



Photograph of me at age 10, taken in St. Petersburg.
I entered the title *The Giant* by hand.

Я в возрасте 10 лет, снято в Петербурге. Надпись „Великан“ сделана от руки.

The Giant and Other Creatures

Prokofiev's Childhood Compositions

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Overture to *The Giant*

The music of Prokofiev's juvenile period, c.1896–c.1908, may be divided into three categories: (a) works for piano solo; (b) works for the stage; and (c) other miscellaneous works that include pieces for four-hand piano along with one-off efforts like works for voice and piano as well as zither and piano and two symphonies. Until 1900, when the composer was nine

years old, Prokofiev's output was limited to the first two kinds: compositions for the piano and those for the stage. His piano works are almost an exercise in creative and technical discipline; in writing for the instrument, Prokofiev was working with the only soundscape with which he was familiar at the time. Composing for the stage, however, offered him the opportunity to experiment with different textures, timbres, and text-based structures. Though the young Prokofiev must have had but a dim understanding of the theatre and its conventions, he was clearly drawn to the stage early on for the fantastic musical possibilities it represented. Whereas writing for the piano allowed him to explore his own developing technique and novel compositional idiom, writing dramatic works encouraged him to experiment with sound, word, and image in combination while pondering how best to command an audience's attention.

Prokofiev's early theatrical works

Among Prokofiev's early works are four operas: *The Giant*, *On Desert Islands*, *A Feast in Time of Plague*, and *Undina* (in all, he composed eight complete operas, spanning an entire lifetime). By 1900, Prokofiev was writing his first, *The Giant*, and as early as 1903, he evinced a preference for exciting sounds in a critique of a chamber music concert that he called "boring". He instead sought "bright colours and dramatic moments".¹ And indeed, these are the two qualities that characterise Prokofiev's earliest operatic experiments.

The Giant seems to have been inspired by Prokofiev's first trip to Moscow with his parents in January 1900, where he saw Gounod's *Faust*, Borodin's *Prince Igor*, and Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty*. This was doubtless the young composer's first exposure to opera, and it represented a major turning point. His compositions of the period attest to a heightened interest in the dramatic and the theatrical. "I began to stage plays," he recalled. "The plots were wretched and invariably included a duel with swords. In terms of form, this was *commedia dell'arte*: we would think up a skeletal plot, and then the actors would improvise". Prokofiev was especially taken with *Faust*, declaring himself enraptured with "the duel with swords and the death of Valentine".² The swashbuckling and pathos not only found its way into his first opera but informed, in sophisticated guise, his later compositions for the stage.

The Giant was his first and earliest "large-scale" work, written in three acts of six scenes. The simple plot holds obvious appeal for a child. A giant terrorises a kingdom, and an army is dispatched to capture and kill him, thus restoring peace to the realm. The plot allows for battle scenes, ever a favourite with Prokofiev, as well as a young lady's fainting fit. All the ingredients necessary to create an exciting and fantastical work for the stage are there.

The last scene in particular shows a precocious flair for the dramatic. During a party at the rescued lady's home, the dishevelled King burst onto the scene declaring that he will no longer fight the Giant; he condemns his courtiers and kills himself. Following this shocking outburst, and in a dramatic *volte face*, the King's subjects surround the Giant and ask him whether he would like to be their new ruler. The creature agrees and the opera ends with everyone singing "Long live our Giant". The violent ending caused Prokofiev's adult supervisors some concern. Why, they asked, does the King have to kill himself? But there was no reasoning with the young composer. He had set his heart on this turnaround and was unwilling to forsake it. The opera needed to finish on a theatrical high note—an early indication of Prokofiev's concern for audience impact.³

Although *The Giant* was written and performed as an opera, it is essentially a piano piece. Its musical shapes and motifs

are drawn from piano etudes and inspired by the physical act of piano playing—hence the emphasis on repeated notes, scalar patterns, and arpeggiated bass figurations. The texture is likewise pianistic, with the vocal lines being superimposed on top almost as an afterthought. This work gives a good indication of Prokofiev's playing skills at the age of nine and also provides insight into his theatrical instinct, albeit in an embryonic state.

