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Spring 2018

## Complete solo piano suites by Rodion Shchedrin

Wenjuan Peng  
*University of Iowa*

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COMPLETE SOLO PIANO SUITES BY RODION SHCHEDRIN

by

Wenjuan Peng

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts  
degree in the  
Graduate College of  
The University of Iowa

May 2018

Thesis Supervisor: Professor Ksenia Nosikova

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Graduate College  
The University of Iowa  
Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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D.M.A. THESIS

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This is to certify that the D.M.A. thesis of

Wenjuan Peng

has been approved by the Examining Committee for  
the thesis requirement for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree  
at the May 2018 graduation.

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## **PUBLIC ABSTRACT**

The final product of this recording project is a high-quality recording of Rodion Shchedrin's complete solo piano suites: *Diary*, *Questions* and *Artless Pages*, as well as two solo pieces: *Sonatina Concertante* and *A la Pizzicato*. These works were composed by Rodion Shchedrin (b. Moscow, 16 Dec 1932) between 2002 and 2009. Only *Diary* has been released as a commercial CD; there are no professional recordings of any of the others. The goal of this recording project is to promote Shchedrin's compositions to pianists and audiences of the United States and worldwide, and to specifically garner attention to his piano works.

As one of the most well-known contemporary composers and pianists in Russia, Shchedrin combines elements of Russian folklore styles, Baroque-inspired polyphony and counterpoint, neo-classical and jazz styles, and twelve-tone techniques in his vast oeuvre. This unusual mixture of compositional methods is demonstrated particularly well in his piano compositions. Shchedrin's unique and often very demanding language is complex and difficult to perfect, as it not only presents performers with various musical and technical challenges but also forces them to expand their creative independence in searching for interpretational solutions.

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## I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### I. Statement of Purpose

The final product of this recording project is a high-quality recording of Rodion Shchedrin's complete solo piano suites: *Diary*, *Questions*, and *Artless Pages*, as well as two solo pieces: *Sonatina Concertante* and *A la Pizzicato*. These works were composed by Rodion Shchedrin (b. Moscow, 16 Dec 1932) between 2002 and 2009. Only *Diary* has been released as a part of a commercially produced CD (Ekaterina Mechetina, Schedrin Shakhidi. Empire of Music B00320C1Y8 2009); there are no professional recordings of any others. My recording is, therefore, the first to present Rodion Shchedrin's works for solo piano written during that time frame. The purpose of my recording project is to promote Shchedrin's compositions to pianists and audiences of the United States and worldwide and to, specifically, garner attention to his piano works.

Rodion Shchedrin is a composer, pianist, and a social activist in Russia. He was born in 1932 into a family of professional musicians. His father, Konstantin Shchedrin, graduated from the Moscow Conservatory as a composer and pianist and also played the violin and viola.<sup>1</sup> During his childhood, Rodion Shchedrin attended the Moscow Choir School and then studied at the Moscow Conservatory. After his graduation, he continued his post-graduate compositional studies with Professor Shaporin until 1959. Shchedrin taught composition at the Moscow Conservatory until 1969 when he started working as a free-lance musician. He became an Honorary Chairman of the Composers' Union of the Russian Federation in 1990, succeeding Dmitri Shostakovich. He served in this organization for 17 years.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Shchedrin, Rodion, *Autobiographical Memories* p. 9-12

<sup>2</sup> Kholopova, Valentina. "Shchedrin, Rodion Konstantinovich." *Grove Music Online*. 24 Nov. 2017.  
<<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>>

As one of the most well-known contemporary composers and pianists in Russia, Shchedrin combines elements of Russian folklore styles, Baroque-inspired polyphony and counterpoint, neo-classical and jazz styles, and twelve-tone techniques. This unusual mixture of compositional methods is demonstrated particularly well in his piano compositions.

