A PEDAGOGICAL ANALYSIS OF PROKOFIEV’S

*MUSIQUE D’ENFANTS*, OPUS 65

A DISSERTATION

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Bringing students out of the piano method books and into the realm of intermediate literature is a very daunting task. If a teacher assigns repertoire and does not provide the student with the proper mental and technical tools needed to be successful, the student may not develop the proper technique and physical touch required to achieve a proper sound or facility around the piano. It is also possible that the student will not develop the ability to listen efficiently or to discover components of the music without help. It is for these reasons that piano instructors are constantly searching for musically and technically rich, appealing repertoire at the intermediate level, and for suggestions on how to teach it.

Frances Clark, whose philosophy of teaching influenced and formed the basis of piano pedagogy programs around the country, said that it takes three things to be a successful piano teacher: knowing what to teach, knowing how to teach, and knowing why we teach.\(^1\) Knowing why we teach is mostly a personal conviction, but knowing what and how to teach are both large facets of study in the field of piano pedagogy.

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Commenting on how to teach, Frances Clark stated that teachers should not be running a "house of corrections." This means that a piano teacher should not send a student off each week with a new piece that has not been previously reviewed together, only for the student to come back the following week to have the teacher correct all of the mistakes. Rather, the teacher should preview each piece with a student before they take it home; exposing any difficult passages or skills not yet learned so that the student is set up for success and can come back the following week with a more accomplished performance.

Technique includes knowledge that the way the student’s hands touch the keys of the piano is directly related to the sound that they will get out of the piano. This principle applies to the issue of technique as well as musicality. Teachers should also be aware that technique includes strong finger strength with a relaxed arm and wrist. Menahem Pressler, soloist and pianist of the world-renowned Beaux Arts Trio, firmly believes in a relaxed arm coupled with strong fingers and a maintained hand arch so that the "performer can support and apply the weight of the relaxed arm." By having a firm hand structure and a flexible wrist, the hand is able to create warm, rich, and non-percussive sounds. This technique also promotes hand health, agility, and long melodic lines. The health of the hand is extremely important and the relaxed wrist allows the hand to be free from tension. When the wrist is loose and it can be used to ‘lead’ the hand around the keyboard, this helps with agility. This technique encourages long melodic lines and a legato touch that is paramount in playing warm, rich melodies.

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Tone color is another important aspect for the piano player. Menahem Pressler has said, “Harmonies are to the ear as a kaleidoscope is to the eyes.” He also said, “Be a painter. A tremendous palette of colors is needed, so the hands must be sometimes loose and light, at other times very strong and forceful. Sometimes very slow attacks, as if stroking the keys; other times, very sharp attacks.” Color can be encouraged in a student by using vivid pictures to describe sections of music and by encouraging students to create their own images and pictures while playing. Color can also come from the dynamics within a piece. Dynamics give indication to more than just volume, they show emotion. The young student should use titles, words, and pictures to help create a story.

Carefully selecting repertoire in a graded fashion speaks to knowing what to teach. If the ultimate goal of learning to play the piano is to have the student play advanced piano repertoire written by master composers, then the teacher needs to consider how to get the student to that goal. This includes tapping into the creativity it takes to preview a piece of music with a student so that good technique, consistent style, and control of musical lines are properly developed, all while respecting the integrity and intent of the composer. Proper selection of graded repertoire on the teacher’s part has the potential to develop the proper technique and physical touch required to attain a proper sound or facility around the piano, as well as to motivate and inspire a student to achieve.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to provide a comprehensive study guide, addressing pedagogical elements, to accompany Sergei Prokofiev’s *Musiques d’Enfants: Twelve*

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3 Brown, 75-76.
Easy Pieces, Op. 65 for solo piano. This study focuses on how the use of Prokofiev’s Music for Children, Op.65 prepares students for the composer’s more advanced repertoire using his self-described five compositional “lines” in his autobiography. The study also explores the pedagogical importance of each piece and an effective way to prepare students for learning them. Various melodic, rhythmic, and technical exercises are suggested to offer teachers ways to teach fundamental performing principles and to offer students creative exercises and activities to achieve technical fluency. Dynamics, tempo, character, and other stylistic aspects are covered. This study will also show that the Op. 65 collection is appropriate for intermediate-level pianists.

Chapter one explores the need for the study, definitions of terms, the three time periods of Prokofiev’s compositional output, and the characteristics of his compositional style. Chapter two contains a review of related literature and Prokofiev’s editions. Chapter three includes the method of investigation and discusses Prokofiev’s Music for Children, Op. 65, with teaching suggestions for technical and musical concerns. Chapter four offers a conclusion, implementation of the study, and recommendations for further study.

**Need for the Study**

There are many benefits in studying the music of Sergei Prokofiev. First, there is a need for students to play Prokofiev’s repertoire for the aesthetic joy it brings. Prokofiev once said, “The music we compose must be, first and foremost, great music, that is, music in which both the idea and its technical execution correspond to the sweep of the
One of the reasons Prokofiev’s music has endured popularity is due to its rich abundance of melody, clarity of form, lyricism, and his inclusion of a wide array of human emotions, including humor and mockery. This clear, unwavering devotion to melodic presence comes from his interest in the classics. In many ways, Prokofiev’s music is different from any music composed before it (prior to 1918), yet it does not totally abandon tradition simply for creating something original. This allows listeners the pleasure of hearing something that they already understand aurally, adding a refreshing quality at the same time. Dmitri Kabalevsky describes Prokofiev’s appeal as having “An optimistic attitude towards life, unbridled energy and, at the same time, a most poetic lyricism and an inexhaustible wealth of melody and perfection of artistic form—all these features determine the power and appeal of Prokofiev’s music, which is uniquely individual as well as an organic development of Russian classical music.”

Second, Prokofiev’s music exposes pianists to a variety of different colors, textures, and dynamic demands. Menahem Pressler, one of the greatest teacher/performers of the last century describes Prokofiev’s piano music as “exciting.” He goes on to say that, “the special colors of folk tunes and marches and many playful elements” can be seen in his works. The contributions of Prokofiev’s piano sonatas to the piano literature “reflect his varied moods from romantic to rhythmic and percussive. I feel his music is incomparable.”

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6 Blok, 15.
7 Brown, 216.
A third reason for the importance of studying Prokofiev’s music is in the fact that he, himself, was a “marvelous pianist and a perfect illustrator of his own theories.” Prokofiev demonstrated a new way to think about playing the piano: as a percussion instrument. In addition to his already diverse stylistic palette, he also performed his works with an enthusiastic and intense percussive, metallic-sounding tone. His approach to the piano was revolutionary.

Although playing Op. 65 prepares young students for further study of Prokofiev’s piano works, it also serves as a pedagogical purpose that can stand on its own. The *Musique d’Enfants* collection provides a vast array of technical, musical, and interpretive issues that help students progress in their performance skills. It offers many different challenges for the young pianist to experience that improve general piano skills, including hand crossings, using a wide range of the piano, voicing, wrist rotation, sophisticated pedaling, contrasting articulation, balance between the hands and within the hand, and the juxtaposition of a number of these skills, to name a few.

What is needed is a comprehensive study guide, addressing pedagogical elements to accompany Prokofiev’s *Music for Children* collection that helps teachers to preview each piece with students so that they might be more successful in their preparation and learning of these pieces. This current study is intended to serve as a pedagogical precursor to Prokofiev’s other works and one that introduces younger students to experience Prokofiev and to wet their palettes for further study on this composer. There

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9 Schonberg, 414.
are currently no studies on Prokofiev’s intermediate-level solo piano work *Musique d’Enfants* Op.65.

**Definition of Terms**

1. **Piano Pedagogy** – The study of teaching piano with musical, technical, and psychological considerations.

2. **Intermediate Repertoire/Literature** - The collection *Musique d’Enfants* Op.65 is considered intermediate-level repertoire in this study. A student would be ready to play the pieces in this collection after acquiring the requisite musical and technical skills offered through completing level 4 of any standard American piano method book; playing Clementi’s *Sonatinas*, Op. 36 or Burgmuller’s 25 *Progressive Pieces*, Op. 100 or Bach’s easier *Two-Part Inventions*; or after the student has assimilated the following skills: use of chords in both hands, ability to play different hand positions and tonalities, frequent and overlapping pedal changes with attention to careful voicing and clarity, ostinato patterns against simple melodic patterns, thick textures in both hands, increased keyboard range and mobility, faster tempos, perceiving and hearing thin-textured passages with long melodic lines, and contrasting articulation within each hand and between the hands.

3. **Compositional Line** – A term selected by Prokofiev himself to describe the various categories used in his compositions. These lines include classical (neo-

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classical and eighteenth century practices), modern (Prokofiev’s own harmonic language and emotion), toccata (rhythmic, motoric element), lyrical (thoughtful and meditative mood, long melodies), and grotesque (scherzo, whimsicality, laughter, mockery).

**Biographical Outline of Sergei Prokofiev**

**The Early Years (1891-1918)**

To understand the implications of this collection, it is important to understand Prokofiev’s life and background. Prokofiev grew up living in a small village in Russia where he was secluded from cultural activities. His mother was an amateur pianist and was his sole source of contact to music during his formative years. She taught him to play the piano and exposed him to traditional repertoire, such as Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven and Chopin. Prokofiev spoke highly of his mother’s natural teaching ability, saying, “Mother had pedagogical talent. Unobtrusively, she guided me and explained how to use the instrument.” His mother wanted him to develop a love for music and for the piano, so she consulted the young Prokofiev on what repertoire he would like to play, choosing only compositions that were short and beautiful. Once he learned these compositions, he was encouraged to transpose them into different keys. His mother also limited her son’s practice time each day until he was old enough, in her opinion, to handle more. It is also noted that Prokofiev’s mother did not want to squelch his natural, early enthusiasm by forcing him to constantly practice technical exercises; instead, she chose to focus more on

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These early experiences proved to be the backbone of his musical language as he matured as a composer.

In 1904, Prokofiev was admitted to the St. Petersburg Conservatory. His teachers included Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Alexander Glazunov, Anatoly Lyadov, and Nikolai Tcherepnin. These mentors affirmed his childhood exposure to Viennese classics. Many were not accepting of experimental compositions that deviated from conservative tastes. It was not until 1908 that Prokofiev began attending Evenings of Modern Music, a progressive concert series of contemporary music. He was later asked to bring his own compositions to be performed and was encouraged to write more daringly.\(^{15}\)

Prokofiev’s style during this early period resembles that of the Classical period. One author describes Prokofiev’s compositional style at this point as classic, manifested through his use of forms, rhythm, and texture.\(^{16}\) His harmonic idiom is described by a clear and simple use of basic chords united with incidental and transition chords.\(^{17}\)

**The United States and Paris (1918-1934)**

In 1918, Prokofiev left Russia due to Revolutionary chaos, which began a year earlier. He moved to the United States for a short period and then moved to Paris in 1923, the world’s center for new music. His compositional style during this time was more modern and experimental than before. He was trying new things as an artist and he wanted to keep up with how quickly the world’s tastes were changing.\(^{18}\) His

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\(^{15}\) Berman, 3.

\(^{16}\) Nestyev, 60.

\(^{17}\) Nestyev, 61.

\(^{18}\) Berman, 6.
compositional pursuit during this time was “innovation in general, the quest for new sounds and harmonies, the creation of an original music unlike anything known theretofore.” In an American interview, Prokofiev stated, “The cardinal virtue (or, if you like, vice) of my life has always been the search for originality, for my own musical language. I hate imitation, I hate hackneyed methods. I do not want to wear anyone else’s mask. I want always to be myself.”

