

Sergei Prokofiev's opera *The Fiery Angel* arranged for cello & piano



Maya Fridman

Cello

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Advisor: Martijn Hooning, Dmitri Ferschtman, Christina Guillaumier

Research coördinator: Jed Wentz

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Prokofiev's opera 'The Fiery Angel' (Arrangement for cello and piano) by Maya Fridman

Introduction

1. Research questions

It is a challenge to evoke a spirit of theatrical drama without involving a theatre. While the value of an arrangement of a piece which originally was meant for a theatrical setting may seem obscure, this work neither limits the imagination of the performer and the audience, nor reduces the 'fantastic' of Prokofiev's score. It rather translates the narration into a new language and a new form, whilst staying true to the essence of the original.

Since music and story are inseparable, even if I would want to extract the musical material and "free ... [the] material from the opera's dense malignant textures"¹, I have roughly followed the structure of the opera, thus creating a sort of mini-opera. That's also why the title of the resulting piece simply stays *The Fiery Angel*.

This leads to this intriguing question: What does the term 'arrangement' actually mean? How much freedom can a musician take when arranging a composition? Which criteria are to be followed? Are there any specific rules to follow, or is the only guidance one's musical intuition?

Researching this enables me to connect two areas of my greatest interest: performing as a cellist and writing music arrangements. I have always been inspired by transcriptions of opera arias for cello because, in my opinion, hardly any other instrument is as similar to the human voice as the cello.² In this research, the analysis of the choices I had to make concerning which of Prokofiev's materials to use in my arrangement, reflects my understanding of this opera, and constitutes a part of this essay.

¹ Nice, David *Prokofiev: A Biography (From Russia to the West, 1891 - 1935)*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003.

² Examples of great arrangements are Victor Derevyanko's transcriptions for cello and piano of Mahlers 'Kindertotenlieder' and 'The songs and dances of Death' by Mussorgsky

Examples of arrangements of Prokofiev's work are the completion of the Solo Cello Sonata by the Russian musicologist and composer Vladimir Blok, and Rostropovich's completion of the Cello Concertino. Other examples are Prokofiev's own arrangement of the *Adagio* from *Cinderella* and the arrangement by Sapozhnikov (an outstanding Russian cello pedagogue) of the ballet *Chout* op. 21, which was published in 1971 and recorded by Alexander Ivashkin, but remained almost hardly known. Also Prokofiev's third symphony, which consists entirely of the musical material of *The Fiery Angel*, together with Myaskovsky's transcription for piano for four hands turned out to be a great help for my work.

My fascination for this opera started long before I conceived the idea of writing an arrangement. Because when I heard this piece for the first time at the age of 14, it triggered my imagination, and becoming acquainted with the piece coincided with my deep interest in the Silver Age³. In my opinion, *The Fiery Angel* manifests the aspirations of the Silver Age, hidden in the symbolic forms of the leitmotifs.

In December 2014 I started to arrange *The Fiery Angel* for cello and piano, by slowly unwrapping its layers of meanings, and structuring my thoughts. This mental structure, however, revealed itself completely only after I finished the arrangement and became the basis of this research.

Besides my deep involvement with this opera, another motivation for me was to improve the rhetoric and declamatory aspects of my cello playing. The challenge was to make the material of the opera comprehensible even without language, and nevertheless preserve its dramaturgy. Therefore, the main question to be answered in this research is how an opera can be moulded into a piece for only two instruments. In order to do this for such an arrangement, a new form had to be invented in which the dialogues of the voices and the multicolour of the orchestra would be naturally recognizable in the cello and piano parts. In the beginning of my working process, it was helpful to see the way how Prokofiev re-worked his opera into the third symphony. However, since this symphony is a piece of absolute music, there are no similarities in terms of organizing musical content, except for the four-

³ A Russian Culture which emerged during the reign of Nicholas I, starting with the publication of Bryusov's three anthologies 'The Russian Symbolists' (1894-1895) and ending by the deaths of Blok and Gumeliev and the coming to power of the Bolsheviks in 1922.

movement overall form of the piece. I decided to structure my arrangement by using the following dramaturgical pattern⁴: exposition of the situation, rising action, climax, and resolution. Like in drama there is a clear exposition – the first movement – containing important information (leitmotifs of Renata, Ruprecht, Madiel and Love) the audience needs to know and to be able to follow the main storyline of the play, and encompassing the past actions of the characters (Renata tells the story of her relationship with Madiel/Heinrich). The second movement presents a ‘rising action’ point in the arrangement, setting up an increased feeling of anticipation and tension (the scene with a Fortune teller), and it eventually leads to the climax in the third movement. The fourth movement suggests an answer to the mystery and a resolution of the internal conflict, but this answer fades away in obscurity after reaching the highest emotional intensity.