Rodion Shchedrin wrote extensively for piano. Among the highlights of his piano works are seven piano concertos which continue the traditions of Mikhail Glinka's *Kamarinskaya* (the first orchestral work based entirely on a Russian folk song) with their colorful orchestration, folk-sounding melodies, and energetic dance-like rhythms. His second Piano Concerto employs a 12-note series, while the finale of the same work includes a jazz improvisation. The third Concerto is set in the form of variations on a theme. The fourth is based only on sharp keys (hence the '*Sharp Keys*' subtitle) and is highly virtuosic in both of the movements. Other important piano works include the *Polifonicheskiy Tetrads* (Polyphonic Notebook), a set of 25 polyphonic preludes which form a textbook of polyphony, and *Twenty-Four Preludes and Fugues*. Both collections are examples of Shchedrin's interest in polyphonic traditions of J.S. Bach.

## II. Repertoire Listing

My passion for Shchedrin's music began when I watched a video of the esteemed pianist Yuja Wang give the premier performance of the piano suite *Artless Pages* at the *Verbier Festival* in Switzerland on August 1, 2009. This was my first encounter with Shchedrin's works, and the performance sparked my continued exploration of his compositions. Shchedrin composed seven works for piano between 2002-2009. Interestingly, four out of seven pieces are suites: *Diary*, 2002; *Questions*, 2003; *Hommage à Chopin* (eleven pieces for four pianos), 2005; and *Artless Pages*,

2009.<sup>3</sup> I chose the three piano suites *Questions*, *Diary* and *Artless Pages*, and the two solo pieces *A la Pizzicato* and *Sonatina Concentrate* for this recording project since these works exemplify Shchedrin's compositional style to the fullest and contain very idiomatic writing for the piano. They require formidable technical fluency, call for an imaginative expanse of color, and employ swift mood changes from movement to movement. They also present significant challenges to the performer because of the complex rhythmic patterns within each piece. All three piano suites that I recorded use extensive serial techniques which is one of Shchedrin's preferred methods of composing. This recording consists of the following:

*Questions* - 11 pieces for piano (2003)

1.	0:54
2.	1:10
3.	0:32
4.	1:18
5.	0:22
6.	1:27
7.	1:24
8.	1:35
9.	1:19
10.	2:00
11.	0:44

*Diary* - 7 pieces for piano (2002)

<i>I. Sostenuto assai &amp; II. L'istesso tempo</i>	4:19
<i>III. Allegretto moderato (in ritmo)</i>	1:30
<i>IV. Allegro, ma non troppo</i>	1:07
<i>V. Lento, sempre poco rubato</i>	3:13
<i>VI. Presto leggiero</i>	1:15
<i>VII. Sostenuto alla Campana</i>	3:40

*Artless Pages* - 7 Impromptus for piano (2009)

<i>I. Romantic Etude (Staccato Etude)</i>	1:31
<i>II. Unforgotten Micaela</i>	2:09
<i>III. Music to Chekhov's Play</i>	3:59

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<sup>3</sup> Shchedrin, Rodion, *Autobiographical Memories* p. 264-265

<i>IV. The Tsar's Cortage</i>	2:36
<i>V. Aria</i>	3:44
<i>VI. Reminiscences of Old-Age Romances...</i>	3:42
<i>VII. The Politician Speaks...!</i>	3:47
 <i>Sonatina Concertante (2005)</i>	
I.	2:34
II.	7:21
 <i>A la Pizzicato (2005)</i>	 3:42
Total: 62:55 minutes	

### III. Introduction of the Works

#### I. *Questions*

The first suite, *Questions* (2003), was composed for pianist Olli Mustonen, and contains 11 short movements. The first performance took place in London (UK) on October 9, 2004, at Queen Elizabeth Hall. The most intriguing quality of this cycle is that it gives the performer a lot of freedom to uniquely interpret the work. For example, Shchedrin provides no tempo or metronome markings; his only instructions are that performers should choose their tempos, dynamics, and phrasings with the musical text being only of 'basic' significance. Thus, to quote the composer himself “the performer is free to erect a building of his or her own construction, following the whims and call of the will and imagination: obeying one's own individual sense of tempo and sound contrasts, one's own logic of extension in time. In this work, I trust the interpreter's creative initiative, imagination and intuition.”<sup>4</sup> Shchedrin creates diversity throughout *Questions* by varying duration, texture, and pitch range, and extensive of suspensions. The overall harmonic language is influenced by serialism.