The first five years of this so-called “foreign period” took place in the United States. Prokofiev was able to complete, revise, and publish many compositions that he had begun while still in Russia. His reception in America was not all positive, as the dramatic nature of Prokofiev’s writing style shocked Western audiences.

Prokofiev’s move to Paris was timely, since he had already made a name for himself there. However, over the course of his stay in Paris, he experienced his least creative and least productive period. Between 1909 and 1919, Prokofiev produced thirty-four opuses, but between 1924 and 1934, he produced only twenty opus numbers, with many of these consisting of duplications, revisions and rearrangements of old compositions. This period in his writing is most likely due to a shift in the Parisian art world. Composition began to be about what was new or novel and created a “tendency toward pseudo-innovation.” Changes in musical taste not only included innovation for innovation’s sake, but it also included a move toward subjectivity. The composer’s reality was more important than a general reality.

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19 Nestyev, 123.
20 Nestyev, 98.
During Prokofiev’s time abroad, he had learned everything he could about Western contemporary music, enough for him to decide that it was “pointless, without a future, and utterly devoid of content.”\(^{21}\) After the year 1934, Prokofiev’s compositional output took a sharp turn. He began traveling to Russia and took much new artistic interest and inspiration from Soviet life. It was during this reconnection with his roots that his compositional output became more clearly defined and purposeful.

During the summer and early fall of 1935, Prokofiev stayed in a tiny bungalow on the River Oka at the house of artist Vasily Polenov. He spent much time composing and playing with his children. Prokofiev and his two sons often spent their days playing volley-ball, tennis, and swimming in the river.\(^{22}\) It was a highly prolific summer for Prokofiev. He worked on *Romeo and Juliet*, a second violin concerto, and it was there that he completed the twelve pieces of *Musique d’Enfants* (Music for Children) Op. 65. Prokofiev was amused by the attention and affection that his colleagues gave to his sons. He even allowed his youngest son, Oleg, then aged seven, to sit in silence at the same desk and draw while his father composed.\(^{23}\) It is easy to see how the inspiration for these twelve pieces may have come from these summer days at Polenovo, as well as a return to his native country, filled with fond memories of his childhood.

**Return to Russia (1936-1953)**

After many visits to Russia, in 1936 Prokofiev finally moved back to his homeland, against many of his friend’s urgings. Some believe he expected a warm

\(^{21}\) Nestyev, 121.
welcome and to be treated as well as he was upon his many previous visits, but the timing of his return was unfortunate. At this time, the editorial “Muddle Instead of Music” was published. The document condemned Shostakovich’s opera, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. The bourgeois were demanding that composers cater to their tastes in music and Stalin began his most terrible purges during 1937-1938. Political attacks on composers, including Prokofiev, included accusations of “formalism.” The term means a “tendency to exaggerate the formal aspect of a work of art at the expense of its content.” It was just ambiguous enough to include the tastes of the elite, but it eventually meant that composers could not use dissonances or complex polyphony, and they must include a melody that could be remembered immediately. Offending composers, including Prokofiev, could not have their music performed in public. Prokofiev was well aware of his surroundings and the political implications for his writings. As a result, his general compositional output during his return to Russia was more melodious, less dissonant, and less pointed. In 1948, he wrote an article justifying his use of harmonic exploration. He explains, “In some of my work during the last year you will find isolated moments of atonality. While I had no sympathy for this kind of thing, I nevertheless made use of it in order that the value of tonal writing might be brought out all the more strongly by the effect of contrast.” The years following his return to Russia are considered his most productive period and he is thought to have reached compositional maturity at this time as well.

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25 Berman, 19.
26 Berman, 19.
Another catastrophic event happened during Prokofiev’s years back in Russia, World War II. Russia entered the war in 1941. This was especially devastating for Russians because the Soviet leadership had just signed a non-aggression pact with Germany in 1939. When German troops invaded the country, the Soviet people were completely shocked and saddened.28 Prokofiev died on March 5, 1953 at the age of 62.

**Compositional Characteristics of Prokofiev’s Solo Piano Music**

Although Prokofiev never taught piano lessons, his *Music for Children* is a wonderful pedagogical collection full of insight into the complexities of his more advanced solo piano repertoire. It is the only opus in Prokofiev’s oeuvre that is designed for the truly intermediate piano player. Each of the twelve pieces is rich in musical thought and musicianship and they help prepare students in developing a sense of Prokofiev’s compositional style. They can be perceived as a stripped-down version of his more difficult works.

Prokofiev wrote his *Autobiography* at the age of fifty. It includes an explanation of five categories or streams that he used for his musical compositions. These categories are referred to as “lines” and include classical, modern, toccata, lyrical and grotesque. Prokofiev explains these elements in his own words:

The first was the classical line, which could be traced back to my early childhood and the Beethoven sonatas I heard my mother play. This line takes sometimes a neo-classical form (sonatas, concertos), sometimes imitates the eighteenth century (gavottes, the ‘Classical’ Symphony, partly the Sinfonietta). The second line, the

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28 Berman, 17.
modern trend, begins with that meeting with Taneev when he reproached me for
the ‘crudeness’ of my harmonies. At first this took the form of a search for my
own harmonic language, developing later into a search for a language in which to
express powerful emotions (‘The Phantom’ in the Piano Pieces op.3, ‘Despair’
and ‘Suggestion diabolique’ in the op. 4 Piano Pieces, the Sarcasmes, the
Scythian Suite, a few of the songs op. 23, The Gambler, Seven, they are Seven, the
Quintet and the Second Symphony). Although this line covers harmonic language
mainly, it also includes new departures in melody, orchestration and drama. The
third line is the toccata, or ‘motor’ line, traceable perhaps to Schumann’s Toccata
which made a powerful impression on me when I first heard it (Etudes op. 2,
Toccata op. 11, the ‘Scherzo’ in the Piano Pieces op. 12, the Scherzo of the
Second concerto, the Toccata in the Fifth Concerto and also the repetitive
intensity of the melodic figures in the Scythian Suite, Le pas d’acier [The Age of
Steel] and passages in the Third Concerto). This line is perhaps the least
important. The fourth line is lyrical: it appears first as a thoughtful and meditative
mood, not always associated with the melody, or at any rate with long melody
(‘Fairy Tale’ in the Four Pieces for Piano op. 3, Dreams, Autumnal, the songs op.
9, the ‘Legend’ op. 12), sometimes partly contained in long melody (the two
Balmont choruses, the beginning of the First Violin Concerto, the songs to
Akhmatova’s poems, Grandmother’s Tales). This line was not noticed until much
later. For a long time I was given no credit for any lyrical gift whatever, and for
want of encouragement it developed slowly. But as time went on I gave more and
more attention to this aspect of my work.
I should like to limit myself to these four ‘lines’, and to regard the fifth, ‘grotesque’, line which some wish to ascribe to me as simply a deviation from the other lines. In any case I strenuously object to the very word ‘grotesque’ which has become hackneyed to the point of nausea. As a matter of fact the use of the French word ‘grotesque’ in this sense is a distortion of the meaning. I would prefer my music to be described as ‘scherzo-ish’ in quality, or else by three words describing various degrees of the scherzo-whimsicality, laughter, mockery.\footnote{Sergey Prokofiev, \textit{Soviet diary, 1927, and other writings}, trans. Oleg Prokofiev (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991), 248-249.}

In general, Prokofiev’s piano works show an inclination towards certain twentieth-century trends and rejection of others. Although he did not adopt atonality or make use of vague outlines of melody, he did incorporate neo-Classicism, neo-Romanticism, impressionism, expressionism, surrealism, mysticism, primitivism, futurism, folklorism, and socialist realism, which is to create music that is simple, optimistic, nationalistic, and that glorifies life in the Communist state.\footnote{Stephen Fiess, \textit{The Piano Works of Serge Prokofiev} (New Jersey and London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1994), 3.}

Performing the music of Prokofiev, specifically, requires the ability to create different sounds using different physical approaches. Often these different technical approaches are juxtaposed or used directly after one another. Prokofiev’s music often includes a percussive sound which is achieved by attacking the key with the entire arm. This offers a more metallic sound, one that is a must in Prokofiev’s music.

Clearly Prokofiev was influenced by various experiences and exposures throughout his life and travels that affected his compositional career. His Op. 65
composition lends itself well to pedagogical study of his other piano works due to the variety of different colors, textures, and dynamic demands present in the work.
CHAPTER 2

Review of Related Literature

Several books have been written to better understand the music of Prokofiev; however, there is not much offered that includes study guides that accompany his music. Furthermore, there is not a comprehensive study guide available to accompany Music for Children, Op. 65. This chapter explores the literature that exists on Prokofiev’s historical background and his compositions.

Harlow Robinson’s biography on Sergei Prokofiev provides a balance of information between Prokofiev’s life and his writing. Robinson’s book is both extremely insightful and interesting to read. The book discusses Prokofiev’s productive summer in Polenovo when Op. 65 was written and it also discusses the general style of that works. However, details, analysis, and performance practice regarding Op. 65 are not addressed.

Stephen Fiess wrote The Piano Works of Sergei Prokofiev. His book includes a chapter called “A pedagogical introduction to the piano works of Prokofiev.” The chapter breaks down Prokofiev’s piano works into four categories: works written for pedagogical use, advanced-intermediate-level works, advanced-level or concert works, and

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32 Fiess, Prokofiev.
transcriptions. *Music for Children*, Op. 65 is the only piece listed in the pedagogical works category. In the beginning of the next category, Fiess states that it is probable that some of Prokofiev’s other works were written partially with pedagogical intent, but that stylistically and technically they have more in common with Prokofiev’s other, more challenging works. Fiess briefly discusses each of the pieces comprising Op. 65 and includes various types of information. The chapters inconsistently identify technical or musical challenges, such as “introduces jump-bass” or “evokes a deeply sorrowful mood,” and theoretical information, such as “harmonic techniques…include clusters and added tones.” All of the information given is helpful, but it does not provide more than a few sentences per piece and it does not talk about how to approach the technical and musical challenges.

Author David Nice wrote *Prokofiev: From Russia to the West 1891-1935.* As the book implies, Nice covers Prokofiev’s life and musical career from birth until his move back to Russia. The final chapter offers some useful information on the details of Prokofiev’s stay at Polenovo during the summer of 1935. It details a typical day for Prokofiev composing and spending time with his children on the lake. The chapter also goes into more detail about the opus, mentioning some general skills the pianist must possess to play the collection.

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Simon Morrison’s *The People’s Artist: Prokofiev’s Soviet Years* serves as a continuation from where Nice left off.\(^{34}\) The book picks up in 1935 and continues until Prokofiev’s death in 1953. Although *Music for Children* is cursorily mentioned in this book, the events that surround the creation of the composition are included. Since Op. 65 was written between Prokofiev’s middle time period (his years abroad) and his final time period (his return to Russia), it is helpful to review the details of his life surrounding that summer of 1935.

Neil Minturn’s *The Music of Sergei Prokofiev* covers a broad range of mediums, including piano music, orchestral music, chamber music, concertos, and vocal music. The first chapter offers insight into Prokofiev’s “wrong note” writing and the interplay between wrong note and traditional compositional practices. It includes a concise biography and an in-depth discussion on the “two most important forces shaping Prokofiev’s musical and artistic life: tradition and innovation.”\(^{35}\)

Prokofiev was an avid diarist from the time he was a boy until about forty years old. His youngest son, Oleg, translated his *Soviet Diary, 1927, and Other Writings*.\(^{36}\) The introduction, written by Oleg, gives an overview of the writings found inside the diary and explains his father’s attitudes and intentions for writing. The diary section only covers Prokofiev’s thoughts from January to March of 1927, but the book also contains his *Autobiography*. The *Autobiography*, an invaluable resource, gives account to his childhood and the affect those years and experiences had on his compositions, and it also


\(^{35}\) Minturn, 2.

