

S e r g e i
R A C H M A N I N O V

P R E L U D E S

O p u s 3 2 N ° 1 C major



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Sergei RACHMANINOV

1873 - 1943

P R E L U D E Opus 32 N° 1 C major

The composition of 24 preludes covering all the major and minor keys is a huge challenge and Rachmaninov's contribution was spread over 20 years. In spite of the demands of an active and successful stage career at the piano and on the podium, with limited time for composing, he rapidly completed Op 32 between August and September 1910. These tone poems created in his middle years reveal an even more improvisatory style, often with an exclusive atmosphere and no precise form. Unlike Op 23, they are without dedication.

At the age of 19 his celebrated C# minor prelude gained so much success that his public would not allow him to leave the stage unless he performed it, yet again, as an encore. He believed that any of the 23 preludes following this youthful first essay in the genre were far superior, although

one must admit that he had certainly hit upon a unique formula to excite his audiences. However, the "Bells of Moscow" would cause him intense irritation.

In December 1911 Rachmaninov first played pieces from opus 32, and during his subsequent career as a pianist he regularly included individual preludes in concert programmes, especially N° 5, 8 and 12.

Given that the composer was born in 1873, an age of great artistic individuality, it is not surprising that he typically performed without wholly respecting the score. His choice of tempi is quite idiosyncratic and this edition reflects some of the more effective deviations and the editor's preferences, sometimes indicated with an asterisk*.

Some of the phrasing, dynamics and agogic markings have been modified and a zealous student will need to consult the original Russian Gutheil or Robert Threlfall's Boosey & Hawkes 1992 edition.

As Brigitte François-Sappey pertinently states :
"many of these preludes demonstrate the 'new poetic age' of Schumann and the songs without words of Mendelssohn, redefined by a Slavic, post-Chopin sensibility, and the energy of a pianistic force."



This first prelude in C is marked *allegro vivace* with minim beats. A brief typically chromatic creation — mostly *forte* with a soft central section moving swiftly through distant harmonies on its short journey back to the home key.

5-13 *sostenuto* pedal suggestions are entirely editorial

16 there is a slight modification at the end of the bar

19-25 barlines have been modified

34-35 *acciaccaturas* are editorial

PRELUDE

Op 32 N° 1

allegro vivace

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9 *f* *m.d.*

11 *m.d.*

13 *f* *Sost. Ped* *..*..*

15 *p* *8va*

17 *8va* *** *1* *2* *3* *2* *1*

System 1, measures 20-21. The right hand features a melodic line with triplets and slurs. The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes. A *mf* dynamic marking is present in measure 21.

System 2, measures 22-23. The right hand continues the melodic development with slurs and fingerings. The left hand features a more active bass line with eighth and sixteenth notes.

System 3, measures 24-25. Measure 24 includes a *f* dynamic marking. The right hand has sustained chords. The left hand has a melodic line with slurs and fingerings. Measure 25 features a *f* dynamic and a sixteenth-note triplet.

System 4, measures 26-27. The right hand consists of sustained chords. The left hand has a melodic line with slurs. A *m.d.* (morendo) dynamic marking is present in measure 27.

System 5, measures 28-29. The right hand consists of sustained chords. The left hand has a melodic line with slurs and fingerings. A *m.d.* (morendo) dynamic marking is present in measure 29.

Measures 30-31. The score is in G major (one sharp). Measure 30 features a treble staff with eighth-note chords and a bass staff with a sustained low G and moving bass notes. Measure 31 continues the treble staff's eighth-note pattern and the bass staff's movement. Dynamics include *mf* and *f*.

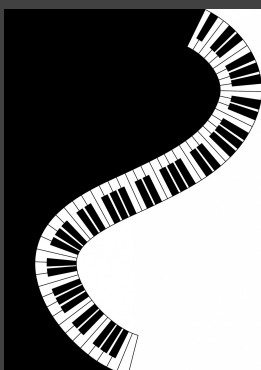
Measures 32-33. Measure 32 starts with a *ff* dynamic in the bass staff. Measure 33 features a *mf* dynamic. Both measures show complex chordal textures in the treble and moving lines in the bass. Fingerings (1, 2) are indicated.

Measures 34-35. Measure 34 has a *f* dynamic. Measure 35 features a *f* dynamic and includes a 4-measure rest in the bass staff. The treble staff has complex chords and moving lines.

Measure 36. The treble staff has a 4-measure rest, and the bass staff has a 4-measure rest. The measure concludes with a final chord in the treble staff.

poco meno mosso

Measures 37-40. Measure 37 starts with a *mf* dynamic. Measure 38 features a *p* dynamic. Measure 39 includes a *m.s.* (more slowly) marking. Measure 40 ends with a *p* dynamic. The score shows complex chordal textures and moving lines in both staves.



R A C H M A N I N O V

P R E L U D E S

O p u s 3 2 N ° 1

p u b l i s h e d J u n e 2 0 2 0

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