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<sup>4</sup> Shchedrin, Rodion. 2003. *Question*. Mainz. Schott Music International. p. 6.

This piano suite is full of hidden references to the works and styles of other composers.

Movement No.1: In this short nine measures-long movement, Shchedrin creates an interesting effect of suspending sound in time when he employs 12 full fermatas and only five harmonic changes. These colorful sustained chords subtly recall Debussy's *Clair de Lune* and also highlight Shchedrin's imitation of Russian church bells and aleatoric (by chance) methods of synthesis.

Movement No. 2 employs a non-legato articulation. Overall, the texture loosely consists of four layers, where top three layers mainly hold suspended notes for several measures while the left-hand introduces a jazzy "walking bass" row.

Movement No. 3 has no bar lines, and is, perhaps, the most conventionally serialistic: Shchedrin establishes all 12 tones early on, then employs imitation and sequences, repeating passages and inverting others. The monophonic line of staccato 16<sup>th</sup> notes sextuplets is interrupted by irregular chords suddenly played by the left-hand. The rhythmic drive and short articulation are similar to Prokofiev's style. Though seemingly random, the pattern introduces two contrarily-moving melodies, with the top notes being A-flat, B-flat, C, D-flat, E-flat, F and D, C, B, A-sharp, G-sharp, F-sharp as the bottom notes.

Movement No. 4: The pedal point of sustained bass chords once again imitates the bell-like sounds and is reminiscent of Debussy's *Pagodes*.

Movement No. 5 is similar to the third with its fast-moving Prokofiev-style non-legato articulation. Shchedrin creates a dark mysterious atmosphere here by using only the lowest register as indicated in the key signature of two bass clefs.

Movement No. 6 brings to memory the *The Oxcart* from Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* with its plodding heavy and slow ostinato left-hand figurations. The texture of this movement is richly layered and gradually builds up and culminates in the final eruption of energy.

Movement No. 7 again references the *Pictures at an Exhibition* by introducing whole note sonorities reminiscent of those in *Catacombs*. It consists of alternating chromatic chords clusters and a rhythmically-mirrored fourteen measures long phrase.

Movement No. 8 stands alone among other movements of the suite with its episodic free flowing range of highly contrasted moods and colors. Shchedrin's imitation of the harp's sound interrupted by intense crescendos and the overall feeling of spontaneity recall the spirit of Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies*.

Movement No. 9 is a palindrome in which the twenty chordal clusters slowly ascend to reach the central section of four free-standing chords and then descend in reverse order.

In Movement No. 10, Shchedrin uses polyphonic textures in which two quintuplet motives operate as subject and counter-subject similar to Bach's inventions and fugues. The persistent for this movement rocking rhythm of an eighth note followed by a sustained dotted half within a quintuplet beat is one frequented by Shchedrin, and can be found in many other pieces, including *Sonatina Concertante*.

Movement No. 11 concludes the suite on a highly energetic note: Shchedrin uses groups of short, repeated chords separated by long rests to create tension. Simple crisp grace notes randomly appear throughout the movement and contribute to the slightly offbeat tone of the march. These characteristics recall Prokofiev's *March* from *Love for Three Oranges*.

## II. *Diary*

The second suite, *Diary* (2002), was written for pianist Anna Gourari, and the first performance was in Moscow on December 5, 2002.<sup>5</sup> By his own personal admission as a composer and pianist, these seven pieces serve as Shchedrin's autobiography.<sup>6</sup> *Diary* is comprised of seven movements which are performed without breaks (*attacca*), though there is a composer's indication that they can each be performed separately. The individual movements do not have their own names and could be considered as numbered *Diary* entries. Movement 1, 2, 5, and 7 are performed in a non-periodical variable meter.

The first movement, *Sostenuto assai*, is the shortest. This five-measure movement recalls Mikhail Glinka's opera *Ruslan and Lyudmila*, in that Chernomor's motive, F, E-flat, C-sharp, B, A, is used as a descending bass figure.

The second movement, *L'istesso tempo*, imitates the tinkling sound of a little bell with its very soft dynamic range (*pp* to *ppp*) and constantly running fast and *leggiero* passages shared between both hands. It dies away with a *morendo* at the end.