\(^{36}\) Prokofiev, *Soviet Diary*. 
includes his own description of compositional techniques included in his works. These five compositional “lines” are laid out and detailed with specific pieces for illustration.

Vladimir Blok’s *Sergei Prokofiev: materials, articles, interviews* of 1978 is helpful from a completely different point of view.\(^{37}\) The first group of essays are by Soviet composers writing about Prokofiev. The next group consists of articles, interviews, and notes concerning various aspects of Prokofiev’s life, works, and compositions. Sviatoslav Richter and Emil Gilels were two of the greatest pianists of the 20\(^{th}\) century who both knew Prokofiev and premiered his later sonatas. Both pianists wrote material about the composer that is included in this compilation. Richter’s article speaks on specific pieces as well as Prokofiev’s character and mannerisms. Gilels’ article, on the other hand, mostly remarks on memories of playing the composer’s own compositions for him, and Prokofiev’s responses to Gilels’ performances.

Karl Rasmussen wrote a book on Richter detailing his life as a pianist.\(^{38}\) The book includes a large section on Richter’s exposure to and knowledge of Prokofiev as man and as musician. No information is specifically given on Op. 65, but general information about the composer is useful; including, Richter’s thoughts about Prokofiev’s music as they were composed throughout the years.

Jung Hee Park’s dissertation, “A Performer’s Perspective: A Performance History and Analysis of Sergei Prokofiev’s Ten Piano Pieces, Op.12”\(^{39}\) offers insight into how

\(^{37}\) Blok, *Prokofiev.*


\(^{39}\) Jung Hee Park, “A Performer’s Perspective: A Performance History and Analysis of Sergei Prokofiev’s
performance practice has changed historically. Park includes an overview of Prokofiev’s style and compositional characteristics and then a historical account of his piano recordings and the recordings of other pianists throughout a number of generations. In the final chapter, Park gives attention to the character, form, and some technical aspects in each piece of Op. 12. The information given in the analysis chapter is similar to the intent of my study; however, I provide more detail concerning how to teach each piece as well.


Harumi Kurihara’s dissertation “Selected intermediate-level Solo Piano Music of Enrique Granados: A pedagogical analysis” provides the best model for this study. Kurihara offers pedagogical analysis on intermediate-level solo piano works with the intention of setting a foundation for studying more difficult Spanish music. Kurihara’s study has a similar intent to this study, except that the analysis in this study will fall within the parameters of one specific collection.

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Yunn Bing Tan’s dissertation “Teaching intermediate-level technical and musical skills through the study and performance of selected piano duos”\textsuperscript{41} serves to identify piano duo works from various musical periods that help develop technical skills and musical knowledge for intermediate-level piano students. Tan’s study takes the opposite approach of this study in that specific areas of technical and musical concern are identified and then selected piano duos are chosen to address these specific concerns.


**Prokofiev’s Editions**

It is important for teachers and students to find the edition(s) that most closely reflect the editorial wishes of the composer and that are not heavily marked with additional suggestions by an editor. It is for this reason that a section on Prokofiev’s editions is necessary in this study.


According to Grove Music Online, Prokofiev’s “principal publishers” include Boosey & Hawkes, EditionsRusses de Musique, Gutheil, Jürgenson, and Muzgiz. From this list, only one publisher currently offers a complete edition of Op.65: Boosey & Hawkes. Furthermore, only two publishers printed Op. 65 in the same year it was composed. Edition Russe de Musique and G. Schirmer claim 1935 publications of the opus; however, during World War II Boosey & Hawkes bought Editions Russes which held the rights to the works of Prokofiev and other prominent composers.

Since the original printing of Music for Children in 1935, many reprints have been made. There are only two complete sheet music editions of Op.65 that are available for purchase today; including G. Schirmer, and Boosey & Hawkes. Considering that Boosey & Hawkes bought the rights to one of the original publishers of Music for Children after World War II, that Boosey & Hawkes was also named as one of Prokofiev’s “principal publishers,” and that it is still in print today, the Boosey & Hawkes “authentic edition” will be used for the analysis in this dissertation.

It is strongly suggested that any reader of this document locate a score to use throughout the reading of this study. The musical examples used in the analysis portion in chapter 3 are specific to the corresponding points that are made. It will be very beneficial to see the entire score for broader concepts and points that are made.
CHAPTER 3

Methods and Pedagogical Analysis of Op. 65

Method of Investigation

Prokofiev wrote *Music for Children*, Op.65 in 1935. It is a collection of twelve pieces at the intermediate level and was the first of many compositions he wrote aimed specifically at an audience of children. Prokofiev especially loved fairy tales and used this attraction, coupled with a unique understanding of a child’s worldview, to compose famous children’s pieces that the world still loves today. The Op.65 collection exhibits elements of good children’s writing due to its simple, unexpected, and pictorial nature. It is well-known that Russian culture emphasizes an intense and indulgent love for children, and Prokofiev is no exception.43

Each piece in Op.65 has titles that are easy for children to understand, such as “Regrets,” “Parade of the Grasshoppers,” and “The Rain and the Rainbow.” The collection begins with “Morning” and ends with “Evening” and “The Moonlit Meadow,” giving it a circular and complete feel if played in one sitting. *Music for Children*, Op.65 is not easy to play, but it is the easiest music Prokofiev wrote for the piano.

Written during Prokofiev’s summer stay at Polenovo, it is interesting to think

about the fun he and his children had swimming and playing together during the
writing of this work. Performers may muse on these events while trying to evoke certain
moods created by Prokofiev during composition.

The goal of the analysis is to identify musical and technical challenges found in
Prokofiev’s *Musique d’Enfants* and to provide pedagogical techniques and suggestions
for teachers and students. Each piece is analyzed and will address basic elements such as
physical approach, wrist motion, fingering, and pedaling; interpretative issues such as
phrasing and balance; pedagogical considerations such as sequencing of learning
techniques, and exercises that aid in the learning aspect of each piece. A table labeled
Appendix A gives a summary of these aspects at the end of this study for ease of use.

For this investigation, I relied on books and articles by respected performers and
authors on performance practices and stylistic characteristics, on Prokofiev’s own
suggestions for understanding his repertoire, and on my own experiences and education
in the field of piano performance and piano pedagogy.

**Pedagogical and Technical Analysis of Op. 65**

**Op. 65, No. 1 “Morning”**

The first piece in the Op.65 collection is full of fun opportunities to portray nature
sounds, such as the low sounds of a bull-frog, the high sounds of birds chirping as the sun
comes up, and the brief swirl of rustling leaves. The music is based on familiar scale
patterns and triads in the key of C. It includes two main thematic sections: mm. 1-4, 5-8,
24-29 and mm. 9-17, 18-23. The first section contains leaps in register, expanding and
contracting of the hand, hand crossings, and two- and three-voice lines where the inner
voice is the melody. The second section consists of a repeated pattern of two note slurs and replacing fingering on repeated notes coupled with melodic material that must be handled maturely. Overall, stylistic concerns such as long melodic lines and treatment of expressive markings are areas of discussion and concern for the young pianist.

**Technical Considerations for “Morning”**

In the first section, moving quickly between registers requires both speed and precision of the hands. In mm.1, 4, and 24, a rest precedes and follows the register shifts. Moving the hand during the rests is essential. In places where a register shift does not precede or follow a rest, the student must practice with “landmark notes”. For example, in m.2, the hands begin only a sixth apart and then quickly move four octaves apart and then quickly back to an octave apart again. The student needs to establish a good general sense, muscle-memory-wise, of where the next notes are and move each hand rapidly to that location. A good exercise to practice is to play the E in the left hand and the C in the right hand at the beginning of measure two, then move the hands out so that the left hand thumb plays G2 and the right hand thumb plays C6. The student then quickly moves back to the middle of the keyboard with the thumb in each hand on middle C (Example 1).

When practicing, the entire hand should move quickly to the “landmark notes” and touch the correct key without actually playing them. Once the fingers touch the correct “landmark notes,” only then is it safe to physically play the note. This will create a slight hesitation before each jump in register but that hesitation will be easily and quickly eliminated after the skill of moving is mastered. What is most important is that the correct notes are played every time the hand moves.

The voicing in mm. 2 and 6 require special attention and technical considerations. The four voices are written in a chorale-like style and the alto and tenor lines are to be voiced slightly louder than the outside voices. In m. 6, this same pattern is repeated except the alto voice is more active; here again, the alto and tenor lines are most important because they add harmonic and melodic interest. The act of embellishing voices in subsequent appearances also happens in mm. 5 and 7. In all of these instances, the fingers must control the specific dynamic needs of each voice. The student is encouraged to practice using different articulations within the hands. For instance, the alto and tenor voices could be practiced legato while the other two voices could be practiced as staccato. Once this is comfortable in the hands, the student should reverse this practice articulation.

Other practice suggestions for these measures are to physically place the wrist behind the melody notes that are emphasized to give that specific note more arm weight and, therefore, more volume. The student can also practice different combinations of voices to shape and to listen for, such as tenor and alto voice practiced together, or bass
and alto voice practiced together, and so on. This allows the ear a chance to highlight each voice and to challenge the ear to hear separate voices in different combinations.

The next section of technical importance begins in m.9. The right hand contains a series of two-note slurs that require the hand to expand and contract. The published fingering suggests using fingers one and three; however, I believe that fingers one and four, or fingers one and five, offer a more comfortable reach (especially for smaller hands). I prefer finger five for this entire pattern, no matter the interval span given in this section for the right hand. This finger choice also gives a more balanced feel to the hand to assist with the wrist motion of the two-note slurs. Each of the ascending two-note slurs will include a wrist motion that travels down on the first note then circles down and to the right for the upward playing motion of the second note.

An additional difficulty for this section is the need to play the same note but to replace the fifth finger with the thumb. This occurs with the right hand ascending pattern. When the hand comes off the second note of the two-note slur, the fifth finger will brush back toward the pianist and release from the note. The student should continue this motion of releasing the note upwards and to the right since this will place the thumb on the E where the fifth finger just left off in a more naturally flowing way. Similarly, traveling back down these two notes will require the wrist motion and the finger replacement to do the exact same motion and sequence of steps only heading in the opposite direction.

Finally, there is the difficulty for this material to be played as a well-phrased, melodic line in the left hand while executing the difficulties previously discussed in the right hand. The key to playing these measures accurately with the hands together is to
first master the right hand technique and then to commit to a fingering in the left hand that requires the least amount of position changes. The fingering I suggest is to begin on the 5th finger in m. 10, use the 2nd finger to play the f-sharp and the 4th finger to play the A in m. 11, use finger 2 on the E in m. 13 and then, in the same measure, use a combination of finger 5 on the A with an immediate replacement of finger 1 (Example 2a). This fingering allows the student to “feel” around the keyboard and it allows the eyes to further concentrate on the more mobile right hand. This same material is used again in m. 18-23 only the responsibility of the hands has switched. The left hand now carries the intervallic leaps and the right hand contains the melody. This technique of playing the same material in each hand is commonly found in Prokofiev’s writing and is seen throughout this Op. 65 collection. The right hand melody now includes chords and requires voicing on top of the other technical considerations for this section. The student should still rely on a good fingering to help navigate through these measures. In m. 19 the fingering should be 1, 2, 5 on the chord, 4th finger on the right hand D, and then fingers 1, 2, 3 on the first chord of m. 20. This allows for finger legato and helps guide the student’s fingers through the transition of register. The second beat of m. 20 includes fingers 1 and 4, while the next three beats utilize fingers 5 and 3, 4 and 2, and 3 and 1, respectively.

