Generic Plurality and Two-Dimensional Unity in Medtner's First Piano Concerto, Op. 33

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1   The Missing Puzzle

Despite the enduring interest in Medtner's music, the 1st Piano Concerto, Op. 33 (1914–18) has attracted surprisingly little attention comparing to his piano sonatas and *skazki*. Although it is often considered as the culmination of Medtner's earlier attempts at large-scale single-movement form, the significance of the Concerto in both Medtner's oeuvre and the history of the piano concerto is largely overshadowed by the success of its *fin-de-siècle* Russian contemporaries.[1] This is perhaps due to the unfavourable reception of Op. 33, in which Medtner was criticised for his technical incompetence. Boris Asafiev, while praising Medtner's characteristic melos, complains about the Concerto's overall lack of coherence. He contends that its episodic formal organisation (engendered by the variations that function as a sonata development) halts "the forward movement" and disturbs "our capacity to fathom the development of the music over the whole expanse of it."[2] This 'overload' of episodes arguably obscures Medtner's musical intention and thereby leads Asafiev to aver that

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1 See Aleksandr Alekseyev, "Die Klaviermusik Nikolai Medtners und seine Konzerte für Klavier und Orchester," in *Einführung in die Klaviermusik von Nikolai Medtner*, ed. and trans. Ernst Kuhn (Berlin: Ernst Kuhn, 2008), 105; and Barrie Martyn, *Nicolas Medtner: His Life and Music* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995), 116–17. For a brief reception history of Op. 33 in Russia, see ibid., 120f; also the reviews by Vyacheslav Karatygin (1922), Sergei Bugoslavsky (1923), and Leonid Sabaneyev (1923), cited and translated into German in Christoph Flamm, *Der russische Komponist Nikolaj Metner: Studien und Materialien* (Berlin: Ernst Kuhn, 1995), 319–33. For the Russian contemporaries of Medtner's Concerto, I have in mind Rachmaninov's 2nd and 3rd Piano Concertos, as well as Prokofiev's 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Concertos.

2 Boris Asafiev, *Russian Music from the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Alfred J. Swan (Ann Arbor, MI: Edwards Brothers, 1953), 202. For the Russian original, see Asafiev, *Russkaya muzika: ot nachala XIX stoletiya*, rev. and ed. Elena Orlova as *Russkaya muzïka XIX i nachala XX veka* (Leningrad: Akademiya, 1968). Here Asafiev probably followed on

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the same strategy produces a "more directly enchanting and unpremeditated" effect in the sonatas and the *skazki*.[3]

The Concerto however seems to exhibit a different conception of formal process from what Asafiev suggests. Even more so than his earlier sonatas such as Op. 22 and Op. 25 No. 2, Op. 33 manifests a strong Lisztian influence in its adoption of 'multimovement form within a single movement' – or of what Steven Vande Moortele theorises as 'two-dimensional sonata form' – as the fundamental formal design.[4] Such a formal construction demonstrates a sonata teleology that diverges from the general 18th-century-based understanding of concerto form. Marginalising the Romantic heritage of Medtner's 1st Piano Concerto would therefore result in the lack of generic context for understanding its formal practice. This in turn risks eclipsing Medtner's original approach to large-scale single-movement form that he had been developing since Op. 22.[5]

Drawing on Julian Horton's recent studies on the postclassical piano concerto, the present chapter scrutinises Medtner's formal strategy in relation to the Romantic concerto's generic subtypes – namely the virtuoso concerto and the symphonic concerto – and their associated formal praxis. I argue that the Concerto assimilates generic and formal characteristics of both the symphonic concerto and the virtuoso concerto into its two-dimensional sonata process: at the local level, the deployment of ritornello and solo occasions intra-thematic

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  Sabaneyev's criticism of the Concerto in the latter's 1923 review. See Flamm, *Nikolaj Metner*, 331–2.

3 Asafiev, *Russian Music*, 203.

4 Aleksandr Alekseyev and Wendelin Bitzan also point out the Lisztian influence on Op. 33. See Alekseyev, "Die Klaviermusik Nikolai Medtners," 108; and Bitzan, *The Sonata as an Ageless Principle. Nikolai Medtner's Early Piano Sonatas* (PhD diss., University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, 2018), 84 f, 89. The concept of 'multimovement form within a single movement' (or 'double-function form') comes from William S. Newman and is subsequently expanded and modified by Carl Dahlhaus, James Hepokoski, and Steven Vande Moortele. See Newman, *The Sonata since Beethoven* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969); Dahlhaus, "Liszt, Schönberg und die große Form: Das Prinzip der Mehrsätzigkeit in der Einsätzigkeit," *Die Musikforschung* 41 (1988): 202–13; Hepokoski, *Sibelius: Symphony No. 5* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); and Vande Moortele, *Two-Dimensional Sonata Form* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2009). The idea of two-dimensional sonata form will be discussed in more detail in the later part of this chapter.

5 Flamm, *Nikolaj Metner*, 233n747; see also 222–34.

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proliferation and comprises the first-movement symphonic form in the sonata cycle akin to the symphonic concerto; at the overarching level, it constitutes the first-movement concerto form in the manner of the virtuoso concerto. Together they attest to a two-dimensional conception of concerto form. In what follows, I first outline the generic issues associated with the postclassical piano concerto and situate them in a Russian context. This paves the way for a reappraisal of Op. 33's form-functional behaviour via a modified model of two-dimensional sonata form, which takes into account the generic codes of both the virtuoso concerto and the symphonic concerto. Such an integration of formal types is then understood in line with Medtner's aesthetic formulations of plurality and unity in his book *Muza i moda* [*The Muse and the Fashion*], in which the generic plurality of the Romantic concerto is coalesced into a unified two-dimensional formal framework. In view of this intricate generic hybridity, I conclude that the Concerto could be conceived as Medtner's seminal essay on concerto form, serving as the missing puzzle in what Ivan Ilyin describes as the composer's own "history of the sonata."[6]

2 The Postclassical Piano Concerto and Its Russian Variant

Asafiev's criticism of Medtner's Op. 33 reflects a long-standing issue in the study of the postclassical piano concerto, whereby its formal syntax is often assessed through the lens of theoretical models derived from 18th-century (particularly Mozartian) piano concerti. His claim that Medtner's episodic variations inhibit "forward movement" and impede development points to a classical sonata reading that treats thematic development as an essential criterion of a sonata development section. Aleksandr Alekseyev likewise adheres to the same theoretical premise. He expresses dissatisfaction with the lack of thematic development in Medtner's piano concerti, proclaiming that the composer did not make enough effort to transform the thematic material constantly.[7] Such a perspective has a profound impact on the reception not only of Medtner's

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6 Ivan Ilyin, "Sonata Form in Medtner," in *Nicolas Medtner: A Tribute to His Art and Personality*, ed. Richard Holt (London: Dennis Dobson, 1955), 180.

