

University of Nevada, Reno

**What Makes Nikolai Kapustin's Classically-oriented Works Sound Like Jazz  
Improvisation by Deconstruction of His 24 Preludes in Jazz Style, Op.53 and Concert  
Etudes, Op.40**

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Musical Arts

by

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December, 2023



THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

We recommend that the dissertation  
prepared under our supervision by

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be accepted in partial fulfillment of the  
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## Abstract

Nikolai Kapustin was a Russian pianist who is considered a composer of classical and jazz fusion. His compositions mainly focus on keyboard literature, chamber music, and big band music. Despite Kapustin's music sounding similar to jazz music and jazz improvisation, he historically denied the role of jazz in his compositions and saw himself only as a classical musician. This document will start an investigation into why Kapustin's compositions have a jazz improvisation sound and how he combines classical and jazz elements into a work. This study will review the evidence of Kapustin's biography, the background history of jazz music performance in the Soviet Union, and Kapustin's 24 Preludes in Jazz Style Op.53, and his 8 Concert Etudes, Op. 40, to prove why and what factors make his music sound like jazz and jazz improvisation. Also, the research will discuss how Kapustin passed a thread through classical music and jazz to become a new music.

## Acknowledgements

First, I am very grateful to Dr. Hyeyeon Park, my classical piano teacher, life mentor, and advisor, for her consistent support and help. I am thankful for the artistry and inspiration you have given me over these years. You also taught me a lot about how to deal with many problems at work. I have always considered choosing you as my advisor to be one of the most important decisions I have ever made.

Thanks to my committee member, Mr. Adam Benjamin, for being my jazz piano teacher. I'm glad the school has a wise and good teacher like you. I like the jazz study atmosphere here very much. I am thrilled that my skills have improved here, and everyone is encouraging, supportive, and making progress with each other. Thanks to Dr. Louis Niebur, an intelligent and excellent musicologist, for his valuable advice on my dissertation so that I could know the direction of my efforts. Thanks to Dr. James Winn, a prodigy pianist and kind teacher. You are always so nice. Thanks to Dr. Valentin Deaconu for participating in my music learning journey and your appreciation of music; your participation made my committee very diverse.

I would also like to thank Dr. Heather Woodson-Gammon for her valuable suggestions and guidance on my dissertation, particularly thanks for your patience.

My most grateful appreciation to my parents for their support and help over these years. I could not make it this far without you all. Especially, my dad, you taught me the mentality of persistence in doing something and the eternal love from my mom. This documentation should represent my years of music study.



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## Introduction

I believe that many pianists have had an embarrassing moment when they were young. Whenever there is a piano next to a family gathering or going out with friends, relatives or friends might ask a pianist if they wanted to play a piece or two to entertain the atmosphere since they have been learning piano since childhood. In such instances, when I was young, because I was shy and afraid of embarrassment, I didn't dare to play the music without memorizing it. In most cases, I was excused because there was no music score.

Things changed when I knew I would go to the United States to study music in college. Frankly, I decided to learn something rooted and original from the U.S. for this opportunity, and the only thing I knew about music then was jazz music. I didn't have the experience of learning and knowing improvisation from my teachers nor in a class until when I went to college. In my junior year of college in 2015, I started learning jazz piano because jazz piano improvisation attracted me very much. Improvisation is a technique that can allow one to play for hours without the need for a music score; it fascinates me, and I want to gain the ability to improvise. However, I didn't grow up with jazz music in the background. In the beginning, I started learning classical piano. My friends around me all played classical piano, and what I usually listened to and played on TV was all about classical pianos. The experience of learning improvisation was bound to be complicated.

In my senior year, one of my American classmates played Kapustin's prelude Op. 53 No.17 in A-flat major in our piano studio class. It was my first time hearing the music by Kapustin, and it sounded so jazzy; for that prelude has the same quality of a consistent walking bass, swing rhythm, seventh chords all over the piece, and the upbeat tempo of the jazz orchestra

sound that I attended in school at my early phase of studying jazz piano. Meanwhile, I was struggling to learn jazz piano and improvisation skills. I remembered how hard it was when I knew nothing about jazz and tried to improvise. Kapustin and his music became an intermediate island between styles of classical and jazz for me. From then on, I began to get in touch with and understand Kapustin's music. Kapustin's music is well-known for its combination of classical forms and jazz idioms. Kapustin's experience growing up in the Soviet Union reminded me of the political opposition between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War of the last century, and it made me curious about how Kapustin's music style became a fusion of classical and jazz in this environment.

After years of practice, frustration, and many live jazz jam sessions, I've reached the improvisation level I want. Even though I am not a real jazz pianist, I stepped out of my comfort zone and still considered myself as a classical musician. I love to play works by such classical composers as Chopin, Mozart, Liszt. Also, I like to play chamber music to team up with other performers. The joy of playing music is not only from solo work but also the process of playing with someone else, which is essential. Kapustin's music and experiences resonate more with me. I understand that as a young classical musician, I can play and memorize challenging repertoire, but at the same time, I hope that I can have the ability to improvise as well. His music and music composition makes me feel that we are walking on the same path. Although I haven't composed music thoughtfully like him yet, I believe I can.

Improvisation is a capability, and I see it as a platform; it is just like Microsoft's Windows system, Apple's iOS system, and the programming language Python. I can do anything I want on this platform: having fun with improvisation, composing music, walking up to the piano and playing in any situation without fear. Also, the experience was like learning to ride a bicycle or

skiing for me. Once you understand it, your body memorizes it for life and enjoys it. Also, improvisation is an ephemeral element. As *The Grove Dictionary* explains, improvisation is “...the creation of a musical work, or the final form of a musical work, as it is being performed. It may involve the work’s immediate composition by its performers, or the elaboration or adjustment of an existing framework, or anything in between.”<sup>1</sup>

Jazz and classical music seem to be different branches; one from the western classical system, and the other one was rooted from the United States. But when I gain knowledge from both, they complement and support each other, allowing me to view music from multiple perspectives.

Nikolai Kapustin's music is an ingenious fusion of classical and jazz elements, making his works unique and attracting the love of many pianists and music lovers. His music demonstrates a deep understanding and complete mastery of different musical styles. After Kapustin's works became well-known in 2000, more and more discussions began about his unique musical genre. For instance, although Kapustin's music may sound improvised, every note he wrote and published results from careful consideration.

My dissertation looks at what makes Kapustin's classically-oriented work sound like jazz improvisation. If the same conditions were applied to other composers, would their music sound like improvisation? And should we think about whether improvisation is a necessary condition for being a composer?

Kapustin considered himself a classical musician rather than a jazz musician and denied that his music was an improvisation. However, I will use 32 pieces of Kapustin's works to analyze how they are similar to American jazz music and under the classical music context in an important way. Moreover, going through the occupation of Kapustin, we will find that as a

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<sup>1</sup> Bruno Nettl, *et al.*, “Improvisation,” *Grove Music Online*, 2001.



classical musician, he also could improvise, and this improvisation ability was inseparable from the influence of American jazz when he grew up. Although most European classical composers in history can improvise, when talking about improvisation, the first thing we think of is American jazz. Not everyone knows that Mozart and Beethoven improvised, but American jazz is known for its improvisation.<sup>2</sup> Kapustin's music used classical forms such as the etude, prelude, and impromptu; and referenced the American jazz style by blues, bebop, characteristic chord progressions, and improvisation. In the two pieces I will analyze, Kapustin adopted the standard twelve bars blues form by classical notation with the common harmony progression and blues scale. Kapustin also wrote the running right hand chromatic melody while aiming for chord tones and bebop lines in multiple pieces.

To better understand this research, in the first chapter, I will briefly introduce Kapustin's life experience and his composition style. The second chapter will introduce the historical background, including the brief background of American jazz, a brief background of Ukrainian jazz, and the development and status of jazz music in the Soviet Union. The third chapter briefly summarizes the historical background and development of the classical prelude. Chapter Four is about some jazz elements such as the notation of swing rhythm, jazz harmony ii-V-I, and tritone-substitution, that I think are important to discuss in the context of “All The Things You Are” and “Autumn Leaves.” I also will introduce the different rhythms that classical pieces often emphasize beats one and three, but jazz mostly is in two and four. More jazz elements will illustrate within additional jazz standards such as “Blue Monk” in blues form, bebop solo line in “Blues for Alice,” “Pent up House,” “Take Five,” “On Green Dolphin Street,” and the left hand pattern of Boogie-Woogie style. As a pianist with a strong jazz piano background, I have

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<sup>2</sup> For more on this subject, see: John P. Murphy, “Jazz Improvisation: The Joy of Influence.” *The Black Perspective in Music* 18, no. 1/2 (1990): 7–19. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1214855>.

long-term experience in playing and practicing. The examples of jazz elements I will provide are not only the knowledge that I am familiar with but also the ones that I think are representative of the many jazz standards. These examples are an essential part of the foundation of jazz music.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, I will argue why Kapustin's work sounds like jazz improvisation through the examples of jazz music's structure, a discussion on sound aesthetics, and an analysis of Kapustin's own preconceptions.

Starting from Chapter Five, I will analyze in detail how each of Kapustin's 24 preludes has a specific relationship with classical and jazz music. Chapter Six is a brief historical background introduction to the etude. Chapter Seven is a detailed analysis of the correspondence between Kapustin's eight etudes and classical and jazz music. I will have the conclusion of the questions and the summary of the entire research in Chapter Eight.

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<sup>3</sup> For more on this subject, see: David J. Elliot, "Structure and feeling in jazz: Rethinking philosophical foundations." *Bulletin of the Council for research in music education* (1987): 13-38.

## Chapter I: Biography with The Influence and Compositional Style of Nikolai Kapustin

### Section I. Biography

In recent years, many people have discovered that Nikolai Kapustin's music has multiple styles that have unique characters. From the nineteenth to the twentieth century, Kapustin composed many types of works. His composition consisted of many chamber works, and compositions for orchestra and big band. Among his compositions, Kapustin also composed significant solo keyboard pieces, such as twenty piano sonatas, etudes, impromptus, and a set of twenty-four preludes and fugues.

Nikolai Kapustin was born in Horlivka, Ukraine, in 1937. No one in Kapustin's family was engaged in music professionally, but Kapustin's family supported his musical dream. Starting at the age of seven, he learned to play the piano. Piotr Ivanovich Vinnichenko was Kapustin's first piano teacher at a beginner level.<sup>4</sup> At the age of twelve, because of his outstanding talent, Vinnichenko recommended Kapustin to the professional piano teacher Lubov Frantsuzova at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, who was Kapustin's first experienced piano teacher.<sup>5</sup> From the age of twelve to fifteen, Kapustin studied hard to gain a solid piano performance foundation and increased knowledge of music theory. During this period, at the age of thirteen, he wrote his first piano sonata just for fun. For him, this attempt clarified his idea of pursuing music in the future.

When Kapustin was fifteen, he entered Moscow Music College and studied with Averlian Rubakh.<sup>6</sup> A few years later in 1956, with the encouragement and recommendation of his teacher

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<sup>4</sup> Yana Tyulkova, *Classical and Jazz Influences in the Music of Nikolai Kapustin: Piano Sonata No. 3, Op. 55*, DMA diss., (West Virginia University, 2015), 10.

<sup>5</sup> Jonathan Edward Mann, *Red, White, and Blue Notes: The Symbiotic Music of Nikolai Kapustin*, DMA diss., (University of Cincinnati, 2007), 28.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

Rubakh, Kapustin went to the Moscow Conservatory at the age of nineteen.<sup>7</sup> Kapustin studied the traditional Russian school of piano playing under Alexander Goldenweiser at Moscow Conservatory, and he established a broader picture of the potentiality of music along with a Russian style of virtuosic playing technique.

The original music career path of Kapustin was to become a classical pianist. Kapustin's piano teacher at the Moscow Conservatory, Goldenweiser, had a rigorous and rational attitude toward music.<sup>8</sup> At this time, Goldenweiser was also a "believer in the concept of loyalty to the original."<sup>9</sup> During Goldenweiser's teaching, he would conduct a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of each movement of the score, and he would be more eager to find the reason and logic for every detail written by the composer on the score. Goldenweiser's learning philosophy influenced Kapustin during his college years, which led to his career plan of becoming a composer rather than a performer.

Kapustin started to listen to and discover American jazz music, such as by Benny Goodman, Nat King Cole, and Louis Armstrong, while he was working on his classical studies during his studies at Moscow Music College and Moscow Conservatory.<sup>10</sup> His interest in jazz music became more important than his classical music degree. Kapustin's first professional job in jazz was performing with his jazz quintet for concerts before joining Yuri Saulsky's Band in Moscow.<sup>11</sup> Later, with a bigger platform for him, he joined Oleg Lundstrem's jazz orchestra and toured around the former Soviet Union for eleven years. Lundstrem's jazz orchestra was formed

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<sup>7</sup> Tyulkova, *op. cit.*, 14.

<sup>8</sup> Junwei Xue, *The Artist Teaching of Alexander Goldenweiser: Fingers in Service to Music*, DMA diss., (University of Kansas, 2018), 6.

<sup>9</sup> Jing Zhang, *The Origin and Inheritance of Russian Piano Performance School* (*Journal of Jilin University of Arts* 99, 2010), 13.

<sup>10</sup> Sudip Bose, "Crossing Over," *The American Scholar*, Phi Beta Kappa, 2018.

<sup>11</sup> Tyulkova, *op. cit.*, 17.

in Harbin, China, in 1934 by Oleg Lundstrem.<sup>12</sup> After World War II, the band returned and settled in Russia in 1956. Additionally, Lundstrem's jazz orchestra is considered one of the oldest jazz orchestras in Russia. The experience and years with Lundstrem's jazz orchestra made Kapustin familiar with the style of jazz from the Western world by famous artists such as Duke Ellington, Miles Davis, Count Basie, and many others. These artists had a significant influence on him and his unique style such as the big band sound, the adaptability of different kinds of jazz, and the "swing sounds" of jazz. Additionally, this is evidence of why Kapustin's early phase of work was still centered in orchestras and ensembles.

In the late 1960s, while Kapustin was touring with Lundstrem's jazz orchestra, he met his future wife Anna Baranovskaya. They met in a café, and Kapustin later invited her to attend one of his shows.<sup>13</sup> After that, in 1969, Kapustin married Anna Baranovskaya. The following year, 1970, Kapustin's first son Anton was born. The birth of a new family member changed Kapustin's focus from touring with Lundstrem's jazz orchestra to caring for the family and becoming a provider; in 1972, Kapustin quit Lundstrem's jazz orchestra and joined Boris Karamishev's "Blue Screen" Orchestra in Moscow. Later in 1977, he wrote his first solo piano composition, *Suite In the Old Style for Piano*, op. 28. Meanwhile, he joined Vadim Lyudvikovsky's Television and Radio Light Orchestra until 1977. Kapustin's second son Pavel was born in 1978. After that, from 1977 to 1984, he worked with the State Cinematography Symphony Orchestra, mainly for recording cinema music in Moscow. After 1984, Kapustin dedicated most of his time to composition. He said, "The most productive period in my life

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<sup>12</sup> S. Frederick Starr, *Red and Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union 1917-1991* (New York: Limelight, 1994), 226.

