

Vasilis Kallis*

Principles of Pitch Organization in
Scriabin's Early Post-tonal Period:
The Piano Miniatures

KEYWORDS: Scriabin, piano miniatures, octatonic scale, acoustic scale, whole-tone scale, pitch substitution, genus transformation

ABSTRACT: Scriabin's post-tonal period, which begins around 1909 with *Feuillet d'album*, Op. 58, is defined by the subtle and sophisticated exploitation of some special non-diatonic sets and their pitch universes: (i) the acoustic scale: 0, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, t (member of set-class 7-34), the parent scale of the *Mystic Chord*; (ii) the octatonic scale, Model A: 0, 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, t (member of set-class 8-28); and (iii) 9-10: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, t (the nine-note superset that arises from the union of the acoustic and the octatonic scales). Close examination of the post-Op. 58 works allows us to partition the late style into two periods: early, from Op. 58 to Op. 69 inclusive; and late, from Op. 70 to the final creation, Op. 74. During his early post-tonal period, Scriabin developed a pitch organization method based on the interaction between the acoustic and octatonic scales within the constraints of their nonachordal common superset 9-10. This essay examines the specifics and the application of the acoustic-octatonic interaction in the composer's miniature pieces written in his early post-tonal period.

Received June 2008

Dedicated to the memory of Anthony Pople

[1.1] Scriabin's post-tonal period, which begins around 1909 with *Feuillet d'album*, Op. 58, is defined by the subtle and sophisticated exploitation of some special non-diatonic sets and their pitch universes: (i) the acoustic scale: 0, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, t (member of set-class 7-34), the parent scale of the *Mystic Chord*; ⁽¹⁾ (ii) the octatonic scale, Model A: 0, 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, t (member of set-class 8-28); and (iii) 9-10: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, t (the nine-note superset that arises from the union of the acoustic and the

octatonic scales).⁽²⁾ See Example 1. Close examination of the post-Op. 58 works allows us to partition the late style into two periods: early, from Op. 58 to Op. 69 inclusive; and late, from Op. 70 to the final creation, Op. 74. During his early post-tonal period, Scriabin developed a pitch organization method based on the interaction between the acoustic and octatonic scales within the constraints of their nonachordal common superset 9-10. Other pitch entities appear as well, but their functional role is supplementary until they are integrated into a coherent style in the Tenth Sonata, Op. 70, which marks the beginning of the composer’s final period.

Example 1. Scriabin’s primary pitch material



(click to enlarge)

[1.2] This essay considers Scriabin’s method of pitch syntax in his early post-tonal period (1909–12) through the examination of miniature piano pieces. Since the composer was writing these to master his craft, they constitute valuable source material for the study of his pitch organization.⁽³⁾

[1.3]

Example 2. Model of pitch organization in Scriabin

Scriabin’s method of pitch organization centers on the chromatic possibilities available through the

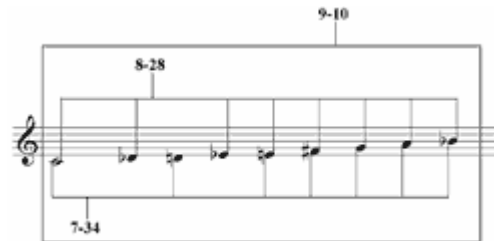


(click to enlarge)

pitch relationship between the acoustic (labeled as such for its similitude to the overtone series) and the octatonic scales.⁽⁴⁾

These closely related scales share a common hexachordal subset (6-Z23), which allows the remaining pitches—one, D (2), exclusively acoustic, the other two, D^b (b2) and E^b (b3), exclusively octatonic—to dictate the

Example 3. Generation of 9-10 from the union of the acoustic and the octatonic scales



(click to enlarge)

play of
identity.

Example 2
exemplifies
the central
motto in the
composer's
method of
pitch
organization.

As can be
seen, the
acoustic and
octatonic
scales are
connected
efficiently
through a
variable
second scale
degree— $\sharp 2$ in
the acoustic
and $\flat 2$ in the
octatonic.

The
chromatic
interplay
occurs within
two distinct
harmonic
structures, the

Mystic Chord

(set-class
6-34) and its
octatonic
version,
labeled

Mystic Chord

B (set-class
6-Z49), in
which $\sharp 2$ and
 $\flat 2$ are realized
as the ninth
and the
lowered ninth
respectively.

Since $\sharp 2$ and $\flat 2$
 $\sharp 2$ can be used
to determine
whether a
segment of
music is
acoustic or
octatonic,
they are
classified
henceforth as
the acoustic
and octatonic
indicators,
respectively.

[1.4]

Although there is more than one way to define the relationship between 9-10 and the acoustic and octatonic scales, Scriabin's compositional practice (which unequivocally treats the heptachord and the octachord as gestalts) allows us to view 9-10 as the union of the pitch content of its two subsets (Example 3).⁽⁵⁾ In fact, 9-10 is the only

nine-note
superset of
the octatonic
scale and the
smallest
common
superset of
the latter and
the acoustic
scale. It
constitutes
the superset
under the
auspices of
which the
acoustic scale
and the
octatonic
scale, Model
A
interpenetrate
one another,
and,
additionally,
its pitch
constraints
form the
chromatic
pitch gamut
of the phrase
units that

shape the
musical
surface.

[1.5] The pitch entities in Example 1 and all their subsets are treated not as abstract set-classes, but as specific ordered non-diatonic scales. “Ordered” means that a specific pitch center is imposed on which specific harmonies (*Mystic Chord*, *Mystic Chord B*, and their variants) are built. In Scriabin’s early post-tonal period, both the acoustic and the octatonic scales have their pitch center on the pitch on which the *Mystic Chord* and *Mystic Chord B*, respectively, are built. This approach restricts the octatonic scale to one of its two rotations, semitone-tone, Van den Toorn’s Model A. The correlation with the specific pitch centricity refers not only to the acoustic and the octatonic scales, but also to their subsets employed in the composer’s early post-tonal oeuvre.

[1.6] Scriabin’s principles of pitch organization have preoccupied scholars from the first moment that his post-tonal works earned a place in the twentieth-century repertory. It is particularly in the work of M. Kelkel, Anthony Pople, and Fred Lerdahl that we find apt analytical descriptions of Scriabin’s octatonic/acoustic (and thus 9-10) ventures.⁽⁶⁾

[1.7] Kelkel realizes the structural significance of the composer’s chromatic schemes in formalizing a language based on the exploitation of different

Example 4. Scriabin’s octatonic/acoustic transformations

The diagram illustrates the relationship between octatonic/acoustic scales and Scriabin's Mystic Chords. It is organized into three horizontal levels:

- Level a):** Shows two octatonic scales. The first is labeled "Type a" with the number "6-34" above it. The second is labeled "Type b" with the number "6-Z49" above it.
- Level b):** Shows two "acoustic collection" scales. The first is labeled "7-31" above it. Arrows point from the octatonic scales in level a) down to these acoustic collections.
- Level c):** Shows two chords. The first is labeled "Mystic Chord" and the second is labeled "Mystic Chord B". Below them are the descriptions: "(Dominant 13, 5th omitted)" and "(Dominant 13 with b9, 5th omit)".

harmonic/modal
types. The most
significant of his
observations is the
proposed
distinction
between two
harmonic and
modal types. The
Mystic Chord and
Mystic Chord B
correspond to the
acoustic scale and
the octatonic
heptachord 7-31
respectively
(Example 4).