Notable features in *The Giant* include three modulations: the piece moves from C major into the keys of B-flat major (an early preference for neighbouring tone modulation?), F major, and G major. In addition, the score shows great attention to detailed dynamic markings and tempo indications, with no fewer than ten tempo changes in the first act alone. The young composer adjusts the pacing to suggest corresponding shifts in atmosphere. Moreover, the frequent tempo changes sustain interest as one change of mood follows another, usually in rapid succession.

Act II commences with a fourteen-bar dramatic introduction meant to be performed before the curtain is raised. This episode is based on a chromatic sextuplet figure played *forte* and increasing in loudness. In a subtle alteration of colouring, the music modulates from C major to F major as soon as first act begins, highlighting Prokofiev's interest in the curtain-raising convention.

In moments of purely instrumental (i.e. piano) music, certain musical gestures and patterns jump out of the score as examples of what would become staples of Prokofiev's idiom. One very basic gesture is the leaping bass line, used to outline the character of the Giant; it prefigures the composer's skill at pithy caricature and characterisation. Throughout the score, this leaping bass line sounds like the Giant's footsteps trampling all over the opera and so functions as a character in its own right. It is deployed by Prokofiev in broken chord patterns as well as an ostinato bass. Similarly there are other gestures (such as the chromatic sextuplet figure mentioned above) that highlight developments in the magic wonderland inhabited by the Giant.

Between *The Giant* and the Conservatory opera *Maddalena*, Prokofiev wrote three other operas: *On Desert Islands*,⁴ *A Feast in Time of Plague*⁵ and *Undina*.⁶ Only fragments of *On Desert Islands* and *A Feast in Time of Plague* survive. Of *Undina*, the two acts that remain make it possible to measure how far Prokofiev's dramatic thinking has come in the span of just four years. As the composer did not work on *Undina* continuously, however, it is stylistically inconsistent. He began the opera in 1904 but laid it aside, returning to it only in 1907. According to Prokofiev, "the fact that I had written the fifth act did not mean that I had finished the opera: there were unfinished bits in some of the earlier acts, and Act I, composed at the age of thirteen, was in a more childish vein than the others, differing from them so much that I planned to compose it again from scratch."⁷

The story is again fantastical. A knight, Sir Hildebrand, emerging from the woods, comes upon a fisherman and his adopted daughter, Undina. He tells them that the beautiful Bertralda doubts his commitment to her and wishes to test him. At the mention of Bertralda, Undina "plays all kinds of pranks, first splashing water, then fleeing. When a storm breaks, she hides herself in the pelting rain and in the water of the lake."⁸ While the fisherman and knight run off in search of Undina, the rainfall is transformed into a ballet of rivulets, with which the first act ends.⁹ Prokofiev claimed in his autobiography that "the second act was less naïve than the first: it had more harmonic ideas, and even inventions".¹⁰

In the fifth and final act, Hildebrand withdraws to the solitude of his room after celebrating his marriage to Bertralda. Undina emerges from her underwater kingdom and lulls the

knight in her deadly embrace. Prokofiev ends the opera on two quiet chords.



This earned him the criticism of his friend Vasilii Morolev, who demanded to know “how you can possibly end a long five-act opera with two quiet chords that don’t even involve a real cadence?”¹¹ Morolev’s comments isolate two important traits in the composer’s craft: the lack of traditional harmony, especially at cadence points; and the element of surprise that evolves into such an integral feature of his comedic, playful mode. Their appearance as early as 1907 is a testament to the composer’s originality as well as his prodigious development.¹²

Like *The Giant*, *Undina* is written in piano score with the voice parts above. The writing remains highly pianistic with a distinctive bass line, as in *The Giant*, being an essential component of the texture. The bass line assumes different guises: broken chordal accompaniment, leaping figure, ostinato, repeated octaves and triads. From the fragments that remain of *Undina* it also appears that the young composer had begun to experiment with structuring an entire section of the opera through the use of a single figure in the bass. This particular technique would be carried over into his through-composed mature operas.