<sup>13</sup> Mark Peters, *A Study of Nikolai Kapustin's Sonata No. 12, Op. 102: A Contemporary Jazz Sonata in Two Movements*, DMA diss., (West Virginia University, 2017), 17.

began when I stopped playing with the orchestra. So I became completely free as a composer only in 1984, although even before I composed quite a few pieces.”<sup>14</sup>

With more time to devote to composing after 1984, Kapustin's works became more diverse. These included works for chamber ensembles, solo piano, and concertos, and he continued to write new works every year. It was not until after 2000 that the world gradually saw and widely recognized Kapustin's work. Since then, he has received a lot of media coverage and attention.<sup>15</sup>

In 2007, when Kapustin was 70 years old, his followers held a big concert for him in Moscow. This concert was composed of Kapustin's chamber music in the first half of the show and orchestral music in the second half. Among the pieces programmed, his chamber music included *Elegy* for Cello and Piano, op. 96, Sonata for Cello and Piano, no.2, op.84, and Trio for Flute, Cello and Piano, op.86. The orchestral music in the second half contained Concerto no. 2 for Cello and String Orchestra, op. 103 and Concerto for Violin, Piano and String Orchestra, op. 105. The passion from young generations of musicians and music scholars, and positive public attention for Kapustin increased significantly in the following years.<sup>16</sup> With his popularity boosted worldwide, “anniversary concerts” were successively held focusing on Kapustin's works in 2009 and 2011 in Moscow. Also, in 2016 and 2017, two more concerts themed on Kapustin’s 79th and 80th birthdays were held in Moscow.

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<sup>14</sup> Tatianna Abramova, *The Synthesis of Jazz and Classical Styles in Three Piano Works of Nikolai Kapustin*, DMA diss., (Temple University, 2014), 2.

<sup>15</sup> Links of media attention: Praeludium (@Praeludium), “Interview by Harriet Smith with Kapustin,” VK, March 12, 2013, [https://vk.com/wall-47938096\\_46](https://vk.com/wall-47938096_46); Kitty On The Keys, “Kapustin—Piano Music,” Piano Street, August 23, 2012. <https://www.pianostreet.com/smf/index.php?topic=47689.0>; Leslie De’Ath, “Nikolai Kapustin - A Performer’s Perspective,” MusicWeb-International, 2002, <http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2002/Jun02/Kapustin.htm>.

<sup>16</sup> Kapustin’s works Reviews: David Hurwitz, “Kapustin: Piano Concerto, Sonata, etc. SACD,” ClassicsToday, 2011, <https://www.classicstoday.com/review/review-15850/>; Brain Reinhart, “Review,” MusicWebInternational, 2010, [http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2012/Mar12/Kapustin\\_Etudes\\_8572272.htm](http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2012/Mar12/Kapustin_Etudes_8572272.htm); Chang Tou Liang, “Nikolai Kapustin Piano Works / Thomas Ang (Piano) / Review,” Pianomania, 2013, <http://pianofortephilia.blogspot.com/2013/08/nikolai-kapustin-piano-works-thomas-ang.html>.

Kapustin's composition career continued until 2016; his last work was titled *Moon Rainbow* for piano, op. 161. After a long illness, Kapustin died in Moscow on July 2, 2020. He was 82 years old. News of his death spread around the world. I remember that the media was covering the news of sorrow overwhelmingly.<sup>17</sup>

Before 2000, Kapustin was an unknown Russian pianist. The internet is one of the critical factors that allowed his works to be seen by the world. Around 2000, the development of the internet was boosted by new technologies, which made the internet of music streaming services more accessible to everyone. After 2000, his works became very popular and widely circulated among the younger generations of pianists. His music has contributed to the world and holds a pivotal position. For instance, Kapustin's compositions updated the pianist repertoires. Also, he was a figure who forged a new direction for younger composers and musicians to explore. As more and more famous pianists performed Kapustin's works in concerts,<sup>18</sup> his works have gradually become classics of the 20th and 21st centuries.

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<sup>17</sup> Links of Obituary: Toccata (@Toccata), "Post," Facebook, July 6, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/toccatamusicgroup/posts/from-martin-andersonthe-news-of-the-death-of-nikolai-kapustin-on-2-july-2020-at-/2786451448123493/>; "In Memoriam: Nikolai Kapustin," Schott Music, July 15, 2020. <https://www.eamdc.com/news/in-memoriam-nikolai-kapustin/>; Lynn René Bayley, "Goodbye to Nikolai Kapustin," The Art Music Lounge, July 6, 2020. <https://artmusiclounge.wordpress.com/2020/07/06/goodbye-to-nikolai-kapustin/>.

<sup>18</sup> Pianist played works by Kpausitn such as David M Rice, "Yujia Wang at Carnegie Hall - Prokofiev, Chopin, Kapustin & Stravinsky," Classical Source, October 22, 2013, <https://www.classicalsource.com/concert/yuja-wang-at-carnegie-hall-prokofiev-chopin-kapustin-stravinsky/>; Peter Reed, "Alexei Volodin at Queen Elizabeth Hall," Classical Source, June 13, 2012, <https://www.classicalsource.com/concert/alexei-volodin-at-queen-elizabeth-hall/>; and also Russian pianist Sergei Redkin performed Kapustin's Bagatelles Op. 59 No. 9 on his encores. Ates Orga, "Verbier Festival 2019 - Sergei Redkin plays Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev & Rachmaninov," Classical Source, July 26, 2019, <https://www.classicalsource.com/concert/verbier-festival-2019-sergei-redkin-plays-tchaikovsky-prokofiev-rachmani-nov-live-medici-webcast/>.

## Section II. Kapustin's Compositional Style

According to language philosopher Philip Nicholas Johnson-Laird, music creation is inseparable from improvisation.<sup>19</sup> For example, most of the time from medieval Gregorian chant to modern pop music, they are all inseparable from the first step of spontaneously humming the melody. The same goes for composing; the structure, melody, and harmony are all important elements that make up a fine work. Just like establishing a building, it must have a scope to limit it, which is the structure. In Kapustin's fusion of classical and jazz styles, the classical elements would correspond to this structure, while the jazz elements would contribute with bebop melody lines, blues scales, and many seventh chords with the ii-V-I progression.

Kapustin never received any professional composition training. His composition methods and styles developed through his personal research and learning. Writing well-received pieces of work without any professional composition studies is impressive. After Kapustin's performances with the Moscow Philharmonic concert took place in 2009, he took questions from the audience. When the audience asked about how he taught himself to compose and what he thought of his 24 preludes and fugues, Kapustin replied that there was nothing incredible about it; just like Bach, who was also self-taught, Bach's zero experience in composing did not prevent him from writing his renowned Preludes and Fugues.<sup>20</sup>

The ultra-skilled playing of American jazz pianists was also one of the factors that influenced Kapustin's works.<sup>21</sup> In a 2013 interview with Kapustin by Yana Tyulkova, Kapustin

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<sup>19</sup> P. N. Johnson-Laird, "How Jazz Musicians Improvise," *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 19, no. 3 (2002): 415–42.

<sup>20</sup> ClassicalForum.ru, accessed October 17, 2023, <http://classicalforum.ru/index.php?topic=395.0>.

<sup>21</sup> Oscar Peterson is famous for playing tough technical jazz. His playing can not only stay at a fast tempo but also shows the flexibility of his fingers for music articulation. Art Tatum has a deeper understanding of harmony. He can quickly add new harmonies to each measure in the improvisation and sometimes even play a new chord in every beat to smoothly connect to the next chord. Also, Art Tatum's hands are so big that he can "span a 12th on the keyboard." (Steven Cerra, Art Tatum – Genius in Prospect and Retrospect, *JazzProfiles*, 2016). Bill Evans' rootless voicing harmonies are one of the features for which he is famous. He often plays chords with the band with no root note. In addition to playing the 3rd, 5th, and 7th notes with his two hands, he will add flat or sharp 9th, 11th, and



stated that many jazz pianists, including Oscar Peterson, Herbie Hancock, Art Tatum, and Bill Evans, had influenced him.<sup>22</sup> In the influence of classical music, American jazz pianists Bill Evans and Kapustin's early music studies were both in the direction of classical piano. The pianist Gershwin was also one of the factors that influenced him.<sup>23</sup>

The musical influence on Kapustin was not only from American jazz artists, but also from French composers and styles as well. For instance, Kapustin was influenced by French composer Maurice Ravel.<sup>24</sup> In the 2013 interview with Kapustin by Yana Tyulkov, Kapustin replied, "During the years of study in the Conservatory I also developed an interest in the music of Ravel and later Bartok."<sup>25</sup> Ravel also has unique insights into the setting of harmony; just like he once was influenced by American jazz pianists, Ravel often used natural modes, pentatonic scales, and seventh and ninth chords. Ravel's works tend to be traditional tonal music, and his works "place timbre and sonic phenomena in the musical foreground."<sup>26</sup>

Kapustin was not doing anything different from what J. S. Bach (1685-1750) or Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) were doing at the time, composing new styles of music. He just

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13th notes at the right time to add color to the music. Similar elements of the characteristic styles of these jazz pianists can be seen in Kapustin's works.

<sup>22</sup> Tyulkova, *Classical and Jazz Influences in the Music of Nikolai Kapustin: Piano Sonata No. 3, Op. 55, op. cit.*, 26.

<sup>23</sup> American composer George Gershwin's (1898-1937) *Rhapsody in Blue*, composed in 1924, was one of the most successful classical and jazz fusion works that preceded Kapustin. This work was originally a symphony; however, a solo piano version was later released due to its popularity. *Rhapsody in Blue* is also one of the works that represents the prosperity of the Jazz Age in the United States in the 1920s. Although early sales of *Rhapsody in Blue* claimed that "a million copies were sold," (Ryan Banagale, *Arranging Gershwin: Rhapsody in Blue and the Creation of an American Icon*, Oxford University Press, 2014, 95) *Rhapsody's* success and popularity have historically proven that this fusion of classical and jazz has a relative audience base and market as a new music type, especially this kind of performance score with detailed markings and every note written without improvisation. Moreover, in a 2015 interview, Yana Tyulkova noted that many people compare Kapustin's work with Gershwin's. But Kapustin said he dislikes comparisons between himself and Gershwin. (See Yana Tyulkova, *Conversation with Nikolai Kapustin*, Schott Bush, 2019, 417). He found this unpleasant and tired of it.

<sup>24</sup> A famous piano improvisation solo piece from Bill Evans is called "Peace Piece." This piece shows many French Impressionist styles of twentieth-century music in its slow rhythm, mood, and atmosphere. The impressionistic style of Peace Piece's slow painting color is similar to the beginning of Maurice Ravel's (1875-1937) *Piano Concerto* in G. Bill Evans once stated that Ravel's music style significantly influenced him so much, and he liked French Impressionist music. See Richard Ray, *Finding the DNA of Ravel and Chopin in the music of Bill Evans*, (CPR Classical, 2014).

<sup>25</sup> Tyulkova, *op. cit.*, 24.

<sup>26</sup> Jessie Fillerup, *Magician of Sound: Ravel and the Aesthetics of Illusion*, (University of California Press, 2021), 3

chose a different musical language than the standard European system. Kapustin most likely did so because he felt it was a language that was still popular and alive, unlike Europe at the time. He used jazz as his medium of choice and classical music as a framework.

At the first phase of the composition process, Kapustin, like other classical composers in history, started with a little idea, accumulated and modified it, and finally turned it into a perfected work like Beethoven's. Kapustin said that Beethoven had superb improvisation skills and could quickly write down all the improvisation content, but Beethoven did not; instead, Beethoven would slowly write down the materials in a draft and then revise it over and over again until it became a fine work.<sup>27</sup>

What sets Kapustin apart from improvisational jazz musicians is how his music was notated. Like other classical musicians, Kapustin had many manuscripts and recorded every note, as well as articulations and dynamics in every detail. Unlike most jazz musicians and composers who use chord symbols to summarize the harmony of the work when composing briefly, the sheet music of most jazz works does not have many details to show the performers what sound effects they need to play because it is mostly improvisation.

For Kapustin, he wanted the performers to follow the notes he had written and play them like classical music rather than improvise based on his compositions as a jazz lead sheet. Kapustin had very high standards for his work. He considered improvisation flawed and preferred "perfect works," which he revised repeatedly, like classical music. Kapustin once said, "There is no need to improvise with my music, although it is jazz.... I am not interested in improvisation – and what is a jazz musician without improvisation? But I am not interested, because it's not perfect."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Tyulkova, *op. cit.*, 25.

<sup>28</sup> Tyulkova, *op. cit.*, 27.

## Chapter Summary

I have shown how Kapustin initially aspired to become a classical pianist. However, his interest in jazz music was more than just the study of classical music, and he turned to the experience of jazz while touring Oleg Lundstrem's jazz orchestra in his early career. This influence of jazz music then began appearing in his compositions. His works spanned the likes of chamber music, orchestra, and solo keyboard genres and was widely recognized at the beginning of the 21st century. Kapustin combined classical structures and jazz elements and was inspired by jazz legends such as Oscar Peterson and Bill Evans in the West, creating a deep understanding of various music styles. Despite lacking formal composition training, Kapustin's detailed classical notations and view of improvisation made him unique. The uniqueness of Kapustin's multi-layered music has won praise for his contribution to the 20th and 21st centuries of music. In the next chapter, I will briefly describe the development of jazz in the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as the differences between the two.

## Chapter II: Historical Background of Jazz Development in the US and Soviet Union

As a country of immigrants, the United States is a melting pot of cultures. Even though people from all over the world come to the United States, this land welcomes different cultures simultaneously. In the 1920s, the United States more widely accepted the diversity of popular culture than in the Soviet Union. Jazz music was and became a crucial part of American music culture, and the 1920s to 1930s was considered the flourishing of the Jazz Age in the United States. A musician and scholar, Stephen Frederick Starr, talks about jazz in his book and says, “Yet in the twentieth century there does exist one form of expression—jazz— that far outstripped the others in its impact upon social life... This form crystallized so completely the values of the times that the post-World War I era became known as the “Jazz Age.”<sup>29</sup>

In music history, classical music and jazz developed independently and differently. Despite their stylistic differences, Gerald Early has observed that there are a number of important similarities between European classical music and jazz. One fact that Early stated was, “Classical pianist Glenn Gould and jazz pianist Errol Garner were known to hum or occasionally vocalize along with their playing...”<sup>30</sup> They both advocate the expression of individualism, but the musical form is quite different; one is completely following the written score by the composer and the other one has more freedom to speak out what the meaning of music is for solo players at the moment.

Jazz originated from the United States at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Specifically, the Jazz genre was born in the southern port city of New Orleans,

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<sup>29</sup> Starr, *op. cit.*, 9.

<sup>30</sup> Gerald Early, “Keith Jarrett, Miscegenation & the Rise of the European Sensibility in Jazz in the 1970s.” (*Daedalus* 148, no. 2, 2019), 71.

and its musical roots come from blues and ragtime. Jazz focuses on improvisation, call-and-response patterns, and combines black African and white European culture.

As Russia's politics shifted dramatically in the 1910s, a parallel revolution happened in the United States with its rapid development of jazz. In the United States, Jazz's relatively free music style, rhythm, structure, harmony, enable it to develop rapidly. Just like Russia exited the First World War after the October Revolution and used the liberation movement to build a utopian future perfect society, American jazz uses rhythm, melody, and dance with improvisation to express individuality in music. This jazz style allows it to be considered as "a musical revelation, a religion, a philosophy of the world, just like Expressionism and Impressionism."<sup>31</sup>

American novelist Francis Scott Fitzgerald once said of his understanding of jazz, "The word jazz, in its progress toward respectability, has meant first sex, then dancing, then music."<sup>32</sup> In New Orleans, the newspaper *Times-Picayune* in 1917 published much the same thing of jazz, "To uncertain natures, wild sound and meaningless noise have an exciting...to such as these, jazz is a delight. A dance...is quite different from the languor of a Viennese waltz..."<sup>33</sup> Over the next few decades, many newspaper articles worldwide covered the new phenomenon of jazz music. Many newspaper writers and scholars positively affirmed jazz and contrasted it with the "decorous feeling"<sup>34</sup> of the middle class in the 19th century. Jazz is also associated with free body movement and dance, and it has become a symbol of personal body liberation.<sup>35</sup>

The world-wide popularity and cross-regional development of jazz was inseparable from the development of recording technology. Recording is a vast improvement over the traditional communication method of listening to a live artist's performance and word of mouth. Although

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<sup>31</sup> Starr, *op. cit.*, 12.

