

**Chapter 1 : Prokofiev: Piano Sonatas Nos. 2 & 8, Romeo and Juliet; Shostakovich: Preludes, Op. 34**

*Sergei Prokofiev Piano Sonata No 8 in B flat major, Op 84 1 Andante dolce 2 Andante sognando 3 Vivace Evgeny Kissin, piano.*

Sixteen years passed before he composed his next Sonata: This work was going to be the first of a series of three to be called "The War Sonatas". He cherished the idea of thinking about the Sonatas 6, 7 and 8 as a huge "sonata" in eleven movements. Finished in , the Sonata number 7 in B-flat major op. Despite its huge proportions and presenting some serious technical challenges to the performer, Piano Sonata No. The settling down and purification of the last period of Prokofiev can be clearly seen in that work. The first performer other than the composer was Sviatoslav Richter. The young pianist relates: I have never heard anything like this before. With a barbaric boldness the composer breaks with the romantic role models to give life to his music with the devastating urges of the twentieth century. Here, Prokofiev, undoubtedly impressed by the world in war, gets into a kind of violence in his musical language as well as a sort of radicalism unseen in his works since he returned to the USSR. *Allegro moderato* The theme, in alternating minor - major thirds is hard, nervous and sharp edged. It is also one of the most characteristic ones of the composer. After a section of alternating octaves and chords in both hands, piano, a second theme appears with an amazing purity and softness. A tender melody in unison at both hands. The *écriture*, from linear, becomes gradually compacted and tormented. Troubling triplets at the low range conclude the exposition section of the movement. In the development section, the mixture of threads and anxious drives is expressed with repeated notes. The dramatic content of this section is based on the opposition of the lyrical second theme always scattered with the "demoniacal" thirds which constitute the main element of the first theme. The cruelty of the discourse raises with harsh chords and glissandos. Then the tension falls to more serene harmonies and the development section also ends with the staccato triplet figures at the basses. The shortened re-exposition, taken one octave lower, re-states all those chaotic visions. *Allegretto* The second movement, in E major, is somewhat relaxed. Staccato chords present a wandering melody. A definitely vertical *écriture* alternated with a melody in large steps. At the key signature change, from E major to C major, repeated chords over a strong left hand melody bring back the first E major theme with fast falling arpeggios in the left hand. The middle part, *Meno mosso*, is a melodic and linear one, yet it also includes elements from the previous theme. With flexible and amorous chromaticism, it, nevertheless brings in the middle section a darker shade with the *ostinato* basses even though the elegiac right hand "tries to keep going. Between its various appearances other themes appear. The middle section, *Andante*, presents the first theme of the first movement, but as a distant remembrance: That last one will end the Sonata in an aggressive pacing. Shorter than the previous one, it is, nevertheless, analogous to it by its mixture of sheer anxiety, top rage and also meditative and lyrical sections. The first movement does not have a key signature, the others do have E major and B flat major keys. The sonata was premiered in Moscow on January 18, by Sviatoslav Richter. *Allegro inquieto* The movement is in the form: The first theme, presented in unison at both hands, is short, angular and agitated. It is promptly followed by a pounding of a four-notes long motivic cell that will have an important part in the development sections. The initial A section is partly in a horizontal *écriture*, sometimes polyphonic and other times with crudely dissonant sharp-edged chords. The movement, thereafter, is somewhat calming its pace with the reappearance of the four-notes motive on C, and, after a little outburst of energetic chords, it leads to the B section. This B section, *Andantino*, is in total contrast with the preceding one, it is suggesting a painful intimacy and a somehow undecided tonal orientation. With a *poco a poco accelerando* the A section returns, this time intensified in its fury and percussive aggressiveness. The previously mentioned four-cell motive will reappear here in the low range and with longer timings of its notes, thus intensifying the dramatic impact with a rigid gravity. A shortened *Andantino* briefly appears leading to the last A section which will drop down and get lost in the low keys of the keyboard. *Andante caloroso* After the frightening asperity of the first movement and its almost atonal harmonization, the *Andante caloroso* brings a warmth in a deliciously tender setting of the E major and with a lyricism which seems to be thought for a cello and solo viola. A middle section starting with a fast

