine.¹ In addition, he was a talented young violinist. His father, who was a successful wind instrument maker, was born and raised in Germany and his mother was the daughter of a Polish wind instrument maker.² Despite his musical upbringing, his parents were not supportive of his musical career. Nevertheless, he started studying music theory, composition, violin, and piano at the Kiev Music School in 1890. He later entered the Moscow Conservatory in Russia as a violin student in 1894, where he also studied composition with Anton Arensky and Alexander Taneyev. He won the gold medal in composition when he graduated in 1900. By this time, he had completed some of his most important works including an opera *Earth and Heaven* (1900), String Sextet in C Minor, No.1, Op. 1 (1898), String Quartet in A Major, No.1, Op. 2 (1899), String Octet in D Major, Op. 5 (1900) and Symphony in E♭ Major, No. 1, Op. 8 (1900). Between 1905 and 1908, he studied conducting under Oskar Fried in Berlin. Afterwards, he embarked on a short-lived career as a conductor in Russia.³

An influential educator, he was deeply interested in providing music education for everyone in the Soviet Union. He started teaching in 1913 at the Kiev Conservatory and became

¹ Galina Grigor'yeva, "Glier, Reynol'd Moritsevich," *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press*, accessed February 11, 2017.

² "Reinhold Glière Life and Work," *Composer and Musical Teacher*, Joerg Schnadt, accessed Mar 28, 2020, <http://www.reinhold-gliere.net/index8.htm>.

³ Stanley D. Krebs, "Reinhold Glière," in *Soviet Composers and the Development of Soviet Music*, ed. Stanley D. Krebs (London: Allen & Unwin, 1970), 70-81.

its director the following year.⁴ From 1920 to 1941, he was a professor of composition at the Moscow Conservatory.⁵ His most famous pupils are Sergei Prokofiev, Nikolai Myaskovsky and Aram Khachaturian.⁶ He outlived Prokofiev and Myaskovsky by three and six years respectively and died in 1956 in Moscow.

Musical Compositions

Glière was a highly dedicated and productive composer. Glière's works include about forty compositions with no opus numbers, as well as a hundred works with opus numbers, written between 1898 and 1956.⁷ Glière is remembered as a composer of large-scale works such as symphonies, ballets, and operas. However, his works also encompass various other genres, including music for piano, violin, cello, bass, trumpet, voice, choir, string chamber, concerto, wind orchestra, and incidental music to poem, play and film.

Like some of his peers, Glière was both a composer and pianist, and he wrote an extensive number of piano works. His sets of small pieces include the Three Mazurkas, Op. 29 and multiple sets of *Morceaux* and *Esquisses*. This tendency to write in small-scale genres also applies in Glière's music for other instruments and ensembles. The majority of Glière's instrumental, piano ensemble, and solo voice music consists of sets of short pieces. For piano ensemble, he wrote two sets of pieces, which include 6 *Morceaux* for 2 pianos 4 hands, Op. 41 (1909) and 24 *Pièces faciles* for piano 4 hands, Op. 38 (1908). His six sets of short pieces for various instruments and piano

⁴ Ibid., 70-81

⁵ Grigor'yeva, "Glier, Reyngol'd Moritsevich."

⁶ Elsa Z. Posell, "Reinhold Moritzovich Glière," in *Russian Composers*, ed. Elsa Z. Posell. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1967), 128-133.

⁷ Martin Rummel, "About this Recording," liner notes of Complete Duets with Cello, by Martin Rummel, Alexander Hülshoff, Friedemann Eichhorn, Till Alexander Körber, NAXOS, December 22, 2011.

include *11 Pieces* for different instruments and piano, Op. 35 (1908) and *12 Album Leaves* for cello and piano, Op. 51 (1910).

Notably, Glière wrote an Impromptu for the Left Hand from *2 Pieces* for Piano, Op. 99 (1955). Many composers have realized the necessity of music for the left hand for pianists who have injured or damaged their right hand. Such pieces can also enhance the left hand's sensitivity and skill as the right hand usually takes up a prominent role. Some works for the left hand previously written by other composers, such as Maurice Ravel's Piano Concerto for the Left Hand in D Major (1929), Alexander Scriabin's Prelude and Nocturne for the Left Hand, Op. 9 and several pieces for the left hand from Leopold Godowsky's Studies after Frédéric Chopin (1894-1914), might have motivated Glière to compose the piece. Glière's piece can be useful in introducing students to music for the left hand as it is short and involves less crossing over the two staves than the earlier mentioned pieces.

As a dedicated teacher, Glière also composed educational music. While he kept his career as an educator at the Kiev conservatory, he also composed many instructive but artistic piano pieces at the early intermediate to intermediate level: *12 Pièces Enfantines* (12 Piano Pieces for children) of middle difficulty, Op. 31 (1907), *8 Pièces Faciles pour Piano* (8 Easy Pieces for Piano), Op. 43 (1909), and *12 Esquisses* (12 Sketches) of middle difficulty in 3 volumes, Op. 47 (1909). He did not overlook the importance of having students play ensemble music as he wrote *12 Easy Pieces* for violin and piano, Op. 45 (1910), *12 Morceaux*, *12 Pieces* of middle difficulty for piano 4 hands, Op. 48 (1909) and *7 Artistic-Instructive Pieces* for violin and piano in two books, Op. 54 (1911).

CHAPTER TWO

THREE MAZURKAS, OP. 29

Glière's Three Mazurkas, Op. 29 is the only set of mazurkas among his compositions. They were dedicated to Leopold Godowsky (1870-1938), who was a Polish-American virtuoso pianist and composer, best known for his composition, 53 Studies on Chopin's Études (1894-1914). Glière might have thoughtfully composed his mazurkas for Godowsky because of Godowsky's fondness of Chopin.

The genre of mazurka, which is a Polish folk dance,⁸ was popular in Russia along with the polonaise by the end of the eighteenth century, as Poland had been completely partitioned by Russia. During the 1830s and 40s, the mazurka had become greatly popular in Western Europe and subsequently in America.⁹

Chopin, whose mazurkas are by far the most well-known examples of the genre, took melodic and rhythmic elements from Polish dances and varied them in his mazurkas. His use of modal mixture resulted in his harmonies being more ambiguous. He also used chromatic harmonies that included tritones, extended chord structures, and unusual folk-derived scales to blend the melodic and rhythmic elements from Polish dance in his mazurkas.¹⁰

⁸ Stephen Downes, "Mazurka," Grove Music Online. 2001; accessed March 28, 2020, <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000018193>.

⁹ Carol Kendall Oliver, "The Mazurka Triangle: The Influence of the Mazurkas of Frédéric Chopin on the Mazurkas of Alexander Scriabin and Reinhold Glière." (DMA diss., The University of Memphis, 2005), 17-18.

¹⁰ Paul Badura-Skoda, "Chopin's Influence," in *Frédéric Chopin: Profiles of the Man and the Musician*, ed. Alan Walker (London: Barrie & Jenkins Ltd, 1979), 258-276.

Grove Music Online defines the rhythm of a mazurka as shifting “the accent to the weak beats of the bar within a triple meter.”¹¹ The mazurka-type rhythm consists of two short and two long notes, which prohibits an accentuating of the first beat: short notes on the down beat, and two long notes on the following two beats.¹² All of Glière’s Three Mazurkas adopt this rhythmic pattern. In mazurkas, often sounds from pitch sets emanating from modal scales give the music a distinct folk color.¹³

Mazurka in B Minor, No. 1

The first of the three mazurkas, in B Minor, is written in ternary form: A (mm. 1-17), B (mm. 18-36) and A (mm. 37-54). It begins with a dominant seventh chord and resolves to a tonic chord in the following measure and utilizes chromaticism extensively. In three quarter time, this piece uses the mazurka-type rhythm, mostly two eighth notes followed by longer notes. The typical periodic structure of mazurkas is four-measure phrases which result in eight or sixteen measure periods,¹⁴ but Glière makes the phrase structure irregular by adding an extra measure at the end of the A sections. The end of the first A section has an extra measure caused by the delayed resolution from a hemiola (mm. 14-15) and bar-crossed melody notes (mm. 15-16) (Fig. 2.1). The added measure causes an irregular phrase structure in the B section, which begins with a three-measure phrase and then strictly follows four-, eight- and sixteen-measure phrase structures. The beginning of the A section displays melody in the right hand and block chord

¹¹ Downes, "Mazurka"

¹² Oliver, "The Mazurka Triangle: The Influence of the Mazurkas of Frédéric Chopin on the Mazurkas of Alexander Scriabin and Reinhold Glière," 15.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 57.

accompaniment in the left hand in the medium register of the keyboard. Even though Glière is using the same melody of the first phrase (mm. 1-8) when it is repeated an octave higher in measures 9-17, he varies the texture by using a broken chord accompaniment instead in the left hand. The descending chromatic thirds in the left hand in measures 14-16 in the A section foreshadow the more extensive use of chromaticism in the B section (Fig. 2.1).

The image displays three systems of musical notation for a piano piece in B minor. The first system shows measures 5-8, featuring a melody in the right hand and a broken chord accompaniment in the left hand. The second system shows measures 9-12, with a melody in the right hand and a broken chord accompaniment in the left hand. The third system shows measures 13-17, with a melody in the right hand and a broken chord accompaniment in the left hand. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Blue annotations highlight specific musical features: 'Broken chord accompaniment' is written below the first system; 'Hemiola' is written above the second system; 'Descending chromatic thirds' is written below the third system; 'Bar-crossed melody' is written above the third system; and 'rit.' is written below the third system.

Figure 2.1- Mazurka in B Minor, mm. 5-17

While the A section is for the most part diatonic, the B section is more harmonically unstable and continuously modulating to different keys. At the beginning of the B section, a new

ascending chromatic theme is introduced in the right hand (mm. 18-20). Throughout the B section except for the first phrase, three different two-measure phrases are repeated with each idea being transposed to another key: Eb Major (mm. 21-24), Db Major (mm. 25-28), F# Minor (mm. 29-32) and B Minor (mm. 33-36). In the transition between B and the second A section in measures 34-36, a notable chromatic note, E#, completes a French augmented sixth chord that includes a tritone (G, B, C# and E#), leading to the dominant seventh chord of B Minor (F#, A#, C# and E) in the following measure (Fig. 2.2). When the A section returns, the music remains the same only it is extended by one final measure that contains a tonic bass note in the left hand and a tied chord in the right hand (Fig. 2.3).

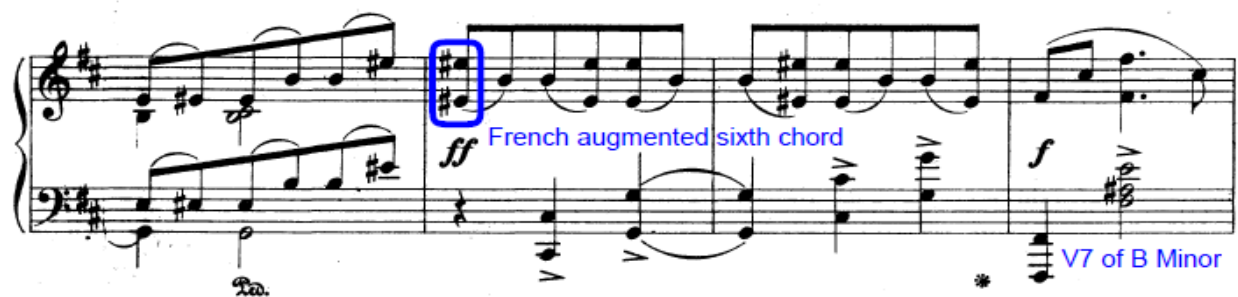


Figure 2.2- Mazurka in B Minor, mm. 34-37



Figure 2.3- Mazurka in B Minor, mm. 50-54

In measures 8 and 44, students are recommended to use a long pedal to sustain the V7 of V throughout the bar while intermittently changing the damper pedal often for clear enunciation

of the melody in the right hand. (Fig. 2.1) Also, when there is a pedal point in the left hand underneath the chromatic elements in the right hand, for example, in measures 29-34, one will benefit from using half pedal to deliver the chromatic scale clearly while holding the bass note.

Mazurka in A $\flat$ Major, No. 2

The second mazurka also begins with a dominant seventh chord that resolves to the tonic in the next measure. It is also written in ternary form: A (mm. 1-12), B (mm. 13-30) and A' (mm. 31-44). In this piece, Glière introduces a bolder irregular phrase structure. Towards the end of the A section, the tempo changes to *Meno Mosso*, and the use of a *sf* on the second beat with an *a tempo* results in an irregular phrase feel. The main theme in the A section begins with an octave interval, and this thematic feature appears throughout the A section. The octave appears less frequently in the B section but when it does, it is varied with the use of dotted rhythm (m. 13) or extended to a twelfth interval (m. 21) (Fig. 2.4).