<sup>32</sup> Starr, *op. cit.*, 10.

<sup>33</sup> Starr, *op. cit.*, 11.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

music scores are an ancient and vital medium for paper communication, phonograph records can perform better than paper. Not only is the record lightweight and capable of recording a lot, but it also captures every performance nuance. The recording is an excellent way for jazz to develop, featuring complex and dense sounds to notate the details and styles the performer needs to play.

The improvisational part of jazz became very important to African-American people as a liberation from racism. American white people started to realize the problem and tried to solve it. After the invention of the phonograph, “an all-white New Orleans group called the Original Dixieland Jass Band made the first jazz recording, introducing hundreds of American musicians to the new music in 1917.”<sup>36</sup> From this record, jazz was not only played by African-Americans.

Dixieland jazz featured small groups with instruments like trumpet, clarinet, and trombone. Louis Armstrong and Jelly Roll Morton were significant figures in this style. Armstrong mastered jazz trumpet playing and had a unique voice singing, and these characters became important in jazz music. Morton was a jazz pianist and composer. He was considered the first important jazz composer with “a rich synthesis of African-American musical elements, particularly as embodied in the pure New Orleans collective style which he helped to develop to its finest expression.”<sup>37</sup>

Recording technology with Dixieland jazz music was blown across to eastern hemisphere Russia mainly in the 1920s, and it quickly became a new popular lifestyle. One of the reasons for the popularity of American jazz is that it encourages self-expression— improvisation, which is the opportunity for individual musicians to give their ideas of how music should be sounded after playing the head of the tune.<sup>38</sup> More types of jazz were developed and spread out from the 1920s

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<sup>36</sup> Terry Teachout. “Jazz.” *The Wilson Quarterly* (1976-) 12, no. 3, 1988, 68.

<sup>37</sup> Gunther Schuller, “Morton, Jelly Roll,” *Grove Music Online*, 2001.

<sup>38</sup> The slang head means the main melody of the jazz standard, which was written by the composer.

to late twentieth century such as swing, bebop, cool jazz, hard bop, free jazz, and fusion.

Musicians in the Soviet Union picked them up later.

It is essential to look over the expansion of the jazz environment in the USSR, which later became Russia. Also essential is to look at the early phase of Kapustin's childhood surrounded by Ukrainian jazz and thus his close connection to the world of jazz. Horlivka, Ukraine was Kapustin's birthplace and hometown. At that time, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic was a republic of the Soviet Union. Following the February Revolution in the Soviet Union, the Soviet regime in Ukraine was formally established in December 1917. With the collapse and re-establishment of the regime over the next two years, the Ukrainian Soviet regime was officially named the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic in 1919.

The young people's nightlife in Lviv, Ukraine, in the 1920s was mainly clubbing. With the spread of Western culture, young Ukrainian students spent most of their free time in jazz venues such as cafes and cabaret shows. In 1930, Leonid Yablonsky founded the Ukrainian jazz band. This band became widely known as Yabtso Jazz, one of Lviv's most famous jazz bands.<sup>39</sup> The earliest members of Yabtso Jazz included Bohdan Vesolovsky, Anatol Kos, and Stepan Humynilovych. A pianist, accordionist, and composer, Bohdan Vesolovsky composed a hit single called *There Will Come Another Time*, which was very popular then.

However, jazz development in Ukraine was struggling. After Stalin held the stable power at the end of 1920s, he turned many mediums politically. The fact was that the Stalin government not only politicized jazz, but also "increasingly tried to support proletarian elements in the arts."<sup>40</sup> Because of the location and politically, Ukraine was all part of the Soviet regime, thus in

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<sup>39</sup> Christine Chraibi, *Bondi Vesolosvsky and Yabtso Jazz: swinging Lviv in the 1920s-1930s* (Euromaidan Press, 2020).

<sup>40</sup> Martin Lücke, *Vilified, Venerated, Forbidden: Jazz in the Stalinist Era* (Journal Volume I, Issue 2, Michigan Publishing, 2007).

the subsequent series of policies, the 1930s and 1940s, Jazz in Ukraine was also subject to a level of prohibition.

After Stalin died in 1953, the successor Nikita Khrushchev had set a more open environment of culture in the USSR. Finally, in 1969, Donetsk was the first city in Ukraine to host its jazz festival.<sup>41</sup> The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic later declared independence as Ukraine in 1991. It was not until 2000 that another jazz festival, Donetsk Jazz, was held again, later known as DoJ. This music festival in Ukraine in 2000 reflects the Eastern European jazz style. The Oleg Lundstrem jazz orchestra, a jazz group in which Kapustin had worked in Moscow, also participated and performed without leader Lundstrem for the first time since 1934. Located in eastern Ukraine, Russia officially took over Donetsk in 2022.

Moreover, only a few jazz records were produced from 1970 to 2000 in Ukraine, reflecting the lack of jazz history.<sup>42</sup> Meanwhile, Kapustin already went to Moscow to study in 1952 at the age of 15; thus, Ukrainian local jazz music probably only had a minor influence on his childhood life. Nonetheless, these experiences of the Ukrainian jazz music culture at his young age gave him the foundation and understanding of what jazz was and how it sounded.

The jazz that survived in the Soviet Union was not easy as well. In the early phase of the twentieth century, Moscow started to develop fast and became the largest city in the country, and it was also the most populated city in the USSR. Meanwhile, many of the middle class needed more artistic diversity with the desire for interaction and connection to Western popular entertainment.

Nonetheless, many historical events that changed much of Russia's musical culture and legacy in the 1910s, such as the Japanese-Russian War, World War I, the February Revolution,

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<sup>41</sup> Cyril Moshkow, *JazzFest, Ukrainian Style, Down Beat*, (Maher Publisher, Vol.70, August 2003), 21.

<sup>42</sup> Paul Miazga, *The Fall and Rise of Jazz in Ukraine* (Kyiv Post: Ukraine's Global Voice, 2010).



the October Revolution, and so on. The empire ruler of Russia from 1613, the Romanov dynasty, lost domination at the beginning of the twentieth century. Additionally, the failure of the Japanese-Russian War and World War I were among the main reasons the Romanov dynasty collapse dramatically,<sup>43</sup> and their family were executed in 1918. Following the February Revolution and October Revolution in 1917, Vladimir Lenin, whom the Bolshevik Party had supported, took over the whole Russian government after the Romanov dynasty. Later, Lenin established the Soviet Union and developed the concept of Communism, which has a contrasting perception to Western Capitalism. These revolutions shifted Russian culture completely, significantly impacting the civilization and their arts and life.

From the earliest days of Soviet history, Soviet leaders recognized the power of music to influence a population. Because it has just experienced substantial social changes, a sufficient labor force can allow the country's economy to recover relatively quickly. Among them, it is vital to maintain the entertainment and diversification of the public. For example, Early Soviet jazz musicians often learned how to play jazz from tapes because of the recording technology boosted in the early 1910s. Thus, in jazz trending the 1920s, some Soviet officials remained open and welcoming to popular culture related to North America and Western Europe.

Even though the ideology of Communism tended to be conservative about Collectivism as a whole, the desire for individual self-expression was still rooted in the people. Therefore, there was available room for this new genre to start growing in Russia in 1922.

On October 1st, 1922, the first jazz concert was held in Moscow led by Soviet musician Valentin Parnakh (1891-1951) and his band named *Pervyj v RSFSR èkscentričeskij orkestr – džaz-band Valentina Parnacha*. This event was considered the birth of Soviet jazz.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopedia. "Russian Revolution." Encyclopedia Britannica, August 11, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Russian-Revolution>.

<sup>44</sup> Lücke, *loc.*, cit.

Additionally, the music of the first jazz concert did not have any improvisation at all; the program contained only the popular American tunes.<sup>45</sup> With the genre of jazz introduced to the USSR in the early twentieth century, Kapustin later grew up with this new sound during the days he was studying in Moscow.

The Bolshevik regime, under the leadership of Lenin, won the victory. They established a new government, but at this time, the economic system of the entire Soviet Union was in terrible shape. Governing the country well is the original intention of every new regime. From 1922 to 1928, the Lenin government began to announce a new economic plan called the New Economic Policy (NEP).<sup>46</sup> This economic policy aimed to allow the Soviet Union to establish a new market economy under a socialist system. Under this new policy, the NEP encouraged the development of its private enterprises and became one of the conditions for jazz to enter the Soviet Union smoothly. Instead of imitating American jazz, Soviet musicians could compose their Soviet jazz through direct communication with the outside world during this period. Compared with the later Stalin period, the NEP at this time was the peak of the development of Soviet jazz.

Under the economic policies of the NEP, Soviet pianist Leopold Teplitsky played an essential role in developing jazz in the early Soviet Union. At that time, Soviet musicians were very interested in authentic and native American jazz, and Teplitsky was one of them. Teplitsky set out from Leningrad to Philadelphia in 1926 to study jazz with the support of the Soviet Union's official government.<sup>47</sup> His goals for this year-long study trip were to learn jazz techniques and purchase many jazz arrangements and related instruments. He planned to apply all these resources to developing Soviet jazz bands in those new cities liberated by the Soviet Union. While studying in Philadelphia, Teplitsky collected the jazz music arrangement from Paul

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<sup>45</sup> Mann, *op. cit.*, 24.

<sup>46</sup> Starr, *op. cit.*, 53.

<sup>47</sup> Starr, *op. cit.*, 66.

Whiteman, the "king of jazz." Later, Teplitsky organized the first jazz concert after returning to Leningrad in 1927, with instruments including "two fashionable new American-made piston-valve trumpets" from the United States.<sup>48</sup> The performance of Teplitsky's jazz band had the support and appreciation of a large audience; however, jazz band pianist Boris Wohlmann admitted that "the public interest in our performance was great, but to tell the truth the orchestra had no sense of true jazz. The venerable musicians, accustomed to a completely different playing style, could do no more than conscientiously play the printed notes. Improvisation and any creative initiative by the performer was out of the question."<sup>49</sup> Wohlmann's point of view can prove from the side why Kapustin's jazz was all written out rather than a complete live improvisation.

However, many more officials pointed out that this new open cultural form was foreign capitalism's cultural and ideological invasion. As Stalin came to power in the late 1920s, Stalin's government adopted a more robust policy of resistance. Stalin banned Western music and dance and required the Soviet entertainment industry to be highly politicized.<sup>50</sup> Stalin's government's first five-year plan, announced in 1928, mainly promoted agricultural collectivization policies, focusing on the workers and peasant classes rather than Bourgeoisie. This period was called The Great Fracture or Iron Age.<sup>51</sup> At this time, Stalin did not regard the NEP policy implemented by Lenin as an ideology of Western capitalism and set jazz was considered Western culture brutally suppressed and banned by this movement. Also, strict censorship replaced the previously created liberal environment to prevent Western capitalism from destroying socialist ideology through cultural export.

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<sup>48</sup> Starr, *op. cit.*, 68.

<sup>49</sup> Starr, *op. cit.*, 69.

<sup>50</sup> Gleb Tsipursky, Jazz, Power, and Soviet Youth in the Early Cold War, 1948-1953, (*The Journal of Musicology* 33, no.3, 2016), 336.

<sup>51</sup> Starr, *op. cit.*, 80.

It was not until the mid-1930s that Stalin's government stopped this aggressive cultural boycott policy. Because these previous policies applied effectively, Stalin later declared victory in building the foundations of socialism.<sup>52</sup> After the stable power, the Stalin government graduates showed a certain level of tolerance for the influence of Western culture during this period. Later, the central government's policies allowed people to interact more with Western entertainment culture, such as dances and jazz played by jazz stars Alexander Tsfasman and Leonid Utesov.

Nonetheless, in the late 1930s, the Soviet Union's policy shifted from openness to the world to isolationism. The most likely reason was World War II from 1939-1945. This policy decision once again affected folk art and culture, including jazz. Previous jazz band members either disbanded on the spot or could only play other types of music, such as "Estrada."<sup>53</sup> However, there was still some room for compromise. In addition to the shift in music themes from diversification to ideological Soviet songs that mainly focused on patriotism, jazz developed into a Sovietized version of jazz under historical conditions. Sovietizing jazz was defined as "Minimizing improvisation, syncopation, blue notes, and a fast swinging feeling, and instead playing in a more lyrical and slow style, with such traditional jazz instruments as trumpets and saxophones supplanted by strings and Soviet folk instruments."<sup>54</sup> This form of jazz was based on the ideologies of the time, and the music was highly pre-arranged and approved. Also, this over-modification of orchestration has lost jazz improvisation's original soul and meaning.

Compared with the Soviet Union's restrictions on cultural invasion from the Western ideology in late World War II, many changes were made after Stalin's death in 1953. The most

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<sup>52</sup> Tsipursky, *loc. cit.*

<sup>53</sup> Tsipursky, *op. cit.*, 337.

<sup>54</sup> Tsipursky, *loc. cit.*

obvious statistic is that the number of "amateur artists" in the Soviet Union increased from 5 million in 1954 to 9 million in 1962.<sup>55</sup> The growth rate doubled from 250,000 "amateur artists" per year from 1950 to 1954, reaching 500,000 annually. The growth rate of "amateur artists" directly proves that the Soviet Union's tolerance for domestic art and culture during this period has expanded much compared to previous years. Jazz, a typical American musical culture, was also allowed to be studied and performed again starting this period.

It was not until 1953 that 16-year-old Kapustin heard authentic American jazz on the radio for the first time. He recalled: "At first my friends and I could hear jazz only on the radio. I do not remember which jazz artist I heard first. It could be Glenn Miller or Louis Armstrong."<sup>56</sup> This style is different from classical music, and Kapustin was fascinated. Kapustin thought he would become a classical performer before, but when he was 20 to 22, he understood jazz's importance.<sup>57</sup> He preferred to compose rather than perform, and one of his goals was to combine the two forms of music perfectly. In this combination, Kapustin is good at using the structure of classical music and adding the harmonic and rhythm style of jazz to achieve the idea of fusion music.

Amidst such frequent changes in policy, there was a famous musician who was actively developing his musical talent while achieving remarkable results. Alexander Tsfasman (1906-1971) was a renowned jazz pianist and composer during Stalin's period and the first jazz soloist in the Soviet Union. His jazz band AMA was the first recorded in the Soviet Union. At the same time, AMA was also the first band to perform live on television and the first to perform

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<sup>55</sup> Tsipursky, *op. cit.*, 341.

<sup>56</sup> Mann, *op. cit.*, 28.

<sup>57</sup> Mann, *loc. cit.*

jazz music and improvisation without pre-arrangement.<sup>58</sup> Tsfasman was also the first Soviet jazz musician to receive praise from Western European and American jazz musicians.

