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I. Jeongin Kim, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts in Piano.

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Musical Borrowing in Selected Piano Works of Ruth Schonthal

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Musical Borrowing in Selected Piano Works of Ruth Schonthal

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of the University of Cincinnati
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by

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Abstract

Ruth Schonthal (1924–2006) was a Jewish-American composer and educator of German birth. She studied with Paul Hindemith at Yale University, yet would eventually reject his compositional style. She favored incorporating and transforming the music of the European tradition, and claimed inspiration from Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Brahms, Bartók, Scriabin, and Rachmaninoff. Her piano works incorporate and transform borrowed materials from those composers with her own compositional style.

This document analyzes Schonthal's musical borrowing techniques present in selected piano works. I provide a biographical portrait of Schonthal in the first chapter along with her achievements and stylistic influences. The following four chapters are devoted to three musical borrowing techniques that Schonthal employed: modeling, setting, and patchwork. Modeling is divided into two chapters. The first examines her modeling of Romantic piano literature, and the second focuses on modeling pedagogical repertoire. I have employed J. Peter Burkholder's typology of musical borrowing as the foundation for my study.

This topic is important because Schonthal's piano compositions are underrepresented in contemporary piano literature. Her focus on traditional forms ran counter to many of her contemporaries, yet in focusing on the music of the past, she was able to develop a mature compositional style that maintains relevance today. My aim is to provide an insight into Schonthal's mature compositional style and how musical borrowing influenced that style.

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I would like to acknowledge Dr. J. W. Park and Myongeun Schuyler who opened the doors for me to study in the United States. Without their help, I would not be here now.

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Lawrence and Judith Walker, 나의 어머니 MyongHee Choi, Kevin Rockwood, and my Lord

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Introduction

Ruth Schonthal (1924–2006) was a Jewish-American composer and pianist of German birth whose music brought together elements of European Romanticism and folk songs. She was also a remarkable pianist and dedicated educator in both piano and composition, and served as a professor at several universities in New York with her final position at New York University from 1977 to 2006. Lowell Liebermann, one of Schonthal's prominent students, has claimed, "Ruth had boundless enthusiasm for all music and knew no aesthetic boundaries." The German classical and romantic musical traditions are a fundamental element in her mature compositional style, which reflect Schonthal's musical links to and yearning for Old World culture. In an interview with Jane LePage, Schonthal described her compositional style as follows: "I feel a special kinship to the European, especially the German and Viennese musical tradition, and use this as the foundation of my own musical creativity."

While many of her contemporaries moved away from tradition and towards serialism, electronic music, and minimalism, Schonthal remained strongly rooted in the European tradition. This is not to say that Schonthal was conservative, but rather that she choose to borrow aspects of previous composers' works while developing her own compositional style. Schonthal

¹ Allan Kozinn, "Ruth Schonthal, A Composer of Eclectic Vision, Dies at 82," *New York Times*, July 19, 2006.

² Lowell Liebermann, "Ruth Schonthal (1924–2006): A Remembrance," *New Music Box*, July 18, 2006, accessed August 12, 2013, http://www.newmusicbox.org/articles/Ruth-Schonthal-19242006-A-Remembrance/.

³ Roswitha Sperber, *Women Composers in Germany*, ed. Roswitha Sperber, trans. Timothy Nevill (Bonn: Inter Nationes, 1996), 84.

⁴ Composer's interview with Jane Weiner LePage, quoted in Jane Weiner LePage, *Women Composers*, *Conductors, and Musicians of the Twentieth Century: Selected Biographies* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1980), 235.

incorporated and transformed piano music of the European tradition, and used musical borrowing as a compositional device in her piano works.