The musical score for Mazurka in A-flat Major, mm. 9-21, is presented in three systems. The first system (mm. 9-12) shows a melodic line in the right hand with dynamics *f* and *pp*, and a bass line with a chromatic descending line. The second system (mm. 13-16) continues the melodic line with dynamics *pp* and *a tempo*. The third system (mm. 17-21) features a melodic line with dynamics *cresc.*, *mf*, *ff*, and *mf*, and a bass line with a chromatic descending line. The chromatic descending bass line is highlighted by blue boxes in measures 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21.

Figure 2.4- Mazurka in A $\flat$ Major, mm. 9-21

As in the first mazurka of this set, Op. 29, Glière utilizes chromaticism extensively in the B section while the A section is more diatonic. Through mm. 16-20, the left hand bass line moves by semitone from B to G, which becomes a dominant seventh (G, B, D and F) of C Minor in the next bar (Fig. 2.4). Similarly, a chromatic descending bass line appears throughout mm. 23-27. There is a French augmented sixth chord used in measure 27 (A, C, D and F $\sharp$), the E $\flat$ acting as an upper neighbor tone, and the C $\sharp$ as a lower neighbor tone to D. The D dominant chord in measure 28 actually acts as an inversion of the previous French augmented sixth chord, only it now has its perfect fifth restored. This chord stays in the air with the use of pedal until the next bar and then disappears in the following measure of rest. The melody in the right hand in measure 27 is repeated three times, each time played an octave lower, the third time played

without accompaniment with a *ritardando* followed by a measure of rest. Therefore, the music has a natural *decrescendo* through thinner texture and slower tempo. This results in two bars that sound as if the music is hesitating but ultimately amplifies expectation for the return of the A section (Fig. 2.5). Then suddenly the A' section comes in A $\flat$ Major, which is unexpected. The A' section displays some linear interplay between the melodies in both hands in mm. 31-34, in contrast with the A section in which the left hand is more chordal. While the right hand plays the same melody from the A section, the left hand begins an ascending melody starting one and half beats later throughout the phrase. In measures 33-34, the melody is transferred to the right hand, because of the big interval between the ascending melody and low bass notes in the left hand (Fig. 2.5). The piece typically proceeds with two measure phrases, but at the end, the phrase extends to two three-measure phrases (mm. 39-41 and mm. 42-44).

The image shows a musical score for a Mazurka in A Major, measures 22-35. The score is written for piano and features a chromatic descending bass line in the first system, a French sixth chord in the second system, and a melodic line with ornaments in the third system. Annotations include 'cresc.', 'f a tempo', 'rit.', 'm.g.', and 'Ab Major'.

Figure 2.5- Mazurka in A Major, mm. 22-35

Overall, this piece emphasizes the typical mazurka-rhythm, beginning with two short notes followed by long notes on the second and third beats, sometimes with the use of ornaments on the long note. However, Glière varies the emphasized beat by placing a long note with an ornament on the first beat (m. 3) and alters the accented beats in mm. 9-10. While the rhythm of the mazurka is extensively used throughout the piece, the use of syncopation with an ornamented note is noticeable in the B section, in mm. 19, and 27-29 (Fig. 2.5).

Performers should play the ornaments using pedal very sparingly and discreetly. For measures 31-34, where the melody is split between the hands, one should voice both melodies proportionately and distinctly.

Mazurka in B♭ Minor, No. 3

Glière ends the set of mazurkas with his longest, slowest and most expressive one. This mazurka is also written in ternary form and displays considerable chromaticism and syncopated rhythm typical of the mazurka. However, it also has numerous unique elements that differentiate it from the previous mazurkas. First of all, it begins with the tonic, while the other mazurkas began with dominant seventh chords. Second, while the first two mazurkas have more lively and moderate tempos at the metronome marking dotted half note = 76, this mazurka requires a more slow and relaxed tempo at the metronome marking dotted half note = 63. Third, while the first two mazurkas for the most part are homophonic, having main melody lines in the right hand and an accompaniment in the left hand, this mazurka includes more multi-layered texture passages throughout. This more complex texture requires a slower tempo in line with the expressive nature of this mazurka. Lastly, while in the A sections of the previous mazurkas, the themes involved skips in the melody line and stayed diatonic, the main theme in this mazurka is linear and utilizes more chromaticism even before getting to the B section. And while the previous two mazurkas have contrasting themes in between the A and B sections, this mazurka is monothematic. However, Glière creates differences between sections by using different textures, more chromaticism, polyphonic passages and unique phrase structures. The polyphonic elements appear in the A section, for example, in measures 9-12 (Fig. 2.6). The right hand displays contrary motion between two voices resulting in a more complex texture. In the first four measures, there is a chromatic descending line on the top notes of the left hand chords resulting from the use of suspensions (Fig. 2.6).

The formal structure of this piece includes an extended middle section: A (mm. 1-17), B (mm. 18-50) and A (mm. 51-70). The A section features 4 + 4 + 4 + 5-measure phrases, and the

returning A section has a more extended ending with 4 + 4 + 4 + 5 + 3-measure phrases. The last three measures of the A' section seem to be a continuation of the previous 5-measure phrase, as they prolong the same melodic idea each time starting on a lower pitch, and gradually disappear with a *diminuendo* until the end of the piece.

The image displays a musical score for a Mazurka in B-flat Minor, measures 1 through 12. The score is written for piano and is in 3/4 time. It features three systems of staves. The first system includes a tempo marking of (♩ = 63.) and a dynamic marking of *p*. The second system is annotated with 'Chromatic descending line' in blue, with arrows indicating a descending melodic line in the right hand. The third system is annotated with 'Polyphonic elements' in blue, with arrows pointing to overlapping melodic lines in both hands.

Figure 2.6- Mazurka in B $\flat$ Minor, mm. 1-12

The B section begins with 8 + 8-measure phrases. Each 8-measure phrase contains the same melodic idea repeated twice but every time starts on a different pitch. The melody of the first phrase (mm. 18-21) is played first in the left hand. As it ascends, the right hand takes over from the fourth bar (m. 21), before it finally arrives on a half note E $\flat$ in the right hand doubling the melody of the left hand (m. 24) (Fig. 2.7).



Figure 2.7- Mazurka in B $\flat$ Minor, mm. 18-31

Like the A section, the B section displays contrapuntal passages. There is an exchange of melodies between the right and left hand; after the first four measure group, the right hand reiterates the same melody that was played earlier by the left hand, and vice versa. In measures 26-33, the melody shifts between the left and right hand, as the melody in the left hand rises and crosses over the systems. In the meantime, the ascending chromatic eighth notes from the first two measures of each phrase (mm. 26-27, 30-31) in the left hand continue rising through the right hand in the following two measures (Fig. 2.7).

In the following measures, the phrase structure becomes ambiguous as a fragment of the melody line (m. 42) is repeated multiple times until the A section returns in measure 51. For the

last repeat, the rhythm of the melody is augmented over two bars with *ritardando* and *diminuendo* markings, creating a disappearing effect and preparing for the return of the A section with the dynamic, *pianissimo* (Fig. 2.8). The melodic fragment was repeated three times at the end of the B section of the second mazurka followed by a measure of rest. However, in this piece, Glière experiments more boldly by repeating a fragment eight times (accompanied by chromatic movement in the left hand) and altering the rhythm at the end of the phrase (Fig. 2.8).

The image displays a musical score for a Mazurka in Bb Minor, measures 43-54. The score is written for piano and consists of two systems. The first system, labeled 'Repeats of a melody fragment', shows a melody in the right hand that is repeated eight times across six measures, while the left hand plays a chromatic descending line. The second system, labeled 'Rhythmic augmentation of the melody', shows the melody in the right hand being augmented over two measures with 'rit.' and 'pp a tempo' markings, followed by a return of the melody. Blue arrows indicate the repetition of the melody fragment and the chromatic movement in the left hand.

Figure 2.8- Mazurka in Bb Minor, mm. 43-54

Because of its complex texture, this piece will require good voicing, fingering and clear pedaling. Therefore, a deep understanding of the music would be needed in performing this piece, especially when one has to follow the melody line when the melody is split between hands in the B section. The chords are often thick with sevenths, the melody line is often doubled in octaves, and this piece covers a broad range of the keyboard. Thus, a performer with a larger hand span would be better equipped to handle this piece; the skill of relaxation would be crucial in teaching and performing the piece.

Conclusion

Since their complexity and difficulty develop and progress towards the last mazurka, these three mazurkas are a good set of learning pieces. In general, all mazurkas are in ternary form, where the A sections stay diatonic for the most part and the B sections introduce significant passages of chromaticism. Glière always makes the B sections different from the A sections by implementing more chromaticism, polyphony, frequent key changes, different texture, lengthened phrase structure, and using different rhythms. The first mazurka is the most straightforward one, while the last mazurka is the most developed one. The second mazurka becomes a bridge between the two pieces by introducing some important features that appear in the final mazurka. In the second mazurka, Glière foreshadows the use of polyphony for a few measures in the B section and then ultimately utilizes it extensively in the third mazurka. He tends to make the transition between the B and the return of the A section ambiguous by repeating a fragment of melody multiple times followed by a measure of rest, which is best exemplified in the third mazurka.

Even though these mazurkas are not particularly virtuosic, their complex texture and deep musical content requires a more advanced player in order to better bring out their artistry.

CHAPTER THREE

TWENTY-FIVE PRELUDES, OP. 30

The Twenty-Five Preludes are the largest set among Glière's solo piano compositions. He wrote many collections of smaller pieces ranging from two to six pieces. His other bigger sets for piano are pedagogical sets, including *Eight Easy Pieces* for piano, Op. 43 (1909), *Kinderstücke*, *12 Pièces Enfantines* (Children's Pieces, Twelve Piano Pieces) of middle difficulty, Op. 31 (1907) and *Twelve Esquisses* of middle difficulty for piano in three volumes, Op. 47 (1909). The set of Twenty-Five Preludes represents the evolution of technical development among his compositions.

Chopin wrote in smaller genres of pieces comprising sets such as the impromptu, nocturnes, preludes and dances (mazurkas and waltzes, etc.), and succeeded in creating short, meaningful pieces that stand out on their own as individual works.¹⁵ An example of this is Chopin's Twenty-Four Preludes, Op. 28. Similarly, Rachmaninoff and Scriabin wrote twenty-four preludes, where each piece is technically demanding and substantial enough to perform independently. Glière followed this tradition by writing his most virtuosic set of piano pieces, the Twenty-Five Preludes, Op. 30.

As the set of Chopin's 24 Preludes covers all major and minor keys, Rachmaninoff's 13 Preludes, Op. 32, Prelude in C# Minor, Op. 3, No. 2 and 10 Preludes, Op. 23 complete the full set of 24 preludes in all twenty-four keys. Scriabin's 24 Preludes, Op. 11 also cover twenty-four keys and follow the same key sequence as Chopin's (C Major - A Minor - G Major - E Minor...etc.). Glière follows this tradition in a slightly different way by using all twenty-four keys plus one repeated key at the end. The set consists of five books, with each book containing five preludes.

¹⁵ Jasmin Lee, "The Breadth of Chopin's Influence on French and Russian Piano Music of the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries" (DMA diss., University of Maryland, College Park, 2015), 8.

The key sequence is rather simple: it begins with the key of C Major and then moves to the parallel minor before moving up a half step (C Major - C Minor - D $\flat$ Major - C $\sharp$ Minor...etc.); the pattern is repeated until finally reaching B Minor in Prelude, No. 24. C Major is then repeated in the last prelude, No. 25.

Following the lineage of the prelude from the Baroque era, Chopin's preludes employ the same thematic material throughout, usually based on motivic patterns that evolve over a large harmonic scheme.¹⁶ Glière follows this style of writing in his preludes. Chopin also influenced Russian composers with the use of the rubato technique inspired by the human voice and sustained harmonies with help from the damper pedal.¹⁷ Rachmaninoff used lyrical melody lines and chromatic harmonies, which are inherited from Chopin.¹⁸ As a virtuoso, Rachmaninoff infused his piano music with technically demanding passages, using the whole range of the keyboard, and thick harmonies, which create a rich, orchestral timbre and represented virtuoso romantic pianism.¹⁹ Most of Rachmaninoff's preludes use ternary form, but with variations of the form, such as an expanded development and a lengthy coda. Glière's preludes also combine a romantic musical language with virtuosic elements.