From 1925 to 1930, Tsfasman was Felix Blumenfeld's student for six years at the Moscow Conservatory. The coincidence was Kapustin's first professional piano teacher, Rubakh, was also a student of Blumenfeld as well. It was not until the 1960s that Kapustin had the opportunity to come into contact with Tsfasman for the first time; they both were born in Ukraine. Their shared teacher-student backgrounds and their early exposure to the rigorous demands of classical performance techniques and music theory resonated with each other. Kapustin admired Tsfasman, a jazz celebrity who greatly influenced Kapustin's understanding of jazz. Kapustin recalled, “We (pianists) liked Tsfasman for his elegance and easy-going style and his perfect finger technique.”<sup>59</sup> Tsfasman's success was inseparable from the support and practice of Soviet-era jazz music concepts. Tsfasman believed that performers should memorize the music scores.<sup>60</sup> It is not improvisation like a jazz musician; performers should practice according to the score repeatedly to achieve perfect performance. The purpose of memorizing music is that the soloist should demonstrate virtuoso technique on stage instead of improvisation. Therefore, Kapustin began to create his fusion of classical-jazz compositions through Tsfasman's ideas.

## Chapter Summary

The United States has a diverse culture in the world as an immigrant country. With the diversity, especially when jazz music was booming in the 1920s, marking the Jazz era. Jazz originated from New Orleans, combined the influence of Africa and Europe, and became a

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<sup>58</sup> Starr, *op. cit.*, 134.

<sup>59</sup> Mann, *op. cit.*, 33.

<sup>60</sup> Yingzhou Hu, Variation Op.41 and Etudes Op.67 by Nikolai Kapustin: Historical Background, Stylistic Influence, and Performance Approaches, DMA diss., (Ohio State University, 2020),16.

symbol of people's spiritual liberation. During the immigration wave from the 1920s through the 1930s, the diverse cultures of the United States spread throughout the world along with the population flow. Also, the immigration wave and recording technology played an essential role in the development of jazz music in Russia. This music genre has spread globally and even affected the Soviet Union. Because of its political transformation, it is facing challenges. The New Economic Policy (NEP) briefly allowed jazz to thrive in the Soviet Union, but the Stalin regime made restrictions to prohibit Western influence. After Stalin died in 1953, Nikita Khrushchev eased cultural restrictions, and jazz gradually became popular again. The jazz environment influenced Russian composer Nikolai Kapustin, who later combined classical and jazz works. Kapustin's unique music journey reflects the complex interaction between the political climate and art expression between the United States and the Soviet Union in the 20th century. In the next chapter, I will briefly introduce the history of Prelude and its development.

### Chapter III: Brief Background of the Prelude

A prelude is a style of music that usually serves as a warm-up instrumental performance before the primary vocal or instrumental performance. The earliest keyboard prelude could date back to 1448 when German composer Adam Ileborgh composed *Incipiunt praeludia diversarum notarum*, five short pieces played on the organ.<sup>61</sup> The prelude has always had an improvisational function like traditional jazz; however, the classical composer will carefully write down every note on the score.

The prelude, a music form set as a warm-up before the primary performance, has a rich history and dates back to the 15th century. It was initially an improvisational performance and later became more structural in classical music, such as *The Well-Tempered Clavier* by J.S. Bach, for teaching purposes. The romantic composer Chopin transformed the prelude style into an independent work, affecting the later composers, such as Scriabin and Rachmaninoff.

Twentieth-century composers, including Shostakovich and Kapustin, continued this tradition and composed 24 preludes. Some composers from the seventeenth century to the present often give a teaching function when composing preludes. The seventeenth-century composer J. S. Bach (1685-1750) published two sets of twenty-four preludes and fugues written as *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, in which the twenty-four pieces were arranged in a chromatic form from the key of C and have a precise meaning, keyboard teaching implications. Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778-1837) composed the 24 preludes for piano op.67, which was also one of the works mainly designed to train keyboard player's finger skills and improvisational ability. Soulima Stravinsky (1910-1994), son of Russian composer and performer Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971), once said of his own *The Art of Scales: 24 preludes*, "The Art of Scales can serve

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<sup>61</sup> David Ledbetter and Howard Ferguson, "Prelude," *Grove Music Online*, 2001.



as a relief from the practice of bare scales whose basic mechanics, however, should be fully mastered beforehand..."<sup>62</sup> This concept gives keyboard players more choices when practicing or warming up.

Romantic-era composer Chopin (1810-1849) composed 24 Preludes, op. 28 for piano and published in 1839. Instead of using it as a prelude before a more significant work, Chopin set it up as an independent piece.<sup>63</sup> Chopin's initiative also profoundly influenced composers from the late 19th century to the 20th century, such as Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915), Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943), who all composed 24 preludes. Performers often play such works independently in concerts. Some modern composers have once again used preludes and fugues to compose music. Composers such as Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975), Rodion Shchedrin (1932-present), and Kapustin all wrote 24 Prelude and Fugue. Shchedrin once said of his own 24 Preludes and Fugue, "The preludes in my cycle fulfill the role of introduction and are, as it were, overtures to the fugues. The preludes are never an independent piece but invariably a predicate or preface, a way of preparing for the main business. And the preludes are shorter and more aphoristic than the fugues."<sup>64</sup>

The tonal arrangement in preludes is primarily a group of major and minor keys, and there are two combinations: parallel and relative major and minor. Taking Bach's *The Well-Tempered Clavier* as an example, the arrangement of each piece mainly uses semitones and parallel major and minor progressions; the 24 preludes' order composed by nineteenth-century composers Hummel and Chopin both use the cycle of fifth relationship. Scriabin and Kapustin's 24 preludes follow Chopin's 24 preludes op. 28 cycles of fifths to arrange each song.

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<sup>62</sup> Eric Gilbert Beuerman, *The Evolution of the Twenty-four Preludes Set for Piano*, DMA diss., (University of Arizona, 2003), 73.

<sup>63</sup> Anatole Leikin, *The Mystery of Chopin's Preludes*. (Routledge, 2016), 8.

<sup>64</sup> Beuerman, *op. cit.*, 75.

Many other composers have written 24 preludes, including Russian composers such as Scriabin, Felix Blumenfeld (1863-1931), Rachmaninoff, Shostakovich. Kapustin also followed the trend of Russian composers with his 24 Preludes Op. 53 composed in 1988. Kapustin's Preludes Op. 53 was also a tribute to Chopin and other great composers. Pianist and composer Jed Distler once said, "He hasn't just merely appropriated but truly internalized the music's stylistic and textural evolution from Scott Joplin to Keith Jarrett."<sup>65</sup> In an exclusive interview with Harriet Smith, Smith mentioned Kapustin's 24 preludes and whether performers must play the entire set as one repertoire. Kapustin said, "Actually no. I think they're too long that way - pianists can play any part of it. It doesn't matter."<sup>66</sup>

## Chapter Summary

Historically, composers arrange the order of each prelude's key differently, but going with the cycle fifth is a standard mode. The Op. 53, written by Kapustin in 1988, paid tribute to this tradition and covered a variety of styles. Kapustin emphasized that it provided flexibility for the performance, and the performer could play the separate preludes instead of the whole set. In the next chapter, I will introduce related jazz elements that correspond and show with Kapustin's twenty-four preludes and eight etudes. These elements can provide a simple and basic understanding of jazz music. Also, I will discuss how Kapustin's piece sounds like jazz improvisation for four reasons: the structure of jazz music, the improvisation from an aesthetic of sound perspective, the preconception of Kapustin, and the facts of Kapustin's music career.

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<sup>65</sup> Jed Distler, notes to *Nikolai Kapustin Piano Music*, Hyperion CDA67433, 2004.

<sup>66</sup> Harriet Smith, Bridging the Divide: An Interview with Kapustin, (*International Piano Quarterly* Autumn, no. 13 2000), 55.

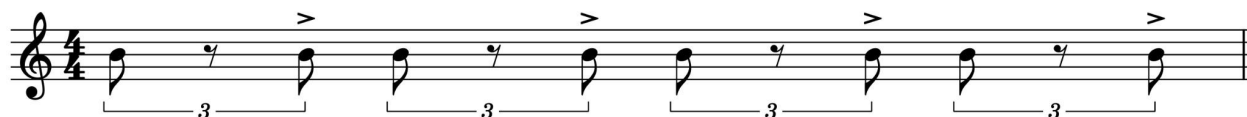
## Chapter IV: Jazz Elements and Kapustin's Sound

### Section I: Jazz Elements

The following jazz elements will show in the analyzed chapters later for reference.

Kapustin's 24 preludes feature many different jazz styles, including blues, ballad, waltz, swing, and jazz-funk.<sup>67</sup> Jazz scores use the same standard notation method. However, the most crucial swing notation method is often ignored and unknown to classical musicians. In jazz, swing refers to a particular rhythm. Although it often appears in notation as two eighth notes as each beat, it must be played as a triplet (Example 1.1) galloping sound under the jazz genre. Triplets also appear in Kapustin's 24 preludes, but most are mainly written with eighth notes rather than triplets.

### Triplets



### Example 1.1

Blues is a genre rooted in African-American musical traditions. It is often characterized by 12-bars form chord progression and the use of blues scales that consist of the pentatonic scale plus a flat-third in each major scale. The blues also has a distinctive sound that flat-third tends to

<sup>67</sup> Ballad is usually a slow, freestyle, narrative music genre with romantic or emotional themes. Waltz is a dance music style generally in 3/4 meter; its rhythm pattern often transfers the momentum that emphasizes the first beat of each three-beat measure. Swing is one of the jazz styles that flourished in the 1930s and 1940s in the big bands often led by the horn sections; it features consistent eighth notes of galloping sound. Jazz-funk is a fusion genre of jazz and funk; it usually characterizes jazz elements with syncopation and strong downbeats followed by a sixteenth-note groove.

resolve to third or second and sometimes carries the performer's emotion of humming during improvisation; it also contains specific patterns and jazz licks sounds. One of the jazz standards, "Blue Monk," by Thelonious Monk, was composed in 1954; it included a regular 12-bar blues form (Example 1.2) and a B-flat blues scale in the melody.

The image displays a handwritten musical score for the jazz standard "Blue Monk" by Thelonious Monk. The title "BLUE MONK" is written in large, bold, black letters at the top, with "THELONIOUS MONK" written in smaller letters to the right. The score is arranged in four systems, each consisting of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The first system shows the first three bars of the 12-bar blues form. The second system shows bars 4-6, with a red rectangular box highlighting the first bar of the melody. The third system shows bars 7-9, featuring a triplet in the second bar. The fourth system shows bars 10-12, ending with a double bar line and a circled "F" in the bass staff, indicating the final chord.

Example 1.2

Boogie-woogie is a style of blues piano performance characterized by fast and repetitive rhythms and bass. The pianist usually plays the 12-bar blues form with repeated bass patterns by the left hand (Example 1.3), while the right hand plays improvised melodies and ornamentation.

The steady rhythm and improvised melodies make boogie-woogie suitable for solo and dance styles. Kapustin also used the boogie-woogie style of jazz to compose, which I will elaborate on in later chapters.



Example 1.3

In jazz harmony, composers often use the seventh chord to write the melody on top of it. These seventh chords make jazz music sound complex and more options of melodic notes. Among the chord progressions of classical music, usually written as I-IV-V-I, however jazz usually uses I-ii-V-I to form a phrase (Example 1.4) and modulates them. In general, the harmonic direction of classical music is the same as jazz's in music theory, except that it changes from classical subdominant to jazz supertonic, but their function is the same: predominant chord. We will see a lot of chord progressions of I-ii-V-I in Kapustin's 24 preludes.

18. ALL THE THINGS YOU ARE - HAMMERSTEIN/KERN

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the song "All the Things You Are" by Hammerstein/Kern. It consists of five staves of music, each with a key signature of one flat (B-flat major) and a 4/4 time signature. The chords and their tritone substitutions are as follows:

- Staff 1: F-7, Bb-7, Eb7, Abmaj7
- Staff 2: Dbmaj7, G7, Cmaj7, (tritone substitution of G7)
- Staff 3: C-7, F-7, Bb7, Ebmaj7
- Staff 4: Abmaj7, D7, Gmaj7, (tritone substitution of D7)
- Staff 5: A-7, D7, Gmaj7, (tritone substitution of D7)

Example 1.4

Tritone substitution (Example 1.5) is a chord progression that plays a significant role in jazz music. It replaces the original seventh chord with a new seventh chord separated by three whole tones. In Example 1.5, the S means substitution I placed from the original chord. In classical music, augmented sixth and neapolitan chords resemble tritone substitution. Kapustin

also employed this jazz harmony technique in his works.

### Autumn Leaves

Yuzhou Huang

The score consists of two systems. The first system is for Trumpet in C and Piano. The second system is for Trumpet in C and Piano. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The music is in G major. The first system has five measures. The second system has five measures, starting with a first ending and a second ending.

**System 1:**

- Measure 1: Trumpet in C: G4, A4, B4, C5. Piano: G4, B4, D5.
- Measure 2: Trumpet in C: G4, A4, B4, C5. Piano: G4, B4, D5.
- Measure 3: Trumpet in C: G4, A4, B4, C5. Piano: G4, B4, D5.
- Measure 4: Trumpet in C: G4, A4, B4, C5. Piano: G4, B4, D5.
- Measure 5: Trumpet in C: G4, A4, B4, C5. Piano: G4, B4, D5.

**System 2:**

- Measure 1: Trumpet in C: G4, A4, B4, C5. Piano: G4, B4, D5.
- Measure 2: Trumpet in C: G4, A4, B4, C5. Piano: G4, B4, D5.
- Measure 3: Trumpet in C: G4, A4, B4, C5. Piano: G4, B4, D5.
- Measure 4: Trumpet in C: G4, A4, B4, C5. Piano: G4, B4, D5.
- Measure 5: Trumpet in C: G4, A4, B4, C5. Piano: G4, B4, D5.

**Chord Progressions:**

- System 1: A-7, Ab7#11, GM7, CM7, F#-7b5.
- System 2: B7#9b13, E-, E7b9, B7, E-.

#### Example 1.5

In jazz rhythm, the most significant difference between it and classical music is the emphasis on beat 2 and 4 instead of beat 1 and 3. Jazz uses this rhythm throughout the piece, and the rhythm in beats 2 and 4 has momentum, driving the music continuously. Bebop is a type of jazz that originated in the United States in the early 1940s, and its predecessor was the swing style. The bebop jazz style contains a fast tempo, fast harmonic progressions change, and challenging improvisation. One of the jazz standards, "Blues For Alice," composed by Charlie Parker in 1951, is one of the jazz standards in the fast bebop blues style. During the improvisation in the bebop style, not only did the performers need to focus rhythm on beats 2 and 4, but they also would target the chord tones in beats 1 and 3 on each measure. To land in the

chord tones of beats 1 and 3, performers often achieve this through many chromatic lines; see the example of one of his improvisation bebop lines (example 1.6) from Charlie Parker on "Blues For Alice."



Example 1.6

In addition to the Blues style type, there are other common 16-bar and odd meter standards in jazz. For example, Sonny Rollins composed "Pent Up House" in 1956. "Pent Up House" consists of a classic 16-bar song structure (example 1.7) and a continuous syncopation rhythm with ties. Regarding odd meters, Paul Desmond wrote a jazz standard, "Take Five," in 5/4 in 1959 (example 1.8). "Take Five" was later made famous by the Dave Brubeck Quartet, and this odd meter approach evolved from the traditional 4/4 or 2/4 meter stands out and is loved by the majority of jazz musicians. In the subsequent analysis chapters, I will mention these two pieces again and discuss how Kapustin used jazz standards to compose.



346.  
SWING  
(UP)

## PENT-UP HOUSE

— SONNY ROLLINS

SONNY ROLLINS - "SAXAPHONE COLOSSUS"

Example 1.7

420.