A project like this cannot be done without the use of imagination, and taking the risk of disturbing the natural flow of Prokofiev's piece. In many ways the process of arranging resembles composing, but a big difference is the much higher degree of responsibility arising from the respect and knowledge of the original score. Besides the problems in choosing the excerpts, of writing complementary lines if needed, of finding a new form, et cetera, I have also encountered practical issues such as finding fingerings, bowings, dynamics, tempi and many more. While working on this piece, my limitations of both musical and technical nature were revealed to me like in a mirror. This was a very confronting, however uplifting, process.

2. The aims of my work

- To give a vital interpretation of this masterpiece and to make this music known to a bigger audience, also by recording a CD
- To make a highly professional arrangement and thus broaden the cello repertoire
- To deepen my understanding of Prokofiev's compositional process

3. Methods

Regarding the motives and the imagery they reflect:

- a. Marking the leitmotifs in the score
- b. Selecting episodes, analysing their connections and their climaxes

⁴ An overview of the materials used can be found in the tables in the Appendix, see pp. 25

- c. Reducing and shortening the selected episodes
- d. Creating a long story-line through diversification of elements such as changing registers (in both cello and piano), densities and textures of the chords (in the piano part), to depict specific characters.

Regarding the characterization of psychological (imaginary) spaces:

- a. Working out transitions between the episodes through reduction and shortening
- b. Experimenting with textures in the piano part, and finding appropriate sound colours in the cello part
- c. Finding the right dynamics (which may differ from the ones in the original score)
- d. Creating for a listener envisualization through manipulating with time
- e. Comparing spaces (psychological and real) between my arrangement and the original score.

Regarding rhythmic underpinnings (tempi):

- a. Finding correlations between the episodes with regards to the tempi and tempo indications in my score (which may differ from the original score).
- b. Regrouping rhythmical structures within musical phrases

Characterization techniques:

- a. Analysing the way Prokofiev depicted the main characters in the score: Since all the thematic material is also presented in the orchestra I saw which instruments illustrate which characters.
- b. Analysing vocal declamatory lines as regards to the text: which words are emphasized
- c. Soundscapes surrounding the main melodies often tell even more about the characters by creating mixtures of vocal lines and the accompanying instruments.

Tracing the connection of this arrangement to Prokofiev's composition techniques:

Exploring Prokofiev's "theatrical mode of writing"⁵ and the place of *The Fiery Angel* amongst his other works

⁵ Guillaumier, Christina *From piano to stage: a genealogy of musical ideas in the piano works of Sergei Prokofiev*, RSAMD University of St. Andrews, 2010, p. 53

Analysing my approach to this piece, as a performer

- a. Studying the piece as a creative process.
- b. Working out the physicality of the performance, and its theatricality.

4. The structure of the thesis

The introduction brings an overview of the topic, research goals, and tools of the research, as well as the motivation for the choice of my project.

The second part analyses the arrangement itself, provides musical examples and information about the background of the opera.

About the opera

1. Place of the piece in the work of Prokofiev, content of the opera itself

The Fiery Angel encapsulates the contradictions and paradoxes of the Symbolist era, and it undoubtedly is one of the composer's most problematic and controversial works. The libretto, written by Prokofiev himself, is based on a semi-autobiographical novel by Valery Bryusov (1907) which was published as a serial in the leading Symbolist journal 'Libra' between January 1907 and August 1908. Bryusov's subtitle summarises the plot: "A True Story, in which it is related of the Devil, more than once appearing in the image of a Radiant Spirit to a Maiden, and seducing her to Various Sinful Deeds, of Unholy Practices of Magic, Astrology, Alchemy, and Necromancy, of the Trial of the Maiden under the presidency of His Eminence the Archbishop of Trier, as well as of Encounters and Discourses with the Knight and thrice Doctor Agrippa of Nettesheim, and with Doctor Faustus, composed by an Eyewitness."

When his friend Nikolai Myaskovsky (1881– 1950) cautioned him that this subject might be too 'theological' for modern opera audiences, Prokofiev quipped: "There's little theology in *The Fiery Angel*, but endless orgies. Only Allah knows when I'll orchestrate it all."⁶

Nevertheless, Myaskovsky was absolutely confident of the gigantic potential of the opera. In his letters he deemed "*The Fiery Angel* to be the work in which you have risen to your full height as a musician and an artist. In order to give characters such as Renata and Ruprecht all their depth and unbelievable human complexity, you had to mature to full brilliance. Though your Renata lives only on paper, her music brings to mind a bright visual image."⁷ The opera implies that the conflict between Renata and Ruprecht is part of an ancient struggle between forces of dark and light; between the ideal, immaterial world and the material reality in which they live. On the other hand, everything maybe only happens in Renata's mind "all woven full of contradictions and surprises like a cloth of many-hued yarn"⁸.