This set of preludes is the largest and most virtuosic set among Glière's piano compositions, and it requires an advanced performance level. I have selected fifteen out of the twenty-five preludes to discuss in this paper and perform for my project recital. It is worthwhile to explore the performance issues along with a stylistic analysis.

¹⁶ F. E. Kirby, "The Early Nineteenth Century," in *Music For Piano, A Short History*, ed. Reinhard G. Pauly (Cambridge: Amadeus Press, 1995), 190-191.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Richard Anthony Leonard, "Rachmaninov," in *A History of Russian Music*, ed. Richard Anthony Leonard (New York: Macmillan Co., 1968), 251-260.

¹⁹ Glenn R. Winters, "An Analysis of Sergei Rachmaninoff's Preludes, Opus 23 and Opus 32, and Etudes-Tableaux, Opus 33 and Opus 39" (DMA diss., Northwestern University, 1986).

General Characteristics of Glière's Twenty-Five Preludes

The preludes are mostly written either in ternary form or they are through composed and monothematic. In the ternary forms, the second A section is often extended by repeated fragments of the theme.

Glière's fondness for chromaticism can be seen in the main themes of these preludes that are often imbued with chromatic lines. Also, he tends to use chromatic passages at important points in the music, such as when modulating and introducing a new melody line, or leading back to thematic material.

Long pedal points are often used in the preludes. One such example is the Prelude in B $\flat$ Minor, No. 22. Even though there is a lot of chromaticism in the piece, a tonic pedal on every beat provides a sense of stability. In the Prelude in G Major, No. 15, a long pedal point on the tonic underlines the harmony in the A section, and a pedal point on the dominant leading to the main theme in the return of the A section emphasizes the harmonic progression.

The interval of a fourth acts as an important feature in the preludes. For example, the main themes in the Preludes No. 7 and No. 14 display intervals of a fourth. Similarly, Glière also uses tritones prominently in the theme of the Prelude in B Minor, No. 24.

The texture is often thick, and the technique is demanding with the frequent use of seventh chords, octave leaps and fast-moving arpeggios, covering a wide range of the keyboard. The style of writing makes one think that Glière might have had a large hand span like Rachmaninoff. The character of many preludes is dramatic in a fast tempo.

Many of Glière's preludes bear similarities with Rachmaninoff's preludes, which had been written earlier than Glière's. He might have well known Rachmaninoff's pieces and emulated them in certain ways, for example, the figurations, harmonies, and structures. Especially, the texture and

figuration of Glière's preludes no. 6 in D Minor, no. 11 in F Major, and no. 21 in B $\flat$ Major resemble Rachmaninoff's preludes Op. 23 no. 9 in E $\flat$ minor, no. 8 in A $\flat$ Major, and no. 2 in B $\flat$ Major, respectively.

The preludes are sufficient to show off one's physical, musical and technical prowess and to be performed in concerts. Their drama, lyricism, and romanticism will be attractive to audiences. The set can also act as a good alternative to other virtuosic sets of pieces by other composers.

Prelude in C Major, No. 1

This short, dramatic prelude is through composed and covers a wide range of the keyboard. Except for a few spots, the dynamic level ranges between *forte* and *fortissimo*. The texture of this piece is very thick; most of the time, the right hand plays seventh chords. The interval of the chords in the left hand often tends to be big enough that a performer with fair-sized hands would have to roll the chords. Starting in measure 17, the accompaniment in the left hand changes to octaves. After fast chromatic descending sixteenth-note octaves in measures 17-18, eighth-note octaves appear covering a wide range of the keyboard. In measures 9-12, the melodic line on the upper layers of each chord moves in parallel seconds, creating an interesting balance of sound. After this passage, there is chromaticism in contrary motion in the outer voices until the main motive enters in m. 19. Also, groupings of three eighth notes over six bars (mm. 13-18) create a sense of syncopation. (Fig. 3.1).

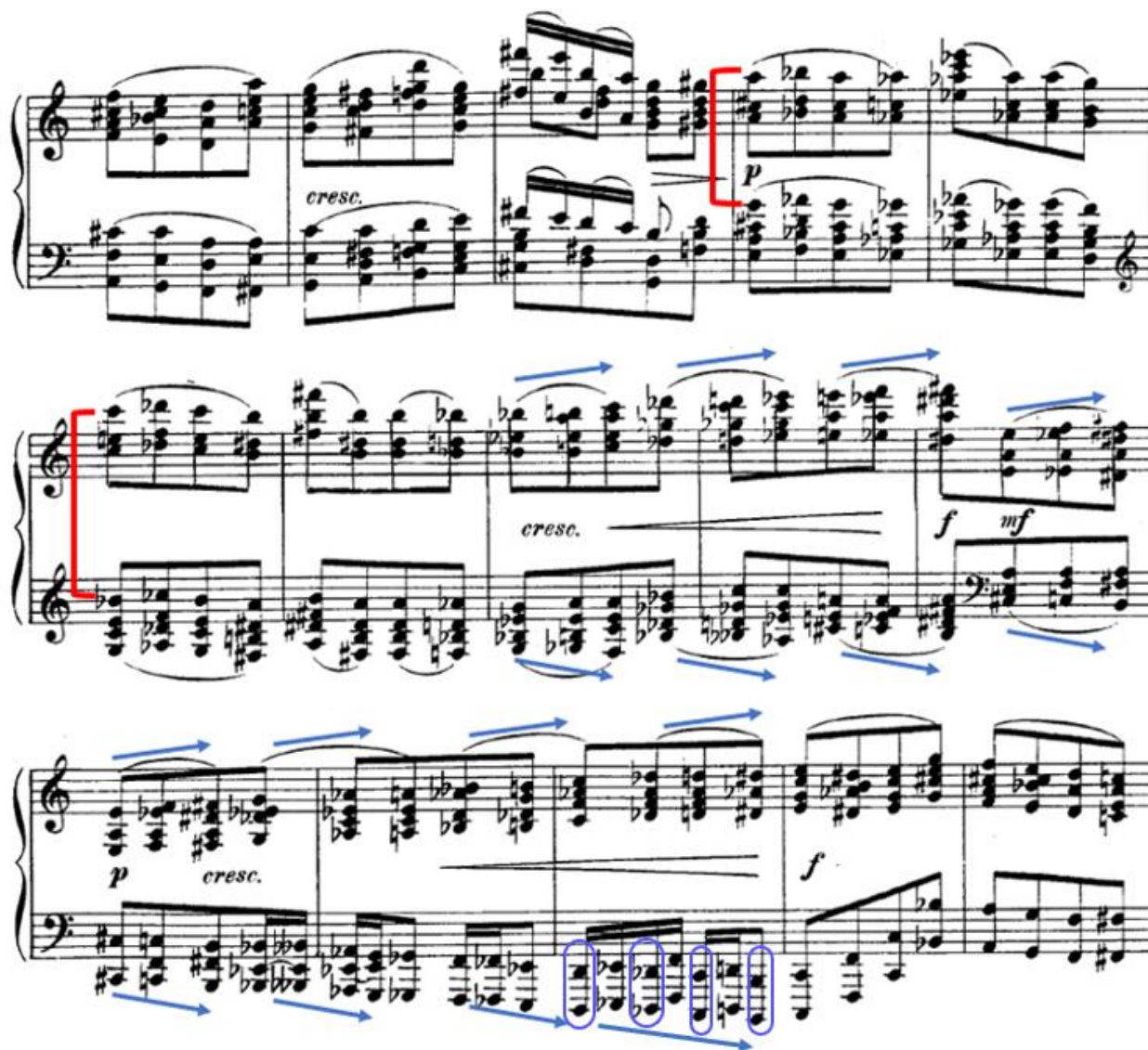


Figure 3.1- Prelude in C Major, mm. 6-20

In mm. 23-26, there is chromatic contrary motion again. Syncopation is displayed through the use of slurs on two eighth notes that resolve by half step, starting on a weak beat. Through mm. 27-29, groups of three chords create a hemiola, while the right hand has a chromatic line that leads toward the return of the main theme in m. 30. From measure 30 on, an ascending countermelody to the main melody appears in the left hand, emphasized with accents (Fig. 3.2).



Figure 3.2- Prelude in C Major, mm. 21-35

In measure 38, the material from the beginning of the prelude returns and the music comes to a close after oscillating tonic and diminished chords are highlighted over three bars in mm. 42-44; the D# in the diminished chord acts as a passing tone while the remaining notes of the chord (F, Ab, B) outline a diminished seventh chord that resolves to C Major (Fig. 3.3).



Figure 3.3- Prelude in C Major, mm. 41-45

Despite the bulky texture, one has to bring out the linear melodic content and harmonies to achieve sensitive playing. As this piece is marked “*Moderato*,” with a metronome marking of quarter note = 104, one should keep the piece flowing. Creating long phrases and voicing the main melody line would help in keeping the music moving forward. One would have to change the pedal on every beat throughout because of the prelude’s constant use of chromaticism and the use of a wide range of the keyboard. When rolling the big chords in the left hand in mm. 5-8 (Fig. 3.1), pedaling on the bass note would help to display the harmonies effectively. Where the bass note is held over multiple bars while other voices ascend with changing harmonies, it is recommended to flutter the pedal.

Prelude in Db Major, No. 3

This prelude is written in ternary form: A (mm. 1-16), B (mm. 16-37) and A’ (mm. 38-57). The most challenging part in learning and performing this piece is to play the repeated sixteenth notes throughout the piece in the marked tempo (*Vivace*). In the A section, the right hand is to play simultaneously both the upper eighth note melody line legato and the groups of two repeated sixteenth note chords staccato. While the right hand meets this technical demand, the left hand plays a rather simple accompaniment with groups of three eighth notes in the form

of an arpeggio in each bar. When the music transitions to the B section, chromaticism is seen in both hands ascending by half step in mm. 13-15 (Fig. 3.4).



Figure 3.4- Prelude in D $\flat$ Major, mm. 9-17

In this piece, Glière creates a big contrast between sections by changing the texture, as opposed to the Prelude No. 1, where the texture remains the same throughout. While the melody in section A is smooth with linear motion, the B section has more wide leaps and accents within the melody. In the B section, the legato melody disappears, and the two hands exchange playing two repeated sixteenth notes, which is technically demanding, as all the notes are located in close proximity on the keyboard. The melody line is still linear and chromatic despite the leaps (Fig. 3.5).



Figure 3.5- Prelude in D $\flat$ Major, mm. 28-37

In the return of the A section, the main theme is restated in a *forte* dynamic level, different from the beginning where it was played softly. Near the end of the piece from measure 50 on, both hands have a long chromatic line that leads to a big D $\flat$ Major chord.

With the outer fingers spanning an octave, this requires the right hand to stay stretched out, making it more difficult to play two different articulations simultaneously. To make the melody line clear despite the busy notes underneath, one has to voice the melody precisely and play the repeated chords softer, relaxing the thumb and wrist.

Prelude in C# Minor, No. 4

This piece is marked “*Presto, impetuoso*,” with a metronome marking of dotted half note = 76. The prelude begins with a low dotted half note and a two-measure phrase that contains ascending arpeggios in both hands followed by two thick chords. These passages are reminiscent

of Chopin's Op. 25, No. 12 etude with its arpeggio passages that require both hands to play parallel motion starting on different degrees of the same harmony (Fig. 3.6 and 3.7).