(click to enlarge)

[1.8] Pople's
study of the
Prelude, Op. 67,
No. 1 presents a
well-buttressed
effort to decode
Scriabin's
peculiar octatonic
practices,
especially in
conjunction with
9-10, which Pople
treats as a new
normative set

“regarded as
being
composed-out
against the
normative
background of the
octatonic set
[0,1,3,4,6,7,9,10].

”(7) Similarly to
Pople, Lerdahl
also correlates the
octatonic scale
with 9-10, but in
addition he brings
the acoustic scale
to the fore. His
analysis of Op.
67, No. 1 offers a
precise
description of the
relationship
between the three
scales and their
role in Scriabin’s
method of
pitch-organization

(8)

[1.9] The most significant aspect with regard to the history of the acoustic scale and 9-10 is not so much the lack of acknowledgment, but the failure to realize the specifics of the dialectic between the acoustic and the octatonic scales, not least of the chromatic interplay between $\frac{5}{b}2$.(9) This is a result of widespread misconceptions

that have their roots in essentially two factors: (i) the excessive weight placed on the whole-tone scale as pitch material in Scriabin's post-tonal period, and (ii) the failure to associate the *Mystic Chord* with the acoustic scale itself. Perhaps the overabundance of whole-tone dominants in late nineteenth-century music brought about such misconceptions; certainly, Scriabin's oeuvre in 1903–9 abounds in dominants with lowered or raised fifths. Nevertheless, the whole-tone scale's prominent appearance in the composer's transitional period does not justify regarding it as a determinant of pitch organization in the post-tonal style. More to the point, the acoustic scale appears no less prominently in the transitional period.

[1.10] This structure, for example, saturates the musical surface in the outer sections of the Scherzo, Op. 46, a work well into the composer's

transitional period. Example 5 shows measures 1–4, which articulate two T_7 related phrases. Apart from the downbeat of measures 2 and 4, the music unfolds a succession of a single type of dominant harmony, a dominant seventh with a raised eleventh (set class 5-28), a structure prophetic of the

Example 5. Scriabin's primary pitch material

(click to enlarge)

Mystic Chord (the E \flat at the last eighth-note of the incomplete introductory measure and the B \flat at the last eighth-note of measure 2 are non-harmonic notes). The particular excerpt is an early example of Scriabin's later practice of articulating dominant-type chords where the root is also tonic. Vital to our present considerations is the full appearance of the scale exactly at the downbeat of measures 2 and 4: C acoustic and G acoustic respectively. These are points of structural significance, because they constitute the boundaries of the first two phrases, a

momentary goal of what precedes them. The presence of C and G acoustics as the pitch source of these structurally significant harmonies is surely not accidental; it corroborates the emerging prominence of the acoustic scale in the composer's music.

Issues of pitch organization

The octatonic scale

[2.1] The octatonic scale is invariant at four distinct transpositional levels: T_0 , T_3 , T_6 , and T_9 will keep the pitch content of the scale intact. The symmetrical

Example 6. 9-10, T_3

The image shows four staves of musical notation, each representing a different transposition of an octatonic scale. The staves are labeled T_0 , T_3 , T_6 , and T_9 from top to bottom. A bracket labeled '9-10' is positioned above the first two staves. An asterisk (*) is placed above the second note of each staff, indicating an acoustic indicator.

operation * = acoustic indicator

(click to enlarge)

Example 7. Octatonic scale, array of harmonies

properties of the scale are transferred within 9-10 as well: it remains the symmetrical component of its superset, which is itself an asymmetrical entity. In fact, the cyclical application of T_3 to 9-10 yields quite interesting results that merit attention. It keeps the octatonic component within 9-10 invariant. However, it brings forth a new pitch,

in Scriabin's post-tonal oeuvre



(click to enlarge and see the rest)

the second
scale degree
of the
acoustic
component,
which is an
extremely
important
technical
detail in
Scriabin's
compositiona
l approach.
See Example
6. This
means that
while the
cyclical
transposition
of any 9-10
by
interval-class
3 will keep a
single form
of the
octatonic
scale intact,
at the same
time it will
yield four
distinct 9-10s

and four
distinct
acoustic
scales. These
provide a
“new” pitch
at each
transposition,
which is
none other
than the
acoustic
indicator. In
addition, the
three
acoustic
indicators
found in the
 T_3 , T_6 , and T_9
forms of the
original T_0 of
9-10 are the
three pitches
that, when
added to
9-10, bring
about the
complete
chromatic
aggregate.

[2.2]

Scriabin's
method of
pitch
organization
makes
exclusive use
of the
octatonic
scale, Model
A, the
rotation of
8-28 able to
provide
major and
minor triads
(as well as
other tertian
harmonies)
built on the
first note of
the scale,
which also
lines up as
closely as
possible with
the canonical
ordering of
the acoustic
scale. Of the
many
harmonic

structures
built on the
tonic of the
octatonic
scale, Model
A, Scriabin
favors
specific
dominant-type,
yet tonally
non-functional,
extended
and altered
harmonies:
more
specifically,
Mystic
Chord B, its
variants, and
some
pentachordal
subsets. See
Example
7.⁽¹⁰⁾

The acoustic scale

[2.3] The acoustic scale is a transpositionally asymmetrical entity; it is not invariant under any transposition. Its value in Scriabin's pitch-syntactic routines lies in its close pitch relationship with the octatonic scale, and in that it contributes the only non-octatonic pitch within 9-10, the acoustic indicator.

[2.4] In addition to the variety of harmonic structures available within its harmonic depository, the acoustic scale exhibits an explicit functional distinction among its seven scale degrees. Scriabin, nevertheless, focuses on a single scale degree, the tonic, and, similar to what he does with the octatonic scale, utilizes only specific dominant-type extended and

Example 8. Acoustic scale, array of harmonies in Scriabin's post-tonal oeuvre



(click to enlarge and see the rest)