⁶ Letter to Nicolai Myaskovsky, dd. 3 January 1924, published in Harlow Robinson: Selected letters of Sergei Prokofiev, p. 250.

⁷ Myaskovsky's letters, as quoted in Morrison, p. 253

⁸ Bryusov, Valery *The Fiery Angel* (I. Montagu, Trans.) Sawtry Cambridgeshire: Dedalus Books, 2004

2. History of the process of composing and staging, Prokofiev's operatic aesthetic

Undoubtedly, Rimsky-Korsakov influenced Prokofiev's perception of the fantastic (through operas like *The tale of Czar Sultan*, *The invisible City of Kitezh* and because Rimsky-Korsakov was his teacher). But Prokofiev's version of the fantastic in the stage works has much more to do with extravagance and the grotesque, as well as with the element of unpredictability, linked directly to his ideas of theatricality. His 'theatrical mode of writing' found its best expression through subjects of the fantastic and supernatural, and it appeared already in his earliest operas (*The Giant*, *Undina*). These ideas and means of defining the characters are expressed in the score of *The Fiery Angel* in various melodic, rhythmic and harmonic layers, which serve to create an atmosphere, transcending the capabilities of language. Prokofiev maintains action on stage through unexpected changes of tempo and register and sudden modulations, thus keeping the audience in constant tension (resembling his own stage performances as a pianist). It is definitely true that the piano always remained crucial for his composition techniques and his instrumentation, since many of his orchestral textures are clearly derived from his pianistic gestures.

Early in his American years Prokofiev found a copy of Bryusov's *The Fiery Angel* in a New York City book shop. He had heard about this book from a friend, the theosophist and poet Boris Nikolaevich Bashkirov, and eagerly delved into reading. Coincidentally, the book reflected his general interest in the occult, Christian Science and Gothic manuscripts.

He slowly began to think of a scenario, although back then, in December 1919, the idea of a new opera seemed still vague and unclear. The composition progressed slowly, mainly because of his busy concert schedule in the US and in Paris. Finally he could give the work his full attention in March 1922 after he moved to the Renaissance Bavarian village of Ettal, following the advice of Bryusov whom he coincidentally met in Berlin that year. There, the definitive first version of the work was finished (in the form of a vocal score). Prokofiev continued to work on the orchestration only in 1926, when Bruno Walter offered to stage the opera in the Städtische Oper in Berlin. This second version, with revisions of both the dramatic and musical content, was completed in August 1927.

"The 1923 and 1927 scores witness numerous shifts in dramatic perspective, the most obvious ones centering on the portrayal of Renata: In the original score, Prokofiev represents the paranormal events as figments of her rather fertile imagination; in the revised score, he introduces verbal and musical motifs that indicate that the events might be in fact real. These motifs, attesting to an integration of natural and supernatural dramatic spheres, extricate the heroine from a position of extreme isolation and tragic devotion and suggest that she might actually be a visionary."⁹ Unfortunately the orchestral parts arrived too late for a production in that season, and the performance had to be cancelled.

Prokofiev thought that this work would show his lyrical genius and would summarise his views on opera in general. But apart from the concert version of two scenes from act II presented by Sergey Koussevitzky in Paris in 1928, it was never staged. When a new attempt to stage it in 1930 by the Metropolitan Opera had failed, he started to suspect that *The Fiery Angel* was somehow cursed.

In truth, he was greatly disappointed, and the score lay forgotten until it was rediscovered in Paris after the composer's death. Charles Bruck conducted the concertante premiere in Paris in 1954, and Teatro La Fenice presented the staged premiere in 1955. Reactions to the opera have been divided, with some critics calling it Prokofiev's masterpiece and others dismissing it as a deservedly neglected musical and dramatic failure. "You need remarkable singers who are intelligent enough to understand what Prokofiev is asking of them, dramatically speaking, and you need a great conductor of the symphonic repertoire who can make a symphony out of the opera – but in the opera house."¹⁰ "Given the amount of attention and time Prokofiev devoted to the composition and revision of the opera and his dogged attempts to find a producing company, it's clear he considered it an important work. *The Fiery Angel* is perhaps his most expressionistic score, using the broad definition of expressionism, and certainly one of his most passionate. When it became apparent that a production was not forthcoming, he used thematic material from the opera as the basis for

⁹ Morrison, Simon *Russian Opera and the Symbolist Movement* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002, p. 260

¹⁰ Järvi, Neeme, July 1991, Gramophone

his Third Symphony (1928).”¹¹

3. Prokofiev's style and composition techniques

Prokofiev's style of composing was affected by his unconventional piano technique, which demonstrates mobility and rhythmic freedom of bass voice and strong polyphonic quality.