Document Organization

The first chapter of this document is devoted to a biographical portrait of Schonthal, including her achievements and stylistic influences. Since no previous document has addressed musical borrowing in Schonthal's piano works, the remaining four chapters will focus on identifying specific compositional techniques using J. Peter Burkholder's typology of musical borrowing. I will discuss which musical borrowing techniques that she employed and those found in a selection of Schonthal's solo piano works. The works include *Sonatina* (1939), *Sonata, quasi un'improvvisazione* (1964), *Reverberations* (1967–74), *Sonata Breve* (1973), *Fourteen Inventions* (1984), *In Homage of ... (24 Preludes)* (1978), *Fragments from a Woman's Diary* (1982), and *From North and South of the Border* (1982–85). The works were selected based on one of the following criteria:

- The composer's program notes listed the inspiration of a work.
- Reviews of a piece indicated that a musical influence was present.
- An analysis of the work revealed borrowed material.

My purpose is to show that musical borrowing was an important aspect of Schonthal's musical style. The topic is intended for pianists who may be unfamiliar with Ruth Schonthal's piano works and proposes a framework for understanding these pieces with their references to previous composers' works.⁵

⁵ Ruth Schonthal, *In Homage of... (24 Preludes)* (Kassel: Furore Verlag, 1997), 1.

Literature Review

There are five DMA theses on Schonthal's music. These are Corazon Andres Bisda's "The Piano Works of Ruth Schonthal," Lauren J. Cox's "The Clarinet Compositions of Ruth Schonthal: A Performer's Guide," Kai-An Ann Wu's "An Introduction to the Contemporary Piano Works Selected for Juried Performances in the 2001 and 2005 Van Cliburn International Piano Competitions," Jun-Ping Lo's "The Cello Works of Ruth Schonthal," and Joyce A Ford's "The Songs of Ruth Schonthal."

Bisda's thesis explores Schonthal's piano works through 1991 focusing on harmony, texture, sound, melody, rhythm, and tempo. Bisda devotes one chapter to Schonthal's piano works, dividing them into sonatas, short pieces, and pedagogical method books. Bisda's thesis contains a one- to two-page description of each piano work, including Schonthal's program notes and a list of works that might have served as models for the piece. She also devotes one chapter to *Fragments from a Woman's Diary* (1982), including a paragraph description of each movement and a discussion of sound, texture, harmony, melody, rhythm, and tempo. She provides a one-sentence description of "In Perpetual Motion" from *Fragments from a Woman's*

 $^{^6}$ Corazon Andres Bisda, "The Piano Works of Ruth Schonthal" (DMA thesis, Manhattan School of Music, 1991).

⁷ Lauren J. Cox, "The Clarinet Compositions of Ruth Schonthal: A Performer's Guide" (DMA thesis, Florida State University, 2011).

⁸ Kai-An Ann Wu, "An Introduction to the Contemporary Piano Works Selected for Juried Performances in the 2001 and 2005 Van Cliburn International Piano Competitions" (DMA thesis, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2009).

⁹ Jun-Ping Lo, "The Cello Works of Ruth Schonthal" (DMA thesis, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2002).

¹⁰ Joyce A. Ford, "The Songs of Ruth Schonthal" (DMA thesis, University of South Carolina, 2004).

¹¹ Bisda, 15–50.

¹² Ibid., 51–63.

Diary, suggesting the influence of Chopin's *Etude* in A minor, op. 25, no. 11.¹³ However, she does not provide a comparative analysis of how the movements were influenced by and related to the listed works. In my thesis I will detail how Schonthal employed these piano works and identify for the first time the types of musical borrowing that she employed.

Cox's thesis mainly focuses on the composer's clarinet works. She does, however, discusses the influence of Bartók's music on Schonthal's *Bells of Sarajevo*, ¹⁴ particularly focusing on the borrowed Eastern European folk melodies. ¹⁵ This is in keeping with Schonthal's mature compositional style, which references music of previous historical periods, particularly those of the European tradition.

Wu's thesis devotes one chapter for *Sonata, quasi un'improvvisazione* (1964). She reproduces the composer's program note, which reads "A rhapsodic, contrasting concert piece. A kind of Brahmsian motive undergoes many musical and virtuosic transformations." The author includes an interview with Robert Plano, the pianist who performed *Sonata, quasi un'improvvisazione*, and they discuss the difficulties of performing the work. Wu does not explore how Schonthal's piece was influenced by Brahms.