TAKE FIVE

— PAUL DESMOND

Eb- Bb-7 Eb- Bb-7  
 Eb- Bb-7 Eb- Bb-7 Eb- Bb-7  
 Eb- Bb-7 Eb- Bb-7 Eb- Bb-7  
 Cbmaj7 Ab-6 Bb-7 Eb-7 Ab-7 Db7  
 Gbmaj7 Cbmaj7 Ab-6 Bb-7 Eb-7  
 Ab-7 Db7 F-7 Bb7 Eb- Bb-7  
 Eb- Bb-7 Eb- Bb-7 Eb- Bb-7  
 Eb- Bb-7 Eb- Bb-7 Eb- Bb-7  
 Eb-

DAVE BRUBECK — "TIME OUT"  
 "GREATEST HITS"

Example 1.8

## Section II: Kapustin's Sound

From the above discussion, it can be seen how three classic elements of jazz are reflected in the piece. However, making Kapustin's compositions sound like jazz improvisation poses a tricky question. I will use the aesthetics of sound and some jazz conventions to demonstrate, explain, and address this concept.

There are four main reasons why Kapustin's works sound like jazz improvisation. First, in the usual jazz standard, the convention of jazz structure is head-in + improvisation + head-out. Second, Philip Alperson, a Professor of Philosophy at Temple University, explains improvisation in music in a journal article. Music is created by composers but performed by musicians, so the performance by musicians cannot completely express the composer's intentions.<sup>68</sup> It is considered improvisation if the performance only partially represents the composer's intentions. Third, Kapustin's preconception about the stereotype of fusing classical music and jazz. Fourth, based on the fact that Kapustin's extensive experience in jazz bands and touring proves that he not only can improvise music, but also, according to the jazz elements in Kapustin's pieces discussed in the following few chapters, the audience would spontaneously perceive Kapustin's music as resembling jazz improvisation.

In terms of the performance structure of jazz pieces, musicians play the notes written by the composer at the beginning and end, but the middle part is improvised. In improvisations, musicians can spontaneously play different melodies based on the chord progression according to the current environment and mood. This structure dominates jazz music. American musicologist Paul Berliner mentions in his book *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation* that "Performers commonly refer to the melody or theme as the head, and to the

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<sup>68</sup> Philip Alperson, "On Musical Improvisation," Wiley on Behalf of The American Society for Aesthetics, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Autumn, Vol.43, No.1, 1984, 17-29. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/430189>.

progression as chord changes or simply changes. It has become the convention for musicians to perform the melody and its accompaniment at the opening and closing of a piece's performance. In between, they take turns improvising solos within the piece's cyclical rhythmic form."<sup>69</sup>

Example 1.9 is a portion of one of the jazz standards' lead sheets, "On Green Dolphin Street," composed in 1947 by Bronislaw Kaper and Ned Washington. All musicians will play the entire song together according to the lead sheet and then improvise with the harmony progression. The player can also change the chord progression according to the situation, but generally, musicians will keep the chords of the beginning and ending the same. After all the musicians have finished improvising, under the instructions of their eyes or gestures, all the musicians will spontaneously start playing the lead sheet again and end it. The entire process is a complete and conventional jazz standard performance. Thus, in the context of jazz conventions, what comes after the theme or head is part of improvisation.

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<sup>69</sup> Paul F. Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation*, (University of Chicago Press, 1994), 63.

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# On Green Dolphin Street

Music: Bronislau Kaper  
Lyric: Ned Washington

**Med. Latin**

**(Intro)**  $E^b_{MA}{}^7$   $G^b_{MA}{}^7$   $F_{MA}{}^7$   $E_{MA}{}^7$

(bass)  $E^b$  pedal

**A (Latin)**

$E^b_{MA}{}^7$   $G^b_{MA}{}^7$   $E^b$   $F_{MA}{}^7$   $E^b$   $E_{MA}{}^7$   $E^b$   $E^b_{MA}{}^7$   $C^7$

(bass) ( $E^b$  pedal for 8 bars) (etc.)

**(Swing)**

$F_{MI}{}^7$   $B^b_9$   $B^b_7(alt)$   $(B^b_{MI}{}^7)$   $E^b_7$

(bass walks in 2)

$A^b_{MI}{}^7$   $D^b_9$   $D^b_7(alt)$   $G^b_{MA}{}^7$   $F_{MI}{}^7$   $B^b_7$

**B (Latin)**

$E^b_{MA}{}^7$   $G^b_{MA}{}^7$   $E^b$

( $E^b$  pedal for 8 bars)

$F_{MA}{}^7$   $E^b$   $E_{MA}{}^7$   $E^b$   $(E^b_{MA}{}^7)$   $A^b_9$   $G^7(alt)$   $C^7$

**(Swing)**

$F_{MI}{}^7$   $E^b$   $D_{MI}{}^7(b5)$   $G^7$   $C_{MI}{}^6$   $(A_{MI}{}^7(b5))$   $F^7$   $D^7$   $F^{\#o7}$

(bass walks in 2)

$G^7(alt)$   $C^7$   $F^7(alt)$   $B^b_{13}$   $A^b$   $G^7(alt)$   $C^7$   $F^7(alt)$   $B^b_{13}$   $A^b$

Example 1.9

Musicologist Philip Alperson explains the blurred distinction between composition and performance in musical improvisation from a philosophical perspective. When considering the interdependence of improvised performance and written works, the traditional concepts of classical music are less clear.<sup>70</sup> The difference between composition and performance is significant in musical improvisation. Composers can repeatedly and infinitely modify each note written on the score, but musicians only have one chance to perform it. Very few people can fully play the composer's intentions, but composers need musicians to convey their music with artistry. Therefore, every performance by musicians includes improvisation, whether in classical music or jazz. Moreover, the performances we hear all have an improvisational part.

Of course, clever people will quickly criticize my point with counterexamples, such as all classical pieces being improvisational and why Kapustin's improvisation sounds like jazz. It is because Kapustin was a figure who brought up the issue of stereotypes. Humans are good at summarizing experiences and lessons from history and like to define new things. After 2000, Kapustin's music received widespread attention and was widely described as a fusion of classical and jazz. This preconceived notion gives the audience an advanced awareness and expectation of jazz sound. Therefore, when the audience hears the jazz elements in Kapustin's pieces, they subconsciously associate them with improvisation. Finally, from Kapustin's biography I mentioned earlier, audiences or scholars have already defined Kapustin as part of jazz. Also, his experience in a jazz band and frequent touring have allowed him to improvise.

Jazz and improvisation are highly corresponding. Combining the above four points: the structural system of jazz music, the performer's performance considered as a new improvisational creation, and the preconception of Kapustin's style and Kapustin's occupational

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<sup>70</sup> Alperson, *loc cit.*

experience, the result would be although Kapustin himself regards his music to belong to the classical category, objectively, his music sounds like jazz improvisation.

### **Chapter Summary**

Kapustin's 24 preludes feature many different jazz styles, including blues, ballad, waltz, swing, and jazz-funk. The score notation of jazz and classical music are the same; therefore, the authenticity of jazz swing rhythm would need to be addressed differently. The seventh chord and tritone substitution are common elements in jazz music. More jazz elements such as rhythm in beats two and four, blues form, bebop solo line, and boogie-woogie are essential in jazz.

Kapustin's works need to meet four requirements to sound like jazz improvisation: the structure similar to jazz standards, the musician's performance, the stereotype of fusion music, and the fact of his years of jazz band experience. In the next chapter, my analysis will explore the structure, harmony, and rhythm of Kapustin 24 preludes. Each work is about one and a half to two minutes long, showing a variety of styles and the corresponding characteristics of classical or jazz music.

## Chapter V: 24 Preludes in Jazz Style, Op. 53

### Prelude I in C major

Prelude I is a ternary form presented in ABA format—the right hand runs around fast 16th notes. In the A section, Kapustin starts with pedaling C as the bass and cooperates with the descending first inversion chord, (Example 2.1) beginning the fourth chord of the key of C on the left hand. Meanwhile, the right-hand plays a descending line in natural keys with F, E, and D as the main melodies. There is only one cadence applied before the B section. B section starts at mm. 20 in the same key of C, the left-hand pattern changes and the harmonic accompaniment turns into a fast-walking bass line. The right hand's melody line becomes and moves closer than the right hand running in A section. The theme A's low C and harmony part appears again from mm.52 until it ends with the C Major 9th chord.

### Example 2.1

Prelude I is a stylistic of etude Op.10 No.1 by Frederic Chopin (1810-1849). The right hand part of Chopin's etude is the same as Kapustin's prelude that has an up and down motion of running. However, the difference between them is the harmony of Chopin's is very smooth and Kapustin's tonal progression is vague. Kapustin employed many chromatic lines that either





### Prelude III in G major

The prelude III is a ballad style and free improvisational twenty-three measures short piece. Instead of fast tempo as prelude I and II, Kapustin set the tempo for this one was *Larghetto*. As we mentioned earlier, Bill Evans and Kapustin were influenced by Ravel and French impressionism. The prelude III has the color of music of impressionism and is similar to the “Peace Piece” by Bill Evans. Every measure is formed by one low bass and chords until the end. Kapustin employed a G major flat-eleventh chord (Example 2.3) at the beginning of the piece. The surprising fourth chord of c minor seventh serves in the measure 3, and it is followed by a flat seventh chord in which Kapustin wrote an e harmonic minor line on top of it. The minor fourth chord usually comes after the major fourth chord, but Kapustin skipped the major fourth chord in order to build the impressionist painting vibe.

The image shows a musical score for the beginning of Prelude III in G major. It is written in 4/4 time and starts with a piano (p) dynamic. The right hand (treble clef) begins with a quarter rest, followed by a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) in the first measure. The left hand (bass clef) begins with a quarter rest, followed by a triplet of eighth notes (G2, B2, D3) in the first measure. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The score continues for four measures, showing various chords and melodic lines.

Example 2.3

### Prelude IV in e minor

Kapustin applied the ostinato bass line to state the theme at the beginning. The Prelude in e minor IV is the piece where Kapustin used the call and response technique of jazz language. The solo melody motive line shows at the beginning with the e minor eleventh vamping chord (Example 2.4) on bass part to mimic the jazz’s horns session harmony. The response part comes

at the m.9 (Example 2.5) where it shifts the melody to the bass line and the right hand states the harmony part at the top, and the same motives show on the right hand.



Example 2.4



Example 2.5

The form is AA' plus coda. Kapustin put the accent mark on the sixteenth note to emphasize the upbeat that keeps reminder of this piece in the *animato* style and the anticipation. There are no two eighth notes consecutively. Instead, Kapustin wrote many dotted eighth and sixteenth notes to imitate the swing sound.

### Prelude V in D major

This is the shortest prelude of this set in total only eighteen measures. Compared with only sixteenth measures of the shortest prelude of Chopin, op.28 no.7, Kapustin wrote two more measures to show the respect of the great of 24 preludes by Chopin. Prelude V is the same as the III in style of ballad in slow tempo. Even though there are only eighteen measures, in slow tempo this one does not feel very short as expected.

Although the title shows this piece in a D major, Kapustin started it with a B-flat seventh major chord (Example 2.6) and followed by A-flat seventh major chord. Then he raised up half step to A major sixth chord and the cadence resulted back to the tonic D major at the end of second measure. This is a bizarre harmonic progression at the starting piece.

Example 2.6

Kapustin used the tritone substitution technique applied on measure 5 as we mentioned on chapter V. He wrote the e minor seventh chord (Example 2.7) goes half step down to the E-flat dominant seventh chord to substitute the A dominant seventh chord and result back to D major at the measure 6.

Example 2.7

The D major blues scale (Example 2.8) was applied on the measure 17, the second from the end of the piece.

The image shows a musical score for two staves, treble and bass clef, in the key of D major. The piece is in 4/4 time. Measure 17 is marked with a '17' above the treble staff. The right hand plays a blues scale in D major, starting on D4 and moving up stepwise to A5, with a tritone (F#) and a flat (Bb) used for blues color. The left hand plays a bass line with chords and single notes, including a tritone (F#) and a flat (Bb) in the bass register.

Example 2.8

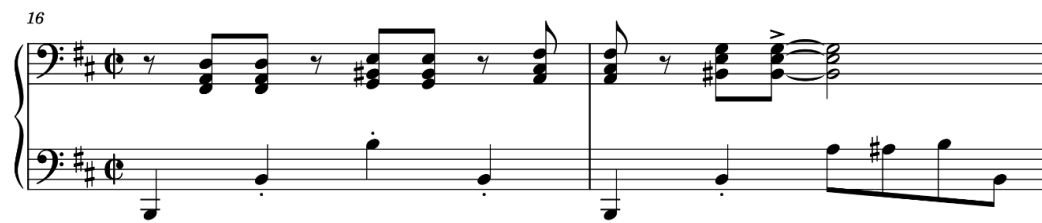
### Prelude VI in b minor

Prelude VI is a relatively long piece compared with other preludes in this set. The structure of this piece is AA'BA' in four parts. The A section lasts from m.1 to mm15, and mm.16-32 is the A' section. Kapustin states the main theme at the beginning of b minor, in which the down beat of the right hand is in the beat one (Example 2.9).

The image shows the beginning of a musical score for two staves, treble and bass clef, in the key of B minor. The piece is in 4/4 time. The right hand starts with a main theme of chords and single notes, marked with a dynamic of *mf*. The left hand plays a bass line with chords and single notes, including a tritone (F#) and a flat (Bb) in the bass register. The score is marked with a '17' above the treble staff.

Example 2.9

The A' section is the theme from down beat to an offbeat cross measure pattern starting from mm.16 (Example 2.10).



Example 2.10

B section starting at measure 33, Kapustin again employed pedal point B to change the theme. He wrote less offbeat than A section here by writing the steady walking bass line. The accent mark also shows on the upbeat of the eighth note and the last beat of triplet as I discussed earlier. However, the swing feel would not be obviously in the tempo of half note 112 bpm in cut time. This section starts getting more chromatic and often changes the key center. The prelude Op.17 No.1 by Scriabin has the same style of B section, in which Scriabin mostly put quarter note on the left hand counter continuously eighth note of right hand.

### Prelude VII in A major

Prelude VII is a ABA form of jazz funk style through the piece. Jazz funk is a subgenre of jazz and focuses on the strong upbeat. Kapustin wrote many accent marks on the weak beat of the right hand melody and the note on the up beat that ties to the down beat at the next measure. Also, these anticipations give the motion of letting the melody keep flowing. The left hand is similar to the drum's funk pattern and it also has many notes on the weak beat that ties to the next down beat as well.

Kapustin wrote the note low A as a pedal point all over the A section and different chords on top of it, and these chords over a pedal point are called slash chords in jazz. These slash chords D7sus/A, B-flat/A, G7sus/A on each measure of A section, Kapustin put them in the B section again on the left hand as the block chords on each beat. The last A section comes back on measure 33, in which Kapustin used the same pedal point of note A and harmony to finish the piece.

A famous tune “On Green Dolphin Street” from the jazz album Kind of Blue by Miles Davis using the same structure ABA form that pedal point of E-flat is all over the A section. This album was released in 1959, and Kapustin most likely imitated the compositional device from Miles Davis.

#### Prelude VIII in f sharp minor

This is another AABA form of the prelude. Although the title states it is in f-sharp minor, the main theme (Example 2.11) is in the pentatonic scale of E major over f-sharp minor eleventh chords on the left hand. Only one clear V to I cadence is in the measure 15-16 to prepare the second A section. The second A section starts from measure 17 using the same notes for both left and right hand.



#### Example 2.11

The very contrasting middle B section has a vague tonality because of the chromaticism of the right hand. From measure 33, Kapustin wrote the chord progressions are D-flat, B-flat 7th,

e-flat minor major 7th, A diminished 7th, b-flat minor 7th, A dominant 7th, a-flat minor 7th, and E dominant 7th within four measures. Last A section comes back on measure 53, in which Kapustin raised them one octave higher.