Also evident from the two surviving acts of *Undina* is the use of declamation rather than arioso singing. The declaimed lines appear to be added at a later stage of composition.¹³ By the time Prokofiev started working on *Undina* in 1904 he had also composed a romance for voice and piano called *Skazhime, vetka Palestiny*, and his experiments for voice and piano shaped the way he conceived of *Undina*’s coloratura singing. His preference for declamation rather than arioso sets the trend, albeit in elementary fashion, for the later operas.¹⁴

As with *The Giant*, Prokofiev uses frequent changes in tempo and time signature to keep up a rapid pace. Unlike *The Giant*, however, the young composer also uses chromaticism. By the time Prokofiev started work on *Undina*, he had completed a number of *Pesenki* for piano, and the expansion of his syntax that is manifest in those pieces is developed in this opera.

In the same way that he had exploited a leaping bass figure to characterise *The Giant*, Prokofiev relied on the semitone to define *Undina*. Her vocal part is accompanied by chromatic harmonies and fast demisemiquaver passages that highlight her hysterical and possibly ephemeral qualities. The other female force in the opera, Bertralda, is enigmatically characterised by arpeggios. Thus the young composer displays an early interest in powerful or at least intriguing female characters that he would continue to explore later on *Maddalena*, *The Gambler* (Polina), and *The Fiery Angel* (Renata).

Early works for piano

Prokofiev first started improvising his own tunes at the piano while his mother was practising beside him. He used the piano as a way of interacting with the music he heard her play.¹⁵ His mother was his first piano teacher, and according to Prokofiev “she strived to make things interesting, to expand my horizons, to develop skills gradually and above all not to alienate me with drudgery”.¹⁶ Such a liberal teaching system was a double-edged sword, however, because while Prokofiev

became an excellent sight-reader, he also developed some idiosyncrasies at the keyboard that he would spend a great deal of time trying to overcome in his later Conservatory years.¹⁷

For Prokofiev, the piano was the testing ground for musical material that he conceived away from the keyboard. His fingers were entirely at the service of his imagination. Since Prokofiev started composing for the piano well before his technique could meet the demands of his imagination, however, playing was, for him, often a case of forcing his fingers to chase the thoughts that “ran ahead”.

The diversity of the composer’s initial output might erroneously suggest that his first attempts at composition were undisciplined, even random. His compositional activities became increasingly systematic after 1902, the year he wrote the first of his sets of *Pesenki* (Little Songs). Over time, these early pieces for piano become structurally and formally more organised. They also witness the emergence of Prokofiev’s distinctive musical language.

The sets of *Pesenki*—five in all, each containing twelve pieces—are less unified by melodic, harmonic, or rhythmic device than by a network of expressive gestures, from staccato repeated patterns to extreme registral combinations and juxtapositions to motoric ostinati. Many of the rhythmic and harmonic ideas as well as the melodic shapes that the composer uses in these early works remained with him in later years.¹⁸ Some survived almost intact into his mature period; others underwent significant changes; none, it is fair to say, were abandoned.

Written in the summer of 1902, the first series of *Pesenki* affirms the formation of a distinct musical language. The start date coincides with the beginning of Prokofiev’s studies with Reinhold Glière, who was employed to teach him essential principles of harmony, tonality, and form. The organisation of the pieces into sets showed that, under his new teacher, Prokofiev was beginning to view composition seriously, as something that needed to be done diligently with conviction. In the process he was also disciplining himself to spend time composing on a daily basis, a habit that was to last a lifetime. Writing a short piece to celebrate someone’s birthday or name day became a family tradition until the moment Prokofiev began to see it as a nettlesome “duty” from which he needed to be liberated.¹⁹ Even so, for the best part of four years between 1902 and 1906, Prokofiev composed *Pesenki* on a regular basis.

They average around sixty bars in length and are mostly written in small ternary form, a favourite with Prokofiev owing to its potential for varied repetition, “closed” nature, and accommodation of two distinct motives or themes. These pieces are based on the principle of contrast: in some cases the contrast is between two musical ideas, in other cases between two textures or pitch ranges. The two motives or themes confront one another in different ways in different sections. As time progresses the pieces become more sophisticated: the musical ideas explored within them are increasingly complex, and the contrasts between them more defined.

