ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: Mapping Techniques as a Means of Enhancing the Pianist’s Memorization Process of Karol Szymanowski’s *Masques*, op.34

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At the beginning of the 19th century, Hungarian pianist and composer Franz Liszt established a tradition of performing piano recitals by memory. Despite that practice it has been common for 20th-century piano solo compositions to be performed with a score. Because of their structural and harmonic complexity, a significant number of piano works written in the 20th century are much more difficult to learn and memorize. Navigating through traditional performance training, the majority of piano repertoire studied is focused on baroque, classical, and romantic works. As a result, pianists are more accustomed to learning and memorizing compositions that follow the traditional tonal harmonic model. Many of the 20th-century composers moved away from the tonal system by experimenting with new sonorities while searching for their own original musical language. The results of their work often present a significant challenge to pianists whose music education focused mainly on tonal compositions.

*Masques*, op.34 by Karol Szymanowski is an example of this kind of post-tonal composition. I believe part of the reason pieces like *Masques* are seldom performed by students and concert pianists is because of how difficult they are to memorize. In my dissertation I sought
to introduce practical mapping techniques that helped with the memorization of structure and the texture of *Masques*.

This dissertation does not provide a traditional formal or harmonic analysis. Instead, I approached the piece from the perspective of a student or performer who is aiming to learn and memorize it. The mapping techniques introduced in this dissertation help reduce the time required for memorizing the work and serve as a guide to effective memorization of post-tonal piano music. After I learned, memorized, performed, and recorded *Masques*, I analyzed aspects of structure and texture and demonstrated how specific mapping techniques benefit the process of memorization while contributing to a more successful performance. Techniques included: 1. Visualization of a piece’s structure by distinguishing its sectional and motivic relationships, 2. Creation of strategic memory cues and reference points, 3. Distinguishing recurring keyboard and finger patterns, and 4. Identification of tonal and chromatic elements of the texture.