7 See Alekseyev, "Die Klaviermusik Nikolai Medtners," 108.

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works, but also of a large body of non-canonical piano concerti in the long 19th century. Reappraising John Field's piano concerti, Horton contends that "formal theory's heavy dependence on mainstream repertory invariably bodes ill for the analysis of marginal works," which results in a mismatch between theory and practice: while Mozart's piano concerti played only a limited role on the concert stage in London, Berlin, Leipzig, and Paris at the turn of the 19th century, the theoretical models developed out of the Viennese repertory by Carl Czerny, Adolf Bernhard Marx, and later Donald Francis Tovey, James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, were nevertheless used to understand the concerti emanated from these contexts.[8] To evaluate the formal strategy of non-Viennese piano concerti from a Mozartian point of view is therefore, as Horton asserts, "to apply a paradigm that had a minimal impact on the circumstances of their production, but which has been elevated *ex post facto* to the status of a universal principle."[9] In Medtner's case, the geographical and historical disparities between Op. 33 and the Viennese-classical model make it even more of a misprision to critique the Concerto's formal praxis. This anachronistic theoretical orientation neglects the development of the piano concerto throughout the 19th century, not to mention the genre's migration to the East and consequently the emergence of the Russian strand. A reconstruction of the Romantic and the Russian contexts to which Medtner was indebted is thus necessary in order to address the generic properties that underlie the Concerto's formal syntax.

To begin with, Op. 33's Lisztian reference evinces its direct inheritance from the Romantic piano concerto, within which lies the tension between virtuosity and symphonism associated especially with the genre. In place of

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8 See Julian Horton, "John Field and the Alternative History of Concerto First-Movement Form," *Music & Letters* 92, no. 1 (2011): 43, 46–51. For the theoretical models developed from the Viennese repertoire, see Carl Czerny, *School of Practical Composition: Complete Treatise on the Composition of All Kinds of Music, Op. 600*, vol. 1, trans. John Bishop (London: Robert Cocks, 1848); Adolf Bernhard Marx, *Die Lehre von der musikalischen Komposition*, vol. 4 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1847); Donald Francis Tovey, "The Classical Concerto," in *Essays in Musical Analysis: Concertos*, vol. 3 (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 3–27; James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

9 Horton, "John Field and the Alternative History," 47.

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Mozart, the virtuoso concerto at the turn of the 19th century was built on the achievement of Jan Ladislav Dussek in London, who was then joined by Johann Baptist Cramer, Daniel Steibelt, and Field. According to Horton, their some 40 concerti amount to a 'London School', the concerted practices of which had a significant influence on the later London-based composers including Friedrich Kalkbrenner, Ignaz Moscheles, and William Sterndale Bennett.[10] The international scope of these composers' careers also effected a 'cross-fertilisation' of formal thinking (in Horton's words) between London and its continental counterparts. For example, Mendelssohn's visits to London had made his piano concerti an important part of London's concert life in the 1830s and 1840s. This had a critical impact on Bennett, who had his 1st Concerto, Op. 1, heard by Mendelssohn in 1833 and subsequently arranged a visit to Leipzig in 1836. Turning towards Central and Eastern Europe, while Chopin integrated influences from Field and Kalkbrenner in Warsaw and distributed his outcomes in Vienna and Paris, Field and Steibelt assumed their presence in Russia and laid the foundation for the genre's ensuing development there.[11] Together these interactions constituted an interconnected network of reciprocity and fostered the formation of the Romantic virtuoso concerto, whose first-movement form is characterised notably by (1) modulating ritornello; (2) correlation between ritornello and solo subordinate themes, and divergence between main themes; and (3) consolidation of solo topics in relation to formal functions, with a threefold topical discourse involving *bravura*, *cantabile* (or nocturne), and display (*brillant*).[12] All such properties differ fundamentally

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10 Julian Horton, *Brahms' Piano Concerto No. 2, Op. 83: Analytical and Contextual Studies* (Leuven: Peeters, 2017), 87–89, 82.

11 Ibid., 89–90; cf. Therese Ellsworth, *The Piano Concerto in London Concert Life between 1801 and 1850* (PhD diss., University of Cincinnati, 1991), for Mendelssohn's performances in London; and Stephan D. Lindeman, "Continental Composers and their English Influence, as Manifested in the Piano Concertos of William Sterndale Bennett," *Ad Parnassum* 5, no. 10 (2007): 103–41, for a discussion of Bennett's concerti.

12 Horton, *Brahms' Piano Concerto*, 83–86. These topics were initially introduced by Leonard Ratner in the 1980s and have since been explicated by others. See Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1980). On the *bravura* style, see ibid, *Classic Music*, 294–98; on the *cantabile* (or singing) style, see Sarah Day-O'Connell, "The Singing Style," in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, ed. Danuta Mirka (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 238–58; on the nocturne style, see Janice Dickensheets, "The Topical

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from the Mozartian prototype, or the Type 5 sonata in Hepokoski and Darcy's terms.[13]

By the 1830s, the virtuoso concerto was arraigned for its "self-aggrandisement" and "itinerant commercialism" owing to the increasing favouritism of thematic manipulation over improvisation in composition.[14] This environment nurtured the development of the symphonic concerto, which seeks to mimic the legacy of the symphony by foregrounding thematic integrity as the cardinal principle of its formal organisation. The formation of the symphonic concerto was already prefigured in Beethoven's 3rd and 4th Piano Concerti (1799–1800 and 1805–06), which, according to William Drabkin, see the reconciliation of "basic concerto principles with symphonic development."[15] In particular, the 4th Concerto exhibits a cyclic treatment of the main theme, a practice which is also observed in Medtner's 1st Concerto.[16] Such symphonic aspirations were then taken up by Liszt, whose 2nd Piano Concerto, S. 125 (completed in 1839, revised 1849–61), is exemplary for its amalgamation of symphonic strategies developed in the first half of the 19th century. Concurrent with Mendelssohn's 1st Piano Concerto, Op. 25 (1831), Schumann's Piano Concerto, Op. 54 (1841–45), and Henry Litolff's 4th *Concerto symphonique*, Op. 102 (c. 1852), Liszt's Concerto substitutes the sonata-ritornello hybrid prevalent in the first movement of virtuoso concerti with sonata form, or the Type 3 sonata in Hepokoski and Darcy's theory. Moreover, it combines

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Vocabulary of the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Musicological Research* 31, no. 2–3 (2012): 106–108; on the display posture, see Elaine Sisman, "Symphonies and the Public Display of Topics," in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, 90–117; and on the *brillant* style, see Roman Ivanovitch, "The Brilliant Style," in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, 330–54.

13 For the Type 5 sonata, see Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 496–602.

14 Horton, *Brahms' Piano Concerto*, 101; cf. Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, trans. J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 134–42; and Dana Gooley, "The Battle against Instrumental Virtuosity in the Early Nineteenth Century," in *Franz Liszt and His World*, eds. Christopher H. Gibbs and Dana Gooley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 75–111.

15 William Drabkin, "Towards the 'Symphonic Concerto' of the Middle Period: Beethoven's Third and Fourth Piano Concertos," in *Ludwig van Beethoven: Atti del convegni internazionale di studi*, ed. Giuseppe Pugliese (Verona: Matteo Editore, 1989), 97–98.

16 Ibid., 99–100. Beethoven's 4th Piano Concerto was also one of Medtner's most frequently performed works apart from his own compositions. See Flamm, *Der russische Komponist Nikolaj Metner*, 631–32.