Both Ford's and Lo's theses provide one chapter about Schonthal's musical style and influences. Both authors describe Schonthal's musical influence and divide her compositions into three periods coinciding with the years the composer lived in Germany, Mexico, and the United States.¹⁷ This periodization includes a first period (1938–41), escape from Berlin to Sweden; a

¹³ Ibid., 56.

¹⁴ Schonthal, *Bells of Sarajevo* for clarinet and prepared piano (Kassel: Furore Verlag, 1997).

¹⁵ Cox, 57–63.

¹⁶ Wu, 131.

¹⁷ Ford, 5–12; Lo, 16–23.

second period (1941–60), escape to Mexico, move to America; and third period (1960–2006), isolation in the United States. ¹⁸ Although Ford and Lo's theses helped me understand Schonthal's compositional influence for her cello works and songs, neither author discussed the different types of musical borrowing found in her piano music.

Martina Helmig's *Ruth Schonthal: A Composer's Musical Development in Exile* and Jane Weiner LePage's *Women Composers, Conductors, and Musicians of the Twentieth Century: Selected Biographies* provide biographies of Schonthal's life and musical career. Helmig pays more attention to Schonthal's exile from Nazi Germany and how it influenced her compositional style. Helmig analyzes selected works, but does not discuss Schonthal's musical borrowing. LePage devotes one chapter to the composer that includes several of Schonthal's quotations, letters from her teachers, and critical reviews. Although her study also does not include a discussion on Schonthal's musical borrowing as an element of her compositional technique, she provides performance reviews of piano works that shows Schonthal's inspiration from and admiration for previous composers. Both authors list the composer's compositional *oeuvre* (LePage includes works only through 1980), including publication and discographical information.

Mark L. Lehman's, Leslie Petteys's, and Carol Ann Berry's reviews of Schonthal's piano works draw similarities between Schonthal's piano works and those of previous composers.²¹

¹⁸ Ford, 5; Lo, 16.

¹⁹ Martina Helmig, *Ruth Schonthal: A Composer's Musical Development in Exile*, ed. Adina Mornell, trans. Vanessa Agnew (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2006); and LePage, *Women Composers, Conductors, and Musicians of the Twentieth Century*.

²⁰ Raymond Ericson of *New York Times* reviewed her works on April 13, 1964: "Pleasantly Brahmsian or chromatic in the post-Romantic manner, and she was not above deliberate references, by quotation, to the works of earlier composers."

²¹ Mark L. Lehman, "Schonthal: Canticles of Hieronymus; Self-Portrait, Variations; Reverberations;

Lehman mentions a formal similarity between Schonthal's *Sonatina* (1939) and Ravel's *Sonatine* (1903/1905); Petteys addresses a musical idea reminiscent between Schonthal's *Gestures* (1978/1979) and Schoenberg's *Sechs kleine Klavierstücke*, Op. 19; and Berry makes a structural comparison between Schonthal's *Pentatonics* and Bartók's *Mikrokosmos*. However, none identifies the particular types of musical borrowing in these pieces.

There are several recordings of Schonthal's piano works by pianists Nanette Kaplan Solomon, Margaret Mills, Adina Mornell, and Gary Steigerwalt.²² These pianists worked closely with the composer,²³ and their recordings helped reinforce the interpretation that Schonthal wrote about in her program notes.

Methodology

To analyze Schonthal's techniques of musical borrowing, I have employed J. Peter Burkholder's typology of musical borrowing described in *All Made of Tunes: Charles Ives and the Uses of Musical Borrowing*.²⁴ Ives composed nearly two hundred pieces or movements that incorporate music by other composers.²⁵ Most scholars term this musical borrowing or

Sonatina," American Record Guide 65, no. 6 (November 2002): 170–72; Leslie Petteys, "Ruth Schonthal: The Canticles of Hieronymus; Gestures; Self Portrait of the Artist as an Older Woman," International Alliance for Women in Music Journal (June 1996): 46; Carol Ann Berry, "Pentatonics for Piano Solo," The American Music Teacher 48, no. 1 (August 1998): 72.