The E pentatonic scale across all the A sections shows the connection between Kapustin and the style of impressionism music during the twentieth century. Also, in the jazz music language, the pentatonic scale is one of the most useful tools to play in improvisation.

#### Prelude IX in E major

Prelude IX is also in a ballad style and shows the strong romantic lyrical melody with the smooth harmony support contrasting with others. The theme shows two times in the beginning and measure 17 respectively. Kapustin only wrote a single note in the theme for the first time. When the theme comes back again, Kapustin doubled the melody and added notes in the middle to become a chord that enhanced the sound.

This prelude is stylistic as Chopin's ballade No.1, but it is much more short. The second theme of the ballade of Chopin also starts with the single note of melody line and comes back again later with the chord to support. The way Kapustin wrote this prelude has the same intention as Chopin.

Additionally, Kapustin wrote the baroque style of rhythm on measure 12 (Example 2.12), which is similar to J.S. Bach's ending of Sinfonia from Keyboard Partita No.2.





### Example 2.12

Kapustin employed a deceptive cadence on measure 15, which the sound trends to result in a key of A-flat major. However, instead of A-flat major chord, he composed a ii - V - I harmony progression on the key of C major to return the second theme.

### Prelude X in c sharp minor

Prelude X is a very virtuosic piece and includes many meter changes in one piece. This is an ABA ternary form, with A section from m.1 to mm.16, B section from mm.17 to mm. 34, and the last A section from mm.35 to mm.43. We can see the technique of composing orchestral music in this prelude. The composers often write irregular and frequently changing meter on orchestral music to keep the attention from the audience. Example of famous American composer Aaron Copland (1900-1990) composed *Appalachian Spring* and *Emblems* includes frequent many meter change. The solo piano piece usually does not change meter. However, Kapustin wrote the piece starting with 3/2, then in measure 7 it shifts to 4/4, in measure 11 shifts back to 3/2 in the A section. The B section involves many meter changes there, 4/4, 3/4, 7/8, 9/8, 6/4, and 3/2. These changes happen within one or two measures, which is a challenge to have a good rhythm for a performer.

The theme at the beginning of this piece is in C-sharp Dorian mode with the chromatic left hand eighth notes staccato accompanying. In the meter change to 4/4, the left hand figure

changes from eighth notes to most broken sixteenth notes, later becoming fully continually sixteenth notes. The hardest part in this piece is starting from measure 25 (Example 2.13) where four voicings encounter each other with many up beats.

Example 2.13

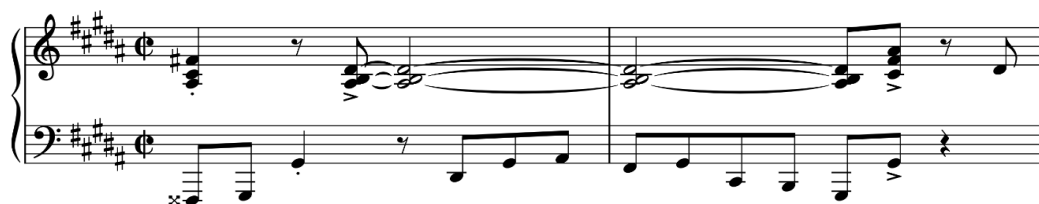
#### Prelude XI in B major

Prelude XI is a classical twelve bars blues form that repeats twice in twenty-four measures. The blues starts the tonic chord B dominant seventh for one measure; the fourth chord E dominant seventh comes at the second measure. The third and fourth measure goes back to B dominant seventh chord. Measures 5 and 6 have fourth chord E dominant seventh again, and B dominant seventh chord on measure 7 and 8. There are two ways of chord progression of measure 9-10 either V-IV or ii-V in blues, Kapustin chose to write it in ii-V progression which is c-sharp minor seventh and F-sharp dominant seventh. Last two measures 11-12 is tonic chord B dominant seventh again.

This is a 12/8 meter that has three eighth notes per beat. Kapustin only wrote b minor blues scales on the melody of this prelude. He also harmonized the melody and embellished it with grace notes, sextuplets, four sixteenth notes against three eighth notes. The left hand pattern always plays on each down beat.

### Prelude XII in g sharp minor

Prelude XII is another jazz funk style piece on the set and AABA a song structure. The A section focuses on the solo bass part that musical motivation drives by bass line (Example 2.14). The right hand mostly plays chords to fill the space. Kapustin employed only i (g-sharp minor seventh) and IV (C-sharp dominant seventh) chord until the strong cadence V-i on measure 14-15.



Example 2.14

B section changes the key signatures from g minor to C major. The bass leading pattern shifts from eighth notes to block chords for each beat, and the right hand has a rhythm pattern mixed of triplet and eighth notes for the swing feel. The B section is like the development of a sonata form that has the unclear tonal center. This section ends on G alter seventh chord and anticipation of single note D-sharp to prepare the g-sharp minor chord of last A section.

### Prelude XIII in G flat major

Prelude XIII is in the 5/8 meter. The 5 beats per measure is uncommon in classical music. However, some modern jazz musicians tend to avoid the comfortable zone of 4/4 meter. This prelude is the same as the famous jazz saxophonist Paul Desmond (1924-1977) composed jazz standard “Take Five” in 5/4 meter in 1959. He was the member of Dave Brubeck (1920-2012)

quartet that made the “Take Five” very popular. The fact that prelude XIII and Take Five sound very similar, and the rhythm pattern are the same.



Example 2.15

This prelude is in the AABA 32 measures song form with the four measure intro (Example 2.15). The A section always stays in the key of G-flat major. However, Kapustin modified the key center from G-flat major to A major in B section where he employed many ii-V (b minor seventh to E dominant seventh) chord progression on key of A; the key signature from G-flat major changes to C major in B section.

#### Prelude XIV in e flat minor

Prelude XIV is the most chromatic style within these 24 preludes. The chromaticism makes this piece sound atonal so much in the fast tempo of 138 bpm. However Kapustin still wrote a few noticeable melodies to trace the progression (Example 2.16).



Example 2.16

Although this is highly chromatic, the structure Kapustin wrote is clear of AABA form. In the B section Kapustin did the same thing as prelude XIII removed the key signature.

The obvious style of Bela Bartok (1881-1945) keyboard atonal music shows in this prelude, especially the Etudes Op.18 No.3, composed in 1918. Bartok and Kapustin employed mechanical and rhythmic fast patterns to show off the virtuosic playing. The difference between these two pieces is that Kapustin wrote the key signature as the anchor to improvise around it but Bartok's style is the avant-garde of atonal. This prelude shows the influence of Bartok's music on Kapustin's works.

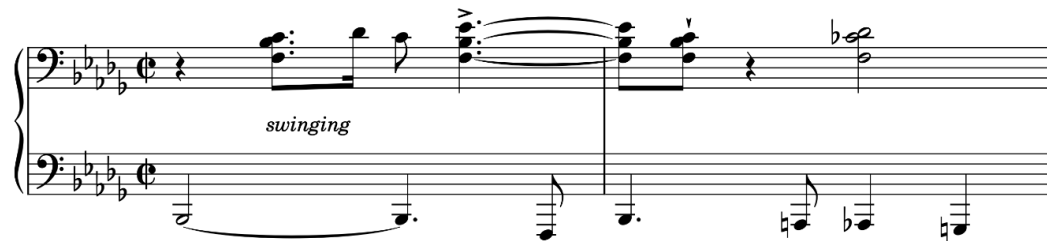
#### Prelude XV in D flat major

The prelude XV is in the ABA ternary form of a big picture; the B section is twice of the A section. Kapustin wrote a very diatonic melody line in the A section over a D-flat sharp nine chord. The unusual e minor seventh chord is in the measure 5 with the right hand playing the E mixolydian scale on top. The B section as most like other preludes that the tonal center is vague; the left hand pattern shifts to the walk bass line by quarter notes. The last A section has the same theme back again in measure 61.

The worth mention is Kapustin wrote eight times of *glissando* on this piece; they were divided by four on all white keys and four on all black keys. The black keys of *glissando* give the unique pentatonic scale sound. Jazz musicians mostly do not write the notation as *glissando* on score; it is a part of improvisation and often occurs on Broadway shows as well. The *glissando* mark is the evidence of Kapustin's classical music thinking and compositional process, which he wants the details on the score. Classical composers wrote *glissando* in their keyboard pieces, such as Liszt, Debussy, Gershwin.

### Prelude XVI in b flat minor

The prelude XVI is in a ABA ternary form, which shows likely the electrical jazz influence on Kapustin in the 1970s. The pitch bend wheel was a good function on the electrical keyboard, and it can bend the pitch range by programming. The B section of this piece modulates from the key of b-flat minor raising up to the key of C major by shifting the key signature. The A section has a clear theme on the top right hand in a swinging mark at the beginning (Example 2.17).



Example 2.17

Also, this is the only prelude of this set that states the swinging at the beginning. The harmony of A section is all in the b-flat minor. Kapustin wrote a few modulation cadence in B section such as f-sharp minor seventh to B dominant seventh back to E major in measure 15. The last A section comes back to the original theme and ends on the b-minor triad chord.

### Prelude XVII in A flat major

Kapustin showed the influence of the early music genre before jazz on prelude XVII, which is ragtime. Ragtime was prevalent before the jazz age in the 1920s, and the piano was one of the popular instruments to play this style. Ragtime also was the style that emphasized the syncopation over the steady bass in the fast tempo. Scott Joplin was known as the King of

Ragtime.<sup>71</sup> The famous stride piano technique derived from ragtime, which means the left hand plays the low bass note and across the big range jumping to play the chord in a short time. Fats Waller was one of the best known stride piano players in history. Kapustin wrote many stride piano parts on this prelude and syncopation rhythms. There are only four types of rhythm of this piece which are quarter notes on the left hand, eighth, sixteenth, and triplet on the right hand. This is the evidence that Kapustin planned out the swing feel not only by eighth notes, but also by the sixteenth notes and triplet.

This is the ABA ternary form as well, and every eight measure is a phrase. Kapustin also used a circle of fourth compositional harmony devices to this prelude from the measure 11 to 15 by G dominant seventh, C dominant seventh, F dominant seventh, B-flat dominant seventh, E-flat dominant seventh. The theme states at the A section very clearly in the key of A-flat major by consecutive syncopations. Kapustin wrote many of the shell voicings on the left hand on the B section. The normal shell voicing consists of root and third or seventh, but Kapustin wrote it in the interval of tenth. It requires the bigger hand to play the interval as a chord. The last A section is the same as the beginning with changing a bit of figuration and ends with a short coda.

#### Prelude XVIII in f minor

This is the only one 3/4 meter of this set of 24 preludes and in a waltz style. It is similar to the stride piano style, waltz style commonly has the root on the first beat as the accent and followed by chords on the top at next two beats. The whole piece is in the ABCA with coda form. Kapustin combines many triplets and sixteenth notes running together on the right hand part to challenge the performer's good rhythm.

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<sup>71</sup> Note, Scott Joplin, The Kennedy Center.

The A section starts with the f minor chord and the thematic melody at the top right hand. The B section modulates to the tonic of C major from measure 16, and Kapustin wrote many ii-V-I chord progressions over C major (Example 2.18). Starting from C section measure 36, Kapustin developed the improvisation in key of C major again and descending the harmony by one whole step down until e-flat minor chord. Then Kapustin used the tritone substitute harmony technique back to f minor again to the same theme of last A section on measure 50.



#### Example 2.18

Kapustin's classical music notation not only wrote *glissando* to navigate the performer, he also wrote more musical abbreviations showing his classical mentality in this prelude such as *poco ritard*, *meno mosso*, *tornando al tempo I*.

#### Prelude XIX in E flat major

This is the prelude that Kapustin employed mostly triple rhythms to state that this piece is in a swing style. As discussed earlier the last beat of triplet needs to be accented in a jazz style, the piece stated itself well about the swing rhythm all throughout the piece. The piece is in the AABACA form.

The A section has the theme in the E-flat major for eight measures and repeats again, with Kapustin using the jazz harmony ii-V-I progression over the theme. The second A section finishes and transits by the jazz playing technique ghost notes (Example 2.19) by the repeating E





measure 3; and e-flat minor major seventh shifts to c-sharp minor seventh from measure 4 to 5. Additionally, the frequent meter change from 4/4, 2/4, 3/4, 2/4, and 4/4 at the last four measures shows the mastery of free improvisation skill by Kapustin.

#### Prelude XXI in B flat major

Prelude XXI is also a freestyle improvisation by stride piano style. There is no clear structure of this prelude. Furthermore, the chord progression at the beginning of eight measures already shows the instability of tonality. For example, the prelude starts with B-flat major, but it changes to f minor seventh, E dominant seventh, A major seventh, E-flat major seventh.

The right hand rhythm includes triplet in sixteenth notes, quintuplet in thirty second notes, and eight thirty second note in one beat together in measure 12 shows Kapustin composed the piece in a freestyle.

Kapustin wrote the trills in measure 17, which is a notation that jazz composers would not write down on the score. Kapustin wrote four measures of same harmony with repeating A-flat over D-flat suspended seventh chord until the end. This is another evidence of Kapustin's freestyle improvisation that does not follow the conventional compositional harmony and structure in the flat third of key of B-flat major. Also, the classical notation *attaca* marks at the last measure to connect the next prelude without stopping.

#### Prelude XXII in g minor

Following the suspended D-flat seventh chord at the end of the prelude XXI without stopping, the prelude XXIII starts instant with a *forte* mark at the beginning. These two preludes are the only one pair together on this set. The form of this prelude is in the ABA'CA' structure.

Kapustin employed the IV-V-i chord progression to start this prelude, which is C dominant seventh, D suspended sense, and g minor on the tonic from measure 1 to 3. The theme is clear in the key of g minor by repeating note D, while the left hand plays the syncopation patterns (Example 2.21). The theme was stated twice at A section by eight measures for each time, the B section starting from measure 17.



Example 2.21

The B section is the same as other middle sections of this set 24 preludes and development of sonata, there is no clear harmony in here. Kapustin used his virtuosic improvisation with many big jumping intervals and chromatic right hand solo line to fill this section. The A' section has the same figuration as the theme but Kapustin modified them in half step up to reaping the E. Kapustin also employed the compositional technique to group three eighth notes as the dotted quarter notes rhythm to create the cross measure triplet feel. This is also the similar improvisation technique used in jazz blues in which performers would play triplet in quarter notes over the twelve bars form over the 4/4 meter; every three measures is a cycle of down beat at beat one.

The C section starts from measure 49 and has the same ambiguous harmony. However, the fun part is Kapustin wrote the jazz bebop line at measure 51 to 52 over E-flat dominant

seventh to D dominant seventh (Example 2.22).

The musical score for Example 2.22 is written for piano in a key signature of one flat (B-flat major) and common time. It consists of two staves: a treble staff and a bass staff. The piece begins at measure 53. The treble staff features a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes, including a chromatic descending line. The bass staff provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines. A dynamic marking of *mf* (mezzo-forte) is indicated in the second measure of the treble staff.

Example 2.22

### Prelude XXIII in F major

Prelude XXIII is a jazz standard AABA song form that repeats twice. Kapustin composed a very singable melody line over this piece in the key of F major, not chromatic style. The structure of this piece is the song melody playing through once AABA form and following the improvisation part of AAB again as the common jazz tune, then the theme melody comes back at the last A section. This is the conventional scheme while playing with unknown people in a public jam session, which shows Kapustin's many years' experience playing small combo and band.