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multimovement cycle with overarching form, altogether generating a single-movement two-dimensional sonata design. This adoption of sonata form in the symphonic concerto is heralded by the practice of modulating ritornello in the Romantic virtuoso concerto, which nevertheless implies a symphonic exposition's tonal scheme that could otherwise proceed without the solo restatement.[17] The virtuoso properties thereby function to serve a broader symphonic ideal of the concerto – in his 2nd Piano Concerto, Liszt realigned the concept of virtuosity with a Beethovenian heroic persona that nonetheless participates in the symphonic discourse.[18] In this model, solo and tutti are coalesced through cyclical thematic transformation to ensure material continuity, which supports the overarching symphonic teleology in the music's two-dimensional sonata form.[19] Virtuoso devices of variation, rondo, and fantasia are consequently eclipsed by sonata form's inherent thematicism in order to adapt the concerto for symphonic display.

Although Medtner's 1st Concerto resembles Liszt's 2nd Concerto in its (partial) sublimation of tutti and solo into large-scale formal functions within a two-dimensional framework, the claim that Medtner's Concerto manifests a close proximity to the Lisztian formal ideal represents only part of the full picture – it disregards the piano concerto's development in the second half of the 19th century, particularly in Russia. While Liszt's formal innovations retained their currency, Mendelssohn's and Schumann's concerti, according to Asafiev and Horton, had also exerted a significant influence on the Russian localisation of the genre.[20] Beginning with Anton Rubinstein, Russian composers had frequently opted for the sonata design for their concerto first movements as well as single-movement two-dimensional sonata forms.[21] Even though sonata form is typically associated with symphonism in the Romantic concerto, these composers had nonetheless given it a virtuoso twist in the coordination of

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17 Horton, *Brahms' Piano Concerto*, 103–104.

18 Ibid., 112–16.

19 Ibid., 112.

20 Asafiev, *Russian Music*, 199; Horton, *Brahms' Piano Concerto No. 2, Op. 83*, 123. See also Jeremy Paul Norris, *The Development of the Russian Piano Concerto in the Nineteenth Century*, (PhD diss., University of Sheffield, 1988) for an overview of the genre's development in Russia.

21 In addition to Rubinstein, I have in mind Mily Balakirev's F♯ minor Concerto, Op. 1, and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's C♯ minor Concerto, Op. 30.

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formal functions and mode of presentation. As a forerunner, Rubinstein notably employed the sonata design (with tutti components in the exposition) in preference to the sonata-ritornello hybrid in the 1ˢᵗ movement of his 4ᵗʰ Piano Concerto, Op. 70 (1864). Following Mendelssohn, he preserved the virtuoso style by correlating, after the initial tutti, the presentation of inter-thematic functions in the exposition with the virtuoso concerto's customary solo topical arrangement (main theme: *bravura*; transition: display / *brillant*; subordinate theme: singing style; and closing section: display / *brillant*).[22] In a similar manner, Scriabin exploited the topical properties of the virtuoso concerto in his realisation of sonata form in the 1ˢᵗ movement of the Piano Concerto, Op. 20 (1896–97). He imbued its main theme with the nocturne (*espressivo*) in lieu of the *bravura*, a feature which arguably demonstrates Field's imprint on piano writing in Russia.[23] Other Russian composers of the late 19ᵗʰ century, including Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninov, instead turned towards the Schumannian precedent by sublimating virtuosity into the pursuit of thematic process. This is evident in the 1ˢᵗ movements of Tchaikovsky's 1ˢᵗ Piano Concerto, Op. 23 (1874), and Rachmaninov's 2ⁿᵈ Piano Concerto, Op. 18 (1900–01), in which the march-like (*maestoso*) and *brillant* topics in the piano often serve to support inter-thematic functions conveyed by the orchestra.[24] Such strategies were then assimilated by Georgy Catoire into his two-dimensional formal experiment in the three-movement Piano Concerto, Op. 21 (1909), where virtuosity permeates through both its interior and exterior expression of form-functionality: it underpins the symphonic presentation of inter-thematic

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22 See Horton, *Brahms' Piano Concerto No. 2, Op. 83*, 128–30, for a more detailed discussion of Rubinstein's Op. 70; cf. Julian Horton, "Listening to Topics in the Nineteenth Century," in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, ed. Danuta Mirka (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 649–50, for the typical correlation of topical discourse and formal functions in the virtuoso concerto first movement.

23 See Norris, *The Development of the Russian Piano Concerto*, 9–11, for the influence of Field's piano concerti in Russia. On Field's use of nocturne in his piano concerto, see Horton, "John Field and the Alternative History," 70–79.

24 A notable example can be found in the introduction from the 1ˢᵗ movement of Tchaikovsky's Op. 23, in which the topics associated with virtuosity are mobilised in the piano in service of the delusive main-theme functionality expressed in the strings. This perception is later corrected on the arrival of the recapitulation. See also Horton, *Brahms' Piano Concerto*, 108, for Schumann's treatment of virtuosity.

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functions on one hand, while displacing the thematic development in its sonata first movement with a theme and variations – the hallmark of the virtuoso style – on the other.

Considering this Russian context, the formal praxis in Medtner's Op. 33 might thus be best understood in relation to the generic codes of both the virtuoso concerto and the symphonic concerto. Although sonata form and its associated symphonism continues to play an important role in the post-Romantic concerto form, it is the virtuoso alteration – often in the manner of the Romantic predecessors – that characterises the Russian piano concerto at the turn of the 20th century. This amalgamation of virtuosity and symphonism culminated in Medtner's approach to concerto form. As we shall see in his 1st Concerto, the interplay of styles concerns not only the mode of expression, but also form-functional behaviour at all levels: while the music expresses a symphonic sonata first movement at the outset, such an impression is contested by the gradual unfolding of an overarching virtuoso concerto form. The dialectic of formal types is nevertheless housed within a unitary two-dimensional framework as the two coordinates of a single sonata trajectory that foregrounds the attainment of the structural cadence as imperative. This twofold realisation of sonata teleology in turn demonstrates Medtner's conception of unity, which, he contended, requires "a coordination of plurality."[25] It also attests to the composer's profound understanding of generic conventions that arises as a result of his continuous engagement with the issue of musical form.

3 Generic Interplay and Two-Dimensional Sonata Trajectory in Medtner's Op. 33

Reassessing Op. 33's idiosyncratic formal practices demands a special model of two-dimensional sonata form that spotlights the interaction between dimensions in order to account for the interplay between the generic properties of

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25 Nikolai Medtner, *The Muse and the Fashion: Being a Defence of the Foundations of the Art of Music*, trans. Alfred J. Swan (Haverford: Haverford College Bookstore, 1951), 14. For the Russian original, see Nikolai Medtner, *Muza i moda: Zashchita osnov' muzikal'nogo iskusstva* (Paris: TAIR, 1935; repr., Paris: YMCA Press, 1978).