The most characteristic features of his piano style are:

- Parallel motion in octaves,
- Various techniques of skips and hand-crossings
- Bright scale passages (like in Haydn, Beethoven),
- Alternating chords between right and left hands (like in Liszt, Balakirev),
- Accentuated non legato passages,

Another driving force was Prokofiev's deep interest in theatre and drama which emerged quite early in his life. One may observe a programmatic elements in many of his works - especially in his instrumental compositions for theatre. He achieves visual expressiveness by combining themes contrapuntally as leitmotifs, and by using descriptive sound effects.

The classical sonata form can often be found in Prokofiev's instrumental music. Referring to it as to “the most flexible musical form” he often changed its typical features. He for example often transforms the recapitulation, changing it into a continuation of the development section. This serves the purpose of dramatizing the development section and shifting the climax to the recapitulation.

Even when he strictly follows the traditional sonata form, he uses uncommon tonal relations, such as unresolved sevenths, seconds, tritones, and volatile alterations which at times may sound atonal.

¹¹Stephen Eddins, quoted on <http://www.allmusic.com/composition/the-fiery-angel-opera-op-37-mc0002386665>>. Precise source unclear.

Analysis (for detailed overview see tables in appendix)

“Arrangements should be understood as translations, a re-writing of the original work that reveals a hidden dimension of the original and, at the same time, adapts it to a specific audience and cultural environment”¹².

First chapter (first movement)

The piece starts with introducing the main characters through their leitmotifs. Ruprecht meets Renata and becomes involved in her life and her spiritual struggle. The attention is focused on lyrical narration which evolves into a passionate interchange between Ruprecht and Renata; a colossal difference of their characters is presented. In the kind of arrangement I wrote there are no such things as main and accompanying voices, the roles of voices are switched swiftly. The cello and piano parts are both telling the story of Ruprecht and Renata, and at the same time take over the role of the orchestra. In the opera, four main leitmotifs are constantly developed, and result in new motives. The tension is growing due to the fact that each of the leitmotifs is trying to overpower the other. The leitmotif of Ruprecht dominates in the end.

The image displays four musical staves, each representing a different leitmotif. The first staff, 'Ruprecht's leitmotiv', is in 4/4 time and features a melodic line with a prominent eighth-note pattern. The second staff, 'Renata's leitmotiv', is in 6/8 time and consists of a more rhythmic, eighth-note melody. The third staff, 'love leitmotiv', is in 4/4 time and shows a more complex, flowing melodic line with various intervals. The fourth staff, 'Madiel's leitmotiv', is in 2/4 time and features a slower, more contemplative melody with wide intervals.

Example 1: Leitmotifs

My choices concerning the organisation of musical material are meant to preserve a story line. At the same time, I was concerned about performability of this piece and about its theatrical aspects, i.e. the physicality of instrumentation and the confrontation of the opposite characters. Shortening of certain episodes was a necessity in cases they were too long to be effective in a cello/piano duo and didn't serve the dramatic purposes of the arrangement.

¹² Fundación Juan March *Beethoven's Symphonies in Chamber Arrangements* (The arrangements and its historical context) <<http://www.march.es/musica/detalle.aspx?p1=18&p5=1978&l=2>>

I would like to illustrate my point by focusing on the beginning of the opera. It opens with a cold, objective statement in the horns and trumpets proclaiming the superiority of reason and of material reality, symbolised by the leitmotiv of Ruprecht:

Example 2: Mvt. I, bar 1-4

This is immediately followed by an episode in which Renata is tortured by her visions, depicted by a single repetitive motivic gesture:

Example 3: Mvt. I, bar 5-9

Already from the beginning of the piece we are confronted with two opposite characters and their theatrical representation. In the 1st Act of the opera there is a scene with a hostess, which I omitted. Taking this freedom, to skip parts of the score was one of the biggest challenges, and my work progressed slowly as I tried out many options and combinations, and couldn't move on until the music fitted perfectly in the right place.

Listening to recordings of the opera with the score was a big help for my choices of instrumentation and harmony. In the process of reducing the density of the orchestra I recombined the lines of different instruments and voices, though still strictly following the character given by Prokofiev at any point. Like in Renata's monologue, starting in the cello part:

The image shows a musical score for Violoncello and Piano, Example 4: Mvt. I, bar 68-83. The score is written for Violoncello (Cello) and Piano. The Violoncello part is in the bass clef, and the Piano part is in the grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The score includes dynamic markings such as *p*, *mf*, *pp*, and *mp*, and articulation markings like *un poco cresc*. The Violoncello part features a melodic line with a crescendo and a shift in dynamics. The Piano part provides harmonic support with chords and a steady bass line.