The only theme (Example 2.23) keeps occurring in A section in the two beats jazz feel, even it is in the 4/4 meter. Kapustin wrote the standard ii-V chord progression and half step passing chord over this piece to show the style of American jazz standard tune.

The musical score for Example 2.23 is written for piano in a key signature of one flat (B-flat major) and 4/4 time. It consists of two staves: a treble staff and a bass staff. The treble staff shows a series of chords, including a ii-V progression and a half-step passing chord. The bass staff provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth and quarter notes. The piece is characterized by a 'two-beat jazz feel' within the 4/4 meter.

Example 2.23

The standard B section is commonly known as the bridge in contrast to the A section starting from measure 17. The left hand accompanies pattern shifts to the four beats swing feel by block chords and big intervals of shell voicing. Kapustin also wrote many ii-V chord progression over such as D-flat major, A major, C major. The right hand syncopation rhythm becomes more than A section.

The improvisation part starts measure 32 after playing through once the form. Although the harmony is not the same as the form, Kapustin used many half steps techniques of the left hand block chords moving the harmony. For example, the left hand plays descending chords of a minor major seventh, A-flat diminished seventh, g minor seventh, and F major seventh in measure 37. Classical music also has the same half step descending harmony technique, for example the transition of first to the second measure of Nocturne Op.9, No.2 by Chopin. However, these chords are often in the first inversion or second, Kapustin's way was still the root at the bottom and descending.

#### Prelude XXIV in d minor

The last prelude is the final ending of this 24 preludes set in a virtuosic style and long piece in tempo of *presto*. This prelude combines many features and elements as a whole such as parallel both hand moving in fourth intervals, group of eighth notes by triplet rhythm cross measures, jazz half-whole scale, the theme of jazz standard "Pent Up House."

This is a ABA'B'A' form in relative long piece compare with others preludes of this set. The A section starts with parallel fourth intervals ascending in F pentatonic scale. There are two parts of the group of eighth notes in triplet cross measured rhythm shows in measure 12 and 27.

Kapustin did not write the triplet in eighth notes but grouped three eighth notes together to create the triplet rhythm.

The jazz standard “Pent Up House” was composed by Sonny Rollins (1930-present) in 1956. Kapustin composed the similar melody line at the end of A second (Example 2.24) to show the American jazz tunes influence.



Example 2.24

The B section starts from measure 33 by holding the whole note sustaining at the right hand top as the main note. This section includes many arpeggio chords and lyrical moments. The A' section theme changed the parallel to contrary motion by fourth interval. Additionally, Kapustin used the jazz improvisation common element D half-whole tone scale (Example 2.25) in the measure 97 of this section. In classical music theory, this scale is called octatonic scale. However, there is no clear harmony on the left hand of this scale. The left hand only plays a few eighth notes underneath the half-whole scale. It shows that Kapustin was knowledgeable of jazz language over improvisation.



Example 2.25

The last A' section does not have the parallel both hands in the fourth interval, it becomes the only right hand playing the theme only. The left hand shifts to arpeggio the chord and again to support the right hand melody. The prelude ends with the theme by contrary motion and in the d minor chord.

### **Chapter Summary**

Kapustin composed 24 preludes in the classical setting like other great composers such as Chopin and Scriabin. We see it in each prelude of Kapustin's connection to classical music or jazz. From these references, it is obvious the style of Kapustin's work combines the elements of classical music and jazz. In the next chapter, I will briefly introduce the historical background and development of Etude.

## Chapter VI: Brief Background of the Etude

Kapustin's compositional practice in 1984 was very productive. He not only composed Eight Concert Etudes Op.40, but in the same year he also composed two other solo piano pieces, Piano Sonata No.1 "Sonata-Fantasy" and Variations for Piano Op.41. Just like Liszt, Kapustin gave each of his eight etudes different names. Although there is no direct connection between the key signatures of each piece, it can be known from the collection's name that he wanted this set to be played in the concerts rather than just practiced at home. Kapustin uses the structural system of classical music to integrate jazz elements into this work. I will analyze these pieces in the next chapter.

In classical music, the French word *etude* means an instrumental piece, usually for keyboards and strings. Its main purpose is to train and improve the playing skills and techniques of performers. The other two names "exercise" and "studies" also mean the same type of work, and they appear more frequently before the 19th century.<sup>72</sup> Exercise tends to mean shorter "figure or passage to be repeated on different scales or keys", and studies describe the purpose of practicing in the bigger picture of this piece of music.<sup>73</sup> The early *etude*'s conception already occurred in the baroque period in different names. J. S. Bach composed many keyboard literatures, for example, four volumes *Clavier-Übung* (1731-41) including six partitas and Goldberg Variation. Although Bach did not use one of these terms to title the piece, they have the same function as *etude* for practice fingers. Another baroque era composer Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757) also composed many keyboard works including the collection of *Essercizi per Gravicembalo* in 1738, which translates to English means exercises for the Harpsichord. The

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<sup>72</sup> Howard Ferguson and Kenneth L. Hamilton, "Study," *Grove Music Online*, 2001.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*



Italian composer Francesco Durante (1684-1755) composed *Sonate per cembalo divisi in studii e divertimenti* (Sonatas for harpsichord divided into studies and entertainments) in 1737.<sup>74</sup>

Beginning in the early 19th century, the rapid popularity of the piano gave rise to a large number of teaching materials for piano amateurs and advanced pianists, which included practical technical exercises.<sup>75</sup> As more people join piano studying, these teaching materials began to innovatively transform technical exercises from ordinary boring training into exciting etudes that can be played in concerts. Among them, Chopin's two etudes Op. 10 and Op. 25 composed in 1833 and 1837 were one of the very good works that combine the two. Although each of the pieces has its own specific finger-training aspect, it is impressive how Chopin's harmonic skills aptly turned the boring exercise into remarkable pieces. As we mentioned earlier, Kapustin composed each piece 24 preludes by borrowing the order from Chopin's etudes.

It was the Hungarian composer Franz Liszt (1811-1886) who brought etudes to another level. With his superb piano playing skills, he studied and composed many etudes collections, for examples, the famous 12 *Etude d'execution transcendante* and 6 *The etudes d'execution transcendante d'après Paganini* were composed and published in 1852 and 1851 respectively. Both collections are popular for their extreme difficulty and gorgeous melodies and played by many pianists. Musicologist F. E. Kirby once commented on Liszt's these two works as "the degree of difficulty transcended that of other etudes of the time."<sup>76</sup> Unlike Chopin, who named each of his etudes after a number, Liszt gave his etudes different titles. The names made them look like character pieces.

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> F. E. Kirby, *Music for Piano—A Short History* (Amadeus Press 2004), 210.

## **Chapter Summary**

The etude is an instrumental piece composed for the keyboard and string instruments in classical music. Its primary purpose is to improve the player's skills. Many great composers have written etudes, for example, J.S. Bach. The piano's popularity after the nineteenth century pushed etudes from simple and boring to large-trunk music that can be performed in concerts, such as the famous etudes by Chopin and Liszt. In the next chapter, I will detail the eight etudes by Kapustin and their connections to classical and jazz.

## Chapter VII: 8 Concert Etudes Op. 40

### No. 1 in C major, Prelude

The prelude in the key of C major is the first piece of this set. Kapustin's music composing technique full of jazz harmony is enough for everyone to listen carefully and firmly attract the audience's ears. The structure of this piece is in ABA' form, similar to sonata form. The two main themes of A section are from mm. 1-12 and mm. 13-20.

Even though this piece is in the key of C, Kapustin employed the pedal point in A-flat and G compositional technique in the first theme. He built many chords on top of these pedal points; as I discussed earlier I will analyze them as the slash chords. From the first measure, the harmony progression starts with B-flat dominant seventh over A-flat and a-flat minor seventh (Example 3.1); it changes to g minor seventh and A dominant seventh over G at measure 5-6. The tonality keeps changing until measure 12 occurs, the first V-I (Example 3.2) cadence connecting to theme II.

Example 3.1

### Example 3.2

On the second theme from measure 13, Kapustin used the whole step descending bass moving from C down to A-flat and jazz harmony progression tritone substitution (Example 3.3) from D-flat back to C major finishing the phrase. The D-flat chord is the tritone substitute for the G chord. Kapustin again employed tritone substitution at measure 28 from D-flat to C.

### Example 3.3

The B section is from measure 41-56. Kapustin changed the left hand accompany part from playing steady down beat to frequently off beat. The right hand rhythm becomes all running sixteenth notes as the normal etudes. Contrasting with A section, the tonality of this section becomes unstable as the sonata's development.

After a quick transition measure 57-59, the last A' section comes back with the second theme before the first theme. The transition passage is the same chord progression as the second

theme, C to B-flat to A-flat to D-flat. With the momentum by accumulating fast tempo, Kapustin ends the piece with E-flat pentatonic major scale of contrary motion.

### No. 2 in A-flat major, Reverie

From the title of Kapustin's second piece, we can see that he expected the performer to roam in his own musical imagination. Naming each song is a smart decision, and the listener who sees the title can directly have an idea of the song they are about to hear. This piece is a romantic and jazzy ABA' ternary form.

It can also be seen from this piece that Kapustin was not only deeply influenced by Chopin's preludes, but also etudes. Although the key signature of this piece is different from that of Chopin etudes op. 10 no.7, the high similarity between the two indirectly shows that Kapustin has carefully studied Chopin's etudes as a reference. Both Kapustin and Chopin use eighth notes for each beat, but Kapustin uses a 12/8 meter (Example 3.4) to distinguish Chopin's 6/8 meter (Example 3.5). Taking the first sixteenth note to the end of the first pattern of Chopin's right hand pattern, it looks the same as Kapustin's right hand pattern. Both of them embody exercises that focus on fingers 1, 5 and fingers 2, 3 or 2, 4.

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece in 12/8 time. The right hand (treble clef) plays a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, while the left hand (bass clef) plays a simple bass line with a piano (p) dynamic marking. The key signature is three flats (B-flat major). The score is divided into two systems, with the first system containing the main rhythmic pattern and the second system containing a continuation of the bass line.

Example 3.4

7. *Vivace.* (♩. = 84.)

The image shows a musical score for a piano exercise. The title is "7. Vivace. (♩. = 84.)". The score is in 6/8 time. The right hand (treble clef) starts with a quarter note G4, followed by a series of eighth notes: A4, Bb4, C5, D5, Eb5, F5, G5, Ab5, Bb5, C6, D6, Eb6, F6, G6. The left hand (bass clef) starts with a quarter note G2, followed by a series of eighth notes: A2, Bb2, C3, D3, Eb3, F3, G3, Ab3, Bb3, C4, D4, Eb4, F4, G4. The score includes fingerings: 4 for the first note in both hands; 3, 2, 1, 2, 1 for the first five notes of the right hand; 4, 5, 2, 1 for the last four notes of the right hand; and 2, 1, 1 for the last three notes of the left hand. A dynamic marking *p* is placed in the first measure of the right hand.

Example 3.5

The A section is an exercise from mm.1 to 22 including two-finger rotation. Unlike Chopin, Kapustin used the jazz chord progression of ii-V of A-flat at the beginning. Kapustin wrote that every 8 measures is a phrase. The right hand pattern continues in the same way until section B appears. The left hand is mainly by the arpeggio outline of the chord. Without a variety of rhythm changes, this section mainly reflects how Kapustin designed harmony. There is no strong cadence of the first ii-V-I until measure 18.

The meter of The B section becomes 3/4. Although moved to Dominant, key of E-flat, Kapustin still started with C Dorian scale, or E-flat major sharp eleventh scale. This section is developed based on 3 themes, mm. 27-30, mm. 59-62 and mm. 92-95. The first part, mm27-30, uses the repeated inner voice as a motivation to support the melody direction. The second part, mm59-62, focuses on the arpeggios to practice the running ability of both hands. The third part 92-95 uses the configuration similar to A section as the transition to prepare for returning to the last A section.

The last A' section comes back with the same key and meter on measure 120. However, Kapustin uses the E-flat dominant chord as the beginning of the last A' section. Same as the beginning of A section, there is not a stable cadence of ii-V-I on key of A-flat major until measure 130. In the end of the last 2 bars, Kapustin employed a whole tone descending from G to E-flat alter seventh chord and ending with A-flat major six nine.

### No.3 in e minor, Toccatina

The title Toccatina is similar to the genre of Sonatina. Kapustin wanted to compose a new simple and small toccata-type piece, so he named it. Toccata is a musical composition primarily used for solo keyboard instruments. Its form not only demonstrates the dexterity of the fingers, but also includes elements of different musical styles such as fugue and sonata forms. Toccata can be traced back to 15th century German manuscripts.<sup>77</sup> Over time, Toccata became more complex in structure and rhythm, such as the harpsichord toccatas and organ toccatas composed by J. S. Bach. In the classical era, the aspect of virtuosic techniques of Toccata were slowly replaced by "exercise and study".<sup>78</sup> In the 20th century the Toccata genre was popularized again, such as *Pour le piano* by Debussy and *Le tombeau de Couperin* by Ravel. As discussed above about the influence of Ravel on Kapustin, Toccatina is a new attempt for Kapustin.

This is a short toccatina. The structure of the song is ABA'B' based on two small themes, and then varies on these two themes. Basically, a phrase is composed of 8 bars, and the tonality of the whole piece is much clearer and more stable than other etudes and preludes. Before the theme of section A begins, Kapustin wrote a 7-section introduction to prepare for the emergence of the theme. First section A begins with measure 8 (Example 3.6), and its theme is dominated

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<sup>77</sup> John Caldwell, Toccata, *Grove Music Online*, 2001.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

by the repeated tenor E. The harmonic progression is V-IV-i on the key of e minor back to the theme. The same theme appears again in measure 16, an octave higher.



### Example 3.6

Section B starts from measure 24 (Example 3.7), with the second theme also appears. The second theme turns the repeated tenor in the right hand into a repeated bass. The right hand becomes block chords, playing many complex upbeat syncopations, with the melody on top of the chords. The chord progressions over the section mostly are i-iv and VI-III on the key of e minor.



### Example 3.7

The A' section starts at measure 36. The repeated E becomes a long range jump of the fifth chord E and G. B' section starts from measure 52. Still using E as the bass, the repeated E becomes a double tone E to create a pedal point-like sound for the bass. The elements of the introduction appear again before the end, and it ends with a difficult arpeggio passage.



## No.4 in B major, Reminiscence

The fourth piece embodies the style of impressionism. Kapustin uses fast running thirty-second notes to build a feeling of memory. There are also almost similar etudes by Chopin in some parts of this piece. It is difficult to ignore the influence of Chopin on Kapustin.

A section from measure 1 to measure 23, of which measure 22 (Example 3.8) is the same as measure 66 of Last A section, and they are exactly the same in different keys as the beginning of Chopin's Etudes Op.10 No.8 (Example 3.9).

Example 3.8

Example 3.9

B section from measure 24 to measure 44 in the key of C, a half step higher. The left hand running with right hand block chords in this section are very similar to the left hand of Chopin Etudes Op.10 No.12. They are both dexterous etudes for practicing left.

The structure of the entire piece is in ABA ternary form. Kapustin set the meter to alternate between 3/4 and 4/4, expressing the style of jazz music through this irregular and unstable rhythm. The rhythm of 3 beats plus 4 beats for a total of 7 beats is generally considered less balanced. Just like the 5/4 meter of jazz standard “Take Five” mentioned earlier, another famous jazz standard “Blue Rondo à la Turk” by Dave Brubeck in the same album *Time Out* uses a very interesting rhythm pattern. The rhythm of “Blue Rondo à la Turk” is 9/8 meter. However, unlike the ordinary and conventional composer's group of three eighth notes, Brubeck used accents on each down beat of one two one two one two one two three. More of the 9/8 rhythm variation appears in the conventional group of three eighth notes in this piece, Brubeck omitted the second beat in the first two groups becoming one x three one x three one two three. Moreover, in the 12 bars before the improvement section, Brubeck alternates between 4/4 and 8/9 patterns every two bars.