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the virtuoso concerto and the symphonic concerto, which is in a large scale crystallised into the dialectics of virtuoso concerto form and symphonic sonata cycle. Corresponding to Vande Moortele's theorisation, this conception of two-dimensional sonata form distinguishes between the dimensions of sonata cycle (movements) and overarching single-movement sonata (form) within a unitary formal design: the two dimensions concur when the same unit expresses formal functions in both cycle and form, and they diverge when such a unit conveys formal functions only in either cycle or form. Formal units with single-dimensional functionality are referred to as 'interpolation' (active in cycle) and 'exocyclic unit' (active in form) in Vande Moortele's terms.[26] In the current formulation, the overarching form in a two-dimensional unit is, however, at times suspended and later reinvigorated, a modification which captures the gradual emergence of the overarching virtuoso concerto design that challenges the ongoing symphonic first-movement perception generated in the sonata cycle.[27] Within the two-dimensional framework, the groupings across different levels of formal hierarchy are conceived after William E. Caplin's form-functional theory, and the idea of sonata trajectory is understood in relation to Hepokoski and Darcy's notion of 'essential sonata trajectory.'[28]

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26 Vande Moortele, *Two-Dimensional Sonata Form*, 24–25. The same terminologies are retained in the analysis of Medtner's 1st Concerto.

27 This could be conceived as a different manifestation of what I theorise elsewhere as 'dialectical form.' See Kelvin H. F. Lee, "Rethinking the Symphonic Poem: Dialectical Form, Sequential Dissonances and the Chord of Fate in Schoenberg's *Pelleas und Melisande*," *Musurgia* 26, no. 3–4 (2019): 7–48. The overlay of formal types is one of the common formal strategies at the *fin de siècle*. See also Lee, "Formalising Star Clusters: Sonata Process and Breakthrough Function in the Adagio of Mahler's Tenth Symphony," *Music Analysis* 40, no. 2 (2021): 178–226.

28 See William E. Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); and Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*. The understanding and categorisation of cadences in the subsequent analysis adhere to Caplin's formulation. See Caplin, "The Classical Cadence: Conceptions and Misconceptions," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 57, no. 1 (2004): 51–117; and idem, "Beyond the Classical Cadence: Thematic Closure in Early Romantic Music," *Music Theory Spectrum* 40, no. 1 (2018): 1–26. Caplin's form-functional theory is built on Erwin Ratz's *Formenlehre*. See Ratz, *Einführung in die musikalische Formenlehre* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1973).

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3.1 Infiltration of Virtuosity and Two-Dimensional Reality

Figure 1 outlines the formal organisation of the Concerto's cyclic first movement in these terms. The generic interplay is already evident in the dimension of sonata cycle from the start. Preceded by a solo *Eingang*, the exposition begins with a Phrygian-inflected C-minor tonic main theme (mm. $3^4 - 44^1$) in a display (*appassionato*) manner, which is characteristic of a symphonic concerto first movement (see example 1).[29] While the initial thematic material is conveyed by the tutti violins, the passagework in the piano serves to support the main-theme functionality expressed through the orchestral display. This strategy resembles Schumann's and later Rachmaninov's use of virtuosity as an interior decoration for the thematically driven form-functionality. The virtuoso idiom however assumes control of the main theme's mode of presentation immediately afterwards. Following the opening sentential tutti (*a*, mm. $3^4 - 20^2$), Medtner deploys the piano solo to assert the functionality of a display contrasting middle (*b*, mm. $20^2 - 27$) and expands the main theme into a tripartite small-ternary design. This solo-led form-functionality is carried through the return of the main theme (*a'*, mm. $28 - 44^1$) in a Phrygian-inflected subdominant, where the solo display is gradually transformed into a *tempesta* episode, leading the main theme to 'become' the transition, to apply Janet Schmalfeldt's term.[30] The main theme thereby exhibits what Horton calls 'proliferation' and 'conflation' at the same time:[31] the former is motivated by

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29 Following Horton, I use the German term *Eingang* ['entrance'] to signify the short improvisatory passage that leads into the thematic material. Superscripts are used throughout the analysis to denote the beat number within the measure concerned. On the *appassionato* style, see Dickensheets, "The Topical Vocabulary," 109–111.

30 "'Becoming'" is defined as "the special case whereby the formal function initially suggested by a musical idea, phrase, or section invites retrospective reinterpretation within the larger formal context." See Janet Schmalfeldt, *In the Process of Becoming: Analytic and Philosophical Perspectives on Form in Early Nineteenth-Century Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 9. In lieu of the traditional all-embracing label *Sturm und Drang*, I distinguish between *ombra* and *tempesta* topics, conceived after Clive McClelland's formulation. See McClelland, "*Ombra* and *Tempesta*," in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, 279–300.

31 Julian Horton, "Formal Type and Formal Function in the Postclassical Piano Concerto," in *Formal Functions in Perspective: Essays on Musical Form from Haydn to Adorno*, eds. Steven Vande Moortele, Julie Pedneault-Deslauriers, and Nathan John Martin (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2015), 112; cf. Horton, *Brahms' Piano Concerto*, 46. Horton's concept of

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Form				⇒R1 (realised at the advent of R2 EEC)					⇒S1 (realised at the advent of R2 EEC)	
	Large-scale function 1:									
	Large-scale function 2:			⇒Exposition 1						
	Inter-thematic function:	MT (small ternary)			⇒TR	ST	C			
	Intra-thematic function:	*Eingang*	*a*	*b*	*a'*					
Tonal process:	i(Phry)			iv(Phry)→	i→V/III	V(Phry)/III	iii(Phry)→♯♯vii(Phry)→	v/♯♯vii→iv/♯♯vii→♯♯vii(Phry)		
Closure:				V: EC (i: i⁶⁻⁴ MC?)	V/III: PAC (EEC?)	V/III: AC				
Measures:	1–3⁴	3⁴–20²	20²–27	28–44¹	44²–48¹ / 44²–66¹	66²–73³	73⁴–97¹	97²–115²		
Cycle – Intra-thematic function:	Solo	Tutti *a*	Solo *b*	Solo *a'*	ST	Tutti C	Pre-Core	Core		
Cycle – Inter-thematic function:	*Eingang* (small ternary) MT			⇒TR						
Cycle – Large-scale function:	Exposition							Development		
Movement:	First Movement									

Fig 1: Medtner, 1st Piano Concerto, Op. 33, formal synopsis of mm. 1–254

Abbreviations are used in the figures and throughout the text to represent the following (both tutti and solo are mobilised to support the form-functionality within the ritornelli if not specified):

MT	Main theme	PAC	Perfect authentic cadence	⇒	Form-functional becoming
TR	Transition	IAC	Imperfect authentic cadence	⇐	Form-functional regression
ST	Subordinate theme	HC	Half cadence	MC	Medial caesura
C	Closing section	EC	Evaded cadence	EEC	Essential expositional closure
RT	Retransition	AC	Abandoned cadence	ESC	Essential structural closure
R	Ritornello	ProC	Prolongational closure	(Phry)	Phrygian inflection
S	Solo	↔	Cadential elision	?	Unstable tonal area without a clear tonal centre

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		115³–127	128–141¹	141¹–158¹	158¹–172¹	172¹–201	202–210	211–226	227–232	233–249²	249³–254
Form	Large-scale function 1:	⇒R2 (realised at the advent of R2 EEC)									
	Large-scale function 2:	⇒Exposition 2					Development				
	Inter-thematic function 1:	MT		⇒ST	C1	C2	Pre-Core (five-part rondo-variation?)				
	Inter-thematic function 2:		TR				A	B	A1	B1	A2?
Tonal process:		i→#vii$^{(Phry)}$→	V/V→?→	V/V→?→	V/V	→?→V/V	V/V→		iii→		i
Closure:		V/ii: PAC	V/V: i⁶⁴ MC	V/V: ↪PAC EEC	V/V: ↪PAC						i: HC
Measures:		115³–127	128–141¹	141¹–158¹	158¹–172¹	172¹–201	202–210	211–226	227–232	233–249²	249³–254
Cycle	Inter-thematic function:	MT	Solo→Tutti TR	⇒ST	(ST-based) C	(ST-based) Coda					
	Large-scale function:	Recapitulation									
	Movement:	First Movement									

Fig 1 (continued)

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a subdominant evaded cadence (mm. 19–20^2) that enlarges the inter-thematic grouping of the main theme to include *b* and *a'*, while the latter is at work when the hierarchical distinction between *a'* and the transition collapse as a result of 'becoming.' These syntactic procedures are made possible only through the strategic arrangement of tutti and solo as the form-functional agent, whereby virtuosity in the piano writing is mobilised as a generative force to protract the main-theme functionality disrupted by the evaded cadence, and to drive the topical transformation that triggers the retrospective reinterpretation of *a'* as the transition.