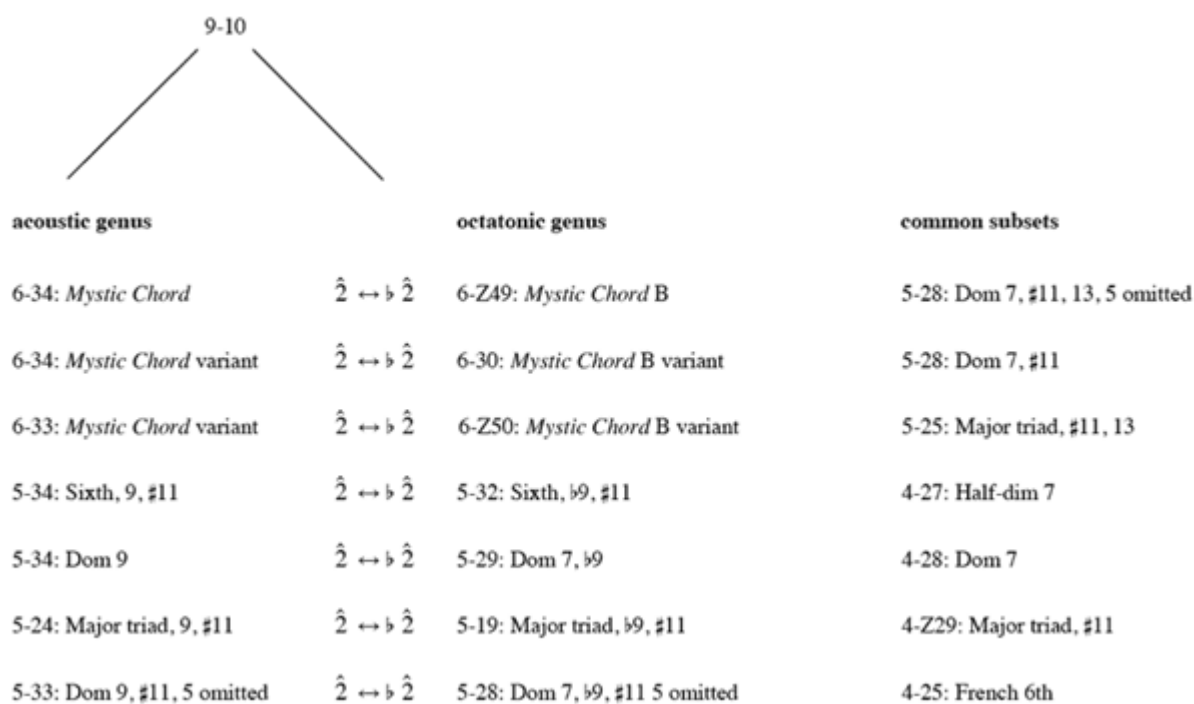
altered
structures,
namely, the
Mystic Chord
and specific
variants. See
Example 8.
The role of the
Mystic Chord
is essential,
not only
because of its
special status
in the
composer's
method of
pitch
organization,
but also
because the
acoustic and
octatonic
(especially
Mystic Chord
B) structures
featured in
Scriabin's
post-tonal
œuvre are
directly
related to it.

The correspondenc
e between the voicing of the acoustic and the octatonic structures is probably a result of the special emphasis given to the *Mystic Chord* as the emerging harmonic foundation in the composer's routines for pitch organization.⁽¹⁾
1)

[2.5] The acoustic and octatonic scales interact with one another by way of common subsets, a vital technical attribute in Scriabin's method of pitch organization. This approach promotes parsimonious voice-leading, which (i) ensures the smooth transformation from one scale to the other and (ii) permits the direct conflict between the members of the chromatic dyad formed by the acoustic and the octatonic indicators ($\sharp 2$ and $\flat 2$, respectively). However, it ought to be said that the interaction between the acoustic scale and the octatonic scale, Model A is not limited to the

interpenetration of a heptachord and an octachord that share a common hexachordal subset. It is rather an interaction between two pitch genera that involves the specific subsets referred to above and some specific common tetrachordal subsets (displayed in Figure 1 below) under the auspices of the common superset 9-10.

Figure 1.



(click to enlarge)

[2.6] How, then, do the peculiar interrelationships in the octatonic/acoustic universe make themselves available in Scriabin's model of pitch organization? The inspection of Scriabin's approach to harmony places the *Mystic Chord* (6-34) and its octatonic version (6-Z49) at center stage. Both of these harmonies remain basic to the composer's harmonic palette and constitute the central point of harmonic reference in the early post-tonal style. All the other harmonic structures deployed are directly related to this harmonic core. Several hexachordal variants are encountered: two related to the *Mystic Chord* (6-34, 6-33), two related to *Mystic Chord B* (6-30, 6-Z50), and one common to both (6-Z23). Specific pentachordal substructures are also articulated when the several forms of the *Mystic Chord* appear as incomplete sonorities. Harmonic structures with fewer than five pitch members are deployed

sparingly, if at all. These structures may appear, usually in the left hand, before other chord members enter melodically in the right hand to form (by integrating the vertical with the horizontal) one or another of the composer's trademark harmonies.

[2.7] The two pitch genera, as mentioned above, interact primarily through common structures. Figure 1 shows the specific details of this procedure. Column 1 lists the acoustic structures. The column next to it displays the corresponding octatonic structures. The last column shows the common acoustic/octatonic subsets that act as mediators in the specific interaction process. All the harmonic structures in columns 1 and 2 include the acoustic/octatonic indicator ($\frac{2}{b2}$), which is missing from the common acoustic/octatonic subset. Scriabin handles the $\frac{2}{b2}$ dialectic very subtly. His harmonic structures unfold via the integration of the vertical with the horizontal, which constitutes a stylistic norm. However, the left hand deploys, more often than not, a harmonic skeleton that rotates the root (1), third (3), seventh ($b7$), and raised eleventh ($\#4$). This allows one of the upper voices to conduct the chromatic interplay between the acoustic and octatonic indicators.

[2.8] Scriabin's treatment of these pitch phenomena in relation to pitch organization prompts the following general observations:

- i. The phrase structure is organized in chunks of music that constitute self-contained "blocks" in which the acoustic/octatonic structural associations are articulated on a single pitch center. (These "blocks" form motivic segments or entire phrase units.) Motivic and thematic designs, as well as the contrapuntal network that assures their interconnection, tend to emphasize the melodic argument between the two members of the $\frac{2}{b2}$ chromatic dyad.
- ii. There are four fixed scale degrees that are almost always present: 1, 4 \flat , $\#4$, and $b7$. There are two other fixed scale degrees whose presence is

more irregular: $\mathfrak{5}$ and $\mathfrak{6}$. There is one variable scale degree: $\flat 2$ or $\natural 2$. In addition, if $\flat 2$ is used, $\flat 3$ can be used simultaneously with $\natural 3$.

iii. These “blocks” are usually transposed by either one of the two fundamental intervals (or their multiples) within the acoustic and the octatonic genus: ic-2 and ic-3 respectively. Ultimately, a work’s transposition structure is used as a means to promote the presence of the acoustic scale, the octatonic scale, and 9-10, at the deepest levels of structure. Scriabin’s transpositional levels tend to avoid the three pitches not present in the pitch content of 9-10 (and, by convention, in the pitch content of the acoustic and octatonic collection as well), i.e. scale degrees $\mathfrak{4}$, $\mathfrak{7}$ and $\sharp\mathfrak{5}$. The first two, in particular, are avoided because they have the potential to erode the peculiar aural characteristics of the composer’s harmonic structures: the lowered seventh and the raised fourth. Scale degree $\sharp\mathfrak{5}$ is something of a special case. It bears no threat to Scriabin’s peculiar sound quality; in fact, the raised fifth may enrich dominant-type harmonies in fruitful ways. It can be seen appearing at deeper levels of structure, if not as a means to corroborate the surface articulation of the whole-tone scale, then as a source of a deeper-structure chromatic conflict. For example, Op. 67, No. 1 and Op. 59, No. 2 present a transposition structure that promotes the presence of $G\flat-G\sharp-A\flat-A\sharp-B\flat-C-E\flat$ (member of the 9-10 subset 7-10) and $C-C\sharp-E\flat-F\sharp-G-A$ (member of the octatonic subset 6-30), respectively at deeper levels of structure.⁽¹²⁾ Op. 69, No. 1 promotes $C-C\sharp-E\flat-E\sharp-F\sharp-G-G\sharp-B\flat$ (member of 8-27), which may be partitioned into the octatonic heptachord (7-31) plus $G\sharp$ ($\sharp\mathfrak{5}$). Here, the presence of $\sharp\mathfrak{5}$ corroborates the surface articulation of the whole-tone pentachord (5-33). (More on the articulation of 5-33 in Op. 69, No. 1, below.)

iv. The persistence with which the specific dialectic between the acoustic and the octatonic scales appears in the composer's early post-tonal period suggests a remarkable syntactic unity. Moreover, the acoustic scale, the octatonic scale, Model A, and 9-10, as well as the *Mystic Chord* and *Mystic Chord B*, become conventionalized in the composer's early post-tonal period through continual usage.