Musical Considerations for “Morning”

Harmonically, “Morning” offers a wonderful opportunity to discuss with students the vagrant augmented chord qualities in measures 19 and 21. It is a good idea to talk with the student about how to build augmented chords, what they sound like, and how, in this particular case, they add color and expressivity to the sound.
The phrasing in this first piece is odd and non-uniform. The A section opens with intermittent melodic fragments amidst C chords. The small melodic gestures only last for three beats and they cross over the bar line from beat two in the first measure to beat one in the following measure. The C chords that are played on the second beat of mm. 2, 3, 6, and 7 are used to create a feeling of downbeat ambiguity. Measure 5, however, begins a new pattern that lasts for only two beats and is repeated in m. 8. This pattern of four sixteenth-notes followed by two eighth-notes must sound the same in m. 5 as it does in m. 8, even though the right hand plays the first hearing and the left hand plays the second.

The B section contains a long, eight measure phrase with the melody in the left hand (Example 2a). The execution of playing long melodic lines requires the performer to carefully listen to the decay of each melodic note so that each subsequent note creates fluidity and does not play too loudly or softly as to discontinue the motion of the melodic line. It is also difficult to create a long line when the phrase lasts so long. Prokofiev’s more advanced repertoire oftentimes consists of handling long melodic lines in one hand while the other hand executes difficult patterns that run up and down the keyboard. One example of this is seen in the first movement of the Eighth Piano Sonata (Example 2b).

Example 2b. Prokofiev Sonata No. 8, Op. 84 in B Major, 1st mov., mm. 46-47.

Prokofiev’s use of expressive markings is noteworthy in “Morning.” In measure 10, *gravamente* is written next to the left hand melody. This term refers to a slower tempo and a more serious mood. The next marking, *dolce*, along with the sudden dynamic change to *pianissimo*, draws attention to a piquant chromatic melodic inflection in m. 16. I suggest an agogic pause be used at the beginning of m.16 and a very slight relaxing of the pulse at the end of m.17 to prepare for the expressive phrase that begins in m.18 at the *cantabile* marking.

*Pochissimo* (“extremely little”) *ritardando* is another expressive marking and one that is not used frequently. It is written during the final two beats of m. 23, just before the *a tempo* in the following measure. This requires exquisite hand and finger control in a small amount of time with an effective transition in the next measure to the original tempo. Prokofiev even includes a marking of *dolce* in the final measure of the entire piece. This marking is meant to create a personal and sensitive sound for the final suspended and resolving chord.

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Op. 65, No. 2 “Walk”
“Walk” has a left hand pattern that seems to depict a happy, leisurely shuffling down a path without a care. The triplets that occur every other measure are reminiscent of a joyful heel click in the middle of a step. The middle section evokes thoughts of a couple waltzing, only to return to the cheerful walk again.

This piece begins in C major, is G centric and stands on the dominant beginning in m. 20, and then briefly returns to the A section in C major in m. 52. The character of the piece and the lack of slur markings indicate that the left hand quarter notes should be detached. It is difficult to maintain this left hand articulation of detached quarter notes and triplets, coupled with a legato, well-phrased right hand. Since the articulation is different in each hand, a student must work on hand independence here.

The time signature is 3/4; however, the student will eventually feel only 1 hyper beat per measure instead of three smaller beats. This encourages a quicker tempo and it propels the music forward to the next down-beat.

Technical Considerations for “Walk”

The left hand pattern throughout the A section consists of quarter notes and an eighth note triplet figure (Example 3). When teaching students to play triplets, it is important to incorporate the concept of arm weight and wrist rotation. The student needs to move the wrist so that it is always behind the finger that is playing. In this case, the wrist will travel to the right to support the thumb and then it will travel all the way to the left to support the fifth finger. This technique allows the student to remain relaxed in the arm and to eventually play more quickly.

Musical Considerations for “Walk”

The A section uses only touches of pedal on the quarter note just before each triplet figure. The purpose of the pedal in this left hand figure is to add a tonic pedal emphasis on the quarter-note down-beat every other measure. The emphasis is necessary on these quarter notes for two reasons: this is the pattern that begins the piece and sets the pattern in motion, and the rising quarter notes, as in m. 2, lead back into the same initial quarter note. In mm. 20-51, the B section, the character of the piece changes and more pedal is required. The new key of G major and the necessary contrast the B section offers gives indication of a more sustained character. Although the A section uses a legato right hand to create a connected sound without much help from the pedal, the B section utilizes finger legato in the right hand to create even longer lines and a fuller sound as well as greater pedal involvement.

The 8-measure phrasing in the A section can be divided into a two-bar, plus two-bar, plus four-bar phrase. This very symmetrical approach to the melody is a common eighteenth century practice that makes up Prokofiev’s self-described, compositional ‘classical line.’ The B section takes on a new key and character. Prokofiev takes another common eighteenth century practice of moving to the dominant for this section. The melody in the B section is more difficult than it appears. As the first phrase is coming to a
close in mm. 24 and 25, the next phrase is starting with an overlap. This Classical period compositional technique, known as an elision, happens again in mm. 28 and 29.

In mm. 36-45, the left hand is given the melody and it is split into two dynamic layers. Although the intermediate student has surely had opportunities in previous study to play left hand melodies, this is still an excellent opportunity for the student to work on projecting a left hand melody and balancing it with a softer right hand. And the left hand melody appears suddenly, not giving the student the chance to prepare for its importance. Of course, this adds to the difficulty of the challenge. The student needs to practice playing this melodic passage with slight pauses immediately before the next dynamic layer to ensure that the hand and ear is ready to switch dynamics before proceeding.

When the A section makes a brief reappearance in m. 52, there is a different dynamic marking of mezzo piano in addition to the original dolce marking. It is obvious from the indication in the score that the return of the A section material needs to be different in tone color and effect than the opening statement.

**Op. 65, No. 3 “Fairy Tale”**

The title “Fairy Tale”, coupled with the notation in the score, depicts an ambiguous, static, and delicate place that is unfamiliar to us. The melody does not move very far very fast, so it creates a feeling of solitude, uncertainty, and perhaps even fear. Students will have an opportunity to use their vivid imagination when learning and performing this piece.

This third piece is in the key of a minor. There are time signature changes and a feeling of unrest due to the left hand ostinato that permeates throughout much of the
piece. This pattern consists of only three stepwise ascending notes which also give a feeling of downbeat ambiguity (Example 4).


![Example 4](image)

**Technical Considerations for “Fairy Tale”**

The two-sixteenth notes/one eighth note repeated pattern that occurs mostly in the left hand, requires an “in the key” playing technique to produce a legato touch. Since the two-sixteenth notes are always repeated notes, the finger must not lose contact with the key before repeating it. In essence, the finger will play the first of the two repeated notes and then ride the key back up until it is almost all of the way recovered. Before the key returns to its original resting position, the finger will immediately re-play the same note. By not allowing the key to completely recover before replaying it and by not allowing the finger to leave the touch of the key, this creates the proper “in the key” playing technique. It is also important to play each note in this pattern at the same dynamic level so no sound is played louder than another, which would create a “bump” in sound. This type of “in the key” technique is used in Prokofiev’s more mature works as well. In the *sostenuto* section of the fourth *Sarcasm*, Op. 17, this same technique is used to create a seamless sound while playing repeated note chords (Example 5).
Example 5. Prokofiev Sarcasms Op. 17, No. 4, mm. 14-16.

Prokofiev’s common switching of material between the hands is seen again in m. 7. The opening left hand accompaniment pattern is now seen in m. 7 in the right hand. No break is given between the two patterns, making it difficult to pinpoint the exact note of the switch; however, if the student uses the thumb in the left hand to play the G in beat three of m. 6, then finger three will be available to play the E on beat one of m. 7. Finger three is a good choice for the first melodic note since it is a strong finger and is located in the middle of the hand. The student can utilize the left hand’s arm weight to sink into the key and produce a stronger tone.

Musical Considerations for “Fairy Tale”

The piece is labeled “Adagio” which requires very controlled, leisurely playing. The amount of sensitivity and warmth connected with this tempo marking and the speed at which the piece is played makes the melodic content difficult to execute. The student must be able to play the melodic half notes loud enough to continue sound until the next melodic note, but still play within an appropriate dynamic level for each line. Once this is accomplished, the student must listen very carefully to the decaying sound of the long note so that the subsequent note continues the melodic line, as seen in “Morning.”
The crescendo and diminuendo in mm. 17 and 21 pose another challenge. The crescendo lasts for four bars and the diminuendo lasts for two bars. Creating smooth and consistent dynamic variances is difficult to control when the notes are close together; however, in this section, these dynamics must be achieved while playing in multiple registers and with hand crossings. The student needs to practice these measures slowly, making a deliberate and exaggerated crescendo and diminuendo. Once the hands learn to feel the appropriate weight needed to increase and to decrease volume, this can be refined to fit inside the overall dynamic marking of piano to mezzo forte, as indicated in mm. 15 and 19.

Pedaling is another point of interest in this piece. In m.15, Prokofiev includes the expressive marking, sostenuto. This informs the pianist to play sustained and with pedal. The pedal is used once at the beginning of each measure for the entire measure. Beginning in m. 20 however, the pedal needs to be cleared every beat. In contrast, the A section, without the sostenuto marking, requires less pedal, although the absence of pedal altogether would leave the sound too dry. I suggest using a half pedal on the repeated sixteenth notes and then only bringing the pedal up to the point of clearing before returning to the half pedal on the sixteenth notes again. The sound should be very connected from note to note, but should not sound “muddy.”

Op. 65, No. 4 “Tarantella”

Prokofiev’s “Tarantella” is a happy piece that brings the characteristics of this Italian dance to life, including skipping, running, and banging on tambourines. The A section is set as a more serious portrayal of the dance, while the B section is whimsical
and enjoyable, reminiscent of skipping due to the wide leaps and variety of articulations. This piece provides a wealth of pedagogical challenges to experience. For many students, this could very well be their first tarantella to play.

This “Tarantella” is similar to Prokofiev’s Second Piano Sonata, fourth movement (Example 6). Both works share the same time signature and key signature, contain running eighth notes, include difficult phrasing due to leaps in the melody, and possess an overall playful character. Also, the melodic writing in the D major section, starting in m. 33, provides a preview of Prokofiev’s mature, widely-spaced melodic writing.


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**Technical Considerations for “Tarantella”**

Prokofiev’s intermediate-level Tarantella uses quick, broken triads and five-finger patterns (Example 7a). It has a wonderfully contrasting B section in D major that should be practiced with a blocked left hand. In this case, the student would practice the left hand by playing the first three beats as one chord and the second three beats as
another chord (Example 7b). This blocking method of practice enables the student to more clearly see and feel how the chords change in each measure. It also provides an easier way to practice hands together so that the student can hear the harmony changes while focusing on the difficult passagework in the right hand.

**Example 7a.** Prokofiev Music for Children, Op. 65, No. 4, mm. 33-38.

The articulation in this piece changes frequently, especially in the B section. In the beginning of this section, there is a repeating two-note slur/ staccato note pattern. The student should not connect the final note of the two-note slur to the staccato note. That articulation, combined with the wide leap in the melody, makes this section challenging to master.