Nanette Kaplan Solomon, Sunburst: Solo Piano Works by 7 American Women, Leonard, LE 345, 1998, CD; Margaret Mills, Margaret Mills Plays Piano Works by Ruth Schonthal and Lowell Liebermann, Cambria CAMCD-1094, 1993, CD; Adina Mornell, Reverberations: Adina Mornell Plays Ruth Schonthal, Berlin Classics, Edel 8516, 1992, CD; Ruth Schontahl and Gary Steigerwalt, Fragments from a Woman's Diary/In Homage of..., Orion, ORS 85490, 1985, 33 1/3 rpm.

²³ Schonthal dedicated *Canticles of Hieronymus* to Margaret Mills who premiered the piece, Adina Mornell recorded *Reverberations* under the direction of Schonthal, and Gary Steigerwalt was Schonthal's piano student and recorded several piano works of his teacher.

²⁴ James Peter Burkholder, *All Made of Tunes: Charles Ives and the Uses of Musical Borrowing* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995).

²⁵ Ibid., 3.

"quotation." ²⁶ Burkholder however has insisted that the relationship between the works of Ives and his resources were more substantial and more detailed than can be suggested by the word "quotation." ²⁷ Working through the music of Ives, Burkholder began to see how Ives used existing music within his own, and he identified different types of borrowing. ²⁸ Burkholder specifically defines fourteen techniques of musical borrowing employed by Ives (see Table 1). ²⁹ By making the distinction between these compositional techniques, Burkholder was able to better understand Ives's music and apply these typologies to other composers' music. ³⁰ In order to demonstrate the types of musical borrowing within Ruth Schonthal's piano works, I have studied how Schonthal used three of Burkholder's types of borrowing: modeling, setting, and patchwork. In my study, I will focus specifically on these three types of musical borrowing, and my style study will include the borrowed material, procedures, motive, melody, and form. I have employed additional supporting material, such as musical examples of the pieces and the borrowed works, where appropriate.

²⁶ Burkholder, "The Uses of Existing Music: Musical Borrowing as a Field," *Note: Quarterly Journal of the Music Library Association* 50, no. 3 (March 1994): 858.

²⁷ Ibid., 853.

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Burkholder, *All Made of Tunes*, 3–4.

³⁰ Idem, "The Uses of Existing Music," 858.

Table 1. Uses of existing music in the works of Charles Ives³¹

Modeling	A work or section on an existing piece, assuming its structure, incorporating part of its melodic material, imitating its form or procedures, or using it as a model in some other way (<i>Holiday Quickstep; Slow March;</i> the Polonaise; and others, ca. 1887–88)
Variations	On a given tune (Fantasia on "Jerusalem the Golden," ca. 1890–89)
Paraphrasing	An existing tune to form a new melody, theme, or motive (Fantasia on "Jerusalem the Golden," variation 2)
Setting	An existing tune with a new accompaniment (March No.1, ca. 1890–92)
Cantus firmus	Presenting a given tune in long notes against a more quickly moving texture (<i>March No. 1</i>)
Medley	Stating two or more existing tunes, relatively complete, one after another in a single movement (<i>March No. 1</i>)
Quodlibet	Combining two or more existing tunes or fragments in counterpoint or in quick succession, most often as a joke or technical tour de force (<i>Sketch</i> , ca. 1892)
Stylistic allusion	Alluding not to a specific work but to a general style or type of music (<i>Memories</i> , 1897; <i>Psalm 67</i> , ca. 1898)
Transcribing	A work for a new medium (arrangement for string quartet of the second movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in F minor, Op. 2, No. 1, ca. 1898)
Programmatic quotation	Fulfilling an extra musical program or illustrating part of a text (<i>Yale-Princeton Football Game</i> , ca. 1899)
Cumulative setting	A complex form in which the theme, either a borrowed tune or a melody paraphrased from one or more existing tunes, is presented complete only near the end of a movement, preceded by development of motives from the theme, fragmentary or altered presentation of the theme, and exposition of important countermelodies (<i>Fugue in Four Keys on "The Shining Shore</i> ," ca. 1902)
Collage	In which a swirl of quoted and paraphrased tunes in added to a musical structure based on modeling, paraphrase, cumulative setting, or a narrative program (<i>Overture and March</i> "1776," ca. 1903–8; <i>Country Band March</i> , ca. 1905–14)
Patchwork	In which fragments of two or more tunes are stitched together, sometimes elided through paraphrase and sometimes linked by Ives's interpolations (<i>Largo cantabile (Hymn)</i> , ca. 1904–14)
Extended paraphrase	In which the melody for an entire work or section is paraphrased from an existing tune (<i>The Housatonic at Stockbridge</i> , ca. 1908–19)

³¹ Table reproduced from Burkholder, *All Made of Tunes*, 3–4.