The *Pesenki* are snapshots of the young Prokofiev’s compositional obsessions, capturing the nascent elements of his later style and attesting to his gift for melodic invention. An example can be found in the seventh little song of the second series, which features a simple melodic pattern set against a flowing quaver accompaniment in the bass.²⁰ Though limited in range and based on octaves, the line bears a yearning, lyrical quality. Prokofiev’s melodies would preserve this trait in the future, while also embracing more distinctive, dissonant intervallic patterns. In the earliest pieces, the melodies tend to be short, balanced, and tonal.

Prokofiev’s chord progressions also remain fairly simple up to 1906. Indeed the harmony of the *Pesenki* gives no indica-

tion of the biting and experimental vocabulary that would emerge within just a few years. At this early stage the harmony comprises mostly I, IV, and V chords. The sequential relationships of chord progressions are as yet of little interest to Prokofiev, but in his later works he would come to privilege them. In the *Pesenki* Prokofiev's use of harmony is directional and tonally unambiguous. Nonetheless, his penchant for the unexpected cadential progression is already apparent.

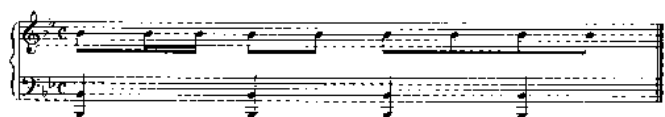
His awareness of the expressive and dramatic possibilities of chromaticism slowly grows. While the very early pieces tend to be written in sharp keys, especially until c.1902/3, they remain inherently diatonic, avoiding non-harmonic pitches. By 1907, however, chromatic inflections become a feature of Prokofiev's sound. In several of the piano pieces both the melodies and harmonies are altered in this fashion.

The *Pesenki* highlight the composer's commitment to clear-cut march and waltz rhythms. These rhythms are metrical, that is to say, he tended to work within the barlines, aligning the beginnings and endings of phrases with the downbeat as much as possible. As he matured, Prokofiev began to build much freer, wayward melodic shapes, setting them for expressive effect against strict rhythmic accompaniments. Within the barlines, however, the manipulation of rhythm in the *Pesenki* is already bold, innovative, and full of personality, thus anticipating the mature composer.

The first little song is characterised by dotted patterns and syncopations that are enhanced and enriched with tremolos. The second piece of the series features a leaping bass (shown below) with repeated triads and a melody built around a dotted rhythm.



The fourth piece involves repeated notes and a chromatic scalar figure. A rhythmic figure reminiscent of the March from *Love for Three Oranges* is accompanied by a bass line in octaves. Repeated note patterns, which have a rhythmic function in the early works but which would also acquire a melodic function in Prokofiev's later music, are a compositional staple.



The piece ends on an imperfect cadence, already suggestive of Prokofiev's later non-resolving cadences.

The fifth little song is largely constructed around an arpeggiated bass while the melody is built on chords, most of which are in first inversion—a favourite hand position. The resulting texture—a chordal melody layered over sweeping arpeggios—recalls the Romantic style.



The texture of melody plus accompaniment allows Prokofiev to develop his distinctive bass lines in a variety of ways: leaping chords, leaping single lines, repeated chords, ostinato patterns, Alberti bass patterns. Some examples are provided below.



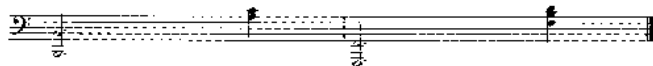
Piano sonata, first movement, 1903²¹



Series IV, Song No. 8, 1905



Undina, Act III, Scene 2, 1907



Series II, Song No. 4, 1903

A typical waltz-like bass line may be found in the sixth little song of the first series:



Tremolos as well as fast demisemiquaver passages are used for effect, particularly in the seventh little song of the first series, which Prokofiev had intended to write "in the grand style, but it had come out rather stilted".²² The composer also uses these effects in his writing for the stage.

The seventh little song is built entirely on a triplet rhythm and is again written in a Romantic idiom, with repeated chords in the right hand for the first six bars and then in the left hand for the rest of the piece. This song also makes use of the left hand over the right hand position—a physical movement that would become a crucial visual component of Prokofiev's performing style. It is the longest song of the set and contains several typical gestures: in addition to the repeated note, there are scalar figurations in quintuplets; loud climactic moments built entirely on repeated chords; whole-bar silences to break up such climactic build-ups; descending and ascending scalar figurations in the bass; tremolo figurations in either hand; and repeated note patterns foregrounded six bars from the end of the piece.