[2.9] Let us see how this approach works in practice. The opening phrase (mm. 1–3) of the *Poème-Nocturne*, Op. 61 immediately introduces a subtle dialectic between the acoustic and the octatonic genera within the pitch constraints of superset 9-10. See Example 9. (Henceforth, we assign 0 to the pitch center of the original phrase unit.) Scriabin introduces chromaticism in terms of the chromatic dyad formed by the acoustic and octatonic indicators, E^{\flat} and $E^{\flat\flat}$, respectively. Both substitute for each other above a recurrently arpeggiated D^{\flat} *Mystic Chord* variant (5-28: $D^{\flat}-F-G-B^{\flat}-C^{\flat}$). Since Scriabin keeps an incomplete D^{\flat} *Mystic Chord* as a common octatonic/acoustic subset in the left hand, the introduction of $E^{\flat\flat}$ in measure 1 yields *Mystic Chord B* on D^{\flat} whereas E^{\flat} (m. 2) yields the *Mystic Chord* on the same pitch center.

[2.10] Identical acoustic/octatonic interpenetrations occur in the subsequent phrase at measures 4–7, a modified T_2 transposition of the original phrase unit (see

Example 9. Scriabin, *Poème-Nocturne*, Op. 61, mm. 1–7



(click to enlarge and see the rest)

Example 9).
 However, this time the incomplete introductory measure of the T_0 unit becomes a full measure with the addition of a *Mystic Chord B* variant whose pitches, despite the orthographical inconsistency, are drawn exclusively from $E \flat$ octatonic, Model A: $E \flat - F \flat - F \sharp - A - B \flat - C \sharp$ (6-Z50). The raised ninth ($F \sharp$) of this formation gives way to the lowered ninth ($F \flat$) at measure 5 to begin the $2/2$ conflict in terms

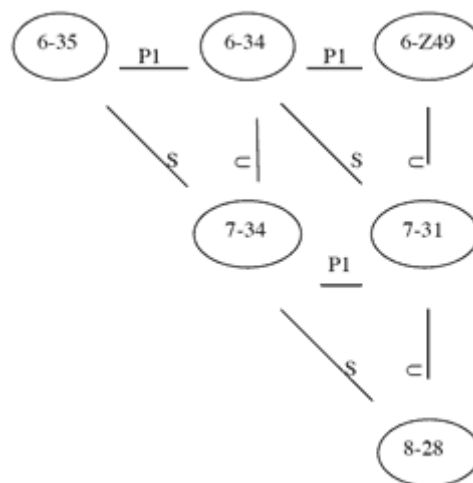
of F/F^b. As in the opening phrase unit, and even more intensified because of the distinct octatonic harmony of measure 4, the music promotes the perpetual alternation of the acoustic and octatonic “blocks.” The chromatic interplay between the acoustic/octatonic indicators emerges gradually as a structural issue; notice the melodic punctuation that emphasizes these two tones. The initial E^b comes with a fermata, as does the F^b at

measure 5, the analogous pitch in the T_2 transposition of the opening phrase (mm. 4–7).

Voice-leading parsimony: a model of interaction

[3.1] The treatment of the acoustic and octatonic scales in Scriabin's method of pitch organization conforms to a broader network of set interaction based on voice-leading parsimony between closely related set-pairs of equal and unequal rank. This procedure promotes genus transformations by way of pitch substitution, pitch

Figure 2. Substitution-based interaction: network of set interrelationships, from Callender (1998, Fig. 11, p. 227)⁽¹⁴⁾



(click to enlarge)

addition/omission,
and pitch
splitting. The
abstract
relationships
between
Scriabin's
preferred scales
discussed below
are presented in
Clifton
Callender's study
of the composer's
voice-leading
routines.⁽¹³⁾

Consider Figure 2
(Callender's
Figure 11), which
epitomizes the
technical specifics
of this relational
network in terms
of the composer's
primary scales
and three
important subsets:
7-31, 6-34 (*Mystic
Chord*), and
6-Z49 (*Mystic
Chord* B).
Horizontal

connections
involve set-pairs
of equal
cardinality, which
form the P1
relation with one
another. As we
see from the three
P1-related pairs
(6-35/6-34,
6-34/6-Z49,
7-34/7-31),
transformations
between them
require nothing
more than a single
chromatic
alteration (or
pitch
substitution). See
Figures 2 and 3. A
single pc is
subjected to
alteration by ± 1
semitone to yield
its substitute and
effect the scalar
transformation.

Figure 3. Voice-leading between P1-related sets

6-35: {0 2 4 6 8 t}	6-Z49: {0 1 4 6 9 t}	7-31: {0 1 4 6 7 9 t}
Scale degree: 1 2 3 #4 #5 b7	1 b2 3 #4 6 b7	1 b2 3 #4 5 6 b7
↑	↑	↑
6-34: {0 2 4 6 9 t}	6-34: {0 2 4 6 9 t}	7-34: {0 2 4 6 7 9 t}
Scale degree: 1 2 3 #4 6 b7	1 2 3 #4 6 b7	1 2 3 #4 5 6 b7

(click to enlarge)

[3.2] The first two measures of *Poème-Nocturne*, Op. 61 (Example 9 above) are a paradigm of this kind of interaction; they exhibit a transformation from 6-Z49 (*Mystic Chord B* on D \flat) to 6-34 (*Mystic Chord* on D \flat) through the substitution of E $\flat\flat$ by E \flat . A similar interaction between 6-34 and 6-Z49 occurs in Op. 69, No. 1 as well. See Example 10a. Measures 1–2 juxtapose the *Mystic Chord* and its octatonic version on

Example 10a. Scriabin, *Poème*, Op. 69, No. 1, mm. 1–6

(click to enlarge and see the rest)

Example 10b. Scriabin, *Poème*, Op. 69, No. 1, mm. 1–5, acoustic/whole-tone interaction

(click to enlarge)

Example 11. Scriabin, *Etrangeté*, Op. 63, No. 2

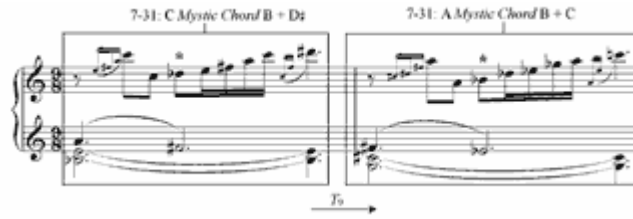
C via the melodic conflict between $\frac{2}{b}$ $\frac{2}{\flat}$ in terms of D and $D \flat$ respectively:

C–D–E–F \sharp –A–B \flat
 → C–D \flat –E–F \sharp
 –A–B \flat . T_4 (mm. 5–6)

juxtaposes the *Mystic Chord* and *Mystic Chord B* on E. There also exist transformations

between 6-34 and the second set with which it forms the P1-relation, 6-35 (Example 10a and 10b). The 6-35 on A \flat

(A \flat –B \flat –C–D–E–G \flat)—actually a whole-tone version of the *Mystic Chord*—of measure 3 is replaced, via the substitution of C with C \sharp , by 6-34 (*Mystic Chord*) on E (E–F \sharp



(click to enlarge and see the rest)

Figure 4. Voice-leading between S-related sets

a)	b)	c)
6-35: {0 2 4 6 8 t}	6-34: {0 2 4 6 9 t}	7-34: {0 2 4 6 7
Scale degree: 1 2 3 $\sharp 4$ $\sharp 5$ $\flat 7$	1 2 3 $\sharp 4$ 6 $\flat 7$	1 2 3 $\sharp 4$ 5
$\updownarrow \pm$	$\updownarrow \pm$	$\updownarrow \pm$
7-34: {0 2 4 6 7 9 t}	7-31: {0 1 3 4 6 9 t}	8-28: {0 1 3 4 6
Scale degree: 1 2 3 $\sharp 4$ 5 6 $\flat 7$	1 $\flat 2$ $\flat 3$ $\sharp 3$ $\sharp 4$ 6 $\flat 7$	1 $\flat 2$ $\flat 3$ $\sharp 3$ $\sharp 4$

(click to enlarge)

-G \sharp -A \sharp -C \sharp -D).⁽¹⁵⁾

Another such transformation occurs between the C *Mystic Chord* of measure 2 and the 6-35 of the following measure, but the octatonic indicator D \flat obscures the clarity of the particular association.

[3.3] Vertical set connections in Figure 2 involve sets related by inclusion. This means that their interconnections do not require any pitch inflections, but are carried out by pitch addition or pitch omission. Sets connected vertically are representatives of the same pitch genus, be it octatonic or acoustic. The decision as to which

set (the inaugural set or specific subsets) is used at the musical surface relies on contextual requirements. The octatonic heptachord of the first two measures of *Etrangeté*, for example, is succeeded by 6-Z49, which eliminates \flat^3 (E^{\flat}), to render the upcoming acoustic/octatonic interaction possible (Example 11).

[3.4] Sets connected diagonally (from the upper left to the lower right corner) form the S-relation, which involves sets with a cardinality difference of ± 1 (see Figure 2 above). S splits a pc to yield its upper and lower chromatic neighbors

and vice versa. Three pairs (6-35/7-34, 6-34/7-31, and 7-34/8-28) are S-related to one another. Figure 4 demonstrates the abstract manifestation of this type of interpenetration.

However, due to his approach to pitch organization,

Scriabin does not particularly exploit the S-relation in the miniatures of his early post-tonal period. As seen in Figure 4, the S-relation involving the pairs 6-34/7-31 and 7-34/8-28 requires the presence of b_2 and b_3 in the octatonic structures. Given the fact that the articulation of b_3 prevents the

construction of
 common
 acoustic/octatonic
 subsets, the
 simultaneous
 appearance of \flat^2 and
 \flat^3 (instead of \flat^2 and
 \sharp^3) becomes a much
 less viable option.⁽¹⁶⁾

[3.5] What Scriabin promotes instead is the combination of vertical (inclusion) and horizontal (P1) motion shown in Figure 2. This operation involves sets with a ± 1 difference in cardinality and incorporates the \flat^2/\sharp^2 interaction, but instead of the S-relation, we observe the combination of pitch substitution and pitch addition/omission. Pitch substitution and omission may be seen at measure 3 in *Etrangeté*, Op. 63, No. 2 (Example 11 above). Here, the octatonic heptachord (7-31) of the first two measures prepares the ground for the upcoming interaction with the acoustic genus. Measures 1–2 unfold 7-31 on C (C *Mystic Chord* B + pitch D^\sharp) and its T_9 form (A *Mystic Chord* B + pitch C), respectively. The first beat of measure 3 restores the original T_0 form but without E^\flat , which is the only pitch whose exclusively octatonic orientation could jeopardize the upcoming interpenetration—it is certainly not accidental that the reduction from 7-31 to 6-Z49 occurs immediately before the octatonic/acoustic dialectic begins. Scriabin, then, promotes the brief oscillation between octatonic and acoustic structures. *Mystic Chord* B (6-Z49: C– D^\flat –E– F^\sharp –A– B^\flat) interacts with the acoustic pentachord 5-33 (C– D^\flat –E– F^\sharp – B^\flat), enforcing pitch substitution (D^\sharp replaces D^\flat) and pitch omission (the A from 6-Z49 is removed in 5-33).⁽¹⁷⁾

[3.6] An important issue as to the nature of the pitch interrelationships within 9-10 emerges at this point. Does the music effect the juxtaposition of the acoustic and the octatonic scales by means that promote pitch *substitution* in terms of $\sharp 2$ and $\flat 2$ or does it suggest *combination* (the deployment of 9-10 as a gestalt and not as the mere sum of the union of the acoustic and the octatonic scales)? Scriabin's persistent use of chromatic dyads as the means to achieve scalar transformation places the principle of pitch substitution at center stage. The interaction between the acoustic and the octatonic scales is conducted primarily through the $\sharp 2/\flat 2$ chromatic dyad as it emerges within the framework of specific harmonic formations. Reference to harmonic membership implies that the specific interactive process is fundamentally a contrapuntal phenomenon in which the $\flat 9$ ($\flat \sharp 2$) of *Mystic Chord B* and of any *Mystic Chord B* variant substitutes for the $\sharp 9$ ($\sharp 2$) of the *Mystic Chord* and of any *Mystic Chord* variant and vice versa. Thus, this chromaticism is structural.⁽¹⁸⁾ Remarkably, Scriabin uses $\sharp 2/\flat 2$ chromaticism exclusively. Decorative "non-diatonic" chromatic tones (itches that fall outside the domain of 9-10) are deployed sparingly; one such instance occurs in Op. 59, No. 2, where the passing tone B at the downbeat of measure 2 resolves to $B\flat$, a member of the governing 9-10 on C.

[3.7] Two technical details show that pitch substitution constitutes a fundamental feature of Scriabin's method of pitch organization: (i) in his approach to voice-leading, the acoustic and octatonic indicators are always treated as adjacencies in the same voice; and (ii) certain pitches are selectively and systematically omitted from the pitch content of adjacent, transpositionally related, phrase units. Let us see how this is practiced in Op. 61 (Example 9 above). The sum of the pitches of T_0 yields the 9-10 octachord 8-27: $D\flat-E\flat\flat-E\flat-()-F-G-A\flat-B\flat-C\flat$. $E\sharp$ ($\flat \sharp 3$) is missing, a fact which serves the composer's intentions in two ways. First, it clears the path for the desired cross-collectional interaction. $E\sharp$ is a pitch that would erode any acoustic/octatonic interpenetration. Had it been present, it would not have been possible to articulate an acoustic "block." Secondly, its absence in one transposition (T_0) only serves to

emphasize its prominence as a member of the structural chromatic dyad in the following one. As shown in Example 9 above, the E^{\sharp} missing from T_0 emerges as the octatonic indicator in the chromatic dyad $F-F^{\flat}$ of T_2 (mm. 4–7): $E^{\flat}-F^{\flat}-F^{\sharp}-F^{\sharp}-G-A-B^{\flat}-C-D^{\flat}$ (T_2 adds a harmonic structure at the downbeat of measure 4 that features the missing pitch of the localized transposition of 9-10, F^{\sharp}). Furthermore, observe Scriabin’s enharmonic spellings. The octatonic indicator asserts itself as the indisputable inflection of its acoustic counterpart: E^{\flat} to $E^{\flat\flat}$ in T_0 , F to F^{\flat} in T_2 and G to G^{\flat} in T_4 .