The return of the A section in m. 49 adds an extra level of difficulty. Each time the main theme is played, it begins on beat 6 of the previous measure (Example 8). This small change, known as an anacrusis, creates a very different coordination sensation.
between the hands. In the original A section, the change in direction for the right hand pattern coincides with the playing of the left hand notes. The return of the A section, however, includes a change in direction for the right hand that does not match up with the left hand notes. The student must feel as comfortable playing the second A section as the first.

**Example 8.** Prokofiev Music for Children, Op. 65, No. 4, mm. 48-54.

![Example 8. Prokofiev Music for Children, Op. 65, No. 4, mm. 48-54.](image)

**Musical Considerations for “Tarantella”**

The maintenance of the line in mm. 33-35 is potentially difficult and strange due to the leaps that occur in a small amount of time. It is difficult for the student to keep the melodic line consistent dynamically and not to have certain notes played louder or softer than needed because of technical challenges. Practicing slowly and exaggerating the dynamics is a great way to practice. It is beneficial to practice these measures at approximately half the intended speed, but with the correct fingering, dynamics, and hand/arm gestures as the piece should sound at full speed. This gives the pianist the opportunity to simulate the resulting performance at an early stage in learning.

There are rapid harmonic shifts in this fourth piece of Op. 65, such as the change from D minor to D-flat major to A-flat major within the first 9 measures. These changes necessitate a movement in hand position to different places on the keyboard. The student will need to practice these hand position shifts so that their movements become more
direct and purposeful. One way to practice this is to move quickly to the next hand position and then wait until the fingers are covering the correct notes before actually playing the notes. This trains the hands to move to the exact location. The pauses that are present in practicing will go away once the motion is comfortable.

The A section uses no pedal. The B section, on the other hand, requires the pianist to pedal one time per measure except in mm. 40, 44, and 46 where the harmonies change in the middle of the measure. Even though the pedal covers the staccatos in this B section, the hand must still execute them just the same to attain the appropriate sound.

**Op. 65, No. 5 “Regrets”**

“Regrets” offers an opportunity for students to explore an eerie, haunting, and sad melody and overall sound on the piano. The wide spacing and doubled melodies create a hallow sound that requires sensitivity, maturity, and emotional depth. The student needs to experiment with different tone colors and characters to make this piece realize its fullest potential.

This fifth piece is in ABA form. The return of the A section is written one octave higher than the original A section, is much more elaborate, and carries a softer dynamic marking. Thus, the return of the A section should not be played exactly like the original A section.

**Technical Considerations for “Regrets”**

The most challenging technical aspect of “Regrets” lies in playing held notes and in determining what sophisticated fingering is needed to voice these notes. Measure 9 requires the pianist to hold the two lowest notes in the left hand while also playing a
moveable, legato melody in the same hand. The first issue is the size of the student’s hand. If the hand is too small, it will be impossible for the student to execute these difficult measures. If the hand is large enough, I recommend playing the triad with fingers 5, 4, and 1, holding the bottom two notes with fingers 5 and 4, and then using the second finger in the left hand to reach for the b-flat in measure 10. Similarly, mm. 11 and 12 have difficult fingerings in the left hand due to the same dilemma. I recommend using fingers 5, 4, and 1 on the initial left hand chord in m. 11 and then using fingers 2, 1, and 2 again on the F, D, and C-sharp in m. 11, respectively (Example 9). This fingering allows the student to maintain a legato melody even while continuing to hold the bass notes.

**Example 9.** Prokofiev Music for Children, Op. 65, No. 5, mm. 9-12.

Musical Considerations for “Regrets”

The musical maturity needed to create an understated, haunting melody that also sounds beautiful is very challenging. Additionally, a hierarchy of sonority needs to be well thought out for this work. Considerations include how to voice a doubled melody line and the balancing of the melody within homophonic texture. The melodic line sometimes transfers between the hands as in mm. 20 and 21, while the right hand plays the C-sharp and D in m. 20 and the left hand completes the line by playing the E-flat in
m. 21. The ability to continue a seamless melodic line while switching hands is an important skill to learn.

Prokofiev incorporates what feels like an abrupt harmonic shift in mm.17-24 (Example 10). Moving harmonically from d minor in mm. 1-16 to b-flat major in m.17 is not difficult for the ear because d minor and b-flat major are closely related keys; however, Prokofiev closes m. 16 on the dominant chord in d minor before moving to the new key of b-flat major, creating a deceptive resolution of V-VI. Prokofiev writes piano and tranquillo here, indicating that a different color and sound is now required. An ascending, left hand chromatic line is an important feature of this section.


Measures 25 and 27 bring another challenge to this piece. Clearly there is a hidden melodic line in both of these measures that must be audible to the listener. Musically, each downbeat needs to be brought out and shaped. The student needs to work not only on keeping the repeated note “D” somewhat softer than the melody in m. 25, but then the student must switch and highlight the melody created by the repeated note “E” using the third finger in m. 27. Once this is accomplished, the student needs to create a long phrase full of pathos and inflection.

In measure 37 of “Regrets”, the listener is expecting to hear a move to C major, as Prokofiev wrote in the original A section; however, here he moves to b minor instead.
This abrupt and unexpected change is highlighted with the dynamic marking of *pianissimo*. The student needs to be aware of these harmonic implications and play these measures with extra time and sensitivity.

**Op. 65, No. 6 “Waltz”**

Prokofiev’s “Waltz” can be thought of as the setting for Cinderella’s ballroom dance. The octave displacement during the A section, a typical trait of Prokofiev’s writing, portrays the spinning and twirling of beautiful ball gowns all around the dance floor. The B section begins to show worry, as if the clock is about to strike midnight; but in this story, the A section returns with even more octave displacement, spinning, and dancing.

This “Waltz” also provides a wonderful introduction to a jump-bass pattern at the lower-intermediate level. The continuity that is necessary in playing the disjunct melody takes a good ear and much technical precision. Challenges in the B section include hand crossings, frequent changes of register, and making musical sense out of large intervals.

**Technical Considerations for “Waltz”**

The left hand has many leaps due to the waltz bass pattern. This pattern can be very difficult for students because as they change hand positions on the second beat they will have a tendency to either miss notes or accent them. To avoid both of these scenarios, the left hand wrist should be relaxed enough to make an oval in the direction of the notes. The wrist will be lower when playing the low bass note and then it will move up and to the right in order to play the notes located in the middle register of the piano. The overall wrist motion is “down-up-up” within an oval shape.
Musical Considerations for “Waltz”

The right hand moves frequently and travels large distances. The frequency of this movement progresses throughout the piece; for instance, the B section is almost primarily made up of octaves and large intervals, and even the return of the A section has more octave displacement than the previous two statements of the main theme located in the first A section. The ability to play a continuous line is difficult in these situations. Students should try either singing the melodic content within the octave they are most comfortable or practicing these melodic lines with the notes in the closest octave, similar to the first statement of the melody in mm. 2-8. By singing the melodies, the student will be able to connect the notes with the voice and create a more natural line in their head before transferring the melodic line to the keyboard. Furthermore, if the student then plays this more conjunct melodic option on the piano while shaping the phrases and working within the dynamic parameters, switching back to the notation as written in the score will make more musical sense to the student because their ear will hear a continuous melodic line even through the displacement.

It is important to note certain melodic considerations that are less obvious in the score. For instance, the melody in mm. 15 and 16 must audibly continue to the left hand for the remainder of the measure and is picked back up by the right hand with the G5 in m. 17 (Example 11). This recurs in mm. 53-55. Also, beginning in m. 56, the left hand adds another voice starting on G, stepping down until the middle C in measure 58. The student should also highlight the continuing bass line of F, B, A, and D in mm. 59-62. The pianist needs to bring out this new line in the left hand as a countermelody.

In the B section, Prokofiev uses common tones and chromatic movements to create a mode shift and add harmonic interest. For example, in mm. 27-28 the D in the left hand changes to a D-sharp making the B minor chord turn into a B major chord. The B in the right hand acted as the first scale degree in B major in m. 27, but then immediately turned into the fifth scale degree of an E minor chord in m. 28. This abrupt change in chords and chord qualities creates an uncertainty and excitement that must be realized by the performer so that the inclusion of tension and release, dynamically, can be authentic.

The return of the A section in m. 40 opens with the melody doubled for the first 3 measures. In mm. 43-46 the left hand’s waltz bass is abandoned and a sparse left hand accompaniment remains. Rhythmically this offers a less stable feel and deemphasizes the downbeat in m. 43 and 44, especially. Also noteworthy in the final A section is the harmonic progression in the final three bars. As in m. 23-25, Prokofiev cleverly resolves the section on the subdominant instead of tonic. Although we expect to modulate going into the B section in m. 23-25, it is not what we expect in the final measures of the piece; however, Prokofiev skillfully manipulates the B2 in m. 60 instead of E2 from earlier in the work. This changes the chord progression to sound as ii-V7-I. Prokofiev also utilizes the secondary melody occurring in the bass voice to create new harmonies and to distract
the ear. These small changes trick the ear into thinking we have ended on the tonic.

Prokofiev often uses this technique in his writing, such as in the 2nd movement of Piano Sonata no. 7 (Example 12).


Octave displacement was mentioned in an earlier paragraph, however, the frequency and creativity associated with the displacement in this particular piece is worth detailing on a deeper level. Measures 47-49 utilize the same arpeggio only this time it occupies three octaves instead of two octaves as it did in m. 9-11. The right hand melody in the final eight measures of the piece is identical to mm. 17-24 in the original A section; however, the left hand treatment of the same measures contains three voices instead of two and the final chord progression is slightly different.

It is important not to pedal too heavily in the A section. The pedal needs to release prior to the bar line so that the waltz has a lifting quality to it; however, the pedal must help when the melody becomes too far apart for finger legato. Similarly, in the B section,
the pedal is used during the left hand repeated notes but released so that the eighth-rest is slightly audible.

**Op. 65, No. 7 “Parade of the Grasshoppers”**

Cleverly titled “Parade of the Grasshoppers”, the seventh piece of Op. 65 is a jaunty march in 2/4 with humorous leaps. The leaps depict different grasshopper characters, such as a female grasshopper for the right hand presentation of the melody and a male grasshopper for the left hand presentation of that same melody. The B section, beginning in m. 17, might evoke the sounds of a grasshopper dance between our two characters. Once the dance is over, they bounce around, full of energy and excited to continue their parade.

Because of the speed and technical challenges found in this piece, it is certainly one of the most difficult of the set. The form of this piece is not extremely clear; however, I believe it is in ternary form with the B section starting with the pick-up in m. 16 and the returning A section beginning with the pick-up in m. 49.

**Technical Considerations for “Parade of the Grasshoppers”**

This piece is rhythmically and physically very awkward. There is a dotted rhythmic figure that permeates the entire piece and this needs to be executed precisely. The student would be well-served to practice the dotted rhythmic figure as perfectly straight, even eighth notes. Once the student returns to playing the dotted rhythm, the result will be a more precise and accurate rhythmic feel. It is also important to pay special attention to the exact articulation. The combination of eighth note followed by a rest in m. 1, staccato eighth note followed by a rest in m. 3 (Example 13a), and slurred notes in
the B section in m. 17 (Example 13b), need to all sound and feel differently. This accuracy is what gives “Parade of the Grasshoppers” its quirky, fun character.

**Example 13a.** Prokofiev Music for Children, Op. 65, No. 7, mm. 1-5.

![Example 13a](image)


![Example 13b](image)

Playing in E-flat major and reading in B major gives the student an opportunity to play in more difficult, and less frequently used keys. Also, the ability to switch keys in the middle of a fast march is a skill that is helpful in further piano study.