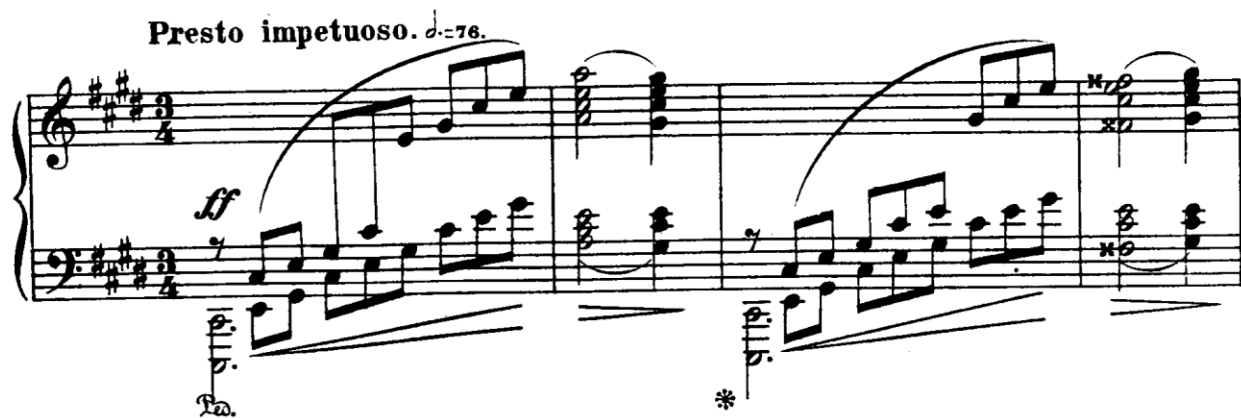


Figure 3.6- Prelude in C# Minor, mm. 1-4

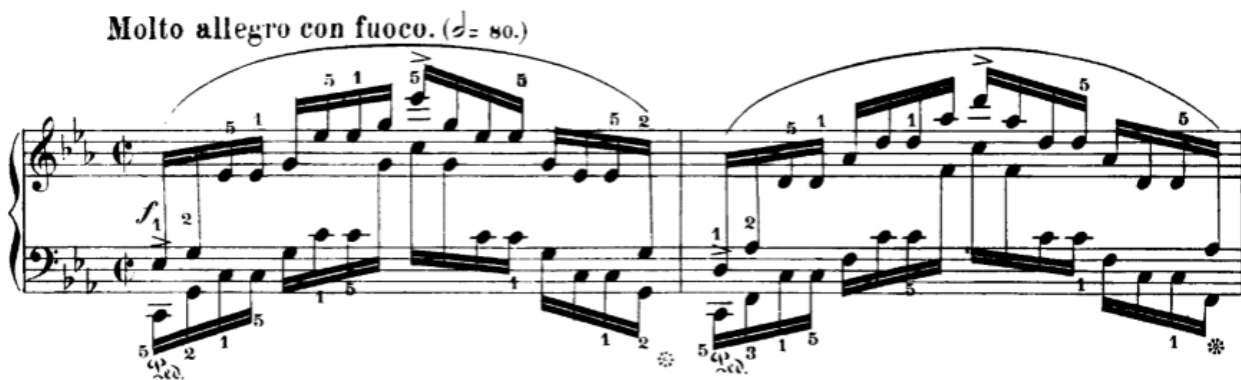


Figure 3.7- Chopin's Etude in C minor, Op. 25, No. 12, mm. 1-2

The melodic phrases can be heard through the two chords every other bar. After the arpeggiated section, a series of *fortissimo* chords leads to the middle section, which is calmer with a *diminuendo* toward *pianississimo*. Throughout the middle section beginning in measure 37, a pattern of two chords whose melody descends by a half step appears in the right hand, and the left hand plays triplets moving chromatically (Fig. 3.8).



Figure 3.8- Prelude in C# Minor, mm. 31-44

There is a great deal of chromaticism and contrary motion in the transition to the return of the A section. From mm. 69-75 on, there is chromaticism in contrary motion with syncopation in the right hand. Then the triplets of the left hand further ascend chromatically in mm. 76-78, exchanging hands and emphasizing D# and A toward a D# diminished chord in m. 79. After the pattern of two chords descending by half step in the right hand over an ascending chromatic line in the left hand is repeated four times, each time in a lower register, the A section returns in measure 83. It becomes more passionate and dramatic with a *fortississimo* marking. Triplet eighth notes are added in the alto voice during the second chordal bars (Fig. 3.9).



Figure 3.9- Prelude in C# Minor, mm. 72-87

At the end of the prelude, the texture from the middle section returns and the music becomes thinner with a soft dynamic, *piano*, and the chords disappear while only the top melody line and the triplets remain moving chromatically. Finally, the piece ends with a long chord in the softest dynamic in this piece, *pianississimo*.

Playing the arpeggios feels unnatural and difficult as each hand begins on a different pitch, mostly at the interval of the sixth. Therefore, good fingering that avoids placing the thumb on the black keys is essential. As this piece involves many fast notes and thick chords with a big dynamic throughout, a performer needs good finger work and stamina. Despite the dense texture and abundance of notes, a teacher should help students find the melodic line and voice it while also playing the triplets clearly.

One should pay close attention to pedaling when learning this piece. Because it uses a lot of chromaticism, careful pedaling is important. In the beginning of the piece where both hands play arpeggios followed by two chords, Glière puts a long pedal mark over two bars (Fig. 3.6). Performers may choose to change the pedal on the series of chords, as the two chords conflict harmonically and resolve by semitone. On the other hand, in the passages where the triplets move chromatically, one could choose to use less pedal for clarity. However, in some places, Glière seems to want to create a blend of sound. For example, in mm. 37-39, he puts a long pedal marking over three bars when the triplets move linearly and chromatically (Fig. 3.8). Also, he often holds a low bass note over the bar and multiple bars, for example, in mm. 48-49, 54-58 and 69-70. In these cases, using the middle pedal would help to sustain the bass.

Prelude in D Minor, No. 6

This prelude is written in ternary form: A (mm. 1-16), B (mm. 17-32) and A' (mm. 33-40). This piece utilizes chromaticism extensively throughout, prescient of the second variation from *Variations on a Theme of Corelli*, Op. 42 (1931) in the same key, D Minor, by Sergei Rachmaninoff, having an upper melody line and chromatic motion underneath (Fig. 3.10 and 3.12).



Figure 3.10- Rachmaninoff's Variations on a Theme of Corelli, Op. 42, Var. II, mm. 6-8

The dynamic *pianissimo* brings out the mysterious mood from the beginning. The melody line has to be played *legato*, therefore, good fingering is required. The melody line consists of three repeated quarter notes on the same pitch followed by a descending half step. This half-step figure recalls the fugue subject from the fugue in *Prélude, Choral et Fugue* (1884) by César Franck (Fig. 3.11 and 3.12). The melody appears as a sequence throughout this prelude.

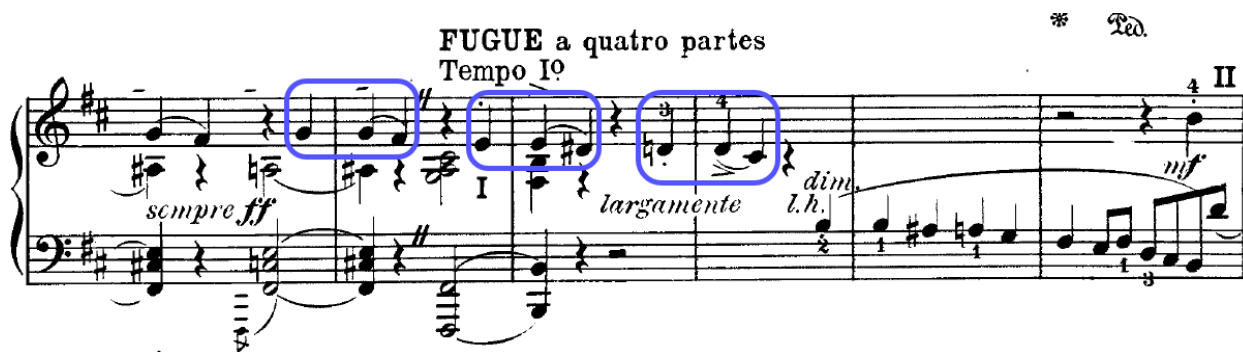


Figure 3.11- César Franck's Prélude, Choral et Fugue, Fugue



Figure 3.12- Prelude in D Minor, mm. 1-3

In mm. 2 and 4, there is contrary motion between the melody and the chromatic inner voice at the end of the melodic phrase, which is emphasized by different fluctuations of dynamic (Fig. 3.12). It also appears between the soprano and tenor voices in mm. 10 and 12.

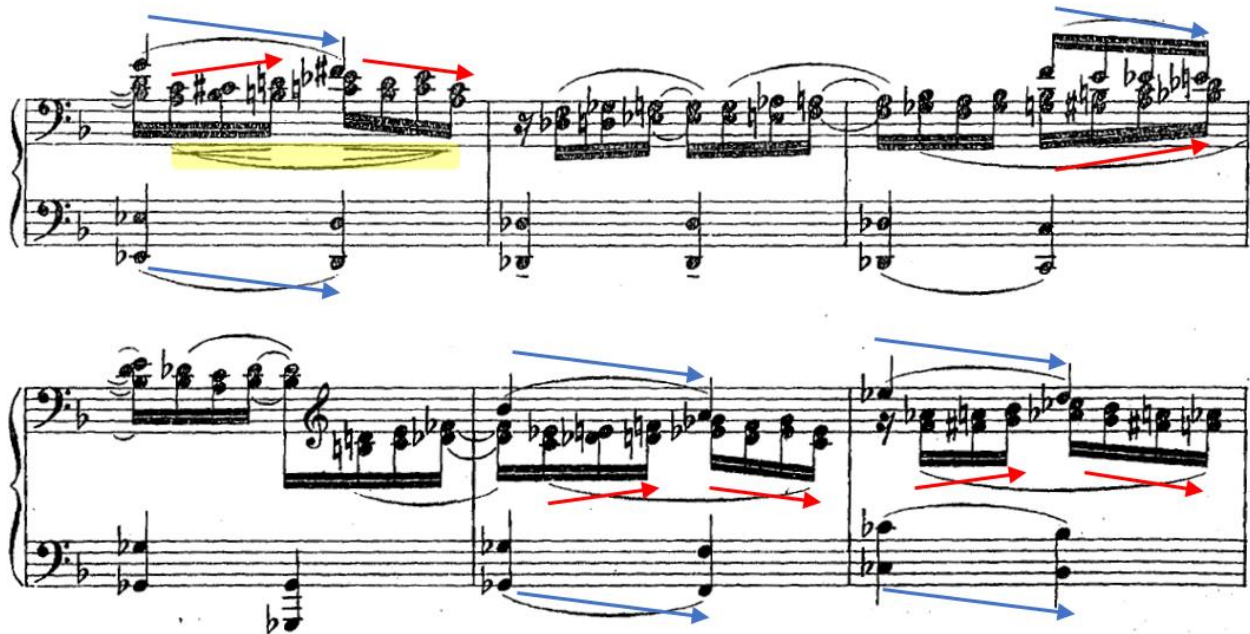


Figure 3.13- Prelude in D Minor, mm. 20-25

In the B section, the melody appears in octaves in the left hand, while the right hand plays chromatic sixteenth double thirds. Contrary motion also appears in this section, for example, in mm. 18, 20 and 22. A melodic fragment consisting of two descending notes by half step is repeated three times in mm. 24-26, appearing in the outer voices in parallel motion, while the inner voice moves in the opposite direction (Fig. 3.13). The sequence of the descending melody line is repeated in mm. 27-29, before the double thirds from the inner voice appear alone and ascend chromatically toward the return of the main theme.

As the prelude moves to climax at a *fortissimo* dynamic level in the return of the A section from m. 33, three staves appear, displaying the widest range of the keyboard used so far,

with the outer voices moving in octaves and the inner voices containing chromatic movement in thirds in both hands (Fig. 3.14).



Figure 3.14- Prelude in D Minor, mm. 32-37

The whole prelude is based on chromaticism, which is present in every measure in the inner voices and the melody as well. The melodic content in mm. 1-16 and mm. 33-39 is based entirely on chromatic motion (Fig. 3.12 and 3.14). This is reminiscent of the prelude in E $\flat$ Minor, Op. 23, No. 9 by Rachmaninoff with its chromatic descending melody and chromatic sixteenth double notes (Fig. 3.15).



Figure 3.15- Rachmaninoff's Prelude in E $\flat$ Minor, Op. 23, No. 9, mm. 37-40

It is challenging to convey two different dynamics for different voices within the same hand such as in mm. 2 and 4. Practicing each voice alone will help one listen to them separately before playing them together. Chromatic passages, especially with double thirds, require good fingering and flexibility of the hands. When the bass note is a half note and has to be held for the whole bar in mm. 34, 36 and 38-40, performers are recommended to change the pedal lightly in order to articulate clearly the upper melody and inner chromatic harmonies (Fig. 3.14).

Prelude in E $\flat$ Major, No. 7

In this prelude, the left hand provides ascending arpeggiated accompaniment, with triplets on the third beat. The melody of the right hand displays a dotted rhythm throughout. The interval of a fourth is important in this prelude as it is used throughout in the melody. In the left hand, the bass notes move up and down in stepwise motion and form a linear line, especially in the beginning (Fig. 3.16). Before the music moves to the middle section, there is a chromatic descending line in the bass in mm. 16-20.



Figure 3.16- Prelude in E $\flat$ Major, mm. 1-7

In the middle part of the piece in mm. 25-42, the hands exchange roles, and the melody alternates between hands. In mm. 29-30 and 35-42, for example, the left hand takes the melody and the right hand plays the arpeggiated accompaniment (Fig. 3.17).