[3.8] The emphasis on the conflict between the two modal indicators emerges as a crucial compositional device. In fact, inspection reveals that, in his effort to allow at least one of the two modal indicators to appear as a “new” pitch, Scriabin

Table 1. Scriabin, Poème, Op. 69, No. 1, mm. 1–6

	T_0	T_2
Scale degree	$\hat{1} \flat\hat{2} \sharp\hat{2} \flat\hat{3} \hat{3} \sharp\hat{4} \hat{5} \hat{6} \flat\hat{7}$	$\hat{1} \flat\hat{2} \sharp\hat{2} \flat\hat{3} \hat{3} \sharp\hat{4} \hat{5} \hat{6}$
Pitch content	$C-D\flat-D^{\sharp}-E\flat-E^{\sharp}-F\sharp-G-A-B\flat$	$D-E\flat-E^{\sharp}-F-F\sharp-G\sharp-A-B$
Harm. status	1 \flat 9 9 \flat 3 3 \sharp 5 13 \flat 7	1 \flat 9 9 \flat 3 3 \sharp 5 13
	T_0	T_3
Scale degree	$\hat{1} \flat\hat{2} \sharp\hat{2} \flat\hat{3} \hat{3} \sharp\hat{4} \hat{5} \hat{6} \flat\hat{7}$	$\hat{1} \flat\hat{2} \sharp\hat{2} \flat\hat{3} \hat{3} \sharp\hat{4} \hat{5} \hat{6}$
Pitch content	$C-D\flat-D^{\sharp}-E\flat-E^{\sharp}-F\sharp-G-A-B\flat$	$E\flat-F\flat-F^{\sharp}-G\flat-G^{\sharp}-A-B\flat$
Harm. status	1 \flat 9 9 \flat 3 3 \sharp 5	1 \flat 9 9 \flat 3 3 \sharp 5

(click to enlarge and see the rest)

Example 12. Scriabin, Masque, Op. 63, No. 1, mm. 1–4

enforces a plan that promotes the correlation between pitch content and transposition interval. See Table 1. In the T_3 , T_6 , and T_9 operations, the acoustic indicator (\sharp) is not present in the original (T_0) form of 9-10; it always articulates itself as a “new” pitch, as does the octatonic indicator (\flat) in T_4 . (The acoustic indicator is, in fact, the *only* new pitch, which is why ic-3 transpositions have a privileged status

Allegretto
avec une douceur cachée

T_3

7-26: C, D \flat , D \sharp , E, F \sharp , A, B \flat 7-26: E \flat , F \sharp , F \flat , G, A, C, D \flat

6-34: C Mystic Chord / 6-Z49: C Mystic Chord B

6-34: E \flat Mystic Chord / 6-Z49: E \flat Mystic Chord

* = octatonic indicator

(click to enlarge)

Example 13. Scriabin, Prelude, Op. 59, No. 2, mm. 1–5

Sauvage, belliqueux

acoustic indicator acoustic indicator

octatonic indicator octatonic indicator

p

8-18: C, C \sharp , D, E, F, G, A, B \flat (T_6)

(click to enlarge)

in Scriabin's
post-tonal
period.)

However, in the
case of T_2 , both
the acoustic and
octatonic
indicators are
present in the T_0
form and one or
both need to be
removed in
order to achieve
the specific
melodic
emphasis.

Given that $\flat 3$,
as noted above,
is the only pitch
that could
jeopardize the
acoustic/octaton
ic (via $\sharp 2 / \flat 2$)
interaction, its
omission is
preferred over
the omission of
the acoustic
indicator (in
 T_2), which

stands for the third of the *Mystic Chord* in the original T_0 form.

[3.9]

Poème-Nocturne, Op. 61, Op. 63, No. 2, the prelude from Op. 59, and Op. 69, No. 1 exemplify this approach.

Poème-Nocturne begins with the 9-10 octachord 8-27 on D^b : D^b-E^b
 $-E^b$
 $-(F^b)-F-G-A^b$
 $-B^b-C^b$. This T_0 phrase unit is replaced by

9-10 on E^b , T_2 :
 $E^b-F^b-F^{\natural}-G^b$
 $-G^{\natural}-A-B^b$

-C-D ♭ . See
 Example 9
 above. The
 octatonic
 indicator in T_2 ,
 $F\flat$, is missing
 from T_0 . It
 would have
 been possible to
 exclude $F\sharp$ (\sharp
 \flat), the acoustic
 indicator,
 instead of $F\flat$.
 However,
 Scriabin would
 then erode the
 ground on
 which these
 subtle
 interrelationships
 are built, i.e.
 the *Mystic
 Chord*, which,
 in the absence
 of its third ($F\sharp$
 in T_0), loses
 identity and
 meaning.

[3.10] However, in Op. 63, No. 1 the change to a different transposition interval (ic-3) dictates a different approach. See Example 12. The acoustic indicator in T_3 is, by convention, a “new” pitch (it is the only pitch in T_3 missing from T_0). Hence, in order to find common harmonic ground between the acoustic and the octatonic scales, Scriabin simply removes the other exclusively octatonic pitch $E\flat$ ($\flat\sharp$) from T_0 . The melodic

emphasis on the $\frac{2}{b}2$ chromatic dyad would have been more salient had E, \sharp $\frac{3}{3}$, been missing from T_0 . However, as in the case of Poème-Nocturne, that would have eroded the harmonic quality of the *Mystic Chord*.

[3.11] In contrast, in the Prelude, Op. 59, No. 2, \sharp $\frac{3}{3}$ in T_0 is missing (Example 13). Yet that particular work is something of a special case. It is Scriabin's first work to incorporate the octatonic scale;

hence, it is not fully in line with later works with respect to harmony and transpositional structure. For one thing, the harmonic structures do not conform to the interactive specifics displayed in Figure 1 above. The emergence of the exclusively octatonic $\mathbb{Z}_8(E\flat)$ in T_0 , combined with the absence of $\mathbb{Z}_8(E\sharp)$ in T_0 , deprives the articulated harmonies of their dominant quality. This creates an aural atmosphere that

is peculiar to the piece. In addition, the transpositional structure is more rigid than that of subsequent works. The A section of the rondo design (ABABA) is governed by the transposition of the initial phrase unit through the minor-third cycle, promoting the systematic unfolding of the acoustic indicator: D in T_0 , F in T_3 , G \sharp in T_6 , and B in T_9 :