Chapter One

Ruth Schonthal: Pianist, Educator and Composer

Ruth Schonthal was a relatively little known composer when compared to her contemporaries, and critics often overlooked her in a period that focused so much on the atonal. Schonthal experienced much turmoil, especially in her early life, and these experiences instilled a longing to reconnect with the music of her heritage. Musical borrowing would become a valuable technique for reconnecting to that music.

Youth and Exile

Ruth Schonthal was born to Viennese parents in Hamburg, Germany on June 27, 1924. At the age of five, she became the youngest female pupil at the Stern Conservatory in Berlin, concentrating on piano and music theory. In addition to attending the conservatory, she took a course from the music theoretician and conductor Heinz Etthoven on analyzing operas and Beethoven's piano sonatas.

By 1938 the political situation in Germany had deteriorated, so the Schonthal family fled Nazi Germany for Stockholm, Sweden and stayed with Schonthal's uncle.³ She continued to study piano, theory and composition with Olaf Wibergh, Alfred Meizel, and a young composer named Ingemar Liljefors at the Royal Academy of Music in Stockholm.⁴ By 1940 the Nazis had

¹ Roswitha Sperber, ed., *Women Composers in Germany*, trans. Timothy Nevill (Bonn: Inter Nationes, 1996), 82.

² Martina Helmig, *Ruth Schonthal: A Composer's Musical Development in Exile*, ed. Adina Mornell, trans. Vanessa Agnew (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2006), 3.

³ Ibid., 5.

⁴ Ibid., 6.

invaded Denmark and Norway, and Russia had invaded Finland. The Schonthal family decided to flee once again. The family was eager to reach the United States, but their visas were delayed.⁵ Ruth's father, Fritz, was able to obtain a visa to Mexico by investing in a business there, and the Schonthals left Sweden for Mexico in January 1941 just three months prior to Ruth Schonthal's graduation from the Royal Academy of Music.⁶ Although her stay in Sweden had been short, the composer recalled in an interview with Martina Helmig that her time there was very productive and busy.⁷ Among her notable keyboard compositions from this period are *Sonatina* in A minor (1939); *Etudes* in E flat, C, and d (1939); and *Preludes* in E, C sharp (1939), and D flat (1940).

The Schonthal family's trip to Mexico was strenuous. First they traveled to Moscow and took the Trans-Siberian railroad to Vladivostok. They then sailed to Yokohama in order to reach Manzanillo, Mexico.⁸ They finally settled in Mexico City in 1941.

Academic Training and Achievements

A few months after arriving in Mexico City, Ruth Schonthal received a full scholarship to study composition with Manuel Ponce at the Conservatorio Nacional de Música,⁹ and her talents as a composer-pianist were soon recognized. The Mexican University Symphony Orchestra premiered Schonthal's *Concierto Romantico for Piano and Orchestra* (1941) with the composer

⁵ Jane Weiner LePage, Women Composers, Conductors, and Musicians of the Twentieth Century: Selected Biographies (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1980), 237.

⁶ Corazon Andres Bisda, "The Piano Works of Ruth Schonthal" (DMA thesis, Manhattan School of Music, 1991), 7.

⁷ Helmig, 6.

⁸ Bisda, 7.

⁹ LePage, 238.

as soloist when she was just seventeen. The piece received positive reviews from the critics.¹⁰ Schonthal won the Conservatorio Nacional's concerto competition and was awarded a series of concerts at the Palacio de Bellas Artes.¹¹ She also performed regularly on Mexico Radio XEQ.