**Musical Considerations for “Parade of the Grasshoppers”**

Pedaling is an important consideration in this seventh piece. Overall, pedaling is sparse and much finger legato is required due to the inclusion of rests and rapid harmonic changes. Pedal should be used in mm. 4, 8, and 12. Starting in m. 17, pedal is used on the quarter notes at the beginning of each measure and then on the chords in mm. 23 and 24. Using pedal to connect any of the notes in m. 17 would only blur the harmonic changes, so finger legato is imperative. A good fingering to use in the right hand is to play the E-
flat first with finger 3, substituting to finger 1. The left hand will use finger 3 on the E-flat and finger 2 on the G. Pedaling considerations for mm. 33-44 include pedaling on beat 1 in each measure and then releasing the pedal on beat 2 of each measure.

In mm. 30-32, the left hand plays only B’s, but starting in mm. 33-41 it alternates harmonic thirds with a B2 pedal point. Although there are large leaps, the bass note remains the same, making it easier for the hand to “remember” where it has been. This is coupled with the right hand material from m. 17. Both hands move frequently and over large distances, making this section difficult to play.

Op. 65, No. 8 “The Rain and the Rainbow”

The eighth piece uses the programmatic title, The Rain and the Rainbow. The rain is accurately portrayed as inconsistent with fast-moving gradations of sound within chromatic sonorities. The rainbow starts with high notes in the right hand and ‘slides’ down the registers like tracing a rainbow from the sky to the ground to find the pot of gold. Compositionally, a widely spaced bass pattern contrasted with dolce melodies and set within a diatonic setting depicts the rainbow sections. The piece is somewhat impressionistic and mixes dissonant clusters of major seconds alternating with scales and chords in C major.

Technical Considerations for “The Rain and the Rainbow”

Although the hands move frequently in this piece, the note choices of these large leaps are often identical and somewhat comfortable in the hand, especially in the “rain” section. Measure 2 spreads both hands outward to play G’s in each hand. Measure 4 spreads both hands outward to play the same G’s followed by a fourth and fifth in
contrary motion in each hand. These same notes are played yet again in mm. 6 and 8 with the right hand playing one additional note in m. 8.

In the rainbow section beginning in m. 9, the left hand provides a more difficult technical challenge with a jump bass pattern. One way for the student to learn measure nine’s jump bass pattern is to have the student silently place the left hand thumb on the higher octave than is written to act as a GPS guide (Example 14). Take care not to accent notes that are preceded by a leap.


![Example 14](image)

Musical Considerations for “The Rain and the Rainbow”

Author David Nice called this piece the “odd man out” of the Op. 65 collection. He also called it an “errant Vision Fugitive.” These comments express the surprise of this stylistically impressionistic piece. “The Rain and the Rainbow” uses whole tone clusters and static harmonies to depict rain, and a quasi-pedal point coupled with a repeating melody to portray the rainbow.

This is a wonderful piece to teach tone color and character variances. Students learn to create swells in sound using relatively non-melodic material and repeated notes.

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45 Nice, p.332.
as in mm. 1, 3 and 7. Pedal in the “rain” sections should blend the sound without blurring the dissonances. Beginning in m. 9, the character changes and the pianist can create a completely different sound with a more defined melody and a sweeter, more beautiful tone color due to the dolce marking.

Op. 65, No. 9 “Tag”

This next piece runs up and down the keys in a fun game of tag. Feiss suggests that the division of the melodic line between the hands could be perceived as one child tagging the next child during this fast-paced game. This piece is in a lively 6/8 with hand crossings, finger changes on repeated notes, and left hand treble clef reading. It is an example of Prokofiev’s self-described ‘motor-line’ writing and is similar in character to “Visions Fugitive” No. 15.

Technical Considerations for “Tag”

This piece is arguably the most difficult in the collection; however, it will be less technically challenging as long as the student solidifies a good fingering for the right hand material from the beginning of study. There are hand crossings sprinkled throughout the piece that require a finesse in making the listener believe it was executed within the same hand. Success in these measures depends largely on the ability of the ear to match sounds and the ability of the finger to respond to what the ear is hearing.

Measures 2-3 and 34-35 include repeated notes that require a finger change. The best fingering option is to use fingers 4-3-2 in the right hand of measure 2 on the B-natural and then switching to fingers 3-2-1 on the C in measure 3 (Example 15). This is a

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46 Feiss, p.99.
good fingering problem solving exercise at the intermediate level that will prepare young 
students for fingering requirements as they continue to grow musically.

**Example 15.** Prokofiev Music for Children, Op. 65, No. 9, mm. 2-3.

The opening theme returns beginning in m. 33 with a slightly different left hand 

pattern. There is an additional eighth note on beats 3 and 6 in mm. 33-34. This small 

change adds interest and is a coordination challenge. The student must lift with the wrist 
on the eighth-rest on beat 2 and then play the following eighth-note with a lower wrist 
only to lift the wrist back up on beats 4 and 1. This wrist motion can be thought of as a 

sort of backward-motion two-note slur since the wrist begins lowered for a softer sound 
first and then pushes into the key to lift the wrist for a louder sound second.

Measures 42 and 44 contain a combination of slurs between the hands that are 

awkward and difficult to play. These two slurs need to sound like one hand continuing 

the previous pattern of two-note slurs from mm. 40 and 41 (Example 16). In order to 

match the right hand two-note slurs in m. 42, the left hand needs to lift on the eighth-rest 
to prepare the hand for a different gesture. The left hand should begin the gesture close to 
the key to match the sound in the right hand from beat 1. The right hand accent on beat 4 
is best played with fingers 3 and 5, followed by finger 1 on the B-natural and 2 on the C 
in m. 43. To achieve an accent followed by two slurred soft notes, as in mm. 42-43, the
student must keep the wrist in a neutral position and the fingers close to the keys to keep
the necessary *piano* sound.

Measure 44 is similar to m. 42 only the hands have now switched the two- and
three-note slur combination (Example 16). In this case, the left hand must approach the
three-note slur in the same manner as m. 42 of lifting the wrist during the rest and
matching the sound of the previous right hand slurred notes; however, once this is
accomplished, the student should only think of the remaining slurred notes in this
grouping as matching the two-note slurs in each hand.

**Example 16.** Prokofiev Music for Children, Op. 65, No. 9, mm. 41-44.

Musical Considerations for “Tag”

The perpetual motion gives a sense of children running and playing. This should
certainly be at the forefront of the performer’s mind considering that the title of this piece
is “Tag.” Other compositional elements that evoke fun and playfulness, typical of this
children’s game, are the intermittent rests and simultaneous leaps in the melodic material
in m. 25, and the hand crossings that complete the melodic material in m. 17 and the like.
Also present in this piece are two-note slurs connecting longer notes marked louder and
with an accent to shorter notes marked as softer with no accent (Example 17a). This
notation is seen in mm. 28, 30-32, and 44-47. Similar writing can be seen in Prokofiev’s
*Sarcasms* Op. 17, No. 1 in mm. 57-62 (Example 17b).
**Example 17a.** Prokofiev Music for Children, Op. 65, No. 9, mm. 28-32.

![Example 17a](image)

**Example 17b.** Prokofiev Sarcasms, Op. 17, No 1, mm. 57-62.

![Example 17b](image)

**Op. 65, No. 10 “March”**

“March” is a happy, quirky piece with grace notes sprinkled throughout to show a silly side of the march. This piece serves as an excellent representative of this genre. The piece is in C major and uses colorful harmonic touches such as clusters and grace notes. Prokofiev frequently uses Marches in his writing; for example, there is a March in his *Four Pieces, Op. 3*, in his *Ten Pieces, Op. 12*, and even *Visions Fugitives, Op. 22, No. 10* has the characteristics of a march.

**Technical Considerations for “March”**

The articulation is difficult in places thanks to the layering of voices, the successful execution of grace notes, and the need for finger legato. Measures 4-10 require a finger legato in the right hand that is crucial to the phrasing. In order to keep the two-
note slur in the soprano voice legato from m. 5-6, the alto note, played by the thumb, may need to let go of its note for smaller hands (Example 18).

**Example 18.** Prokofiev Music for Children, Op. 65, No. 10, mm. 5-7.

![Example 18](image)

The grace notes scattered throughout “March” are to be played before the left hand note, are slurred into the attached right hand notes, and are played very short. By practicing this piece without the grace notes, the student quickly learns how to play with extreme rhythmic precision. Then, when the grace notes are added back into the mix, the student recognizes instantly how short they must be played and how closely to the ensuing beat they must be played.

In m. 11, the main theme is repeated in F major with a new technical challenge. Measures 12 and 14 contain an additional hand crossing by the left hand that is not present in any other statement of the theme. The first challenge with this particular hand crossing is the distance in which the hand must travel. A three octave jump to C6 with the left hand could be a stretch for many young students. Since the hands remain in the same position just prior to the hand crossing, the eyes are free to look toward the target note for the leap. The student should practice m. 12 with a pause immediately after beat 1. This allows the student to look directly at the C6 on the keyboard that begins on beat 2. Allowing the student to look before leaping ensures that the student will accurately play the correct note. This hesitation will eventually disappear. The second challenge is to
execute an accurate move to the C6 on beat 2 in the left hand while still playing the right hand melodic material with shape and volume. Leaping that great of a distance encourages an accented sound, so the student must travel quickly to the high note in order to allow time to simply touch the note before playing it to ensure a controlled placement of the note instead of an attack.

The final four bars of the piece utilize the material from mm. 7-10 except that the left hand adds the same two eighth-note pattern as mm. 12 and 14 and the articulation changes. The material in mm. 7-10 consists of two-note slurs in both hands making the passage easier to learn. The left hand material in mm. 31-32 now contains no two-note slurs to match the right hand articulation; instead, the left hand continues the two eighth-note pattern on the off-beats coupled with staccato quarter-notes on beats 1 and 3. Coordinating this pattern again requires the pianist to practice with pauses before each beat and waiting until each finger is lifted and in place before the next beat is attempted. This ensures the correct rhythm and articulation each time the student practices, creating a solid learning foundation from which to improve.

Musical Considerations for “March”

Some of the dynamic markings are sophisticated and difficult to execute, especially for an intermediate level student. It is not easy, for example, to achieve a successful poco a poco cresc that spans 6 measures, such as in mm. 21-26. The student must not crescendo too quickly and leave no room to grow before reaching the forte marking in m. 27. Conversely, the student must take care not to take too long to crescendo so that the forte measure does not turn into a subito dynamic situation. This takes careful planning and practicing on the part of the student.
Another dynamic that is difficult to execute is the *subito piano* marking in mm. 8 and 9. There is a *crescendo* spanning two measures culminating in a *mezzoforte* dynamic level. Once this *mezzoforte* level is achieved, it immediately switches to a *piano* dynamic level for the very next beat. The student should practice this abrupt change by pausing briefly after playing the *mezzoforte* on beat four of m. 8. The pause is intended to give the student an opportunity to change the amount of pressure in the fingers before playing the *subito piano* notes, ensuring the correct dynamic change. Once this switch is incorporated into the student’s playing, the brief pause can be taken out little by little.

**Op. 65, No. 11 “Evening”**

“Evening” opens with an irregular left hand grouping that is reminiscent of the irregular night song of the locusts. This piece offers a serene mood amid the tempo indication *andante teneroso*, meaning a walking tempo played tenderly. The form of this piece is ABA and consists of alternating homophonic texture with more linear writing. There are examples of Prokofiev’s ‘wrong note’ writing sprinkled throughout this work. These can be seen with the G-flat in the right hand of m. 8, the B-natural in the left hand of m. 10, and the E pedal point in the left hand juxtaposed with the return of the A section in the key of F major in m. 48.