The second series of *Pesenki* is slightly more adventurous. The first little song has a distinctive opening that features a four-bar presentational figure built on repeated octaves. In the left hand, a repeated Alberti bass spans one and a half octaves. The melody, although simple, is extended to cover some two octaves and is one of the earliest examples of a long-breathed line.



It gradually becomes more complex, incorporating semi-quaver groups and long trills, alternating between 3/2 and common time.

The second little song is written in seven sharps and 7/8 time—the first occurrence of a time signature other than simple duple or triple. The opening two-bar gesture is boldly dramatic.





Serge Prokofiev, 1895.

Following this opening, the piece is written in a Romantic idiom with the melody in octaves switching between treble and bass clefs. The middle section moves to B major and switches to 5/8 time. Here is another example of Prokofiev's early melodic writing: simple in structure and tonality, but broad in range.



Prokofiev himself detects the influences of Brahms, Liszt, and Chopin in these early *Pesenki*, but discounts Chopin's influence as merely incidental.²³

The seventh little song from the second series, a melody with accompaniment in the key of E-flat major, was written at his mother's request to compose something tender in a Chopinesque vein. It was also a response to Alexander Goldenweiser's comment that his style would become more pianistic if he were to write the accompaniment "in the form of broad arpeggios sweeping from the left hand to the right, with the melody flowing in between."²⁴ But the young composer disliked these suggestions; rather, he felt much "freer" and more able to experiment in the second and eighth pieces of the second series.

The third series marks the beginning of a subtle shift in Prokofiev's compositional style. The use of specific forms like the march becomes more frequent even as the Romantic influence remains prevalent. This fragment from the third little song is emblematic.



The third series also attests to Prokofiev's increasingly impressive piano technique. He played the eighth little song from the set in his Conservatory entrance exam. Dedicated to his father on his fifty-eight birthday, it represents the leap forward that Prokofiev had achieved in a couple of years. Simply titled *Vivo*, it concatenates several striking gestures.



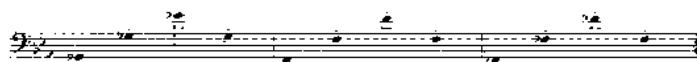
An ostinato pattern replaces the less sophisticated Alberti bass, and the repeated note is now played by the right hand crossing over the left (bar 12). The acciaccatura adds crispness to the texture and is in itself a play on the appoggiatura figure so favoured by Prokofiev (bars 3–7, 16–20, 25–48). It becomes the figure that characterises the whole first section.

The second section, starting at bar 50, suggests the lyricism and rocking textures of Romantic salon singing. The melody occupies two-bar phrases, which usually start on the third and fourth beats of the bar and continue across the barline. This imbues the melody with a sense of yearning as the

left hand maintains its rhythmically strict accompaniment. The section is marked *Moderato* with the melody described as *p dolce e legato*. The use of ornaments, like the turns in bar 64 and the written-out mordent shapes in bar 63, follows the conventions of nineteenth-century piano writing. The Romantic mood persists until the return of the opening *Vivo* section and its sharp rhythms and off-beat chords.

Thus beginning with the third series of *Pesenki*, the syntax gradually becomes more complex, revealing Prokofiev's evolving sense of style and increasingly subtle manipulation of rhythm and texture. Consider the opening of the Romance in D minor from the fourth series, composed in a "serious style" on the occasion of his mother's name day.²⁵ The *Lento* section features a seven-bar phrase spanning two-octaves, a defining feature of Prokofiev's mature writing. The ubiquitous repeated note is used as an accompanying figure in the central *Più animato* section as well as in the *Tempo I*. And the accompaniment is based on repeated and sustained chords, creating the sense of stasis that one also finds in his later piano sonatas.

The tenth little song of the fourth series starts with an opening five-bar appoggiatura figure. In his *Autobiography*, the composer notes that "the tenth took up thirteen pages and was broadly conceived with dramatic shifts in mood, harmonic inventions, and even a combination of two themes".²⁶ The piece features and exploits a walking bass.