Example 4: Mvt. I, bar 68-83

I assigned Renata's voice to the right hand of the piano, whilst her line on the cello is accompanied by material from the strings – this shift in voice leading is dictated by the emotional change in her narration. Further on I play with the accompanying dialogue of the flutes and the 2nd violins, intensifying Renata's narration by transposing her line an octave down and combining it with the part of the double basses (in the left hand of the piano). So in this episode the choices I made are quite transparent and serve to increase the line of tension:

The image shows a musical score for Violoncello and Piano, Example 5: Mvt. I, bar 84-87. The score is written for Violoncello (Cello) and Piano. The Violoncello part is in the bass clef, and the Piano part is in the grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The score includes dynamic markings such as *pp* and *cresc.*, and articulation markings like *cresc.*. The Violoncello part features a melodic line with a crescendo and a shift in dynamics. The Piano part provides harmonic support with chords and a steady bass line.

Example 5: Mvt. I, bar 84-87

Second chapter (second movement)

The second chapter starts with a grotesque scene with the Fortuneteller predicting Renata's bloody destiny. It brings in the aura of chaos and upcoming catastrophe. The leitmotif of the Fortuneteller (or: the leitmotif of the supernatural in general) is infecting the listener with anxiety like a poison:



Example 6: Mvt. II, bar 5, 6

This movement is in a sense much more introvert than the first movement, and it concentrates on depiction of the psychological state of the main characters and their encounters with invisible forces. A challenge, of finding a tempo which would reflect this inner state, especially relates to the scene of Renata drawing a magical circle for invocation. This challenge is for the pianist: to fully express the emotions and contemplative state embedded in the score with "scenographic plasticity"¹³:

Tranquillo, un poco gravemente

Example 7: Mvt. II, bar 35-39

This scene is followed by the dialogue of Ruprecht who is tired of looking for Heinrich and Renata who doesn't give up her search for Heinrich. Since both characters are illustrated by the cello it was challenging to make them clearly distinctive. I emphasised the differences between the two temperaments: the very 'grounded' one of Ruprecht and the exalted, somewhat hysterical temperament of Renata by using different octaves, various dynamics and bow articulations. The right hand (cello) copies its way of playing from the vocal declamation.

In the end of this movement the theme from the opening ('the theme of invocation') of this 2nd Act returns. Knocks are heard on the walls, and both Renata and Ruprecht are expecting

¹³ Prokofiev, Sergei *Diaries* (A. Phillips, Trans.) Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013

Heinrich's appearance. The bottom of a grand piano hit by a gong beater provides enough resemblance to the mysterious knocks on the wall, unless performers will find another creative solution.

Third chapter (third movement)

But as Heinrich doesn't come, Renata is desperate. Ruprecht is trying to comfort her. Yakov Glok is back to take Ruprecht to Agrippa, an important magician posing as a scientist.

Now the central theme of this third movement is introduced (which also forms the basis of the climax in the fourth movement); it can be characterised as a march:

44 *Allegro moderato*
fff espress

50

Example 8: Mvt. III, bar 44-53

Prokofiev's typical ostinato writing constitutes a constant energetic drive. In order to make the depth of expression equal to that of an orchestra, I had to find variety in instrumentation and rhythmic depiction, which I accomplished by diversifying ostinato figures, and changing the roles of piano and cello (in bars n^o. 66, 70, 105, 117).

In Agrippa's study, Ruprecht is questioning him about matters of science and magic. Agrippa is convinced that the real magician is in fact a scientist and a philosopher. The atmosphere is electrified by the presence of supernatural forces under the disguise of the march theme. Ruprecht is convinced by Agrippa's point of view and the movement ends with a prominent C.

Fourth chapter (fourth movement)

“A convent. A spacious and gloomy undercroft with stone arches and a door leading to the outside. When the doors open, daylight floods in and one can see a flight of stone steps leading up to ground level. There are two smaller doors. From the one will enter the abbess and members of the sisterhood; through the other will come the Inquisitor. At a raised level, yet below the arches, there is a stone gallery. On the floor of the undercroft Renata is discovered. She wears the grey habit of a novice. She is prostrate, with arms outstretched, in the form a cross”¹⁴:

Example 9: Mvt. IV, bar 1-7

The Abbess enters from the convent door, goes over to Renata and touches her. Renata rises, kneels before the Abbess, and holds on to that position for some time, with her head inclined. As the Abbess goes away the Inquisitor comes in from another door. There is a stirring expectation among the nuns, and they all sink to their knees. In the course of my creative process, I came up with ideas which sometimes interrupted the linear development of the opera: Now we are suddenly back in a street where Renata is discovered alone, huddling against the closed door of Heinrich's house. To connect musical material after it had been cut out of its original place was the most interesting but also most difficult process, and the only judge of the result was my musical intuition. Displacing material in this manner I followed one of Prokofiev's own composing techniques of re-using material from one act in another act:

¹⁴ Prokofiev *The Fiery Angel (Orchestral Score)* London: Boosey & Hawkes 1957, p.487

The first system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a cello line in bass clef, starting with a half note G2, followed by a half note A2, and then a half note B2. The middle staff is the piano accompaniment in treble clef, featuring a complex texture of triplets (marked with a '3') of eighth notes. The bottom staff is the piano accompaniment in bass clef, also featuring triplets of eighth notes. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4.