The first section of the prelude remains in E $\flat$ Major. In the middle part, there follows a series of modulations, in C Major (m. 25), in E Major (m. 31), in G Major (m. 37), in D $\flat$ Major (m. 39), and a B $\flat$ dominant seventh chord (m. 41) toward the return of the main key, E $\flat$ Major, in m. 43. When the modulation first occurs in m. 25, the pedal point on C appears over four measures in mm. 25-29, then on E over five bars in mm. 31-35. From there on, the bass moves up chromatically, from F $\sharp$ to A $\flat$ in mm. 36-39 (Fig. 3.17).



Figure 3.17- Prelude in E $\flat$ Major, mm. 36-39

After the return to the home key, modulations happen again in mm. 51 and 54 in B Major and D Major. After the final return of the main theme in E $\flat$ Major in m. 57, the pedal point on E $\flat$ lasts for eleven bars in mm. 57-67. The repetitions of the bass note E $\flat$ in mm. 60-62 and 65-66 form a hemiola pattern (Fig. 3.18).



Figure 3.18- Prelude in E $\flat$ Major, mm. 59-66

It is challenging to arrive accurately on a long note from a fourth above, especially when playing the melody in octaves. Practicing in a moderate tempo and keeping the hand shape in close proximity on the keyboard would be helpful in learning this piece.

Prelude in E $\flat$ Minor, No. 8

Glière connects the Prelude in E $\flat$ Major with the E $\flat$ Minor prelude through the use of dotted rhythms. The constant use of dotted rhythm that was used in the Prelude No. 7 also appears extensively throughout the Prelude No. 8. In the E $\flat$ Minor prelude, the dotted rhythm is non-stop and used in both hands, as opposed to the Prelude No. 7. The pattern that is used throughout the whole piece consists of a sixteenth note tied over into a dotted eighth note in the upper voice of the right hand, while the lower voice displays constant dotted eighth notes. The left hand mirrors this rhythmic pattern in reverse throughout the piece. The melody is heard in the top voice of the right hand, often doubled by the thumb of the left hand, for example, in mm. 2-5 (Fig. 3.19). After the first measure, which serves as an introduction, the phrases are generally two measure long. After the first bar containing three fortissimo chords, the ensuing phrases contain six chords over two bars, as in mm. 2-3, 4-5 and so on (Fig. 3.19). The notes move linearly and chromatically and cover a wide range of the keyboard.

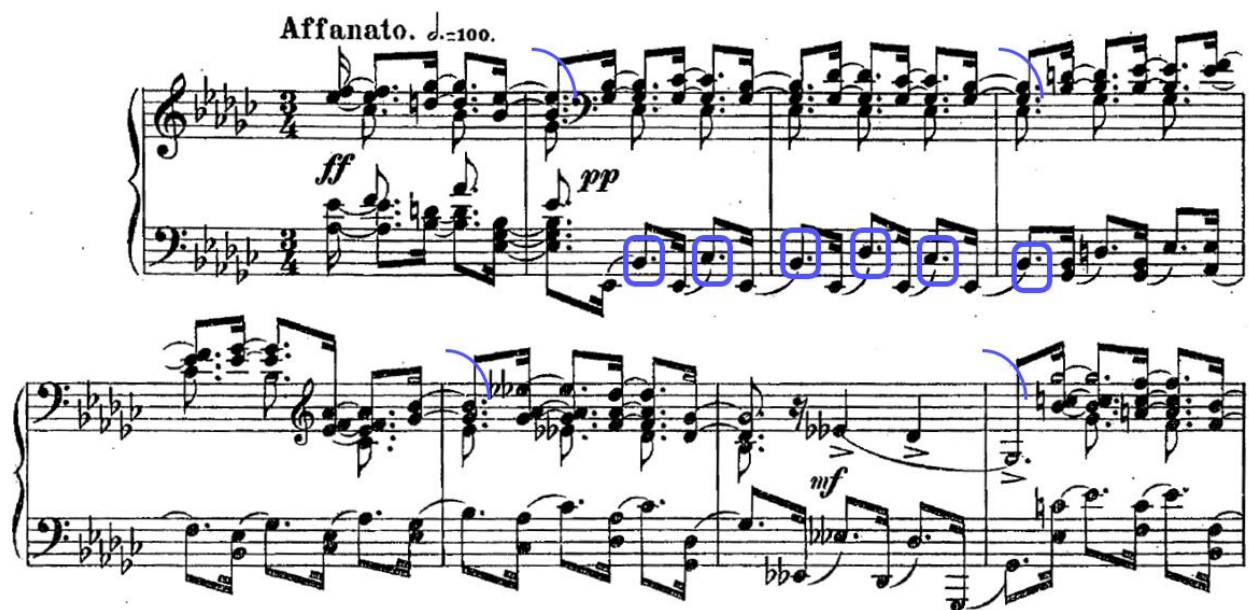


Figure 3.19- Prelude in E $\flat$ Minor, mm. 1-8

Glière uses many chromatic lines in this prelude. For example, there is chromaticism in contrary motion in the outer voices and then in parallel motion in the next bar in mm. 14-15, 16-17 and 18-19. Glière also tends to use chromaticism at important points of the music; chromaticism in contrary motion in the outer voices in mm. 35-37 and chromaticism in parallel motion in m. 38 occurs leading to the return of the main melody in the home key in m. 39 (Fig. 3.20). In mm. 57-60, the material from the introduction in m. 1 comes back and is repeated three times, each time in a lower register as the prelude ends.



Figure 3.20- Prelude in E $\flat$ Minor, mm. 33-40

Playing through the music in blocked chords could be helpful in devising a good fingering and understanding the harmonic progression. To avoid playing the short fragments in a percussive way, a performer has to voice the top and inner voice and make a long phrase line in order to make the music flow.

Prelude in F Major, No. 11

This prelude has a pleasant feeling with a lyrical melody line and is written in 5/4 time. This is a monothematic prelude where Glière creates contrast by varying the texture and moving the melody from right hand to left hand. The figuration introduced in the first bar is repeated throughout the piece; sixteenth-note groups that begin with a sustained melody quarter note, and left-hand arpeggiated quarter notes that cover a wide range of the keyboard. The second sixteenth note in the right hand always doubles the melody an octave higher (Fig. 3.21). The texture is much similar to the prelude in A♭ Major, Op. 23, No. 8 by Rachmaninoff (Fig. 3.22).

In measure 9, the same theme appears as in the beginning of the prelude, but the texture and the pattern are different. The melody of the right hand now shifts to the left hand as the right hand still doubles the theme after a sixteenth-note rest (Fig. 3.21). The melody also alternatively appears in both hands from measure 18 to 29.



Figure 3.21- Prelude in F Major, mm. 7-10



Figure 3.22- Rachmaninoff's Prelude in A $\flat$ Major, Op. 23, No.8, mm. 1-4

While the main melody is mostly diatonic, there is a lot of chromaticism used in the middle section of the prelude. For example, the heavily chromatic melody of the right hand in mm. 23-25 is taken over by the left hand in mm. 26-29. In mm. 27 and 29, the right hand doubles the melody of the left hand. This is another instance where Glière uses chromaticism in a passage right before the return of the main theme. From measure 30 on, the main theme is more strongly restated with the melody played in octaves in a *forte* dynamic level, the left hand now playing eighth notes instead of quarter notes as in the beginning of the piece (Fig. 3.23).

Eighth Note Accompaniment

Figure 3.23- Prelude in F Major, mm. 23-30

The fingering will be 1-5-3-2 in the right hand for most parts of the prelude. Not only voicing the thumb but also bringing out the fifth finger will make the sound more effective, while keeping the other fingers, 3 and 2, playing the sixteenth notes softly. Instead of trying to hold the quarter notes for their full duration, relaxation and circulation of the wrist and elbow

will make the sound more natural and legato. This technical approach can be applied in Chopin's Prelude in F# Minor, Op. 28, No. 8 (Fig. 3.24), when bringing out the melody with the thumb while playing thirty second arpeggiated notes softly. Also, when playing the octave melody notes starting from m. 30, having a flexible wrist and elbow will be crucial to relax and produce a legato and lyrical sound.

The figuration of this piece is reminiscent of Chopin's Etude Op. 25, No. 1 with its fast sixteenth notes articulating the harmonies and the melodic line being formed by the first of each six-note group (Fig. 3.25). Glière's prelude would be good preparation for students wanting to study Chopin's etude and prelude.



Figure 3.24- Chopin's Prelude in F# Minor, Op. 28, No. 8, mm. 1-2



Figure 3.25- Chopin's Etude in A-flat Major, Op. 25, No. 1, mm. 1-2

Prelude in F# Minor, No. 14

This piece is written in 3/2 time, which underscores the spaciousness of the prelude, not unlike Chopin's Prelude in F# Major, written in 6/4 time (Fig. 3.26). Throughout this prelude, both hands remain widely stretched out playing octaves and seventh chords. After the left hand presents a melody with octaves for two bars, the right hand takes over the melody while the left hand starts functioning in a more accompanimental role. In measures 10 to 13, the left hand plays the first melody again, and the right hand presents a countermelody that involves more chords. In this piece, a wide range of the keyboard is used, for example, the left hand plays a low bass note and leaps to the middle range to fill the harmonies in mm. 9-10, 14-15 and 19-21 (Fig. 3.27).



Figure 3.26- Chopin's Prelude in F# Major, Op. 28, No. 13, mm. 1-3



Figure 3.27- Prelude in F# Minor, mm. 9-15

In mm. 31-32, there is a big chromatic line in both hands, including the inner voice of the right hand, leading back to F# Minor in m. 33. This is yet another instance of chromaticism being used at an important structural moment leading back to the home key. When the main theme returns in m. 33, the two melodies are combined, the main melody in the left hand and the countermelody in the right hand (Fig. 3.28).



Figure 3.28- Prelude in F# Minor, mm. 31-33

Toward the end of the prelude, the dynamic gets softer and the hands gradually move to the lower register. When the music arrives in measure 41, marked *Tranquillo*, the texture is thinner as the right hand features a single note melody in a diminishing dynamic. The last two bars of the prelude are marked *Lento* and the music fades away with the softest dynamic in this piece, *pianissimo* (Fig. 3.30).

The interval of an ascending fourth (perfect, diminished or augmented) is an important thematic feature of this piece. Examples of the prevalence of the ascending fourth are found in the melody of the right hand (mm. 10-14 and 33-36), in the left hand (mm. 22-23, 25-26 and 28-30), and in both hands (mm. 19-22) (Fig. 3.29). A slur is placed on the ascending fourth every time in the right hand in the *Tranquillo* section and in the left hand in the *Lento* section, perhaps highlighting the importance of this interval (Fig. 3.30).



Figure 3.29- Prelude in F# Minor, mm. 19-21

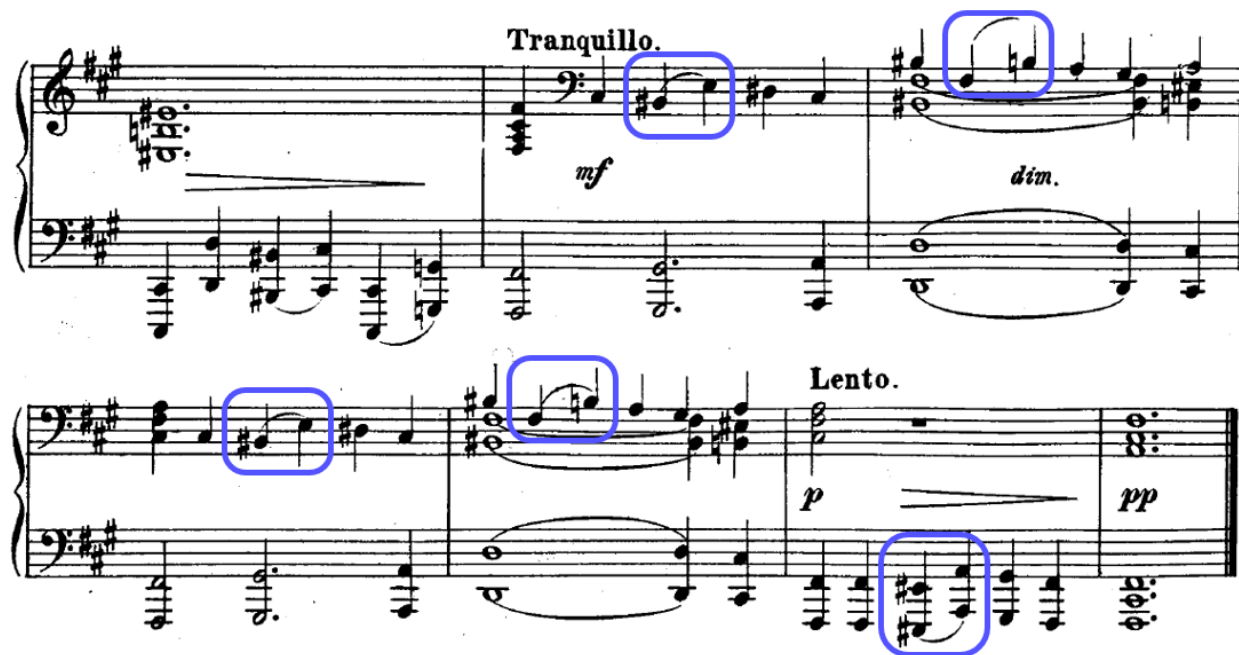


Figure 3.30- Prelude in F# Minor, mm. 41-46

Because of the profuse use of chromaticism, frequent light use of pedaling is recommended. Performers should be cautious not to play the octave in a percussive way, but rather try to make a long line with smooth phrasing. It would be difficult to make the music flow in the passages having big leaps in the left hand continuously, such as in mm. 8-9, 14-15 and 19-21 (Fig. 3.29). A performer should try to keep the musical line as smooth as possible while also practicing to play the big leaps as accurately as possible.