Prokofiev also makes use of alternating thirds written in semiquavers and maintained in the inner voices of the right hand for long stretches. As a result, the inner voice begins to sound like a tremolo and function as an independent line. Variations in texture are created by accessing the higher registers. Both texture and rhythm are gradually enriched as the inner voices transform into a triplet figure, which is then taken up by the left hand. The quiet *calando* section in the middle depends on sustained chords.

The fifth and last series of little songs for piano was composed in 1906. This set marks the final stage in the evolution of the Prokofiev idiom. Over the years, the *Pesenki* had provided the composer with a working template equal in importance to the later sketchbooks. Many of the gestures that emerged first in these piano pieces became more sophisticated musical ideas to be used in his later works for piano and even in his orchestral writing. The final set reveals that he has at once outgrown this short form and made it his own.

By this time, Prokofiev was a student at the St Petersburg Conservatory, majoring in piano. His compositional and performing practices, which were never separate, are synthesised in the first scherzo he ever wrote, which is the second little song of the fifth series. "From the viewpoint of piano technique," Prokofiev explains, "it is written in double thirds in the right hand, and in this respect one feels the influence of certain technical pieces I learned or heard at the Conservatory. Schumann's *Toccata* made a special impression upon me".²⁷ This scherzo is ostensibly written in C major, but Prokofiev's penchant for chromatic colouring emerges right from the outset. The first bar begins on the lowered submediant, followed by the raised subdominant, before coming to rest on the dominant of C major. The opening three bars function as a presentational gesture along the lines of similar gestures heard in the first and second series of *Pesenki*. The piece is written around swift passages of double thirds—another Prokofiev trademark.

The scherzo has a tripartite structure, with the middle section in F minor. This ternary form allows for the introduction of a longer melodic line to be played *p dolce*: a simple four-bar

melody with chordal accompaniment is gradually extended to a six-bar phrase, then to an eleven-bar phrase, then to a six-bar phrase in the double third textures. A somewhat odd feature of this piece is the sudden appearance of a bar written in 5/4 seven bars from the end, one of the very few appearances of an irregular time signature in Prokofiev's early pieces.

This last set of *Pesenki* shows Prokofiev turning ever more towards virtuosic writing. As in the fourth series, the fifth places great emphasis on speed, but now his pieces also demand a challenging pianistic technique that relies upon complete finger independence. There are more intricate figurations in this series and more complicated rhythms. Clearly Prokofiev's training as a pianist at the Conservatory empowered him to compose technically daunting music that showed off his own technique to the best possible advantage.

The seventh and twelfth little songs in series, *Prestissimo* and *Vivo*, are essentially studies in speed. The latter is actually titled *Study Scherzo* in C major, thus making two scherzos in this set of *Pesenki*. The title also indicates that Prokofiev must have been thinking about piano technique differently from when he started writing these pieces in 1902, the refinement in his methods evinced in their polished sophistication.

Both *Prestissimo* and *Vivo* are written in *da capo* form, which again allows the composer to introduce two contrasting ideas in one piece. In the seventh little song, *Prestissimo*, Prokofiev uses the repeated note gesture in the accompaniment along with repeated chords and a bass line in octaves. The lyrical theme in the central section is built around descending, four-note scale segments that gradually travel down an octave. The right hand plays a melodic line with the third, fourth, and fifth fingers while the thumb and second fingers present an accompaniment in quavers. The middle section involves one of Prokofiev's patented winding melodies, here stretching across almost two octaves and featuring contrary motion.



From *The Giant* through the five sets of *Pesenki*, Prokofiev's childhood compositions provide insights into the origins of his syntax and clues as to what makes his sound so distinctive. Many of the gestures, musical ideas, and compositional techniques found in these works become integral to his mature style. Furthermore, these compositions demonstrate that the composer's interest in the piano and in the stage developed simultaneously while also illustrating how Prokofiev used the piano as a practical technical tool as well as a conceptual one.

¹ Prokofiev, Sergei, *Prokofiev by Prokofiev: a composer's memoir*, ed. David H. Appel, trans. Guy Daniels (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1979), 81.

² *Ibid.*, 81.

³ Both *The Gambler* and *Fiery Angel*, for example, end at the point of greatest intensity.