“Evening” is a good example of Prokofiev’s writing style with the sophisticated articulation, as seen in the left hand and with the example of ‘wrong note’ writing, as mentioned in the previous paragraph. These qualities can also be seen in the “Scherzo” of *Ten Pieces*, Op. 12. A similar left hand pattern is used and the ‘wrong notes’ are sprinkled throughout the entire work.
The piece is in F major, but modulates to A-flat major and C major before returning to F major again for the return of the A section. The key changes are written out with their own key signatures, giving students the ability to ‘practice’ changing keys within a piece of music.

**Technical Considerations for “Evening”**

The opening measures of this piece offer an immediate technical challenge due to the odd phrasing and specific articulation in the left hand (Example 19). The first note begins in a partial measure and is connected with a slur to the first beat of the first full measure. This is followed by two more beats that are not connected with a slur and then a two-note slur beginning on the first beat of the second full measure. This pattern is repeated once more until the right hand melody comes in on the first beat of m. 5. The student should practice these opening measures only six beats at a time. The left hand needs to play slowly and deliberately, being certain to exaggerate the slurs and the non-connected notes. Once the student can play through the first six beats with the correct articulation, this pattern should be repeated until the student feels very comfortable.

**Example 19.** Prokofiev Music for Children, Op. 65, No. 11, mm. 1-5.

Beginning in m. 12, there are broken chord figures in sixteenth notes that get passed off between the hands. The student is encouraged to practice this passage in blocked chords instead of playing each note separately. Once this pattern feels comfortable in the hands, this same pattern can be used to teach wrist rotation technique.
Playing the notes as written, the student will have the wrist follow the fingers as they play each note; for example, in m. 12, the wrist will travel slightly to the left to support the thumb as it plays the beginning E sixteenth-note. The wrist will then travel slightly to the center for the following G and to the right for the subsequent treble C in m. 13. This technique allows the arm weight to follow each note and allow for an even sound with an effortless hand motion.

**Musical Considerations for “Evening”**

The form of this piece is ABA, however, the return of A has a few major differences. The eleven bars preceding the A return are set in C major but cadence on an E major triad in m. 47. Then, in m. 48, the A section returns in the original key of F major, but carries with it an E pedal point in the left hand. Thus, tonal ambiguity is clearly present here. The E pedal point creates a glaring dissonance with what the listener expects to hear. Prokofiev, anticipating the potential for a more harsh character in the return of the main theme material, added the expressive marking *dolce* to accompany the *mezzopiano* marking. This additional marking informs the pianist to play with an added amount of softness, sweetness, and tenderness. It is a reflective, bittersweet moment.

The ‘episode-like’ material from m. 13 returns in m. 56, but Prokofiev cleverly mixes this right hand material with the left hand quarter-note and eighth-note pattern from the B section. This pattern uses a C pedal point – the dominant pitch in F major. In m.64, Prokofiev uses a F pedal point in the bass; these two pedal points suggest a gentle ending to this piece. This is followed by a return of the melody with both hands in unison and the additional marking of *espressivo* in m. 68.
Op. 65, No. 12 “Moonlit Meadow”

“Moonlit Meadow” depicts a calm, peaceful, grassy spot illuminated only by the moonlight. The melody present throughout the work can be thought of as a song sung by the insects that come out only at night to sing their tune to the nocturnal. The last piece in this collection, number 12, uses a broken chord accompaniment between the two hands, melody lines written for both hands, double notes, and off-beat triads. It teaches sensitively controlled soft playing and voicing over soft chords. Imaginative use of pedal should be explored.

Technical Considerations for “Moonlit Meadow”

The opening measures present an immediate technical challenge. The right hand begins with the accompaniment figure for only one measure and then the left hand takes over the same accompaniment figure in the same register (Example 20). The student must be able to make a seamless transition in sound while also listening and reacting to the melody in the right hand. The student should practice the transitioning eighth-note accompaniment by itself first, listening carefully to match the sound. Once this move is successful, the student can practice blocking the broken chord accompaniment found in both hands from mm. 1-25 until it feels comfortable in the hand. Mastering the ability to trade the melody and accompaniment between the hands is good for working on balance for each hand.

In m. 35, the left hand takes the melody and the right hand plays off-beat eighth-note chords. The ability to balance the melody in this section is very difficult based on the fact that the melody consists of a single line and the accompaniment plays two or three notes at one time, not to mention that it plays when the melody is holding each note. This means that the student must play the chords even softer to compensate for the ratio difference and must not let the chords bog down the continuity of the melodic line because it plays on the off-beats. In order to achieve the appropriate balance, the student must listen very carefully to ensure the melody is properly phrased.

The return of the A section, beginning in m. 61, is a variation on the opening statement. The melody is now displaced by the value of an eighth-note and the left hand accompaniment now plays only a D pedal point for 8 measures instead of playing the full broken chord as in the original A section. This bare version requires special attention to balance and voicing to make the melody sing. The repeated left hand bass note should be played with “in the key” technique similar to “Fairy Tale.” I recommend playing finger 3 in the left hand for the repeated note since finger 3 is well-balanced within the hand. After the 3rd finger depresses the key, it rides the key back up until it almost reaches the top, only to depress the key again. The right hand melody needs much practice with voicing so that the melody is easily heard. The student can practice the top voice with a
different articulation than the other voices, as mentioned earlier, or the student can imagine playing the top voice just slightly before the rest of the voices in the same chord. This helps to draw the student’s ear and mind to the melody note, and it results in a more focused and well-voiced chordal section.

**Musical Considerations for “Moonlit Meadow”**

“Moonlit Meadow” offers the opportunity for the young pianist to explore pedaling possibilities throughout this work. Beginning in m. 1, the pianist is confronted with how much pedal to use for the broken chord figuration. The melody is in the right hand and both hands are playing at A3 or higher. Both A sections need a fair amount of pedal to evoke the semblance of a moonlit night. The student needs to really listen so that the notes are not too pedaled and blurred. Since the left hand plays one broken chord per measure, the pedaling should not depend on the left hand pattern as much as the melodic right hand material. I suggest using a half pedal and pedaling once throughout each measure. The pedal should begin in the opening measure, release slowly on the first beat of each measure, and then slowly depress just after the first eighth-note of beat 1. This type of pedaling allows for a hyper connected but not blurred sound. In mm. 4, 8, 12, and 16 the right hand contains scalar patterns that require more care. Instead of pedaling once per measure, the student should pedal twice per measure, both times on the downbeats of each of these measures. The fingers should also work toward a solid finger legato technique with an almost overlapping quality.

Starting in m. 19, the left hand takes over the melodic material and the right hand plays the accompaniment. As mentioned before, this is a common trait of Prokofiev’s in all levels of writing. The right hand must work to create the same sound as the left hand
created only measures prior. The melody is now deep in the left hand as low as D2. This lower register requires less pedal for the same effect as when the melody was in the right hand earlier. The pedal should still only be half pedaled and should change slowly, but it should change now on every beat so that the sound is not overwhelming.

The B section, starting in m. 35, carries the melody in the left hand for 4 measures and then switches the melody to the right hand for the remaining 4 measures. The accompaniment pattern alternates eighth-notes and eighth-rests while the melody is smooth and legato. The pedal in this section is sparse and the legato melody depends upon a finger legato technique. The student can use pedal to emphasize and connect melody notes in addition to finger legato, but must be careful not to hold the accompaniment notes into the accompaniment rests.

The melody is passed between the hands in the middle of a phrase in mm. 38 and 39. The left hand begins with the melody and the right hand accompanies from mm. 35 to 38, but in m. 39, the roles switch. The student needs to practice playing only the melody line as written to ensure that the ear knows what to listen for and that the line is well-phrased. Once this is established, the student can then add all voices, as written, while still listening for the well-phrased melodic line. Adding a touch of pedal to help connect the switching of melody from the left hand to the right hand in mm. 38-39 is suggested to help achieve a more seamless transition.

Measures 69-73 provide another musical challenge for the pianist. The melody in these measures is buried inside running eighth-notes; thus it is necessary to voice the correct melodic notes (Example 21). The student should first identify these notes by circling them in the score. The next step is to practice the right hand with different
dynamics and articulations; for example, the student can practice the melody notes as legato notes and the added notes as staccato, and then practice the opposite way. Another way to practice these measures is to exaggerate the dynamic contrast between the right hand eighth-notes. The student should practice the melody notes *forte* and the added notes *pianissimo*. Practicing such extremes in dynamics and articulations help the hand to feel a separation between the melody and the added notes, making it easier for the hand to subtly bring out and phrase the melody as it should be played in a performance.

**Example 21.** Prokofiev Music for Children, Op. 65, No. 12, mm. 69-73.

This chapter presented the analysis of Prokofiev’s *Music d’Enfants*, Op. 65 and provided pedagogical techniques and suggestions for teachers and students. Each piece was analyzed based on technical considerations and musical considerations and a table in Appendix A offers a summarized account of the finding from this chapter.
CHAPTER 4

Conclusion, Implementation of the Study, and Suggestions for Further Study

The purpose of this study was to provide a comprehensive study guide, addressing pedagogical elements to accompany Serge Prokofiev’s *Musiques d’Enfants: Twelve Easy Pieces, Op. 65* for solo piano. This study focused on exploring the pedagogical importance of each piece and an effective way for a teacher to use these pieces to prepare students for further piano study and, more specifically, for further study of Prokofiev’s works. Even though the need for a study guide specifically designed to accompany Op. 65 has been necessary due to the pedagogical significance of the work, one has not existed before now. I believe teachers will use my guide in one of two ways: 1.) Teachers can look for specific musical, technical, or interpretive issues to work on with a student and then select a piece concentrating on those areas by referring to my chart in Appendix A. The teacher can then read the detailed analysis on how to preview the piece with the student based on my analysis in chapter three; 2.) The teacher may independently decide to expose a student to Prokofiev’s *Music for Children* collection and, therefore, look for the appropriate leveling for the student based on my research in Appendix A. The teacher would then chose a handful of pieces and read the corresponding detailed analysis on how to preview the piece with the student based on my analysis in chapter three.
The music of Sergei Prokofiev is widely loved and it exposes pianists to a variety of different colors, textures, and a unique musical language. It also often includes a percussive sound which is achieved by attacking the key with the entire arm for a more metallic sound. This final chapter of this study offers a brief discussion of suggested works for further study by Prokofiev as well as a graded order of study for the 12 pieces in the Opus 65 collection.

Specifically, the Op. 65 collection, *Music for Children*, provides a vast array of technical, musical, and interpretive issues that help students progress in their performance skills and it also prepares young students for further study of Prokofiev’s piano works.

Prokofiev frequently uses leaps in his writing, both melodic and non-melodic. “Morning” requires leaps at least once per measure during the A sections, while the “Tarantella” makes use of leaps clearly in the right hand melodic content of the B section. “Waltz” uses many leaps in the melody, but also includes octave displacement, a compositional tool of which Prokofiev is fond. “Parade of the Grasshoppers” seems to contain leaps in much of the writing as a way to portray the jumping habits of a grasshopper. “The Rain and the Rainbow” is quasi-impressionistic and moves to different registers for sound and sonority. It also uses a brief jump-bass pattern during the rainbow sections that requires the student to leap. “Tag” employs leaps and hand crossings to depict children playing tag, while “Evening’s” primary theme is made up of large intervals in the melodic content to produce a more romantic quality.