The third movement, *Allegretto moderato (in ritmo)* acts as a contrast to the fast-staccato notes of the 2nd movement with its very light, clear, even, and legato articulation. Here Shchedrin recreates the sound of "bells" by using the perfect 4<sup>th</sup> interval throughout nearly the entire movement. The composer's remark [*in 2*] of *pp grazioso* at the beginning of the section points to the lightness of a bell rung in the distance and reminds us of the beginning measures of the *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No. 2* by Rachmaninov.

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<sup>5</sup> Shchedrin, Rodion. 2002. *Diary*. Mainz. Schott Music International. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG 2017 < <https://en.schott-music.com/shop/diary-no133706.html> >

The fourth movement, *Allegro, ma non troppo*, employs consistently repetitive staccato articulation making it very similar to the second movement. Shchedrin creates a very mobile feeling by using indications such as *senza Ped, stacc.*, *Sotto voce, leggierissimo* with a dynamic nuance of *pp* and an overall faster tempo.

The fifth movement, *Lento, sempre poco rubato*, returns to a more lyrical mood with a solo cantabile melody played in the top voice. Shchedrin also marks the movement with several breath marks (') and fermatas, which makes it sound and feel like a singer singing a song with accompaniment.

The sixth movement, *Presto leggiero*, uses staccato notes as a short introduction followed by a contrasting polyphonic toccata-like texture of the main material, accelerated as the section develops (i.e. short eighth notes become sixteenth notes). This movement ends with parallel sevenths descending into the silence as if reflecting on an unfinished entry in the *Diary*.

The last piece of this piano cycle, No. 7, *Sostenuto alla Campana*, sums up the development of the whole suite. The form is ABCA'B', where three contrasting ideas. The A and A' sections, with their subtitle *Campane*, reference the bell-like chord which echoes when played alongside the other sonorities. The B and B' sections, marked *Coro*, are reminiscent of a chorus singing a descending line of whole tones. I believe the descending sound of the "chorale" fragment is intended to symbolize the Holy Spirit and Angelic singing. The C section has a polyphonic texture. The final return of the *Coro* line, now in ascending motion, concludes the whole suite with a feeling of 'unfulfillment' and loneliness.

### III. *Artless Pages*

*Artless Pages*, was the solo piano work that Shchedrin composed in 2009. Each of its seven movements have individual programmatic titles: I. *Romantic Etude*; II. *Unforgotten Micaela*; III. *Music to Chekhov's Play*; IV. *The Tsar's Cortage*; V. *Aria*; VI. *Reminiscences of Old-Age Romances...*; VII. *The politician Speaks...!*. In this post-modern piece, Shchedrin appears to seek a return to romantic expression. While significantly shorter than some of his other works, *Artless Pages* closely resembles Schumann's *Kinderszenen*, Op. 15.<sup>7</sup> The most obvious connection could be found in the titles of the final movements with Shchedrin's "The Politician Speaks" and Schumann's "The Poet Speaks."

Movement No. 1, *Romantic Etude*, (*Staccato Etude* pays a clear homage to the Romantic period. The ostinato triplets generate the impression of continuous motion which is highlighted by the insertion of the melodic notes. Shchedrin's use of staccato is also notable in this section (hence the subtitle of "Staccato Etude"). The dissonant short and rapid notes create tension.

Movement No. 2, *Unforgotten Micaela*, is a reference to Georges Bizet's opera *Carmen*. The section is slow and lyrical in reflection of the tragic ending of Micaela's love relationship in the opera. The recurring *ritenuto* adds a thoughtful character to the music. This movement is the only one which bears Shchedrin's personal dedication (in this case German composer Wilfried Hiller).

Movement No. 3, *Music to Chekhov's Play*, shows Shchedrin's devotion to Russian culture and his continuous admiration of the Russian short fiction writer and playwright Anton Chekhov,

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<sup>7</sup> Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG 2017 <https://en.schott-music.com/shop/artless-pages-no262484.html>.

as evidenced by his previously composed ballets *The Lady with the Little Dog* (1985) and *The Seagull* (1979), both named after Chekhov's stories. In this movement, Shchedrin frequently uses indications such as *rubato*, *a tempo* and *ma poco sempre rubato* (or "always a little rubato") to allow more space for the performer's discretion to perform as an 'actor' in this dramatic play.