Such an integrated approach to virtuosity and symphonism is retained for the rest of the exposition. After a four-measure solo adumbration (mm. 44^2–48^1), the subordinate theme (mm. 44^2–66^1) reclaims the tonic and enters in a singing style that is distributed between tutti and solo (see example 2).[32] Despite remaining in the home key for the most part, it nevertheless closes with a belated move towards the V of III, B♭ major, to put in place the tonal contrast required for sonata form. This modulation is materialised in the form of a perfect authentic cadence (PAC) (m. 65–66), or the 'essential expositional closure' (EEC), which, according to Hepokoski and Darcy, "is the most important generic and tonal goal of the exposition" that gives way to differing material.[33] The new key, however, fails to consolidate in the subsequent closing section (mm. 66^2–73^3). Proceeded with yet another Phrygian twist, the closing

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proliferation concerns mainly the expansion of inter-thematic groupings through multiplication of intra-thematic units from within, which often generates additional dimensions of intra-thematic function. Although the present case is not exactly identical with this formulation, the immediate recovery of the retracted main-theme functionality by means of supplementary intra-thematic units here also attests to a kind of multiplication that effects the swelling of the dimensions of the main-theme grouping – the presentation and continuation functions of the sentence are now contained within the *a* section of the small ternary, creating the impression of a two-level intra-thematic function. I therefore use the term 'proliferation' to encompass this syntactic phenomenon. Apart from that, the *a* section is in itself a proliferated sentence that comprises an addition of a second continuation phrase (mm. 14–20^2) as well.

32 The four-measure adumbration could be considered as a 'caesura-fill' in Hepokoski and Darcy's terms if the i$^{6\text{-}4}$ chord is conceived as the point of the medial caesura. In such a case, the caesura-fill could be regarded as exhibiting both the functions of transition and subordinate theme. This in effect causes functional elision. On the concepts of medial caesura and caesura-fill, see Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 24–25, 40–45.

33 Ibid., 117.

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Ex 1: Medtner, 1st Piano Concerto, Op. 33, mm. 4–7: main theme, presentation phrase

section ends on an abandoned cadence in the V of III (m. 71–72), a gesture that casts doubt on whether the modulation to the subordinate key – a defining feature of the symphonic concerto first movement – has been successfully achieved.

The question over the music's generic identity becomes apparent in the recapitulation of the cyclic first movement. Following the solo-led development (mm. 73^4–115^2) that is based on a Phrygian-inflected ♯vii, B minor, the recapitulation instantly reinstates the interplay between symphonism and virtuosity in the thematic presentation. In contrast to the opening tutti, the recapitulatory main theme is now conveyed by tutti and solo together in a display manner (mm. 115^3–127). It is also significantly truncated, in which the former small ternary is reduced to a sentence that models on *a*, with the content of the original continuation replaced by the developmental material. In spite of the thematic return, the recapitulatory functionality of the main theme,

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Ex 2: Medtner, 1ˢᵗ Piano Concerto, Op. 33, mm. 48–56: subordinate theme, presentation
   phrase

however, is undermined by its inability to secure the home key: although the
tonic is initially attained, such a retrieval is immature owing to the absence of
a preparatory retransition, and the succeeding music quickly falls back into the
Phrygian-inflected ♯vii that stays through the entire main theme. This failure to
regain the tonic is corroborated by a last-minute tonicisation of the V of ii, A
major, via a PAC (m. 127), which diverts the recapitulation further away from
its home-coming responsibility.

   The remaining units of the recapitulation continue to eschew tonic recov-
ery and this eventually gives rise to a reappraisal of the single-dimensional
sonata perception of the movement. Though entering with an allusion to
the secondary dominant, D major, the transition (mm. 128–141¹) lapses into
a tonally unstable environment that transforms the initial solo singing-style
theme into a tutti display episode. Diverging from the common sonata topical
scheme, this display character persists through the return of the subordinate-

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theme material, presenting a case of syntactic non-congruence whereby the transition function is not entirely supplanted while the subordinate-theme function is in the making.[34] Concurrent with this form-functional instability, the tonal wandering initiated in the transition carries on with yet another reference to D major via the opening $I^{6\text{-}4}$. Such a secondary-dominant orientation is eventually ratified by the elided PAC (mm. 157^4–158^1) that closes the formal unit, a structural tonal event which officially disavows the recapitulatory task of producing the 'essential structural closure' (ESC) – the tonic PAC that is supposed to represent the tonal and cadential goal of the sonata trajectory in Hepokoski and Darcy's terms.[35]

The non-fulfilment of the sonata's generic goal in turn renders a re-conception of the Concerto's fundamental formal design: while the final touch on the V of III in the exposition falls short in exemplifying the subordinate-key modulation crucial to sonata form, the secondary dominant, which is firmly secured in the subsequent closing section (mm. 158^1 – 201), instead offers a substantial tonal force that seems to fill in the expositional function of supplying tonal contrast. This dual attempt to establish a subordinate key resembles the exposition of a virtuoso concerto first movement, leading consequently to a retrospective reinterpretation of the overall form as a two-dimensional field that simultaneously exhibits a symphonic movement cycle and an overarching virtuoso concerto form. Under the new perception, the cyclic first movement is construed as assuming at the same time the overarching large-scale functions of opening ritornello (R1), solo exposition (S1), and subordinate-key ritornello (R2), as seen in figure 1. The manifestations of ritornello and solo, however, deviate from the setting of the virtuoso concerto form. In

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34 Syntactic non-congruence denotes the situation where one formal parameter suggests closure and others do not. In the current case, the new thematic material indicates the end of the transition and yet the display topical profile suggests otherwise. This idea is first propounded in Anne M. Hyland, "Rhetorical Closure in the First Movement of Schubert's Quartet in C Major, D. 46: A Dialogue with Deformation," *Music Analysis* 28, no. 1 (2009): 111–42, and adopted for the analysis of the Romantic piano concerto in Horton, "Formal Type and Formal Function" and idem, *Brahms' Piano Concerto*. This could also be construed as an example of what Steven Vande Moortele theorises as the 'strong subordinate theme.' See Vande Moortele, *The Romantic Overture and Musical Form from Rossini to Wagner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 146–90.