Difficult and sophisticated articulation is another feature found in the music of Prokofiev. In this collection, the student can experience a variety of difficult articulations, such as managing different articulations between the hands in “Walk,” difficult melodic
articulation in the right hand of the B section in “Tarantella,” a dotted rhythmic figure that permeates the entire piece and that needs to be executed precisely in “Parade of the Grasshoppers,” the layering of voices and successful execution of grace notes in “March,” and specific and odd two-note slur groupings that go over the bar line in “Evening.” Each of these pieces has its own challenges within the realm of articulations, but “Parade of the Grasshoppers” seems to require the most variance of articulation and touch with the need to differentiate between the writing in mm. 1-2, 3, and 17. This piece also includes different articulations within one hand, such as in mm. 30-32.

Another feature present in Prokofiev’s writing is content equality between the hands. Prokofiev often gives each hand an opportunity to play the same material, making it difficult to match exact articulations and dynamics. This kind of writing is seen in “Morning,” “Fairy Tale,” “Parade of the Grasshoppers,” and “Moonlit Meadow.”

Sophisticated pedaling is another consideration for a handful of pieces in the Op. 65 collection. “Fairy Tale” includes a sostenuto marking in the B section that is not present in the A section; therefore, pedaling should be different for each section. “Parade of the Grasshoppers” uses pedal intermittently coupled with good finger legato to achieve the character of this piece. Pedal in the “rain” sections of “The Rain and the Rainbow” should blend the sound without blurring the dissonances. In “Moonlit Meadow,” the pianist is confronted with how much pedal to use for the broken chord figuration. A fair amount of pedal is needed to evoke the semblance of a moonlit night and the student needs to really listen so that the notes are not too pedaled and blurred.

Prokofiev frequently uses key signature changes in his pieces. The ability to practice changing keys very quickly is a useful skill for young pianists to encounter.
Pieces in the *Music for Children* collection that include key signature changes include “Tarantella,” “Parade of the Grasshoppers,” “Evening,” and “Moonlit Meadow.”

Prokofiev, in his *Autobiography*, explains his five categories that he used for his musical compositions. These “lines” include classical, modern, toccata, lyrical and grotesque and are also seen in Op. 65. The classical line is present, for example, in the form of each piece. Many of the pieces include balanced phrasing, are in rounded binary or ternary form, and the second piece, “Walk,” contains an elision. The modern line, described as Prokofiev’s own harmonic language that also expresses powerful emotion, includes examples of his ‘wrong note’ writing seen in “Evening.” The toccata or motoric line can be seen in the “Tarantella” and “Tag.” Prokofiev’s lyrical line is prevalent in “Regrets” and “Moonlit Meadow.” The grotesque line, the most difficult to pinpoint and interpret and better described by Prokofiev himself as scherzo-whimsicality, laughter, or mockery, is seen in parts of the A section of “Tarantella” and during mm. 30-32 of “Tag.” It is often helpful to see each piece and its technical and musical challenges laid out in an organized format. A chart has been made and included in Appendix A for this convenience.

All of the difficulties listed in this chapter are skills that the intermediate pianist must master in order to move on with success in the piano repertoire. Some of the proficiencies include using chords in both hands, the ability to play different hand positions and tonalities, frequent and overlapping pedal changes with attention to careful voicing and clarity, ostinato patterns against simple melodic patterns, thick textures in both hands, increased keyboard range and mobility, faster tempos, perceiving and hearing thin-textured passages with long melodic lines, and contrasting articulation within each
hand and between the hands. The mastering of these skills allows the student to proceed to the next ability level with the confidence that more advanced repertoire will be successfully executed and the style of these pieces will have integrity.

**Suggested Order of Study**

Although the Op. 65 collection can be played as a set, the order of difficulty within the collection does not begin at “Morning” and stop at “Moonlit Meadow.” The pieces have been grouped for a suggested order of study based on my analysis in Chapter 3. Factors in determining the order include: technical challenges, musical considerations, number of difficulties within each piece, speed of the piece, and length of the piece. Naturally, hand size and strengths and weaknesses of the student could alter this suggested order. Since some of the pieces are almost too similar in level to separate, I have grouped these 12 pieces into three categories labeled lower group level, middle group level, and advanced group level.

The lower group level consists of “Fairy Tale,” “Morning,” and “Regrets.” Each of these pieces have a slower tempo, repeated melodic and rhythmic patterns, and conjunct melodic qualities. Although “Morning” contains leaps, these leaps are consistently made to the same notes or chords each time they occur, lessening the difficulty.

The middle group level contains “Walk,” “March,” “The Rain and the Rainbow,” “Moonlit Meadow,” and “Evening.” The pieces “Walk” and “March” utilize a quicker tempo that, coupled with large leaps and hand crossings, creates a higher level of difficulty. “Walk” also includes overlapping melodic lines, while “March” includes
abrupt dynamic variances and quick articulation changes. “The Rain and the Rainbow,” “Moonlit Meadow,” and “Evening” are all slower in tempo, but each of their difficulties lie in their other qualities. “Moonlit Meadow” requires that the pianist continue lines between the hands, and, like “The Rain and the Rainbow,” they both contain wide leaps.

The final category is the advanced group level. This grouping level includes “Parade of the Grasshoppers,” “Tarantella,” “Waltz,” and “Tag.” Three of the four pieces, “Tarantella,” “Waltz,” and “Tag” are three pages long, while “Parade of the Grasshoppers” and “Tarantella” includes key signature changes in the middle of each piece. All of the pieces in this grouping level have quicker tempos, many leaps in register or octave displacement, and disjunct melodic lines. The table in Appendix A includes the suggested order of study divided into these three group levels.

Suggestions for Further Study

Based on conclusions gathered in Op. 65, further study is warranted in the music of Prokofiev for intermediate pianists. A possible topic for further study that is beyond the scope of this study includes a pedagogical analysis of Prokofiev’s Tales of an Old Grandmother, Op. 31 or his Four Pieces, Op. 32. Both of these collections are slightly more difficult than the Op. 65 collection and serve as the next possible teaching pieces of Prokofiev’s. It would be interesting to compare the musical and technical challenges found in the Music for Children, Op. 65 collection to those that exist in these other works.

Furthermore, as another recommendation for further study, it is worth examining and comparing the musical and technical challenges found in other Russian composer’s
intermediate-level children’s pieces. While there are many wonderful collections of Russian piano music, including Kabalevsky’s variation sets and his 24 *Pieces for Children*, Op. 39, Gretchaninoff’s sonatines and his children’s pieces Op. 98 and Op. 182, and Khachaturian’s *Sonatina* and *Toccata*, these sets are either easier than Prokofiev’s Op. 65 or not written expressly for children. Collections such as Kabalevsky’s *Children’s Pieces*, Op. 27, Khachaturian’s *Children’s Album* Volumes 1 and 2, Stravinsky’s *The Five Fingers* and Shostakovich’s *Children’s Notebook for Piano*, Op. 69 would be excellent collections for teachers and students to learn with an accompanying pedagogical analysis, as they also serve as pedagogically rich, intermediate collections.

One final suggestion for further study is to test a student’s ability to play Prokofiev’s lower-advanced works *Tales of an Old Grandmother*, Op. 31 or *Four Pieces*, Op. 32 without first learning the *Music for Children* collection. These results could be compared against students who successfully learned and perfected the musical, technical, and interpretive challenges found in Prokofiev’s Op. 65.

In conclusion, it is the hope of the author that these findings are made available to teachers and college pedagogy students through presentations at conventions and college workshops, as well as possible article publications. Although the information given in this study may not be entirely new to every reader, I hope that many will find it refreshing and will be able to use the information and exercises to expose young students to the music of Prokofiev. Although this study guide is a great resource and reference, it is my belief that this study will mostly benefit beginning teachers who are just starting their piano teaching careers, not only by offering specific teaching suggestions, but also
by inspiring them to apply these viewpoints and principles to other intermediate-level teaching pieces.
## APPENDIX A

### Musical and Technical Challenges Chart & Grouped Order of Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Piece</th>
<th>Technical Challenges</th>
<th>Musical Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. 1 &quot;Morning&quot;</strong></td>
<td>Leaps in register</td>
<td>Voicing 2 and 3-voice lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lower Group Level</strong></td>
<td>Expanding/Contracting hand</td>
<td>Expressive markings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2-note slurs</td>
<td>LH melody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hand crossings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Content equality between hands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. 2 &quot;Walk&quot;</strong></td>
<td>Difficult articulation</td>
<td>Legato, well-phrased melody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Middle Group Level</strong></td>
<td>Hand independence</td>
<td>Sophisticated pedaling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wrist rotation</td>
<td>Layered dynamics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Left hand triplets</td>
<td>LH melody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. 3 &quot;Fairy Tale&quot;</strong></td>
<td>Key signature changes</td>
<td>Warm, sensitive tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lower Group Level</strong></td>
<td>&quot;In the key&quot; playing technique</td>
<td>Melodic sound continuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Content equality between hands</td>
<td>Long cresc. and dim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LH melody</td>
<td>Sophisticated pedaling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. 4 &quot;Tarantella&quot;</strong></td>
<td>Variety of articulations</td>
<td>Odd/difficult phrasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advanced Group Level</strong></td>
<td>Key signature changes</td>
<td>Widely-spaced melodic phrasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Melodic leaps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Modulations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Broken triad writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. 5 &quot;Regrets&quot;</strong></td>
<td>Difficult held notes/fingering</td>
<td>Tone color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lower Group Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Character variances</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Musical maturity</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Continue melodic line between hands</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bring out hidden melodic line</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>No. 6 &quot;Waltz&quot;</strong></td>
<td>Waltz-bass pattern</td>
<td>Octave displacement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advanced Group Level</strong></td>
<td>Wrist motion</td>
<td>Widely-spaced melodic phrasing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Counter-melodic material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. 7 &quot;Parade of the Grasshoppers</strong></td>
<td>Quick tempo</td>
<td>Sophisticated pedaling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advanced Group Level</strong></td>
<td>Dotted-figure accuracy</td>
<td>Finger legato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sophisticated articulation</td>
<td>Widely-spaced melodic phrasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Content equality between hands</td>
<td>LH melody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Large leaps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. 8 &quot;The Rain and the Rainbow&quot;</strong></td>
<td>Jump-bass pattern</td>
<td>Programmatic title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Middle Group Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tone color</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Character variances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sophisticated pedaling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 9 &quot;Tag&quot;</td>
<td>Advanced Group Level</td>
<td>Hand crossings</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Finger changes on repeated notes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Left hand treble clef reading</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2- and 3-note slurs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Repeated note finger changes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rests/leaps in melodic material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Quick/extreme dynamic changes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| No. 10 "March" | Middle Group Level | Difficult articulation |
|               |                     | Layering of voices |
|               |                      | Grace notes |
|               |                      | Hand crossings |
|               |                      | Finger legato work |
|               |                      | Introduction to March genre |
|               |                      | Sophisticated dynamics |

| No. 11 "Evening" | Middle Group Level | Sophisticated articulation |
|                  |                     | Key signature changes |
|                  |                      | Broken triad writing |
|                  |                      | Prokofiev's 'wrong note' writing |
|                  |                      | Difficult/widely spaced phrasing |
|                  |                      | Musical maturity |

| No. 12 "Moonlit Meadow" | Middle Group Level | Content equality between hands |
|                         |                     | Broken triad writing |
|                         |                      | Double notes |
|                         |                      | Off-beat triads |
|                         |                      | Continue line between hands |
|                         |                      | "In the key" playing technique |
|                         |                      | Sophisticated pedaling |
|                         |                      | Bring out hidden melodic line |
|                         |                      | Continue melodic line between hands |
|                         |                      | LH melody |


Scores