The second system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a cello line in bass clef, featuring a melodic line with sixteenth notes and slurs. The middle staff is the piano accompaniment in treble clef, with chords and sixteenth notes. The bottom staff is the piano accompaniment in bass clef, with chords and sixteenth notes. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4.

The third system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a cello line in bass clef, featuring a melodic line with sixteenth notes and slurs. The middle staff is the piano accompaniment in treble clef, with chords and sixteenth notes. The bottom staff is the piano accompaniment in bass clef, with chords and sixteenth notes. A quintuplet (marked with a '5') is present in the middle staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4.

The musical score for Example 11, Mvt. IV, bars 155-180, is written in 6/8 time. It consists of three staves: a vocal line (soprano), a piano right-hand part, and a piano left-hand part. The vocal line begins with the instruction "sul pont" and ends with "THE END". The dynamics for the vocal line are *mp* (mezzo-piano), *sfocato* (sforzato), and *smorzando* (diminuendo). The piano accompaniment starts with *mp* and includes *sfocato*, *smorzando*, and *ppp* (pianissimo) markings. The piano part features a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand and chords in the right hand.

Example 11: Mvt. IV, bar155-180

On the recording, the gong was very suitable for the effect I wanted to achieve, and would definitely be of a great effect in a performance as well. However, it may be skipped in case it is not available.

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Picc. a2
 Fl. 1, 2
 Ob. 1, 2
 Cl. 1.
 Cl. 1, 2 in Sib
 Cl. b. in Sib
 Fag. 1, 2
 Cfg.
 Cor. in Fa 1, 2, 3, 4
 Tr. in Do 1, 2, 3
 Tbn. 1, 2, 3
 Tuba
 timp.
 Batt.
 Arpa 1
 Arpa 2
 Ren.
 Inq. Inq.
 6 Sœurs 6 Schw. 6 Sisters
 1
 2
 3
 4
 5
 Suite de l'Inq. Gefolge des Inq. Suite of Inq.
 VI. I
 VI. II
 Vie.
 Vc.
 Cb.

Caches en coulisse, Clocken. hinter den Kulissen, Bei off stage
 Doh Soli
 Spi - ri - ti - ma - lig
 Le cou - pa - ble? Mais c'est lui! Oui c'est toi le grand cou -
 du bist sün - di - ger als wir, du bist sün - di - ger als
 Thou thy - self art black with sin, black - er sin than all the
 la, la, la, la, la, la, la
 O - al - O - al - O - al -
 A A
 A ge - nous de réfn, vach le - bis - glo - ri - fions sa -
 du Hall the De vil, wor - ship Sa - tan, wor - ship Sa - tan,
 Spi - ri - ti - ma - lig

B. & H. 19310

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Picc.

Fl 1.2

Ob. 1.2

Cl. I.

Cl. 1.2 in Sib

Cl. b. in Sib

Fag. 1.2

Clg.

Tr. in Fa 1.2 3.4

Tr. in Do 1.2 3

Tbn. 1.2 3

Batt.

Arpa 1

Arpa 2

Ren.

Inq. Inq.

6 Soeurs
6 Schw.
6 Sisters

1
2
3
4
5

Suite
de l'Inq.
des Inq.
des Inq.

VI. I.

VI. II.

Vc.

Cb.

pa - bie. Jai - le donc nur bā - lon. A Sa - tan tu as ven
die die. Klop - je nur mit dem Stab. Dei - ne See - le is/ schon
Sis - ters. Why pa - rade with thy staff, when thy soul was long a -
ni - dam - na - ti, in - ter -
ia, ia, ia, ia, ia, ia, ia, ia,
O - al O - al A
- tan le pt - re, vi - ve le grand
Be - il - al und in us, Lob dem
Be - il - al burns with be - us, all his
ni - dam - na - ti, in - ter -

B. & H. 19310

Example 12: Orchestral score of *Fiery Angel*, London: Boosey & Hawkes Pocket Score 1262, 1994, p. 613, 614

Prokofiev's opera 'The Fiery Angel' (arrangement for cello and piano) by Maya Fridman, February 2016

Final thoughts

From his earliest works, Prokofiev had a very strong interest in theatre; as a result of that he later became an outstanding film composer. As I mentioned before, he possessed a natural theatrical expressivity as a performer, which was reflected in his composition techniques. Undoubtedly, composing for stage influenced his writing style and gave him freedom to experiment with various soundscapes and effects, thus providing his compositions with visual expressiveness. Imitating sounds and tones of specific orchestral instruments is a very theatrical element on its own right, since any instrument has its own dramatic purpose.