Movement No. 4, *The Tsar's Cortege*, is marked *tempo di marcia*. With the title word *Tsar* alluding to the old Emperor of Russia and the use of steady tempo and rigid rhythmic figures, Shchedrin creates a feeling of a royal procession and presents the style of imperial highness in this strict march-like movement.

Movement No. 5, *Aria*, is written within the operatic aria tradition with its expressive cantabile singing melody supported by a lyrical and smooth accompaniment. Numerous indications of *legato* and *sostenuto* allow the melodic phrases to "sing" with an aria-like dramatic feeling.

Movement No. 6, *Reminiscences of Old-Age Romances*, calls for a flexible interpretation. Shchedrin directs this movement to be almost "improvised", as stated in the indication of *Adagio lento, sempre poco rubato quasi improvvisato*. It employs several time signatures changes, such as 4/8, 5/8, 6/8, 8/8, 10/8, and requires an articulation different from any other movement; the quasi-guitar indication also points to imitation of a baroque or classical guitar, lending a beautiful warm and velvety tone to the texture.

The final movement, *The Politician Speaks...!* represents Shchedrin's commentary on the Soviet era that expired in 1991 in which Russian politics were dominated by bureaucracy and an all-powerful leadership. Shchedrin's stormy finale contrasts with the lyrical final movement of Schumann's *Kinderszenen*. Clashing diatonic and dissonant harmonies, abrupt changes of

gestures, and exemplified dynamic ranges could be perceived as sarcastic musical allusions to disputing and accusatory politicians. The movement ends with a piercing 12 measures in the high register and a loud knocking on the piano wood panel. In my opinion, this appears to be a satiric reference to the tradition of knocking on wood to ward off bad luck.

#### *IV. Sonatina Concertante*

Shchedrin composed *Sonatina Concertante* for his wife Maya Plisetskaya and performed it for her in Moscow in 2005 for her birthday. “The piece is characterized by its cantabile elements and tight staccato rhythm with pedal point, and is particularly attractive for amateur pianists because it is easier to play than his other works.”<sup>8</sup>

While the two movements of this *Sonatina Concertante* are marked independently as *Andante* and *Allegro articolato*, the relationship between them is quite close in that the material of the first movement appears at important structural junctions of the second movement, (e.g. before the Recapitulation and the Codetta). Similar treatment of thematic material can be found in the first movement of the Beethoven’s *Pathétique sonata*, Op.13, in which slow chords of the *Grave* introduction reappear within the *Sonata Allegro*.

The first movement is representative of Shchedrin’s style with its frequent uninterrupted quintuplet passages, darkly colored suspensions with strong dissonances, and elements of Russian folk-dance music.

Shchedrin uses an A-flat pedal point throughout most of the second movement, shifting its register from bass to tenor to alto. This movement contains two main contrasting ideas: one is very

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<sup>8</sup> Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG 2017 < <https://en.schott-music.com/shop/sonatina-concertante-no223101.html> >.

precise repeated eighth notes staccato figures combined with more improvised left-hand melodies. The other one is a faster passage with running 16<sup>th</sup> triplets. The final section concludes with the lyrical *Lento* material bringing back the feeling of melancholy.

V. *A la Pizzicato*

*A la pizzicato* is a short solo piano piece that centers around imitating the pizzicato string technique (i.e. plucking strings). Shchedrin similarly used this technique in his piece *Balalaika* (1997) for solo violin. His fondness for this effect might be attributed to his love for Spanish music and guitar-like sonorities (he wrote seven pieces inspired by Spanish music due to this affection). His idea of imitating a technique of another instrument makes this piece unique and gives it a special folklore effect.

This piece is in ABA' form. In the outer sections, rapid staccato marked passages alternate between two hands. Large leaps and consistent short articulation create an intense and dramatic atmosphere. Like the A sections, the B section continues to pass the fast staccato 16<sup>th</sup> notes between both hands but now interrupted by a few unordered chromatic single-trill 8th notes imitating a guitar-like pizzicato sound.