35 Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 232.

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lieu of the pure orchestral ritornello, Medtner adopts a Baroque conception of ritornello whereby the solo is incorporated as part of the orchestral presentation of formal function; this in turn allows the concurrent expression of concerto ritornello and symphonic sonata exposition within the same formal unit (mm. $1-73^3$). Apart from that, while R1 follows the virtuoso concerto formal practice in offering a modulating expositional analogue, S1 (mm. 73^4-115^2) is nevertheless decoupled from its supposed exposition function and aligned instead with the cyclic development generated by the sonata process. This in effect defers the exposition proper and precipitates the amplification of R2 (mm. 115^3-201) to reinstitute the exposition function and its essential subordinate-key modulation. As a result, the novel formal understanding creates a kind of two-dimensional sonata trajectory, in which the virtuoso concerto form and the symphonic movement cycle respectively impact on the overall formal process at different times.

3.2 Dynamics of Formal Functions in the Theme and Variations

The generic interplay between the virtuoso concerto and the symphonic concerto is made overt in the ensuing formal organisation. The virtuoso idiom, which is previously appropriated to serve sonata form's thematicism, now penetrates the exocyclic pre-core (mm. $202-54$) of the solo development (S2) by way of a five-part inter-thematic design that mimics the rondo-variation (see figure 1).[36] This sets the scene for the imminent theme and variations, which appears as the slow movement of the symphonic sonata cycle. As figure 2 summarises, the solo-led slow movement, while functioning as a cyclic interpolation, contains nevertheless a theme and eight variations that provide the platform for virtuoso display. Such virtuosity is channelled through a variety of topical postures that motivate the variations, a formal strategy which showcases Medtner's diverse knowledge of generic conventions.[37] The slow movement starts with a nocturne (*espressivo*) theme (mm. $255-292^1$) that evinces an ongoing cyclic procedure rested on the basic ideas from the main theme and the

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36 Elaine Sisman, "Tradition and Transformation in the Alternating Variations of Haydn and Beethoven," *Acta Musicologica* 62, no. $2-3$ (1990): $157-58$.

37 This is related to Medtner's concept of improvisation, which I shall address later in this section.

subordinate theme (see example 3).[38] This choice of topic could be traced back to the formal praxis in Field's 7th Piano Concerto, H. 58 (1822–32), and later Schumann's Piano Concerto, whereby the nocturne is used as the basis of the cyclic slow movement.[39] The theme is then refurnished as the singing-style 1st variation (mm. 292–311) in the subdominant key, which is carried over into a quasi-recitative (mm. 312–322¹) that prefaces the next variation. Gliding into the dominant via a deceptive cadential progression (mm. 321–322¹), the nocturne theme returns in varied fragments with different figurations in the 2nd variation (mm. 321⁴–339). Its tranquil quality, however, is displaced by the *brillant* passagework at the end, which signals a topical gear change towards virtuoso expression. The subsequent variations attest to a virtuoso spectacle: prefigured by another quasi-recitative (mm. 340–346²) founded on the subordinate theme, the 3rd, 4th, and 5th variations (mm. 346³–426¹) refashion the nocturne theme via an array of virtuoso gesticulations, treating its material with such topics as *bravura*, march, intermezzo, display, and *ombra*. The tonal plan also facilitates this virtuoso pursuit, in which the fluid tonal movement and the fast-moving harmonic rhythm through these variations infuse the solo with the energy and momentum that underpin the virtuoso signification.

The virtuoso rhetoric is brought into a dialogue with the design of the symphonic movement cycle in the later part of the theme and variations, inducing

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38 For a detailed thematic analysis of the Concerto, see Aleksandra Sarest, *Nikolai Medtner's First Piano Concerto: A Metrotectonic Analysis* (DMA diss., City University of New York, 2014). See also Benedict Taylor, *Mendelssohn, Time and Memory: The Romantic Conception of Cyclic Form* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 6–16, esp. 15–16, for a taxonomy of cyclic forms. As I have discussed earlier, it is likely that Medtner inherited this practice from Beethoven and / or Liszt (see note 16).

39 Field's Concerto, H. 58, is a three-movement cycle embedded in two movements, in which the nocturne functions as a cyclic slow movement that is interpolated within the first. Schumann later mobilised the same strategy in his Piano Concerto, Op. 54. This is arguably a convention of the virtuoso concerto developed from Dussek's concerto practice. See Horton, "John Field and the Alternative History," 70–79; also the reviews by Robert Schumann, "John Field: Piano Concerto No. 7 (1836)," in *Schumann on Music: A Selection from the Writings*, ed. and trans. Henry Pleasants (New York: Dover Publications, 1965), 106; idem, "Pianoforte: Concerte," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 4, no. 17 (26 February 1836): 71; and Claudia Macdonald, *Robert Schumann and the Piano Concerto* (New York and London: Routledge, 2005), 93. For Field's influence on the development of Russian piano music, see note 23. While it is not clear whether Medtner was familiar with Field's concerti, he had nevertheless performed Schumann's Piano Concerto. See Flamm, *Der russische Komponist Nikolaj Metner*, 631–32.

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Form	Large-scale function 1:	S2 (*cont.*)									
	Large-scale function 2:	⇒Development (realised at the arrival of m. 491) (*cont.*)									
	Inter-thematic function:	⇒Core (Theme and Variations) (realised at the arrival of m. 491)									
Tonal process:		i→V→i	iv→iv/iv→iv	↑	V	↑	iii↑	v/iii↑	vi/V→V	↑	iv↑
Closure:		i: ProC (m. 284)	iv: PAC		V: PAC (m. 338)		v/iii: PAC		V: ↔IAC	IV: PAC	
Measures:		255–292^1	292–311	312–322^1	321^4–339	340–346^2	346^3–363^1	363^2–387	388–399^1	399^1–410^1	410^1–426^1
Cycle	Topical discourse:	nocturne	singing style	sensibility /recitative	nocturne	sensibility /recitative	bravura	march	inter-mezzo	display	ombra
	Inter-thematic function:	Theme	Var. 1	Preface	Var. 2	Preface	Var. 3	Var. 4		Var. 5	
	Large-scale function:										
	Movement:	Slow Movement									

Fig 2: Medtner, 1st Piano Concerto, Op. 33, formal synopsis of mm. 255–530

Medtner's First Piano Concerto, Op. 33

		426¹–444¹	444¹–448¹	448¹–459¹	459¹–476¹	476¹–491¹	491¹–499⁴	499⁴–522¹	522¹–530
Form	Large-scale function 1:	S2 (*cont.*)							R3
	Large-scale function 2:	⇒Development (realised at the arrival of m. 491) (*cont.*)							
	Inter-thematic function:	⇒Core (Theme and Variations) (realised at the arrival of m. 491) (*cont.*)							RT
Tonal process:		#iv	#VI	→	III;♭II	→	V→	iii→iv→i(Phry)	i(Phry)
Closure:		V/#VI: PAC		III: ↔PAC	♭II: IAC			i: HC	standing on the V
Measures:		426¹–444¹	444¹–448¹	448¹–459¹	459¹–476¹	476¹–491¹	491¹–499⁴	499⁴–522¹	522¹–530
Cycle	Topical discourse:	fantasia (skazka?)	singing style	caprice	singing style	bravura⇒	tempesta	ombra	
	Inter-thematic function:	Var. 6	Preface	Var. 7	Var. 8	⇒Coda (of the Slow Movement)			
	Large-scale function:						⇒Core		
	Movement:	Scherzo?	[Trio?]	Slow Movement⇐Scherzo					

Fig 2 (continued)

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Ex 3: Medtner, 1st Piano Concerto, Op. 33, mm. 263–72: 'nocturne theme'

a series of form-functional transformations – sometimes across dimensions – that lead to a reconsideration of the section as a virtuoso-symphonic formal hybrid.[40] The 6th variation (mm. 426^1–444^1) sees the advent of an F♯ minor fantasia based on the main theme (see example 4). While its imaginative quality

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40 I use the term 'form-functional transformation' to include the various situations of 'becoming.'