In my arrangement, I use the typical features of Prokofiev's writing for piano as I described them above: polyphony, contrapuntal combinations of leitmotifs in climaxes, parallel motion, basso ostinato (both in cello and piano parts), and onomatopoeic 'special' sound effects.

Whilst 'polishing' the arrangement and studying its performance I had to ask myself some questions:

1. How to manage the tempi and how relate them to the declamation and "scenographic plasticity".
2. The next question concerns dynamics. Of course I copied most of the dynamic markings from the original score. However, during the rehearsals a lot of them were re-considered.
3. Bowings are in most cases based on the orchestral slurs. Piano attacks and pedals should fit the atmosphere and be close to the orchestral score.
4. Breathing is very important, not only for the vocal parts but for the structure and flow of the phrases.
5. Although performers should take freedom in the interpretation of this piece, it is preferable to know the opera score. Since it is a programmatic piece, the performer should be aware of the story he/she is telling. For as much as acting is an innate part of performing, I believe that empathy with the main characters of the opera may greatly enhance the performance.

I think it is important to consider the concept of the performance itself. How should a performer invite listeners to the unknown land of *The Fiery Angel*? Should it be a traditional

classical concert or could a performance incorporate visual elements such as light, screens, decorations, etc.? Optionally, elements from music theatre or any other form of art could be also included. And of course, as in any other piece (sonatas, concerti, suites, etc.) each movement could be performed separately and without any theatrical setting.

Conclusion

Below, I present the score of my arrangement of Prokofiev's opera *The Fiery Angel*. Since it is a new and old piece at the same time, it might receive as much negative as positive critique. Most important for me was to reveal the beauty and depth of this opera. I confess that for the main problem I have encountered in the process of working on the arrangement, I didn't find one universal solution but many different ways of approaching the same subject. And the only right one is the one dictated by my intuition, even if I can not always explain it logically.

Amsterdam, February 2016

Appendix: Analysis of the arrangement

1 st movement		Orchestral Score (pages)	Description
Arrangement (bar numbers)			
1 - 4	1	Leitmotif of Ruprecht (horns) in cello part	
5 - 28	7 - 9	Renata is tortured by visions	
29 - 52	31 - 36	Ruprecht's prayer (piano) and Renata's leitmotif (cello)	
53 - 67	37 - 38	Andante': Renata thanks Ruprecht for saving her.	
68 - 79	41	Monologue of Renata in which she tells the story of her youth ('Mne bilo vosem' let')	
80 - 83	43	Cello part switches to the line of Vi2, then Vc/Cb line till the end of the page. Piano part continues the line of Renata	
84 - 87	44	Imaginary dialog between cello and piano right hand (RH) (flutes). Piano left hand (LH) - Renata	
88 - 90	45 - 46	Cello takes over Renata's line. Piano RH - vi 1/2 and flutes. Piano LH - Vc/Cb line	
91 - 94	46	"Ognenni' angel" (Fiery Angel) melody line - both cello and piano	
95 - 110	47	Renata - cello and piano RH together	
111 - 125	51	Leitmotif of Madiel (cello)	
126	52	Cello takes over Renata's part	
127 - 128	53 - 54	Shortened version of her line	
140 - 155	55 - 56	The leitmotif of the Count Heinrich/Madiel is in piano RH (oboe). I made up cello part based on the harmonies of the orchestra chords.	
156 - 172	57 - 58	Cello part derived partly from the strings and partly from Renata. The melodic line of piano - strings and woodwinds.	
173 - 203	58 - 63	Everything is very much like in the original scores. Renata - cello, all the rest - piano.	
204 - 223	317 - 320	This is the 1st introduction of one of the main leitmotif (love leitmotif). It feels to me completely right to place it here in this moment of the development of the 1st movement.	
224 - 257	64 - 69	Following the score precisely.	
258 - 266	70	Skipped 5 bars further (to make the transition shorter) and continued directly from Andante lamentoso	
267 - 272	71 - 73	Cello - Renata	
273 - 275	73 - 74	Cello has elements of oboe part plus Renata	
276 - 287	77	Cello - Renata	
288 - 294		Madiel's leitmotif comes back (piano RH), cello accompanies (Va/Vc), leading to the leitmotif of Ruprecht repeating twice.	
295 - 309		Cello takes over this leitmotif unexpectedly ' <i>dolce piano</i> ', forming counterpoint with piano starting with the 'Love' leitmotif one bar later (in the original scores there is only the leitmotif of Madiel).	
		Free interpretation of 'Love' leitmotif and of Ruprecht in the end	