T_0 : C-D \flat -D \sharp -E \flat -F \sharp -G-A-B \flat

T_3 : E \flat -F \flat -F \sharp -G \flat -A-B \flat -C-D \flat

T_6 : F \sharp -G-G \sharp -A -B \sharp -C \sharp -D \sharp -E

T_9 : A-A \sharp -B-C-D \sharp -E-F \sharp -G

T_{12} : C-D \flat -D \sharp -E \flat -F \sharp -G-A-B \flat

[3.12] Now consider T_4 . Opus 69, No. 1 (Example 10a above) provides a paradigmatic example of how this particular operation lays emphasis on the $\frac{2}{\flat 2}$ chromatic dyad. Measures 1–8 involve two T_4 -related four-measure phrases. What interests us here is the first half of each phrase, which unfolds the acoustic/octatonic interplay on pitch centers C and E, respectively. T_0 (mm. 1–2) carries the 9-10 heptachord 7-26 (C–D \flat –D \sharp –E–F \sharp –A–B \flat) formed by the common acoustic/octatonic pentachord 5-28 and the acoustic/octatonic indicators D/D \flat , respectively. The T_4 of measures 5–6 unfolds as E–F–F \sharp –G \sharp –A \sharp –C \sharp –D (7-26 formed similarly to T_0). Missing from T_0 by convention (4 represents one of the three pitches absent from 9-10), the octatonic indicator F \flat articulates itself as a “new” pitch, and although the two T_4 -related phrases are not adjacent (mm. 3–4 carry the interpolation of the whole-tone pentachord 5-33), the effect is still audible.

[3.13] The concluding stages of Poème-Nocturne, Op. 61 provide further evidence of the compositional value of the $\frac{2}{\flat 2}$ chromaticism; measures 159–72

Example 14. Scriabin, Poème-Nocturne, Op. 61, mm. 159–72



(click to enlarge and see the rest)

bring about a perpetual oscillation of acoustic and octatonic “blocks.” The *Mystic Chord* on D^{\flat} of measure 159 initiates the dialectic with a *Mystic Chord* B variant (6-Z50: $D^{\flat} - E^{\flat} - F - G - A^{\flat} - B^{\flat}$), the latter configured so as to maintain focus (through voice-leading) on the $E^{\flat}/E^{\flat\flat}$ structural chromatic dyad (Example 14).

Figure 5.

Measure 1: 6-34 → 7-31	Measure 2: 6-34 → 7-31
Measure 3: 6-21 → 7-31	Measure 4: 6-Z50
Measure 5: 6-21 → 7-31	Measure 6: 5-19 → 7-31
Measure 15: 8-27 → 6-30	Measure 16: 7-31 → 6-30

(click to enlarge)

[3.14] To further intensify the effect, Scriabin deprives the octatonic indicator of its

harmonic
clothing: in the
last six
measures, E $\flat\flat$
alone interacts
with the acoustic
“block.” This
particular tone,
which is the
lowered ninth of
a chord with a
very strong
octatonic
orientation,
maintains
enough harmonic
weight from its
membership in
the *Mystic Chord*
B variant of
measures 160–62
and 164–66 to
effect a change
of genus. The
closure manifests
the structural
role of the
present
chromaticism.

[3.15] In

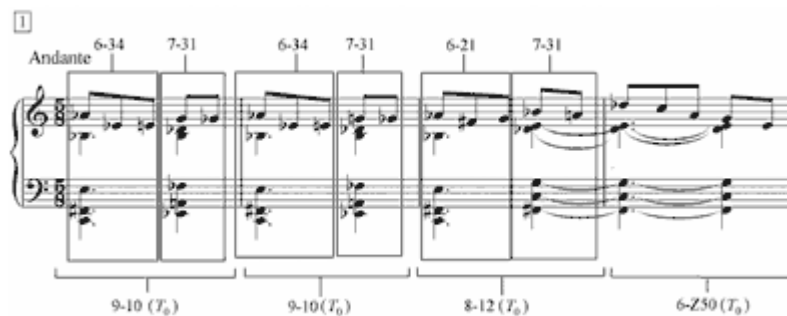
contrast, the
Prelude, Op. 67,
No. 1 features
segments that
resort to
combination.

Pople
demonstrates
that the vast
majority of the
proposed
segments are
governed by
superset 9-10 or
by specific 9-10
subsets.⁽¹⁹⁾ Our
concern here is
with the pitch
content and pitch
interrelationships
in terms of the
acoustic and
octatonic scales
within each
segment.

Measures 1–6
and 15–16, taken
as samples
(every measure
constitutes a
segment here),

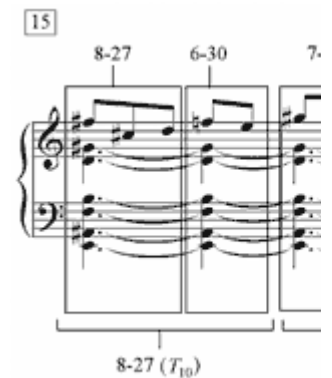
present the
 following set
 successions
 (Example 15):

Example 15a. Scriabin, Prelude, Op. 67, No. 1, mm. 1–6.
 Based on Pople⁽²⁰⁾



(click to enlarge and see the rest)

Example 15b. Scriabin
 67, No. 1, mm.



(click to enlarge)

[3.16] The first six segments (mm. 1–6) are governed by the T_0 form of 9-10: $G\flat-G\sharp$
 $-A\flat-A\sharp$ – $B\flat-C-D\flat-E\flat-F\flat$. Note that, in Op. 67, No. 1, the acoustic indicator ($A\flat$ in
 T_0) is the pitch that initiates every transposition of 9-10 (“each statement of this extra
 pc, at whatever transposition of 9-10, initiates melodic motion”).⁽²¹⁾ Measures 1 and 2,
 which are identical, are governed by 9-10 itself, and measures 3–6 are governed by
 9-10 subsets: measures 3 and 5 by 8-12, measure 4 by 6-Z50, and measure 6 by 7-31,
 all at T_0 .⁽²²⁾ Measures 15 and 16 are governed by 8-27 and 7-31 at T_{10} (Example 15b).
 Two of the eight units (mm. 1 and 2) seem to conform to the principle of pitch
 substitution: they juxtapose 6-34 with 7-31, two distinct acoustic and octatonic
 subsets. The acoustic/octatonic indicators may not be adjacent, but Scriabin’s
 voice-leading keeps them in the same voice. Three segments feature either a single
 octatonic subset (6-Z50 at m. 4), or successions of octatonic subsets: 5-19 → 7-31,
 7-31 → 6-30 at measures 6 and 16, respectively. However, the remaining segments
 present something worthy of special attention: acoustic/octatonic hybrids, set-types

6-21 and 8-27, especially the latter, which articulates $\flat^2_2(\text{F})$ and $\sharp^2_2(\text{F}\sharp)$ in the same harmonic structure *simultaneously*. These segments feature structures that are subsets of 9-10 but *not* of 7-34 or 8-28. Here, the organization of pitch structure points to combination. Note that the presence of these hybrids is not exhausted in measures 3, 5, and 15. 6-21 and 8-27 appear twelve and four times, respectively, throughout the score.⁽²³⁾

[3.17] A similar approach is encountered in Op. 59, No. 2. See Example 13 above. T_0 (the opening phrase unit at mm. 1–5), utilizes the 9-10 octachord 8-18: C–C \sharp –D–E \flat –F \sharp –G–A–B \flat (the B \flat is a non-harmonic tone). The acoustic indicator, D \flat in the opening (T_0) phrase unit, unfolds within a harmonic framework that includes $\flat^3_3(\text{E}\flat)$ instead of the octatonic indicator D \flat : C–D–E \flat –G–B \flat .⁽²⁴⁾ The latter appears in the following beat surrounded by C, the pitch center of the initial T_0 phrase unit. This scheme repeats itself in the subsequent transpositions of the primary phrase unit. The presence of the exclusively octatonic pitch E \flat , along with the registral separation of the acoustic and octatonic indicators, rules out pitch substitution in favor of combination.