Prelude in G Major, No. 15

This prelude, marked *Andante*, displays a lyrical melody. It is written in ternary form: A (mm. 1-23), B. (mm. 24-43) and A' (mm. 44-68). The prelude begins on a tonic chord and moves to a diminished chord of G; the B on the top of the chord acts as a suspension and resolves to A at the end of the measure, and the bass G functions as a pedal point. The left hand displays accompaniment playing moving pairs of sixteenth notes that travel through a wide range

of the keyboard. The right-hand texture features two voices, with the upper voice containing long melody notes and the lower voice playing continuous eighth notes that function as accompaniment. The left hand moves chromatically over a long pedal point in the bass on G in mm. 1-14 (Fig. 3.31).



Figure 3.31- Prelude in G Major, mm. 1-8

Before leading to the B section in a new key, B Minor, the upper notes in the left hand move chromatically down to B in mm. 18-23. This is another instance of Glière using chromatic motion before the beginning of a new section (Fig. 3.32).



Figure 3.32- Prelude in G Major, mm. 21-24

There is also chromaticism in contrary motion in the outer voices in mm. 36 and 40, with the change of time signature to 3/4. Throughout the B section, the bass notes move chromatically until the D dominant chord appears in m. 41. The three bars of dominant in mm. 41-43 provide an extended sense of preparation for the return of the melody in tonic, G Major, in m. 44 (Fig. 3.33).

In the second A section from measure 44, the long pedal point on G also appears, which gives a sense of stability even though there is extensive chromaticism (Fig. 3.33). The three measures (mm. 58-60) highlight an inversion of a French augmented sixth chord before moving to the tonic for the rest of the piece. (Fig. 3.34)

The image displays a musical score for the Prelude in G Major, measures 36-48. The score is written for piano and includes several annotations:

- Measure 36:** The first staff has a circled 'do' (D4) with an arrow pointing to a circled B4 in the second staff. The second staff has a circled G3 with an arrow pointing to a circled F#3 in the third staff.
- Measure 37:** The first staff has a circled G#4 with an arrow pointing to a circled G4 in the second staff. The second staff has a circled G3 with an arrow pointing to a circled F#3 in the third staff.
- Measure 38:** The first staff has a circled G4 with an arrow pointing to a circled F#4 in the second staff. The second staff has a circled G3 with an arrow pointing to a circled F#3 in the third staff.
- Measure 39:** The first staff has a circled G4 with an arrow pointing to a circled F#4 in the second staff. The second staff has a circled G3 with an arrow pointing to a circled F#3 in the third staff.
- Measure 40:** The first staff has a circled G4 with an arrow pointing to a circled F#4 in the second staff. The second staff has a circled G3 with an arrow pointing to a circled F#3 in the third staff.
- Measure 41:** The first staff has a circled G4 with an arrow pointing to a circled F#4 in the second staff. The second staff has a circled G3 with an arrow pointing to a circled F#3 in the third staff.
- Measure 42:** The first staff has a circled G4 with an arrow pointing to a circled F#4 in the second staff. The second staff has a circled G3 with an arrow pointing to a circled F#3 in the third staff.
- Measure 43:** The first staff has a circled G4 with an arrow pointing to a circled F#4 in the second staff. The second staff has a circled G3 with an arrow pointing to a circled F#3 in the third staff.
- Measure 44:** The first staff has a circled G4 with an arrow pointing to a circled F#4 in the second staff. The second staff has a circled G3 with an arrow pointing to a circled F#3 in the third staff.
- Measure 45:** The first staff has a circled G4 with an arrow pointing to a circled F#4 in the second staff. The second staff has a circled G3 with an arrow pointing to a circled F#3 in the third staff.
- Measure 46:** The first staff has a circled G4 with an arrow pointing to a circled F#4 in the second staff. The second staff has a circled G3 with an arrow pointing to a circled F#3 in the third staff.
- Measure 47:** The first staff has a circled G4 with an arrow pointing to a circled F#4 in the second staff. The second staff has a circled G3 with an arrow pointing to a circled F#3 in the third staff.
- Measure 48:** The first staff has a circled G4 with an arrow pointing to a circled F#4 in the second staff. The second staff has a circled G3 with an arrow pointing to a circled F#3 in the third staff.

Other annotations include: 'do' (D4) in measure 36, 'f' (forte) in measure 37, 'dim.' (diminuendo) in measure 40, 'rit.' (ritardando) in measure 42, and 'G Major' in measure 44. The score is in G major, 3/4 time, and features a variety of musical notations including chords, arpeggios, and triplets.

Figure 3.33- Prelude in G Major, mm. 36-48

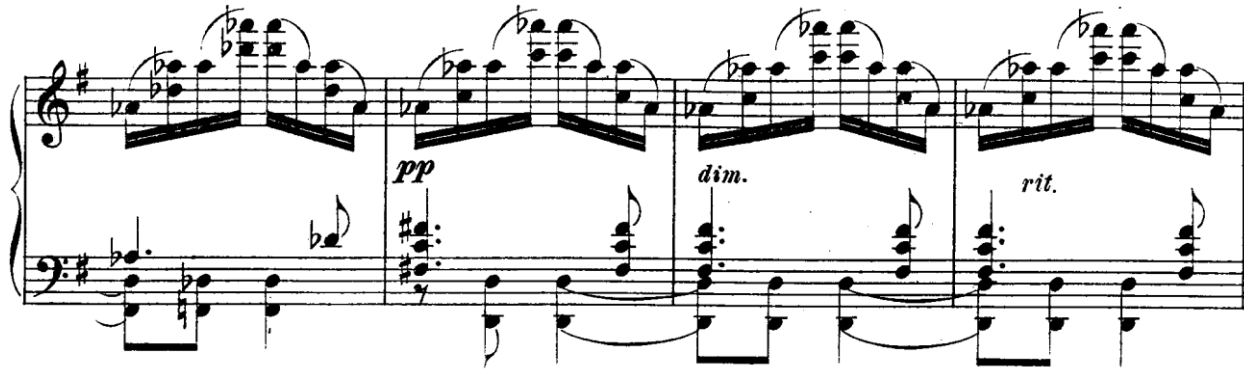


Figure 3.34- Prelude in G Major, mm. 57-60

For the most part, the melody in this prelude is presented by a single note while numerous other notes are involved in the accompaniment. It is important to bring out the top melody line and keep the rest of the texture at a softer dynamic proportion. In the beginning of the piece, keeping the busy sixteenth notes in the left hand and eighth notes in the right hand calm and soft is crucial in voicing the top melody expressively and effectively in a softer dynamic. Instructors should teach their students how to achieve good balance between the two parts. It would be easy to become percussive when thick chords and octaves are moving in big intervals, such as in measures 38-43 (Fig. 3.33). Relaxation and good balance would help to make it sound more expressive. Also, as this piece presents a wide range of dynamics from *pianississimo* to *fortissimo*, students are encouraged to experiment in producing diverse dynamic levels.

Prelude in G Minor, No. 16

This prelude utilizes a great deal of chromaticism and ties over beats. It is written in 12/8 time, counting four beats per bar, so that each beat has three eighth notes. In the beginning, the left hand mostly plays pairs of descending dotted quarter notes, playing a note on every beat, while the first note of the pair is often prolonged to two beats as a dotted half note. On the other

hand, the right hand utilizes ties that go into every beat. As a result, the left-hand plays on the beats, with the right hand following. This texture is similar to the Prelude No. 8, which also had ties going into the beat. Both the right hand and left hand display chromaticism frequently. This is seen in the constant half-step relationships in the melody and also in the left hand with the prolonged half notes descending by half step. This piece is monothematic, as the chromatic theme appears throughout the prelude except in mm. 12-13. As the music moves toward the middle section (m. 7), there is a chromatic line in the outer voices in contrary motion. Starting from measure 9 on, the role of each hand is reversed after a short transition in measure 8, where the function of each hand becomes ambiguous, with octaves in both hands. Now the right hand plays chromatic ascending chords on every beat, and the left hand displays the tied eighth note as seen in the right hand in the beginning of the prelude (Fig. 3.35).



Figure 3.35- Prelude in G Minor, mm. 5-12

In measure 14, the rhythm becomes more complex. The right hand resumes the tied rhythm in full seventh chords, and the left hand plays duplets on each beat that leap through a wide range of the keyboard. The use of duplets was foreshadowed in the right hand in the previous two measures (mm. 12-13) where the time signature also shifts to 4/4 momentarily (Fig. 3.35). An accented chromatic descending line on irregular beats in mm. 14-15 also contributes to the rhythmic complexity of this section (Fig. 3.36).



Figure 3.36- Prelude in G Minor, mm. 13-18

The complexity of the rhythm and the loud dynamic, *fortissimo*, make for a dramatic climax. Glière drives the music forward even more with an *accelerando* and a descending chromatic bass line in the left hand, then a tempo change to *Più mosso* in measure 18 (Fig. 3.36). Under the faster tempo, an even broader range of the keyboard is used and finally, the music reaches an *Allegro* tempo for the final three bars. This comes in stark contrast to the beginning of the piece which is marked *Moderato*. The last three bars of the prelude highlight a long chromatic line in the left hand descending from F to B over a G pedal point.

One should use pedal carefully since the piece uses a great deal of chromaticism and ties over beats. As in the other preludes, Glière uses drastic dynamic changes within a short period of time to achieve dramatic results. Therefore, careful attention to frequent dynamic changes is necessary. Because of its use of a wide range of the keyboard and thick texture, and its driving character, strong octave and chord technique would be required from performers. The passages consisting of series of octaves moving chromatically in big intervals require an advanced degree of virtuosity from pianists.

Prelude in G# Minor, No. 18

This piece is written in ternary form: A (mm. 1-8), B (mm. 9-20) and A' (mm. 21-26) and is monothematic. Different from the previous two preludes discussed in this paper, it begins in a *forte* dynamic right away, and stays mostly in a loud dynamic range throughout the prelude. It also involves a great deal of octave displacement in the left hand and chromaticism in the right hand as seen in the Prelude in G Minor, No. 16. However, the skips in the left hand become more challenging in this prelude with the use of dotted rhythms in a fast tempo. The dotted rhythm in the left hand develops into sixteenth notes that spell ascending broken chords in mm. 5-8, highlighting the harmonies. The bass notes move chromatically in every beat throughout the A section while the right hand almost always plays thick chords with sixteenth notes, often moving by half step. In the beginning of the prelude, the right hand plays a melody that contains a series of three chromatic descending sixteenth note chords each preceded by a sixteenth note rest (Fig. 3.37).



Figure 3.37- Prelude in G# Minor, mm. 3-6

In the B section, there is a dialogue between the hands; the roles of each hand in the A section are now altered and exchanged throughout measures 9-14. The dotted rhythm feature of the left hand in the A section appears in the right hand playing thick chords in mm. 9, 11, and 13 while the left hand takes on the dotted rhythms in mm. 10, 12, and 14. The notes in the left hand in mm. 9 and 13 appear in the following measures in the right hand in mm. 10 and 14, respectively (Fig. 3.38). The right-hand chromatic descending melody with a rest from the beginning of the prelude appears in the left hand throughout the B section.