scale brings, again, the torments and horrors which spread through the entire work. Obsessive and hallucinating ostinato notes with wandering chords above and below may remind bells sounding. The Coda is a short reprise of the initial melody. This minor third interval is always in conflict with the major settings of the right hand. It is a non-stop progression of chords, often built on a scale-wise motion of notes in B-flat major. The accent on the left hand, on the C-sharp octave, is acting as a "disrupter" and it is de-stabilizing the right hand groups, thus creating all through the movement a feeling of unrest. Even though the movement is in ABC BA form, the B and C sections, remembrances of the first movement, do not create any distinct contrasts but integrate in the overall agitation. It is more difficult for the listener, requiring a long sustained concentration to be fully appreciated. So its popularity is much less than the previous two. Sviatoslav Richter admirably described it: Like a tree bending because of its fruits. It was premiered by Emil Gilels in *Andante dolce* Introverted, grave and serious music, expressed in a soft voice almost all through. A serene and melodic pace sometimes only partly animated. A section *Poco piu animato* presents a new motive, but again it does not create a sharp contrast. Even though whispering sixteenth notes appear and develop into arpeggios in various mixed tonalities the entire movement remains with some reserve. In the middle section an obsessive tension is created with a uniform rhythm of quarter notes which will soon "break into exploding" fast runs of arpeggios and scales. This will transport the initial melodic setting into some other "visionary" places, in the last A of the A-B-A form, the Coda, even though built on the same material as the beginning, will be much less serene than it. *Andante sognando* In D-flat major this movement is a beautifully calm, "dreaming" and noble Menuetto-like movement. There is an amazing refinement in the seemingly consonant harmonization. Also to be noted is the richness and the elaboration of the secondary voices. *Vivace* The last movement is rhythmical, "motorized", Toccata-like and long enough to "balance" the first. After the first exposition, just like in the first movement, a uniform rhythm section with quarter notes will raise to a hymn-like climax. *Pochissimo meno mosso* and *Andantino* will cite some elements of the first movement. The last *Vivace* will bring a triumphal Coda. It is not made to strike the big hall of the Moscow Conservatory" Despite its huge proportions and presenting some serious technical challenges to the performer, this last Sonata is extremely refined and "purified". In many points, one can trace a parallel with the noble style of Poulenc, a good old friend of Prokofiev. *Allegretto* It starts without haste in a limpid serenity. Its brisk impulses, fast runs glissando-like 32nds. Those figures will be extensively used later in the piece. The second theme, extremely purified, is not more than a few repeated notes. At the point "*Poco meno mosso*" appears a third motivic element which descends in chromatic steps on dotted rhythms. A short reminder of the first part, with the two first themes, leads to an accompaniment figure which slowly animates from eights to triplets and leads to the third theme, but also includes the glissando-like figures mentioned earlier. This section is in the well known Prokofiev piano style. A *pianissimo* transition in which the tonic rumbles at the left hand on two octaves span, brings the re-exposition in the key of B major. An unusual tonal layout, which however, returns to the main C major for the second theme and the Coda. The swift run which starts the movement was actually foreshadowed at the end of the previous movement, in the low range and *pianissimo*. Interspersed with some nervous staccatos, it connects with the use of some rhythmical elements in a short section, to intentionally grotesque sonorities. Then, to staccatos figures again, this time followed up with chromatic figures. A short development with previously heard elements leads to a transitional part "*Meno mosso*" and then to an "*Andantino*" with a very tidy *ecriture*. This section opposes broken arpeggios of the right hand with the chromaticism of the left. Back to the first part but shortened and the Coda expires in a softened and rarefied line up. First it is a "nocturne" in A-flat major, superb melody with a very tonal but not that conventional harmonizations. In the B part, *Allegro sostenuto* in C major, the light and energy of the "day" breaks in. This brings an agitation which is both happy and somewhat, mundane. In the following two sections, same ideas, will reappear with some variations throughout the movement. *Allegro con brio, ma non troppo presto* Vivacious, dancing, scooting around, the Finale is made up from the cell previously heard at the end of the preceding movement. The other main motive is a small group of staccatos alternating between hands. A new theme, *Poco meno mosso*, combines several motivic elements in a generally ludicrous atmosphere. In the central part, *Andantino* in E-flat major, both hands play sometimes in unison in octaves. At the *Allegretto*, both themes of the principal part appear in

inverse order, setting the ground for the re-exposition. During the vast Coda, made up out of an improvised figure from the beginning, the theme of the first movement reappear at the high ranges, backed up with quintuplets at the left hand. The following bars make the music fade in a harmonic haze. For his last Sonata, Prokofiev opted for an ending most discreet and reserved.