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Ex 4: Medtner, 1ˢᵗ Piano Concerto, Op. 33, 6ᵗʰ variation, mm. 426–30: 'fantasia'

resonates with Medtner's characteristic *skazki*,[41] the *scherzando* figurations also suggest the function of a scherzo movement. This scherzo form-functionality, however, operates within the large-scale function of the theme and variations slow movement, and as such the music exhibits a genuine four-movement cycle embedded within a three-movement scheme, a strategy that directly references Tchaikovsky's Op. 23, Rachmaninov's 3ʳᵈ Piano Concerto, Op. 30, and Prokofiev's 2ⁿᵈ Piano Concerto, Op. 16.[42] The 7ᵗʰ variation (mm. 448¹–

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41 On the general properties of the *skazki*, see Bitzan, *The Sonata as an Ageless Principle*, 124–25. The figuration of the fantasia resembles some of the *skazki* Medtner composed before and during his work on the Concerto. For example, I think of Op. 14 No. 2 (1905–07), Op. 26 No. 2 (1910–12), and Op. 34 No. 1 (1916).

42 See Horton, *Brahms' Piano Concerto*, 324–25, for Rachmaninov and Prokofiev's realisation of the same strategy. This is arguably a practice developed from the Romantic virtuoso concerto

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459^1) presents a caprice predicated on the singing-style material from the recapitulatory main theme in the first movement (mm. 124–27), which is in itself a variant of the nocturne theme. Although at first its singing-style preface resembles a trio within the scherzo movement, such an impression is quickly dislodged by the virtuoso institution, which in turn causes the scherzo to 'regress' to the slow movement.[43] This process culminates in the 8th variation (mm. 459^1–522^1), whose arrival is marked by an elided PAC in the relative major. Here the virtuoso display reaches its high point: preceded by a singing-style orchestral theme, the solo enacts the final demonstration of virtuosity via the enunciation of *bravura*, *tempesta*, and *ombra* topics, which mobilise figurations from the previous variations. The orchestra also resurfaces from the musical interior and bears the form-functionality together with the solo. As it happens, such summative attributes prompt the 8th variation to 'become' the coda of the slow movement. While this is still in progress, the last form-functional transformation takes place amid the *tempesta* (mm. 491^1–499^4) and the *ombra* (mm. 499^4–522^1): the consistent model and sequences, the process of fragmentation, and the concluding tonic half cadence elicit the function of what Caplin terms a developmental core. This realigns the movement cycle with the overarching form and reveals the developmental function of the slow movement, bringing about another case of large-scale 'becoming,' where the theme and variations is reconceived as also being the developmental core of the virtuoso concerto form. The idea of a theme and variations development finds its immediate precedent in Catoire's Piano Concerto. Contrary to Asafiev's and Alekseyev's criticism of such a formal strategy as being in lack of thematic development, what it exemplifies is instead the Russian virtuoso treatment of the symphonic concerto practice, in which the concept of development is construed in relation to improvisatory virtuoso display that is disguised as theme and variations and seizes the formal process via topical discourse. Such an understanding of development as an unfolding of virtuosity is indicated in

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that is filtered through the Russian precedents of Tchaikovsky and Rubinstein. See also note 39.

43 I define form-functional regression as the situation where a form-functional 'becoming' (in this case, slow movement ⇒ scherzo), which embraces a defective second function (scherzo), is being reconceived as regressing to its initial function within the larger formal context.

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Medtner's own sketches of Op. 33, where he declared that there are "actually no variations, but improvisations, intermezzi, caprices."[44] In other words, the theme and variations, being a virtuoso formal device, is mobilised to serve the symphonic ideal in the cycle on one hand, and functions as the development of the virtuoso concerto form on the other. This thereby manifests the development / slow movement as a virtuoso-symphonic hybrid and evinces the persistent interplay between such generic subtypes in form-functional behaviour at different levels.

3.3   Towards A Virtuoso-Symphonic Synthesis

After reinstating the slow movement's function as a developmental core, the symphonic movement cycle gives way to the virtuoso concerto form to make room for it to perform its remaining formal responsibility. It proceeds with an exocyclic orchestral retransition, or a 'retransition ritornello' (R3), whose standing on the dominant effects a modulation back to the home key (see figure 2).[45] This is confirmed at the arrival of the solo recapitulation (S3), which follows a similar thematic organisation as R1 (outlined in figure 3). While S3's Phrygian-inflected tonic return seems to indicate a resolution to the tonal contrast set up in R2, there is however no cadential confirmation: by rerouting to E minor, a' of the small-ternary main theme (mm. 561^1-577^1) once again 'becomes' the transition that leads up to a dominant evaded cadence. Although the succeeding subordinate theme (mm. 577^2-581) immediately reclaims the

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44   This is cited in Flamm, *Der russische Komponist Nikolaj Metner*, 208n704. See also 233n747; cf. Asafiev, *Russian Music*, 202; Kaikhosru Sorabji, *Around Music* (London: Unicorn Press, 1932), 71; and Theophil Stengel, *Die Entwicklung des Klavierkonzerts von Liszt bis zur Gegenwart* (Heidelberg: Reiher & Kurth, 1931), 48–49. Bitzan also explores the connection between variation form and improvisation in Medtner's oeuvre; see Bitzan, *The Sonata as an Ageless Principle*, 133–34. The concept of virtuosity was problematic for Medtner and his use of variation form does not necessarily connote virtuosic display. Yet in some cases, such as the Improvisation, Op. 31 No. 1 (1914), variation form is indeed employed to facilitate the expression of virtuosity, and I would thereby consider the development of the 1st Concerto as one such instance. I thank Christoph Flamm for pointing me to this issue.

45   *Pace* Caplin, here I adhere to Hepokoski and Darcy's characterisation of the retransition as a ritornello, since the finale of the slow movement shows a clear intent to transport the expression of formal functions from the solo to the orchestra.