Figure 3.38- Prelude in G# Minor, mm. 9-14

In the return of the A section, each hand takes its original role. The progression of broken chords used in mm. 5-8 in the left hand comes back in mm. 21-24. In the last two bars, the left hand takes on the chromatic descending melody as the music fades away.

This piece requires great virtuosity with its fast tempo and thickly textured chords that often move in big intervals. Performers would have to invest a great deal of time and effort to master this piece. Practicing in a milder tempo and keeping the hands close to the keyboard would be helpful for accuracy. One should strive for a more transparent sound despite the thick texture and broad dynamic range of this piece.

Prelude in B♭ Major, No. 21

This prelude is written in 3/4 time and in ternary form: A (mm. 1-32), B (mm. 33-55) and A' (mm. 56-106). It is monothematic as the same melody is used in all sections; in order to counteract this, Glière varies the textures in different sections. The right hand consists of a melody with thick chords and the left hand contains busy arpeggiated quintuplet accompaniment. Over two bars in mm. 1-6, the left hand travels through a wide range of the keyboard, often over two octaves, while the melody in the right hand moves linearly (Fig. 3.39). The style of figurations that rise and fall over two octaves resemble the left hand accompaniment of the prelude in B♭ Major, Op. 23, No. 2 (Fig. 3.40) and the prelude in G Minor, Op. 23, No. 5 by Rachmaninoff (Fig. 3.41).

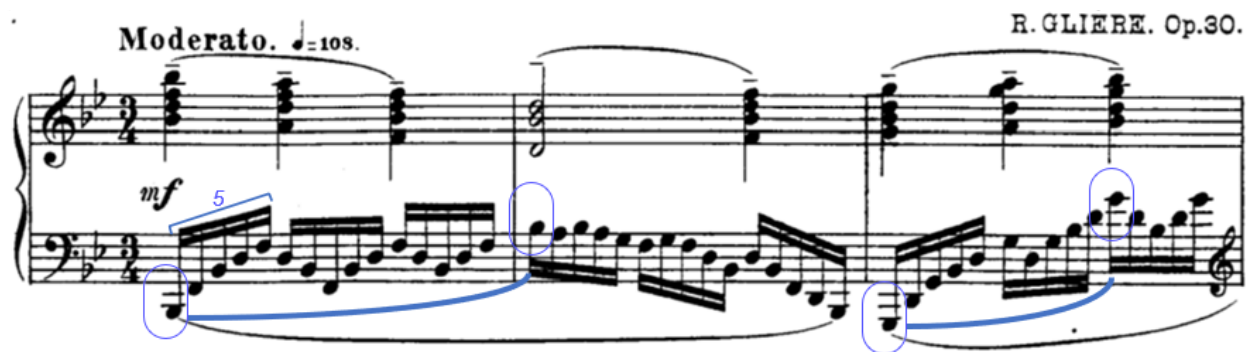


Figure 3.39- Prelude in B♭ Major, mm. 1-3

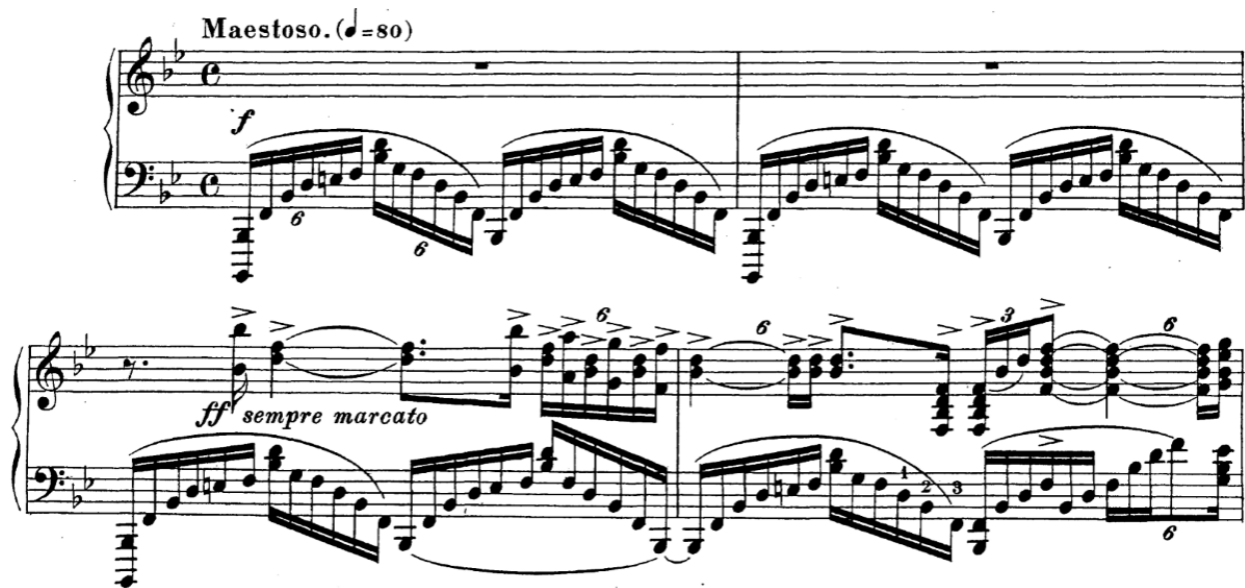


Figure 3.40- Rachmaninoff's Prelude in B $\flat$ Major, Op. 23, No.2, mm. 1-4



Figure 3.41- Rachmaninoff's Prelude in G Minor, Op. 23, No.5, mm. 35-36

In the middle section of the prelude starting from measure 33, the texture becomes thinner and the movement becomes calmer, but still the same melody appears. This is a harmonically unstable section, and key changes happen frequently. The left hand features triplet arpeggios and the right hand has the melody mostly with single notes in a lower register. In some cases, for example, in mm. 34 and 42, the left hand takes on a chromatic descending line and the accompanimental pattern is played by the right hand (Fig. 3.42).

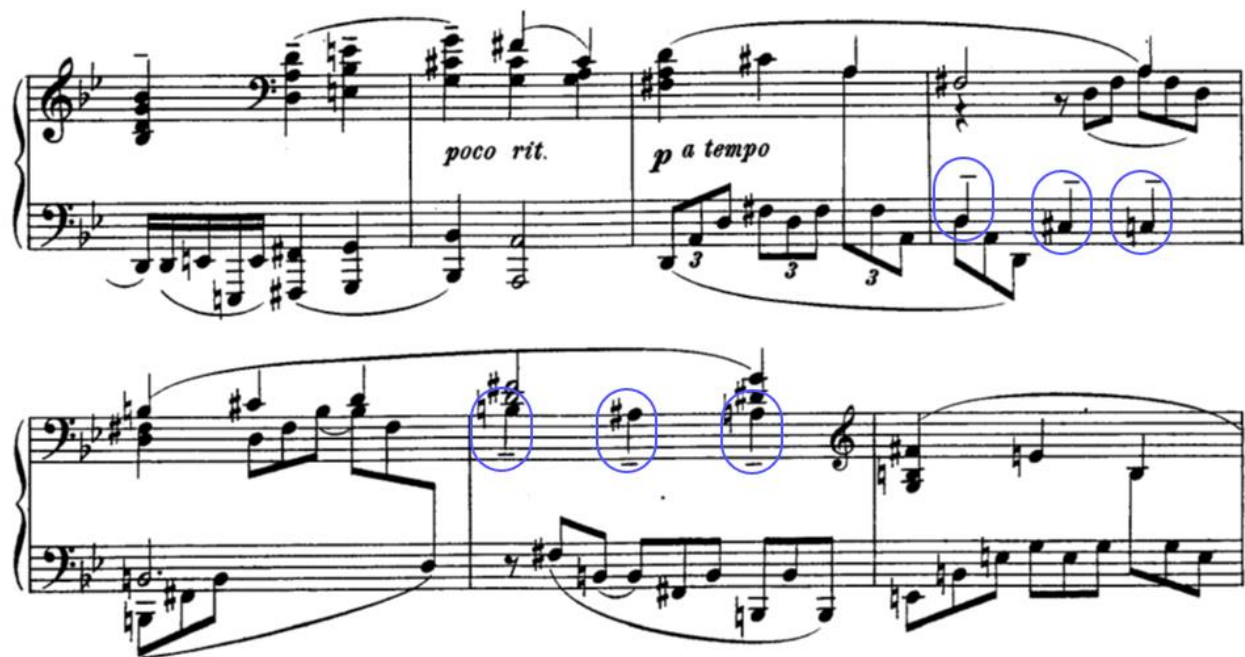


Figure 3.42- Prelude in B $\flat$ Major, mm. 31-37

In the return of the A section in m. 56, the main theme becomes more dramatic with a louder dynamic *forte*, and the use of accents on melodic descending notes in the left hand in mm. 57, 59 and 63. Starting from m. 72 on, in the *fortissimo* climax of the piece, the melody is played an octave higher with accents appearing more frequently in the left hand (Fig. 3.43).

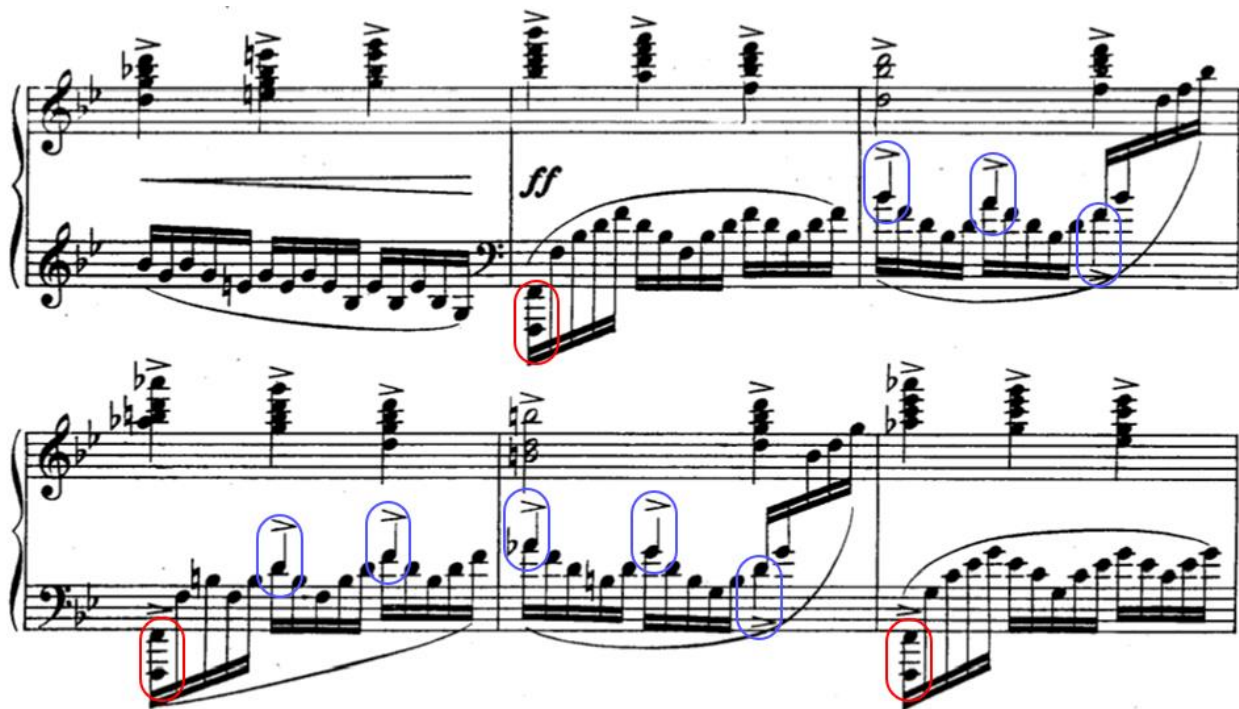


Figure 3.43- Prelude in B $\flat$ Major, mm. 71-76

Glière extends the return of the A section by using fragments of the melody over and over again with a dominant pedal on F over measures 72-88 before finally resolving to the tonic and bringing back the main theme in m. 89 (Fig. 3.44). Gradually, the dynamic level decreases towards the end of the piece until the music finally reaches *pianissimo* following the parallel sixth chords that bring the prelude to a close.



Figure 3.44- Prelude in B $\flat$ Major, mm. 77-88

Good finger work will be required to play the fast arpeggios in the left hand. However, one should keep it mind that it functions as accompaniment and therefore play the notes evenly and softly to bring out the melody in the right hand and the melodic accents of the left hand. Although the right hand has thick block chords, one should voice the melody line and avoid playing percussively by phrasing well and pressing the keys slowly with preparation. In the

middle section, one should be careful not to play slower, but still keep the tempo. As the left hand travels through a broad range of the keyboard, relaxation and circulation of the wrist and elbow is essential.