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### Chapter 2 : Piano Sonata No. 8 in B flat major | Details | AllMusic

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Sunday, January 22, Prokofiev: Emil Gilels gave the premier in December Like a number of others of his instrumental pieces, some of the material is recycled from earlier pieces for the stage. Prokofiev, a very fine composer of both ballet and opera, was unlucky when it came to getting the projects produced. Some of the material in this sonata was originally intended for a couple of Alexander Pushkin projects which did not reach completion. The first theme in the first movement, for example, comes from a film project on the Queen of Spades. The Piano Sonata No. 8 in B-flat Major, Op. 84 There are three movements: Click to enlarge And here is the theme as it appears in the first movement of the sonata: Click to enlarge The theme has an oddly surreal character due to its wide tessitura and frequent large leaps and the way that the tonality seems to wander away from the accompaniment which itself tends to wander, tonally. The first nine-measure phrase begins and ends in B flat, but by the time we arrive at the cadence it sounds very different from where we began. Prokofiev loves to go to or come from a place, tonally, that is a semitone away from what you might expect. In the third measure, for example, he arrives at a G sharp minor harmony where one might expect G minor, the relative minor of B flat. Similarly, instead of a V-I cadence in mm 9, which would be F major to B flat, we get an F sharp minor harmony followed by B flat. The voice-leading helps us to hear it as the tonic despite this. One of my favorite things with Prokofiev, is to see how he has constructed his final cadence, always very original. In the case of the end of the last movement he makes reference to an augmented sixth harmony by insistent alternation between F and G flat underneath a tonic minor chord: An augmented sixth chord leads to the dominant from the semitone above and below, here the dominant is the F and the G flat is the semitone above. Then he has a D flat major chord superimposed on a D minor chord the F being a common note: The final harmony before the tonic is a C flat major chord over an F major chord: The F major is the normal dominant for B flat, the C flat harmony is how he "Prokofievizes" it. Recall that we have seen Prokofiev combine a Phrygian cadence with a normal one before. C flat to B flat is a Phrygian relationship. But enough of this technical stuff! Here is a performance by Vladimir Ashkenazy with the score: And here is a live performance by Emil Gilels:

### Chapter 3 : Colburn Celebrity Series 1

*Sergei Prokofiev Piano Sonata No. 8 in B flat major, Op. 84 1 Andante dolce 2 Andante sognando 3 Vivace Sviatoslav Richter, piano.*

### Chapter 4 : The Music Salon: Prokofiev: Piano Sonata No. 8 in B flat major, op. 84

*Sergei Prokofiev's Piano Sonata No. 8 in B-flat major, Op. 84 () is a sonata for solo piano, the third of the Three War blog.quintoapp.com sonata was first performed on 30 December in Moscow by Emil Gilels.*

### Chapter 5 : Prokofiev: Piano Sonata No. 8 in B flat major, Op. 84 (page 1 of 9) | Presto Classical

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### Chapter 6 : Sonata no.8 in B-flat major op Prokofiev

*In addition, they also trace three distinct periods of his life: the Four Pieces, as a year old student at the St. Petersburg Conservatory in the Russian Empire; Visions fugitives, as a frequent traveler abroad, working with Sergei Diaghilev and his Ballets Russes; and the Sonata No.8, as permanent resident in the Soviet Union.*

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### Chapter 7 : Serguei Prokofiev "War Sonatas" (Piano Sonatas N) by D.E. Okonsar

*Recorded on 03/12/, uploaded on 03/12/ Musician's or Publisher's Notes. Sergei Prokofiev finished his Eighth Piano Sonata in , but the work was actually begun much earlier.*

### Chapter 8 : Sonata no. 8 in B flat major, op. 84 [sound recording] in SearchWorks catalog

*Prokofiev: Piano Sonata No. 8 in B flat major, op. 84 The eighth is the last of the "War" sonatas, begun in with the others, and completed in , at which point who was going to win the war was becoming evident.*

### Chapter 9 : Prokofiev: Piano Sonatas Nos. 2, 6, 8 - Alexander Melnikov | Songs, Reviews, Credits | AllMus

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