2nd movement

Arrangement (bar numbers)	Orchestral score (pages)	Description
1 - 25		Scene with the Fortuneteller:
1 - 4	136 - 140	Piano RH - oboe
check	check	Cello enters with a leitmotif, two bars (piano part made up by me)
7 - 9		Part of the Fortuneteller ("Sis-ta...sis-ta, ris-ta...")
10 - 12		Cello plays the part of oboe and bassoon
13 - 14		Cello - Fortuneteller
15 - 20		Cello - Vi/Vc
21	140	for the reason of expressivity I took this bar from following page
22 - 25	139	Cello - Fortuneteller
26 - 34	153 - 154	Opening of Act II (Tutti)
35 - 39		<i>Tranquillo, un poco gravemente</i> : Piano continues with woodwinds
		Here I skip 5 bars (because this leitmotif is repeating)
39 - 41	156	Renata is drawing the magical circle (Vi1 'con sordino' & flute melody played by piano
42 - 51		The invocation continues
52 - 60	158 - 160	interruption by Ruprecht's invasion
61 - 65	161 - 162	He (cello) continues ' <i>poco piu sostenuto</i> '
66 - 88	163 - 167	Renata's monologue ' <i>Allegro moderato</i> '
89 - 115	178 - 183	Ruprecht's monologue, ' <i>Poco meno mosso, Poco mena (Andante)</i> '
		I skipped three bars of the transition from the original score
116 - 127	183 - 187	and continued with Renata immediately (subito)
128		Transition to
129 - 139	187 - 190	Ruprecht's leitmotif
139 - 148		Renata's reply, this time presented by piano
149 - 185	192 - 197	Orchestra tutti. Recapitulation on the themes presented in the opening of the Act II (bars 35-50)

3rd movement

Arrangement (bar numbers)	Orchestral Score (pages)	Description
1 - 6	243 - 244	Entr'Acte. Orchestra tutti
6	231 - 232	Transition to Renata's leitmotif which leads to the next leitmotif of Madiel.
6- 15	232 - 233	The climax of the introduction. Tutti (Renata is sobbing)
16 - 31	233 - 235	Andantino. Ruprecht consoles Renata swearing to solve the hidden mystery
31 - 42	237 - 239	In Piano LH enters the recognisable 'magic' leitmotif. Piano RH and cello illustrate 'love' leitmotif in canon.
Central part: Allegro moderato		
43 - 81	249 - 256	Tutti (Ruprecht on his way to Agrippa)
82 - 90	257 - 258	Meno mosso, Andante non troppo (appearance of Agrippa)
91 - 93	259	Here the leitmotif of the Fortuneteller appears one more time alluding to the supernatural atmosphere (only first three bars in the piano accompaniment). Cello enters (Ruprecht asking Agrippa his council).
94 - 103	260 - 263	Poco più mosso. Allegro moderato. Dialogue between Ruprecht and Agrippa.
104 - 129	265 - 271	Continuation based on the central theme of this movement.
130 - 140	274 - 275, 293	Climax of the movement and the end of the 2nd scene (also recapitulation of the theme of Agrippa presented before).

4th movement

Arrangement (bar numbers)	Orchestral score (pages)	Description
4th movement		
1 - 48	487 - 497	Act V. Andante
1 - 6		In score only Va, Vc and Cb con sordino. In arrangement cello solo.
7 - 18		Piano enters (strings) and cello continues the same melody (in a different tonality) sang by nuns behind the curtains.
19	492	Poco più mosso: The Abbess enters from the convent door, goes over to Renata and touches her. Renata rises, and kneels before the Abbess and holds that position for some while, with her head inclined.
19 - 48		This follows the structure of the opera
49 - 52	497 - 498	The Abbess goes away.
53 - 55		Allegro. The Inquisitor comes in from another door. There is a stirring expectation among the nuns, and they all sink to their knees.
56 - 72	295 - 297	Returning to Act III Scene 1 (Renata discovered alone, huddling against the closed door of Heinrich's house).
73 - 79	321, 323	Renata asks Ruprecht to kill Heinrich. Ruprecht is shocked.
80 - 120	546 - 553	Allegro Moderato. Back to the convent (beginning of the demonic possession and hysteria of the nuns: "there he is", "will he come"). This is the most serene moment of the whole composition.
		The leitmotif of Madiel is played <i>docissimo</i> . (in the original scores it is interrupted in the middle, p.553).
124 - 141	605 - 608	Transition to the next scene. Appearance of Mephistopheles and Ruprecht. All attention is centered on Renata.
142 - 168	609 - 617	Meno mosso (Andante, ma non troppo). The scene of exorcism. Well recognisable theme from the 3rd movement of my arrangement.
155 -		Cello part based on combination of different motives of the choir and orchestra.
169 -	618	Cello melody starts as a continuation of the previous theme but then it changes in the leitmotif of Madiel, presenting itself for the last time.
		In the piano part there is the conquering leitmotif of Ruprecht.
176 - 177	633 - 634	Both leitmotifs are interrupted by the dissonant harmonies of the end.

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