## II. RECORDING PROCESS

To prepare for my recording project, I purchased scores from the German publisher *Schott Music*. I also contacted the *Maya Plisetskaya Rodion Shchedrin Foundation*, inquiring if any of these five compositions have ever been recorded. The foundation confirmed that only *Diary* was recorded by Ekaterina Mechetina; it was released on the *Empire of Music* label in 2009 (B00320C1Y8). While the absence of existing recordings made my project very exciting and valuable, it also presented me with a great challenge as I had to make all interpretational decisions independently.

The recording project was conducted in the following three stages:

Fall 2017:

- a. Preparation of *Diary* and *Questions*
- b. Recital on Oct.3rd-*Questions* and *Diary* No. 1-No. 3 and No. 7
- c. Recording *Diary* and *Questions* (December 2017)

Winter 2018:

- a. Editing recordings of *Diary* and *Questions*
- b. Writing complete liner notes
- c. Learning the rest of the repertoire-*Artless Pages*, *A la Pizzicato*, and *Sonatina Concertante*

Spring 2018:

a. Preparation of the *Artless Pages*, *A la Pizzicato*, and *Sonatina Concertante*

Performing them in piano seminar and for my private students

b. Recording *Artless Pages*, *A la Pizzicato*, and *Sonatina Concertante* (Feb 2018)

c. Editing the recordings of *Artless Pages*, *A la Pizzicato*, and *Sonatina Concertante*

III. LINER NOTES

**Questions - 11 pieces for piano (2003) 12:45 min**

1.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/3fdv-e262>
2.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/0pxp-mp83>
3.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/tbny-3g68>
4.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/f19v-kk27>
5.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/cvax-xq45>
6.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/kjqd-a392>
7.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/sbm1-a687>
8.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/7hve-r988>
9.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/4gq1-2d04>
10.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/depX-7g59>
11.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/w0ym-py33>

**Diary - 7 pieces for piano (2002) 15:04 min**

- I. Sostenuto assai & II. L'istesso tempo*  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/tejk-sn90>
- III. Allegretto moderato (in ritmo)*  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/2mbr-wk16>
- IV. Allegro, ma non troppo*  
DOI : <https://doi.org/10.25820/vym8-gf57>
- V. Lento, sempre poco rubato*  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/2gem-5a29>
- VI. Presto leggiero*  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/041m-gj03>
- VII. Sostenuto alla Campana*  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/akej-cx06>

**Artless Pages - 7 Impromptus for piano (2009) 21:29 min**

*I. Romantic Etude (Staccato Etude)*

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/3xwr-6y44>

*II. Unforgotten Micaela*

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/k9s6-1041>

*III. Music to Chekhov's Play*

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/rm43-xh75>

*IV. The Tsar's Cortage*

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/c69p-4b59>

*V. Aria*

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/bbjp-1e49>

*VI. Reminiscences of Old-Age Romances...*

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/w81j-qd57>

*VII. The Politician Speaks...!*

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/81xk-ne50>

**Sonatina Concertante (2005) 9:55 min**

*I.*

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/g6cm-fh77>

*II.*

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/4d0e-0c09>

**A la Pizzicato (2005) 3:42 min**

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/nfzf-rm35>

*I. Questions*

The first suite, *Questions* (2003), was composed for pianist Olli Mustonen and contains 11 short movements. The most intriguing quality of this cycle is that it gives the performer more freedom to uniquely interpret the work. For example, Shchedrin provides no tempo or metronome markings. His only instructions are that the performer is free to choose tempo, dynamics, and phrasing. The harmonic language is influenced by serialism. Shchedrin creates diversity throughout *Questions* by varying duration, texture, and pitch range, and extensive use of suspension. This piece is full of hidden references to the works and styles of other composers, including Debussy in the first and fourth movements, Prokofiev in the third, fifth and eleventh movements, Mussorgsky in the sixth and seventh, Liszt in the eighth, and Bach in the tenth.