[3.18] We may draw the following conclusions regarding Scriabin’s approach to pitch organization. Pitch substitution, and thus structural chromaticism in terms of the chromatic dyad \sharp/\flat^2 , plays the leading role in Scriabin’s pitch-syntactic routines. However, combination also has a significant role to play. In addition, one sees phrase units formed by unadulterated octatonic or acoustic structures.

[3.19] Pitch substitution involves either “blocks” that bear the distinctive aura of their parent scale (i.e., Op. 61, mm. 159–72) or structures that are subsets of both 7-34 and 8-28, which leave the play of identities to the acoustic/octatonic indicators (i.e., Op. 61, mm. 1–7, Op. 69, No. 1, mm. 2 and 6). This invites a welcome dialectic that produces a well-controlled, subtle, perpetual change or mixture of “color.” In that sense, chromaticism, subtle as it is, acts not only as an agent of modal mutation, but

above all as a primary compositional determinant with respect to the idea of development, the idea of “change” and “progress.”

Pitch material and form

[4.1] With the exception of Op. 61, all of the piano miniatures that Scriabin wrote in the early post-tonal period are cast in part forms: binary, ternary, and rondo. With regard to large structure, these forms exhibit two primary formal functions: (i) development (embedded within the motion away from and back to the primary “tonality”), which includes motivic and thematic development to varying extents, and (ii) contrast, which depends largely on harmonic and tonal/modal “change.” In the tonal era, “change” was principally accommodated by the modulation from one tonal center to another, subject to context. In twentieth-century music, composers also relied on cross-collectional interaction, which usually involves more than two scales and, more importantly, provides an effective means to emphasize the individual “color” imposed by each scale’s unique interval content. The correlation between genus and formal unit is an important form-determining device, as exemplified in Richard Park’s analytical work on Debussy.⁽²⁵⁾ In the piano prelude *Feuilles mortes*, for example, “each formal unit is associated with one or another genus.”⁽²⁶⁾ However, in contrast to composers such as Debussy, Stravinsky, Bartók, and Ravel, Scriabin does not shift between scales at the beginnings of new sections. His “modulations” rarely pursue the distinction of character between formal boundaries that are found so often in early twentieth-century repertoires. Instead, he largely relies on a subtle cross-collectional dialectic on a single pitch center *within* the phrase unit that is accommodated by pitch invariance and intensified by $\frac{2}{b}2$ chromaticism.

[4.2] In addition, at the local level, decorative chromatic tones appear very sparingly. One of these is the B (mm. 2 and 4) in the Prelude, Op. 59, No. 2 (see Example 13 above), which is an accented passing tone that falls out of the pitch domain of the local reference scale. The insertion of chromatic tones within principal melodic statements, not to mention modulatory passages of any kind, has for centuries been an extremely resourceful means of elaboration in modal, tonal, or post-tonal contexts. On

several occasions, if not in several styles, it has also been a structural arbiter of such basic musical parameters as harmony, phrase structure and form.⁽²⁷⁾ Thus, constraining the pitch content of each phrase to a maximum of nine pitches has a radical effect on musical meaning. In one sense, Scriabin not only employs limited pitch resources (single-type harmonies on a single scale degree), he also appears to deprive his music of the widely applicable techniques of pitch elaboration that would compensate for any loss of interest.

[4.3] Why then does Scriabin refrain from such a powerful compositional resource? In fact, he does not. The lack of a correlation between genus and formal unit and the absence of the chromatic aggregate within the local phrases are balanced by a subtly articulated transpositional *modus operandi* that exploits pitch content and transposition interval to ensure the presence of either the acoustic or the octatonic indicator as “new” pitches at the various transpositions of the original phrase unit. At the same time, the $\frac{2}{b}2$ melodic argument is imbedded very carefully within a sophisticated motivic network in ways that perpetually maintain melodic emphasis.

[4.4] In addition, while the pitch total of phrase transpositions very rarely exceeds the pitch gamut of 9-10, Scriabin’s approach allows the music ultimately to unfold the chromatic aggregate in a procedure that operates beneath the musical surface. The whole operation spans longer chunks of musical time, in which the acoustic indicator provides the three missing pitches at T_3 , T_6 , and T_9 ; occasionally, such chunks govern an entire composition, as in the case of Op. 59, No. 2. Structural chromaticism, both local and far-reaching, along with the gradual unfolding of the chromatic aggregate, offers an effective means to overcome the constraining aspects of Scriabin’s pitch resources. To continue with the same line of thought, the occasional interpolation of whole-tone “blocks” invites a welcome change of “harmonic color.”

[5.1] The present article proposes an analytical model as a means to decode the methods of pitch syntax practiced by Scriabin in his early post-tonal period. It aims to present an ample and coherent exegesis of the many peculiarities that characterize

Scriabin's musical idiom. The development of this particular analytical model has been based on its consistent manifestation in the miniature piano pieces between Opp. 59 and 69, inclusive. Inspection reveals that Scriabin persistently insists on the specifics of the acoustic/octatonic argument. One can observe it saturating the musical surface in Op. 59, Nos. 1 and 2, Opus 61, Op. 63, Nos. 1 and 2, Op. 65, No. 2, Op. 67, No. 1, and Op. 69, Nos. 1 and 2. The acoustic/octatonic argument is also a principal feature in Op. 65, Nos. 1 and 3 and Op. 67, No. 2.⁽²⁸⁾ Nevertheless, it is integrated within the broader syntactic scheme that appears fully developed in the Tenth Sonata, the first work of Scriabin's final post-tonal period.

[5.2] The persistent use of the acoustic/octatonic argument suggests more than just the integrity of the proposed analytical model. Acting as an arbiter of cohesion in the composer's early post-tonal period, it reveals a remarkable unity of style, a style that is unique because of the ingenuity with which its primary ingredients are intermingled. Scriabin is not alone in deploying stock-of-the-day pitch material. The Russians and other Eastern Europeans, as well as the French, had been using the octatonic, the whole-tone, and the acoustic scales well before their initial appearance in Scriabin's oeuvre. What distinguishes Scriabin from his contemporaries is the method he devises to exploit his primary pitch resource, in particular the $\mathbb{2}/\flat\mathbb{2}$ chromaticism that remains at the core of the acoustic/octatonic argument.

[5.3] The use of chromaticism, either in terms of $\mathbb{2}$ and its inflection or of other chromatic counterparts, which remains conspicuous in every stage of the composer's stylistic evolution, constitutes a vital technical attribute. This kind of pitch-syntactic consistency raises the possibility that the analytical model that was intended to cope with the pitch issues within the early post-tonal miniatures could also be applicable to the composer's entire post-tonal oeuvre.