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		531–534	535–553²	553²–561¹	561¹–577¹	577²–581	582–590¹	590¹–604¹	604¹–625¹	625¹–638	639–691¹	691¹–699¹	699¹–741
Form	Large-scale function 1:	S3					Coda					(R4?)	
	Large-scale function 2:	Recapitulation (truncated)											
	Inter-thematic function:	Eingang	MT (small ternary)		⇒TR	ST	Solo Beginning	Solo Middle		(Cadenza)	Middle (cont.)	Tutti End	After-the-End
	Intra-thematic function:		a	b	a'	(truncated)							
	Tonal process:	$i^{(Phry)}$			#iii⇒	i	i						⇒I
	Closure:		V: EC (i: $i^{6\text{-}4}$ MC?)			i: HC; no ESC	iv: PAC (m. 602)		i: $V^{6\text{-}4}$	i: ↔PAC	i: PAC	i: $V^{7;\#5\text{-}3}$ – i	
	Measures:	531–534	535–553^2	553^2–561^1	561^1–577^1	577^2–581	582–590^1	590^1–604^1	604^1–625^1	625^1–638	639–691^1	691^1–699^1	699^1–741
Cycle	Inter-thematic function:		A	B	A		A1	B		C		A2	
	Movement:	Finale (five-part rondo?)											⇒Coda

Fig 3: Medtner, 1st Piano Concerto, Op. 33, formal synopsis of mm. 531–741

tonic, it is substantially truncated with only a residual five-measure compound basic idea that ends on a tonic half cadence. The absence of a closing tonic PAC, or the ESC in Hepokoski and Darcy's terms, signifies the failure to attain the structural goal of the entire sonata trajectory.[46] The generically essential tonic return is thus not ratified, and this offloads the burden of resolution to the coda.

The coda sees the ultimate integration of the virtuoso-symphonic generic practices. It is organised in four parts, exhibiting the functions of both a coda in the overarching form and a finale in the sonata cycle. While the coda shows what Caplin, in reference to Kofi Agawu, regards as the 'beginning – middle – end' paradigm (with an additional 'after-the-end'), the finale presents a five-part rondo-like design with main-theme-based refrains (A) appearing in various forms.[47] Here the generic distinction represented by two-dimensionality is collapsed into a full virtuoso-symphonic hybrid. The extensive coda, being a symphonic sonata property, now replaces the supposed closing ritornello in the virtuoso concerto form. Its formal function is conveyed mostly by the solo in which the celebration of virtuosity reaches its peak and culminates in the cadenza (mm. 625^1–638). This leads to the long-awaited cadential confirmation in the home key (mm. 637–639^1), which marks the official completion of the sonata trajectory and the virtuoso display. The tutti, however, re-emerges after the *lamentoso* couplet (C, mm. 639–691^1) as the coda-end or final refrain (A2, mm. 691^1–699^1), while at the same time suggesting the function of a closing ritornello (R4) in an attempt to rescue the virtuoso concerto form. Such an effort is then repudiated by the subsequent reposeful solo, which transcends the generic tension and engenders the synthesis of the form and the cycle into a unitary coda (mm. 699^1–741). The section in turn ends by recalling the Phrygian II (mm. 732–35) before making its final landing on the major tonic, which ratifies the coda as the ultimate form-functional verdict of the section.[48]

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46 Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 232–33, 245–59.

47 See Caplin, *Classical Form*, 15–16; and idem, "What Are Formal Functions?" in *Musical Form, Forms and Formenlehre: Three Methodological Reflections*, ed. Pieter Bergé (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2009), 24–49. Cf. Kofi Agawu, *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 51–79.

48 The move to the parallel major is atypical for the final refrain of a rondo and in turn suggests the precedence of the coda function.

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4 Conclusion: Sonata Centre and Typological Encirclement

To sum up, the above analysis shows that an understanding of the context to which Medtner was indebted illuminates the network of influences that penetrates his approach to concerto form. As I have illustrated, his 1st Piano Concerto embraces a composite of formal practices that can be traced back to as far as Dussek and Field, whose strategies are developed by Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Liszt, and later modified and channelled through Medtner's Russian precedents and contemporaries including Rubinstein, Tchaikovsky, Catoire, Scriabin, and Rachmaninov. As opposed to an alleged lack of coherence, these practices are assimilated into the manifestations of the overarching virtuoso concerto form and the symphonic movement cycle, housed within a unitary two-dimensional framework. To this end, Medtner carefully set out the coordination of different aspects of form, in particular the relationship between the mode of presentation, topical arrangement, tonal plan, and thematic process:

(1) While the topical discourse and the subversion of virtuosity in the beginning evoke the exposition function of a symphonic concerto first movement, the unratified attempt at a V/III: PAC EEC makes it possible to reinterpret the formal unit as a Baroque-style R1 in the virtuoso concerto form.

(2) The attainment of the V/V: PAC EEC in the cyclic recapitulation corroborates the idea of an amplified R2 and thus the overall virtuoso concerto form.

(3) Although the improvisatory, topic-based theme and variations expresses the function of a slow movement (with a built-in scherzo) in the sonata cycle, the thematic process and the tonic half cadence in the final variation renders a reconsideration of the section as a developmental core of S2 in the overarching form.

(4) Despite that the thematic organisation of the solo-led coda resembles a five-part rondo finale, the tutti coda-end or final refrain recalls the function of R4 and brings about the eventual collapse of two-dimensionality.

Together these strategies amount to a twofold sonata trajectory, which directs

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towards the complete unification of the virtuoso concerto (form) and the symphonic concerto (cycle).

This treatment of unity – to which generic plurality is integral – in turn corresponds to Medtner's thoughts on the relationship between unity and plurality. In *Muza i moda*, Medtner first set out the aesthetic principles underlying his musical creativity, which he deemed "the general law of *coordination* into *unity* […] which undoubtedly governs the whole macrocosm of music."[49] Elaborating on this 'law,' he distinguished between conceptual categories of 'centre' and 'encirclement,' where unity is grouped with the former, and plurality is classified as the latter. While unity is described as the main object and the goal of artistic creation, plurality, in Medtner's words, "gravitates towards [unity] and encircles it. […] A coordination of plurality is always required for an approach to unity."[50] With specific reference to music, Medtner then compared time with centre and movement in time with encirclement, arguing for a notion of time as 'the plane of music' that contains within the movement of all musical parameters – in other words, musical process plays the role of a unitary centre, through which the pluralistic syntax, or the 'encirclement,' is coordinated and manifested.[51] Although this understanding of unity and plurality is often construed in relation to Medtner's treatment of tonality and harmony, I argue that it is also evident in his conceptions of form and genre. Considering Medtner's approach to concerto form in this light, the sonata trajectory in Op. 33 serves a unitary function that brings together different formal types associated with the virtuoso concerto and the symphonic concerto, including (1) virtuoso concerto form, (2) sonata form, (3) rondo(-variation), and (4) theme and variations. These models encircle a two-dimensional sonata trajectory that pervades both the form and the cycle, presenting a generically pluralistic formal unity that exemplifies Medtner's mastery technique and his insightful thoughts on the generic traditions of the piano concerto and their formal manifestations. Such a trajectory thereby establishes concerto form as part of Medtner's sonata project, reinstating the importance of the 1st Piano Concerto as his first attempt to bring concerto form into a dialogue with other

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49 Medtner, *The Muse and the Fashion*, 11–12. Emphases are capitalised in the original.
50 Ibid., 13–14.
51 See ibid., 21.

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sonata types. It also spotlights Medtner's unique conception of sonata process and corroborates Ilyin's account of the composer as a writer of the "history of the sonata."[52] This history is, however, far from complete without a thorough assessment of Medtner's concerto practice in the context of its Romantic and Russian predecessors.

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52 Ilyin, "Sonata Form in Medtner," 180.