## II. *Diary*

The second suite, *Diary* (2002), was written for pianist Anna Gourari and, by Shchedrin's own personal admission, serves as his autobiography. The seven individual movements were written to be played continuously but may be performed individually if desired. There are close connections in style and technique between individual movements: the first movement is similar to the fifth movement, but the latter is more contrapuntal; the third and seventh are alike in articulation; the repeated single note in the second movement is the same as the staccato repeated chords in the fourth. Interestingly, the movements do not have their own names, perhaps representing numbered diary entries.

## III. *Artless Pages*

In this postmodern suite, Shchedrin seeks to return to romantic expression. All seven movements have individual programmatic titles: I. *Romantic Etude*; II. *Unforgotten Micaela*; III. *Music to Chekhov's Play*; IV. *The Tsar's Cortege*; V. *Aria*; VI. *Reminiscences of Old-Age Romances...*; VII. *The politician Speaks...!*. The work closely resembles Schumann's *Kinderszenen*, Op. 15, most clearly in the titles of the final movements (i.e. Shchedrin's "The Politician Speaks" compared to Schumann's "The Poet Speaks"). The first two movements, *Romantic Etude* and *Unforgotten Micaela* respectively reference the Romantic period and George Bizet's opera *Carmen*. The third movement is rhythmically rigid and march-like, while the fifth is like a lyrical operatic aria. The quasi-guitar indication of the sixth movement suggests the imitation of a baroque or classical guitar. The final movement, *The Politician Speaks...!* represents Shchedrin's commentary on Soviet era politics, during which Russia was dominated by bureaucracy and an all-powerful leadership.

#### *IV. Sonatina Concertante*

Shchedrin composed *Sonatina Concertante* for his wife, Maya Plisetskaya, and performed it for her in Moscow 2005 for her birthday. The piece is characterized by its cantabile elements and tight staccato rhythm with pedal point. Its treatment of contrasting thematic material is similar to that of the first movement of the Beethoven's *Pathétique Sonata*, Op.13, in which a material from the *Grave* introduction appears within the *Sonata Allegro*. This piece is particularly attractive for amateur pianists because it is easier to play than his other works.

#### *V. A la Pizzicato*

This a short solo piano piece that centers around imitating the pizzicato string technique (i.e. plucked strings). Shchedrin similarly used this technique in his piece *Balalaika* (1997) for solo violin. His fondness for this effect might be attributed to his love for Spanish music and guitar-like sonorities (he wrote seven pieces inspired by Spanish music due to this affection). His idea of imitating a technique of another instrument makes this piece unique, and gives it a special folklore sounding effect.

#### IV. IMPACTS OF THIS RECORDING PROJECT

Shchedrin's music has been performed throughout both Europe and Russia in concerts, recitals, competitions, and festivals and is often played and recorded by well-known performers from around the world (e.g. Yuri Simonov, Alexander Lazarev, Lidiya Nikolskaya, Yuja Wang, and Seong-Jin Cho). However, despite his popularity with both European and Russian audiences, not many people are familiar with his works in the United States.

I believe that the recording of Shchedrin's music not will not only have a big impact on my career development, but also promote it to the community of listeners who haven't heard his music. Shchedrin's music was very demanding and difficult for me to perfect, but my passion for his music encouraged me to try new style techniques. I believe that the pieces presented me with various technical challenges and expanded my musical independence by forcing me to find solutions for interpretation of Shchedrin's very complex and unique language. I also intend to pursue studies of his solo piano music in the future.

To achieve the goal of this recording project, I went through the following procedures: researched the selected composition, analyzed the compositional characteristics and techniques, practiced every piece, performed the works, and recorded the performance. This recording project challenged me as both a pianist and a doctoral candidate and provided an excellent avenue for other potential recordings in the future.

Upon researching for materials related to this repertoire and Shchedrin as a composer, I found that the number of available resources is very limited and even less is written in English. The paper I wrote for this project will contribute to the existing scholarship on Shchedrin, and my recording will help performers, audiences and pedagogues to learn more about Shchedrin's piano

compositions and contribute to the concert repertoire of advanced pianists. After the completion of this recording, I will continue playing concerts featuring Shchedrin's works in both China and America and seek a contract with a professional recording company to publish this recording. Additionally, I will incorporate this recording process in my future teaching experience with the hope that the knowledge gained from this project will inspire and guide my students to pursue their own professional diversity.

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