Prelude in B $\flat$ Minor, No. 22

This prelude is written in ternary form: A (mm. 1-8), B (mm. 9-16) and A' (mm. 17-27). It is a short prelude, but at the same time it is passionate and powerful. This piece is similar to the Prelude in G $\sharp$ Minor, No. 18 with its driving character and texture and the types of sound combinations played by each hand. It also begins in a loud dynamic, *forte*. This piece doesn't involve larger leaps as often as in No. 18, but still has a few places of quick displacement, mostly at the end of each bar going into the next bar with intervals of a fourth in the left hand.

This piece is monothematic. The left hand plays the main theme of chromatically descending octave notes while the right hand plays sixteenth note chords throughout. In the right hand, a secondary melody line tends to appear on the first and the last notes of four sixteenth note chords, often involving fast octave leaps. The A section is full of tonic pedal points on B $\flat$, whereas in the B section, the music becomes harmonically unstable, a tendency of Glière's preludes in general (Fig. 3.45).



Figure 3.45- Prelude in B $\flat$ Minor, mm. 1-4

The B section begins in a soft dynamic, pianissimo, in the middle register. The left hand plays the descending chromatic line in single notes instead of octaves, and the right hand remains similar to the A section texture. The left hand eventually expands again to octaves in m. 12 and the chromatic descending line returns in m. 13. From measures 13 to 16, the right hand now rises, playing over a three-octave range in every bar with the left hand mirroring the melody note an eighth note behind. Over the four bars of the B section, the harmonies ascend chromatically toward the dominant and the return of the A section: D - E $\flat$ - F $\flat$ - F (Fig. 3.46).

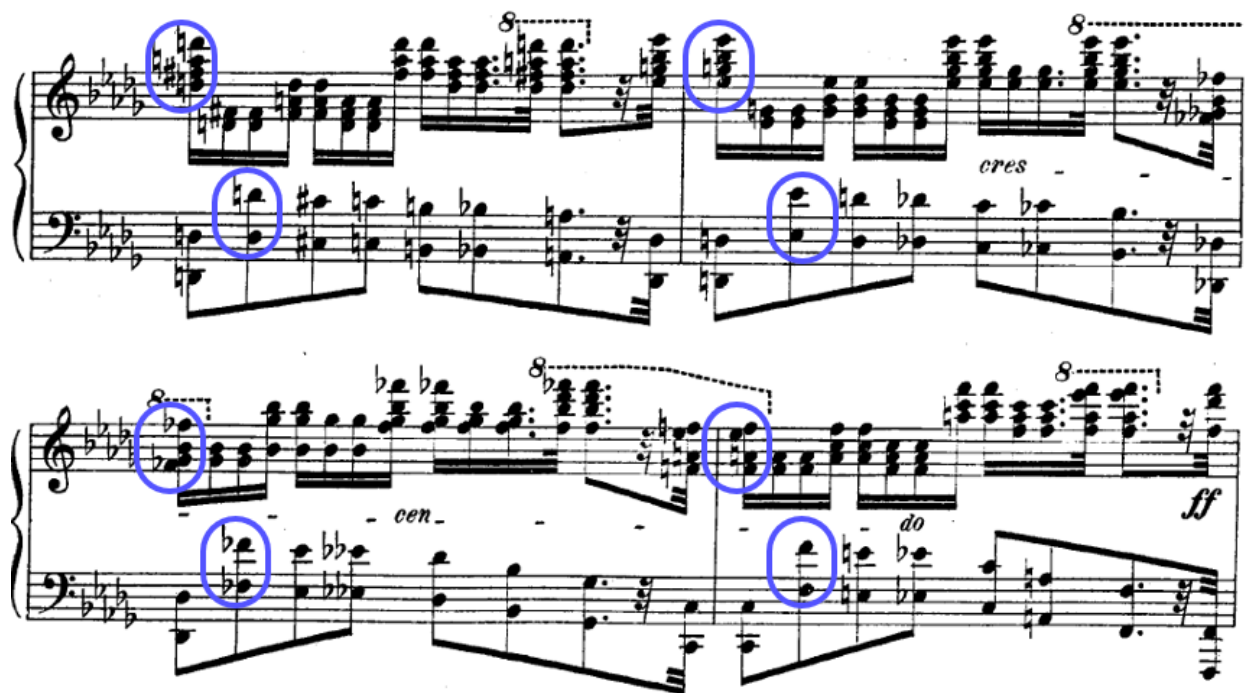


Figure 3.46- Prelude in B $\flat$ Minor, mm. 13-16

Finally, the right hand arrives an octave higher than the beginning of the prelude and the main theme returns. In mm. 19-20, the movement of the left hand is changed to arpeggiated notes, instead of the chromaticism so prevalent throughout the rest of the prelude. Both hands play linearly in parallel motion (Fig. 3.47). From m. 21 to the end of the piece, the chromatic line returns. In the last four measures, this chromatic line is repeated and descends over four octaves to the close of the prelude.



Figure 3.47- Prelude in B $\flat$ Minor, mm. 19-20

The most important pedagogical issue to deal with is the striking rhythm of a thirty second note followed by sixteenth notes, which often involves large leaps in the beginning of phrases. This can be accomplished by throwing one's arms at the notes while remaining relaxed. This technical aspect is similar to the beginning of Beethoven's last piano sonata in C Minor, where the left hand plays large leaps after thirty second notes (Fig. 3.48). Practicing in a slower tempo would be helpful to place one's hands correctly after the large leaps. Relaxation is crucial to play repeated notes in a loud dynamic. As this piece covers a broad range of the keyboard and requires virtuosity and stamina, a mature performer would be better able to handle its technical challenges.



Figure 3.48- Beethoven's Piano Sonata in C Minor, Op. 111, No. 32, mm. 1-5

Prelude in B Major, No. 23

This is a very soft, calm and peaceful piece. It is mysterious for its soft dynamic, unclear form and rhythmic structure. It is written in 3/4 time, but with ties at the end of almost every bar, it is hard to recognize the time as 3/4. This short prelude uses the same melody throughout but is

varied with different chord progressions. The melody is introduced through a four-measure phrase and the same melody is repeated six times with each phrase starting on a lower pitch, before the music finally arrives with both hands moving to the bass clef register in the final phrase. The music already begins in *pianissimo* dynamic, but it gets even softer with a *diminuendo* to *pianississimo*.

The four-measure phrases in this prelude do not end on a traditional perfect cadence. There is no strong resolution of dominant to tonic in this whole prelude, which is unusual for Glière, who emphasizes a strong dominant to tonic resolution in transitions and endings in other preludes. Whenever the phrase is repeated, the ending is slightly different. The first time, it ends with a minor chord on the third scale degree (mm. 3-4), whereas the second time it ends with a fully diminished seventh chord (mm. 7-8) resolving to a tonic chord, and the third phrase ends with a dominant seventh chord unusually resolving to a minor subdominant chord in mm. 11-12. The fourth phrase begins in the Neapolitan, C Major, before ending on an augmented chord. The final phrase ends on a leading tone to tonic resolution, not the typical perfect authentic that is expected (Fig. 3.49).

№ 23.

Adagio. ♩ = 63.

pp una corda

dim. *pp* *dim.*

rit. *a tempo* *ppp*

Figure 3.49- Prelude in B Major

It will be hard to keep a soft dynamic throughout this prelude and make the dynamic even softer toward the end with *pianississimo*, because it already begins with *pianissimo* and because

of the use of the *una corda* pedal. Performers should make the sound disappear gradually. A slow attack of each chord will help to create a soft dynamic and to voice the thick chords.

Prelude in B Minor, No. 24

This prelude is monothematic and played almost entirely with octaves in both hands. Glière uses lots of chromaticism and especially tritone intervals regularly. Leaps of a tritone happen frequently in mm. 1, 3, 9, 11 in the right hand, within a five-note motive (Fig. 3.50).



Figure 3.50- Prelude in B Minor, mm. 1-3

Similar to the Prelude in B Major, No. 23, this piece doesn't end with a traditional dominant to tonic cadence. Toward the end, a chromatic ascending line moves toward the dominant in mm. 28-29, but then three inner melody and bass notes marked *pesante* in mm. 29-30 interrupt and end the prelude with a final cadence that includes a D major to B open fifth resolution. As previously mentioned, this is unusual in this set of preludes that typically include strong dominant to tonic resolutions (Fig. 3.51).



Figure 3.51- Prelude in B Minor, mm. 27-30

As this piece utilizes considerable chromaticism and linear movement, one should use pedal carefully paying close attention to the harmonic changes. Because of its short length, it would be a good preparation piece for Chopin's Etude Op. 25, No. 10 in the same key, which focuses on playing octaves that involve chromaticism (Fig. 3.52).

Allegro con fuoco ($\text{♩} = 72$) Op. 25 Nr 10

22

Figure 3.52- Chopin's Etude in B Minor, Op. 25, No. 10, mm. 1-2

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

This study has provided an analysis of Reinhold Glière's Three Mazurkas, Op. 29 and selected pieces from the Twenty-Five Preludes, Op. 30. Although Glière was an influential musician in his time in Russia, his musical career as a composer has been overlooked, particularly in regard to his small-scale compositions. In addition, his piano compositions have not been performed often. My study of Glière's piano pieces aspires to fill in these gaps and introduce a broader discussion on his compositions, in particular his Romantic musical writing.

A brief explanation of the mazurka in general demonstrates how Glière's mazurkas fit within the genre. Glière makes his mazurkas unique through irregular phrase structure, extending phrases by repeating a fragment of a melody, unexpected harmonic progressions and silence. He also makes the set unified by gradually introducing a complex multilayered texture and, more importantly, experimenting with irregular phrase structure as the mazurkas progress.

An analysis of selected preludes has yielded a number of insights about Glière's piano writing. Overall, Glière's music is basically tonal, but he frequently utilizes chromaticism. With respect to the melodic content, usually each composition is based on a single motive that appears throughout the entire composition and undergoes alteration and development by varying the texture and the inventive use of key relations and chromaticism.

Glière's preludes achieve a highly expressive sound, through lyrical and linear melodic lines and attractive harmonic progressions that are often enriched by chromaticism. The preludes also display a great deal of virtuosity through fast arpeggiated passages, repeated chords, and octave leaps over a wide range of the keyboard.

Glière's piano music, especially his preludes, requires a considerable amount of pianistic virtuosity, as the music consistently calls for the use of extreme dynamics and registers and incorporates technically demanding passages. Despite the fact that the overall level of difficulty of Glière's works is advanced, his piano works can be used as supplementary material next to those of other virtuosic composers such as Chopin and Rachmaninoff.

My project will hopefully contribute to the field of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Russian romantic piano repertoire. Together with my project recital, this paper should be a useful resource for others who want to become acquainted with the music as my analysis explains the pieces and their performance issues. I hope that this study will motivate more pianists to acquaint themselves with Glière's Three Mazurkas, Op. 29 and Twenty-Five Preludes, Op. 30 and schedule them in their recitals; also, that more teachers will include his works both as learning material and concert repertoire for their students.

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APPENDIX A: PROJECT RECITAL PROGRAM

DOCTORAL PROJECT RECITAL

Yunhee Kim, *Piano*

May 15, 2020

2:00pm

Reinhold Glière
(1875-1956)

Three Mazurkas, Op. 29 (1906)

Mazurka in B Minor, No. 1

Mazurka in A $\flat$ Major, No. 2

Mazurka in B $\flat$ Minor, No. 3

Twenty-Five Preludes, Op. 30 (1907)

Prelude in C Major, No. 1

Prelude in D $\flat$ Major, No. 3

Prelude in C $\sharp$ Minor, No. 4

Prelude in D Minor, No. 6

Prelude in E $\flat$ Major, No. 7

Prelude in E $\flat$ Minor, No. 8

Prelude in F Major, No. 11

Prelude in F $\sharp$ Minor, No. 14

Prelude in G Major, No. 15

Prelude in G Minor, No. 16

Prelude in G $\sharp$ Minor, No. 18

Prelude in B $\flat$ Major, No. 21

Prelude in B $\flat$ Minor, No. 22

Prelude in B Major, No. 23

Prelude in B Minor, No. 24

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a doctorate degree in Piano Performance and Literature. Yunhee Kim is a student of Professor Ian Hobson, and her research advisor is Professor Christos Tsitsaros. Committee members include Professor William Heiles and Charlotte Mattax Moersch.