⁴ *On Desert Islands* begins, as the title would suggest, with a shipwreck: the main characters, who are the same as those in *The Giant*, find themselves stranded and at odds with one another. The music is more dramatic than *The Giant* insofar as it portrays the elements, and the score is much longer. In his own analysis of *On Desert Islands*, Prokofiev noted the influence of Beethoven and identified echoes of Chopin's *Etude* No. 12. He confirms that did not err with the time signatures, and that he also began to make use of diminished seventh chords. It was a big work that "continued to swallow up my lighter pieces", Prokofiev, *Memoir*, 40.

⁵ Prokofiev identified *A Feast in Time of Plague* as a turning point in his development. The plague music was built on "diminished sevenths and chromatic scales in triplets". Prokofiev, *Memoir*, 66. In his mature opinion, the best part was the overlong overture, which he described as "a big head on a small body". Written in sonata form, it "remained unsurpassed for several years" (71). The composer Mikhail Chernov, one of Prokofiev's first teachers, pleased him by calling it a "full-fledged overture" (99).

⁶ He devised the libretto based on a narrative poem (*Undine*) by the German Romantic writer Friedrich Heinrich Karl de la Motte. Of the five acts (six scenes) only the third and fourth survive.

⁷ Prokofiev, *Memoir*, 197.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁹ Prokofiev notes in his *Memoir* that he finished the second scene of *Undine* but provides no further information about the storyline (93). A letter from his mother to his father, dated 10 January 1905, notes that Chernov did not like *Undine*, which dampened Prokofiev's enthusiasm to finish it (122). She also notes that her son had written a ballad for the opening of the second act (128).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 142.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 198.

¹² Despite the criticism, Prokofiev maintained that he liked his ending the way it was and lamented that now that he had "devised a lyrical ending for an opera, no one appreciated or accepted it. I was put out." *Ibid.*, 198.

¹³ Declamation, one of the techniques Prokofiev used to create a degree of realism on stage, remained an integral feature of his operas and was often harshly criticised. Even during his Soviet period, when he was especially careful to highlight and foreground the melodic quality of his work, he still relied on declamation. Richard Taruskin notes the importance of discrete "melodic moulds" into which the composer pours different lines of text. In Taruskin's assessment, Prokofiev achieves a lyrical quality in his vocal writing because he "often invents a melodic idea quite independently of his text". Taruskin, Richard, "Tone, Style and Form in Prokofiev's Soviet Operas: Some Preliminary Observations", *Studies in the History of Music - Music and Drama*, vol. 2 (New York: Broude Brothers, 1988), 219-20.

¹⁴ In particular, *The Gambler* and *The Fiery Angel*, both of which are almost entirely declaimed.

¹⁵ She loved the music of Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt, Tchaikovsky, and Anton Rubinstein.

¹⁶ Prokofiev, *Memoir*, 35.

¹⁷ The composer notes that as a result of this broad-minded teaching approach he "didn't learn any pieces thoroughly, and tended to play carelessly. And I was slopping in another way: in positioning my fingers on the keys. My thoughts would run ahead, and my fingers would follow somehow or other." His "bad" habits would cause him grief with his piano tutors at the St Petersburg Conservatory, Alexander Winkler and Anna Esipova. Prokofiev, *Memoir*, 19.

¹⁸ It was the playful Morolev who started calling these *Pesenki* "sobachki" or "puppies" because, in his opinion, some of their features "bite".

¹⁹ Prokofiev, *Memoir*, 188.

²⁰ The *Melody in E flat* appears in both published editions of Prokofiev's early works: *Manuscripti Infantili* (Milan: Ricordi, 1987) and *Erste Klavierstücke* (Hamburg: Musikverlag Hans Sikorski, c.1977).

²¹ The blank bars in this example are copied from Prokofiev's manuscript. It appears that the composer planned on going back to fill in the gaps or establish a numbering system for a copyist to do so. He used a similar numbering system for blank bars for other songs, for example, Series III: Song 3.

²² Prokofiev, *Memoir*, 58.

²³ *Ibid.*, 62.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 63.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 127.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 165.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 167. Although in hindsight Prokofiev suggests the influence of Schumann's *Toccata*, his real engagement with that work would not occur until years later—in his own *Toccata* for piano.