The last A section comes back at measure 45 and to the home key of B major, and it ends with B major seventh chord with ninth, sharp-eleventh, and thirteenth.

#### No.5 in D major, Raillery

The style of the fifth piece is one of the blues styles, Boogie-Woogie. As the title says, this piece has to be fun for the audience. Boogie-woogie is a style of piano blues that originated in the United States in the 1920s and became one of the mainstream blues in the late 1930s.<sup>79</sup> Boogie-woogie also serves as an accompaniment for the audience to dance to.

The characteristic of Boogie-woogie is that the left hand uses continuous ostinato to provide rhythmic solid impetus to the music;<sup>80</sup> its rhythm pattern can be divided into split

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<sup>79</sup> Peter C. Muir, Boogie-woogie, *Grove Music Online*, 2012.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

octaves or dotted eighth notes with sixteenth notes repeated for one beat. The right hand plays different fast riffs, blues scales, and tremolos to increase the fun of the music.

Kapustin's piece also used the standard 12-bar blues form. Kapustin employed an incomplete measure at the beginning to state the D dominant seventh chord. Then, after using the 8-measure introduction, it officially entered the blues form. Kapustin applied different chord progression variations in the blues form. The harmony in bars 9 and 10 of the first two times is V-IV, and in the third and fourth, it is flat VI-flat II.

Beginning in measure 57, Kapustin changed the boogie-woogie left-hand pattern from straight eighth notes to the split octave dotted eighth notes with sixteenth notes. The way Kapustin did this was to prevent the audience from finding the same pattern boring.

In measure 83, the left-hand pattern at the beginning returns. Repeat the form twice, ending with the harmonies V-IV and flat VI-flat II once each.

#### No.6 in B-flat major, Pastorale

The sixth piece, "Pastoral," is an etude that sounds very relaxed and happy, but it also requires technical demand. The structure of the whole piece is AABC form and then repeated once. Kapustin used every eight measures as a phrase as the base. Kapustin took a theme and then varied it on it.

The first A section theme (Example 3.10) appears in the top melody on the right hand, with the theme's melody often occurring in the upbeat. This upbeat style is not only reflected in the jazz style, but this type of rhythm can make the music lively, light, and motivational. The tenor line mainly uses repeating F and G to reflect the fluidity of music. The harmonies in this

section are all very simple in the key of B-flat major. The main harmonic trends are I-iv, I-IV, and iii-iv-ii-V-I.

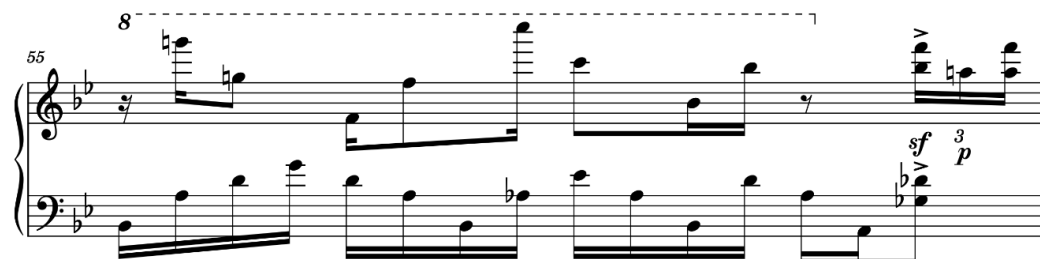
**Allegro moderato** (♩ = 108)

### Example 3.10

After repeating the A section twice, the B section starts from measure 17. Like the A section, Kapustin employed every four measures as a phrase, and the melody is mainly composed of 4 notes: A-flat, G-flat, and F of syncopation. The main harmony progression is ii-V-I in the key of B-flat major.

The C section starts from measure 25. Kapustin used sixteenth notes on every beat, and the four melody notes of the B section appear here in different keys. Kapustin also applied the bass note of the cycle of fourth as the harmony of the entire section, starting from C-sharp and ending at F, naturally transitioning back to the A section of the key of B-flat major.

It is worth mentioning that in measure 55 (Example 3.11) of the second B section, Kapustin wrote a long jumping range similar to La Campanella by Liszt.



Example 3.11

#### No.7 in D-flat major, Intermezzo

The seventh piece, Intermezzo, is an etude and variation of themes A and B and presented as an AABB structure. Kapustin made the variation part very difficult to realize. This piece requires the performer not only to have technical demands but also to have a good sense of rhythm.

Kapustin wrote a 4-measures introduction at the beginning and then entered Theme A (example 3.12) of section A. Theme A is 8 bars and repeated once. The harmony is mainly based on ii-V of the key of D-flat major and descending bass notes.

The image shows a musical score for Example 3.12, measures 5 through 8. The music is written for piano in a key signature of three flats (B-flat major/C minor) and a 3/4 time signature. Measures 5 and 6 feature a melodic line in the right hand with accents and a triplet of eighth notes. The left hand provides a bass line with chords and a triplet of eighth notes. Measures 7 and 8 continue the melodic and harmonic development with a sextuplet in the right hand and a triplet in the left hand.

example 3.12

B section starts from measure 21. The melody of Theme B (example 3.13) has many chromatic moves compared to Theme A. Every four measures is a phrase. The accompaniment of the left hand becomes an interval of the tenth chord. The harmony is in the broken cycle of the fourth progression; for example, from measure 21-24, the bass direction is E-flat, A-flat, F, B-flat.

The image displays two musical staves, numbered 21 and 23, representing piano notation. Each staff consists of a treble and bass clef. The music is written in a key signature of three flats (F major or D minor). The notation includes various chordal textures, including triads and dyads, with some notes marked with accents (>) and slurs. Triplet markings (the number 3) are present in both staves, indicating groups of three notes. The overall style is characteristic of late Romantic or early 20th-century piano music, with a focus on harmonic complexity and rhythmic variety.

### example 3.13

The first variation starts at measure 43, and the fast-running third of the right-hand melody on Theme A and Theme B has more than a few measures. Kapustin wrote this third, running from measure 51 to 89. Because the right hand of Chopin's etudes Op.25 No.6 is all third, we can see the traces of Chopin's influence on Kapustin.

In the second variation, Kapustin employed the left hand with stride piano style and the right-hand triplet in eighth notes to imitate the musical atmosphere of American Broadway. Kapustin did not return to the original theme but ended directly after the second variation.

### No.8 in f minor, Finale

In the last etude, Kapustin uses the name “Finale” to end and summarize these eight etudes. This etude has a substantial improvisation style by constant syncopation, anticipation,

and motion of eighth notes. Kapustin set the tempo of this etude to a very fast speed, *Prestissimo*, which virtually adds a lot of difficulty to the performer.

The structure of the entire etude is AABC and then repeated. Similar to the seventh etude, it has a 4-bar introduction. Section A starts from measure 5. The melody mostly appears on the upbeat and is accompanied by accent marks. Kapustin used this to reflect the swing style in jazz. The left-hand accompaniment pattern is mainly composed of up and down arpeggio, with the main harmony progressions being i-V and i-IV-iv-i on the key of f minor. Kapustin set the phrase every four measures. A section lasts for 24 measures in total and then repeats.

Section B starts from measure 47. The melody changes from eighth notes in the right hand to more lyrical long notes and appears as the chords to make the sound richer than a simple single note. The left hand still has the same arpeggio chords. Section B is relatively short, with only 16 measures. The left-hand ascending bass note, I-ii-III-IV-bV, dominates the harmonic progression in the key of f minor.

The beginning of section C is the most improvisation-like part. Kapustin wrote continuous single eighth notes and many upbeat accent marks throughout the C section compared to the many syncopation rhythms in the A section. The right-hand part has many arpeggios outlining the chords and many chromatic lines to connect the chord tones, similar to the Bebop style in jazz music.

Before the last A section begins, Kapustin employed the same structure, four introduction measures, and then continued with AABC once. At the end of the whole etude, Kapustin ends with the left and right-hand parallel moving and quickly ascending interval of fourth.



## **Chapter Summary**

These eight etudes demonstrate Kapustin's skillful employment of the classical music genre to compose music with jazz elements. Also, these etudes have the same melody segments from classical music, and Kapustin used blues forms of jazz. In the next chapter, I will summarize the dissertation and answer my initial questions about improvisation.

## Chapter VIII: Conclusion

In one of the few interviews he gave after 2000, with Martin Anderson in London, Kapustin directly articulated his version of combining genres in new ways. Anderson then compiled the interview into an article and published it in the *Fanfare* magazine "Nikolai Kapustin, Russian Composer of Classical Jazz."<sup>81</sup> This report was professionally translated from Russian to English, directly and vividly restoring Kapustin's understanding of music. This article also includes direct information about Kapustin's learning experience and how he views his fusion of classical and jazz styles. The article also mentioned that because Kapustin's works are becoming increasingly popular, many people perform his works in public. Thus, many people expect to see Kapustin's live performances in person, but he prefers to record his works rather than perform in person. Kapustin released his album *Kapustin Plays Kapustin — A Jazz Portrait* in 2008, which included Andante, three sonatas, and 10 Bagatelles. Kapustin never considered himself a jazz musician, "I've never been a jazz musician. I've never tried to be a real jazz pianist, but I had to because of composition. I'm not interested in improvisation...All my improvisations were written."<sup>82</sup>

In the same year, 2000, Kapustin also accepted another interview from Harriet Smith in London, and this article was published in the *International Piano Quarterly*.<sup>83</sup> Kapustin clearly expressed in this report that he likes this fusion music form of classical and jazz and believes that the classical part is more important. He stated: "For me the classical part is more important. The jazz style is there to give color – I don't like jazz 'forms' – if you describe them as that – which

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<sup>81</sup> Martin Anderson, Nikolai Kapustin, Russian Composer of Classical Jazz, (*Fanfare*, Sep/Oct. 2000), 93-97.

<sup>82</sup> Anderson, *loc. cit.*

<sup>83</sup> Smith, *op. cit.*, 54-55.

is why I've adopted those from classical music."<sup>84</sup> Kapustin spent most of his life composing music, but his work strongly emphasized classical modes and structures.<sup>85</sup> Additionally, perhaps because of his early studies at the Moscow Conservatory, Kapustin focused more on the classical music part and felt that jazz styles were only meant to give color. During Kapustin's creative process, he believed that his works were written for himself rather than by commission, but he would still be happy to compose good works for his friends if they asked.

During his many years of composing, Kapustin's works were rarely known. No one knows Kapustin or has heard of his name in Western art, partly because he has always lived in Moscow. Although Kapustin had a lot of recording experience with the State Cinematography Symphony Orchestra, most of them were soundtracks for Soviet films. He only had a small number of recordings of his works. Piano Sonata No. 2, recorded by Russian pianist Nikolai Petrov, was one of them.<sup>86</sup>

Nevertheless, Kapustin loves and enjoys his music. However, the public will always discover and love significant and successful work. After hearing Kapustin's Piano Sonata No.2 in the recording, the famous performing pianist Marc-Amdré Hamelin greatly appreciated this. Thus, Hamelin also performed Piano Sonata No. 2 on subsequent tours. Because of Hamelin's playing, people worldwide began to understand and like Kapustin and his music style.

The British pianist Steven Osborne was the first concert artist from the Western world to begin exploring the works of Nikolai Kapustin.<sup>87</sup> Osborne first heard Kapustin's music at a friend's house. At that time, Piano Sonata No. 2 was playing on his friend's speaker. When listening to Kapustin's music, Osborne expressed that he liked this fusion of jazz and classical

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<sup>84</sup> Smith, *loc. cit.*

<sup>85</sup> Bose, *loc cit.*

<sup>86</sup> Jonathan Eugene Roberts, *Classical Jazz: The Life and Musical Innovations of Nikolai Kapustin*, DMA diss., (University of Alabama, 2013), 3.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

style very much and had never heard anything like this style before. At that time, jazz and classical music were considered branches of two music types, and mostly, they could not reach the artistic levels when they imitated each other's music style. But Osborne believes that Kapustin perfectly combines both advantages to form a new music style. With the appreciation and love of this art, Osborne contacted Petrov, who played in the recording. He obtained some of Kapustin's music scores from Petrov in Moscow because Kapustin's works were not published overseas then.

As for what makes Kapustin's work sound like improvisation from a historical perspective, just like Kapustin's upbringing, as I mentioned above, he lived under the political system of the former Soviet Union. The system was very consistent with the concept of Soviet communism. Everyone as an individual is willing to sacrifice their value to achieve collective value through improvement. This system made Kapustin's work sound like improvisation but not entirely improvisational. In the conceptual dimension of thought, Kapustin's improvisation is not considered improvisation. He did not improvise music, but his works became part of the artistic and cultural output of the former Soviet Union. Kapustin's non-improvised musical compositions established a new value for the Soviet music genre.

From a musical perspective, Kapustin's works contain many elements of jazz music. From the swing rhythm to how the chords were constructed and his mastery of the Bebop style, these made his music sound jazzy. Because his music sounds like jazz, we directly connect it to improvisation. Many of Kapustin's eighth note lines contain a lot of jazz improvisation, just like the musicians we usually hear from them playing in bars or restaurants. Besides jazz elements, Kapustin's works also include many classical music harmony composing styles, such as pedal points, ostinato, four parts voicing. Among Kapustin's harmonies, 7th chords account for a large

proportion. The 7th chord is one of the crucial elements of jazz music. Compared with classical music, which mainly consists of triad chords, the harmony of the 7th chords is richer and more complex. Classical music would use the 7th chord in cadence V-I, but any chord can be a 7th chord in jazz. Kapustin also took advantage of this feature of jazz music, using 7th chords with alternation and simple triad chords flexibly.

Regarding format, Kapustin was not restricted by the forms of jazz music. Even though the format of jazz music is short, the improvisational parts are very long, leaving many opportunities for each performer to play solo. For example, the structures of jazz music are roughly divided into ABA, AABA, blues form, rhythm change, and free jazz. From every fragment of Kapustin's works, we can see that his research on classical music is profound. Not limited to jazz forms, Kapustin used structures from classical music such as sonata, rondo, and variational forms. Moreover, Kapustin also used the genre of classical music to compose, such as preludes and etudes, as examples.

Additionally, Kapustin's pieces fulfill the four reasons I brought up in Chapter IV: the jazz music structure, the conception of improvisation by the performer, the preconception of him as a composer, and the long term of working with jazz bands and tours. Without any of the conditions, Kapustin's music sounding like jazz improvisation would not be possible.

Again, Kapustin's music was not improvisation; it was a work written down note by note. If we put these same conditions – historical background, growth experience, and the four elements I outlined above on another composer, we will get the same output; that is, that composer's works will also sound like improvisation. In other words, this can also be an educational way for composers to have a fusion style of classical and jazz. These same conditions can prepare a composer to write similarly improvised works.

Looking at it from another perspective, if we split it into composers who only focus on classical music and composers who specialize in jazz music, the works composed by the two will not have improvisational attributes. Because of the learning process and advanced knowledge of the two, there are few overlaps between the two music types. For example, both classical and jazz music can share a ternary form.

A composer without the ability to improvise can produce good works. For example, not all composers of today's popular songs can improvise. However, a composer who can improvise can make the work style more varied and the layers of the work richer. With many different types of elements, the audience for the work will become more apparent. As a result, more people would like that composer. The more people like that work, the greater the chance it will become a great work in history like that of other great composers.

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