Schonthal married Oscar Manuel Ochoa in May 1942, and their son, Benjamin, was born in September 1944. However, she was not satisfied with the marriage, and she divorced him in March 1946. In the meantime, Schonthal became well known in Mexico as a composer and pianist, but despite her fame, she was not content studying with Ponce. Schonthal wanted to broaden her study in the United States, and the opportunity emerged when she met Paul Hindemith during his visit to Mexico City in 1946. Schonthal attended all of his concerts and rehearsals, and her knowledge of German and Spanish made her a welcome assistant. Schonthal showed him several vocal works of her own and performed the second movement of her *Concierto Romantico* at a private audition. Hindemith was impressed with Schonthal's talent and compositional accomplishments, and offered her a full scholarship at Yale University. Schonthal left for New Haven in August 1946, and Benjamin remained in Mexico with her parents.

In 1948 she earned her Bachelor of Music in composition with honors. During her Yale years, she won a composition competition that resulted the premiere of *Präludium und Fuge in B*

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Bisda, 8.

¹² Helmig, 10.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ LePage, 239.

¹⁵ Helmig, 11.

and *Präludium und Fuge in F* (1947) at the Rochester Music Festival in 1948.¹⁶ After graduation from Yale, Schonthal traveled to her parents in Mexico and brought Benjamin to the United States, and they settled in New York City in fall 1948.

Professional Career as Pianist, Composer, and Educator

Schonthal made her New York City debut at Times Hall in March 1949 performing program of her own compositions.¹⁷ In 1950 Schonthal married Paul Seckel who was an art student at Yale. Schonthal began teaching piano at the Harry Davis School in Westchester, New York in 1952. In spite of this position, the high cost of living in New York City forced her to work long hours as a bar pianist. She played popular music and light classics at the Shelburne Hotel, Hickory House Jazz Club, and Quogue Club in Long Island for four years.¹⁸ Despite these challenges, she continued her career as a composer. She traveled back to Mexico City to perform her works at the Palacio de Bellas Artes in 1952 and regularly performed at the McMillan Theatre, 92nd Street Y, and New York University.

In March 1953 Schonthal's second son, Bernhard, was born. ¹⁹ In the same year, her first son, Benjamin, was diagnosed with epilepsy and a mental disorder, and Schonthal had to put him into a home. ²⁰

¹⁶ Bisda, 16.

¹⁷ 8 *Lieder* (Rainer Maria Rilke) for soprano and piano (1941–46), *2 Lieder* (Li Po translated by Klabund) for soprano and piano (1945), *Präludium und Fuge in B* for piano (1947), and *Sonata* in E flat for piano (1947/48).

¹⁸ Helmig, 18.

¹⁹ Ibid., 19

²⁰ Ibid

In 1958 Seckel and Schonthal decided to move from New York City to Westchester. She would open a private studio, teaching piano, composition and theory as many as forty-five students per week.²¹ With such a busy teaching schedule and the responsibility of running a household, Schonthal began feeling increasingly isolated artistically.²²

To remedy these feelings, she began taking orchestration lessons with Paul Creston in the early 1960s. He gave her support and encouragement, and they became trusted colleagues.

Creston introduced her to the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers

(ASCAP), American Music Center (AMC), and Shawnee Press, which published her piano work *Miniatures* in 1962.²³ The publication of *Miniatures* exposed Schonthal to more professional
contacts, and her music began being performed more often in concert and on the radio.²⁴

By the 1970s Schonthal had published over thirty compositions through Oxford University Press, Galaxy Music Corporation, Carl Fisher, Furore Verlag, Hildegard Music Publishing, Schirmer, and Sisra Press.²⁵ Schonthal also served as a faculty member at Adelphi University, teaching music appreciation, modern music, and music history from 1974 to 1977, and at the Music Conservatory of Westchester, New York, teaching composition, theory, and piano from 1977 to 2004. She taught music appreciation, ear training, and composition at New York University, her last position, from 1977 until her death in 2006.²⁶

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Bisda, 11.

²⁴ Helmig, 21.

²⁵ Ibid., 325–28.

²⁶ Lauren J. Cox, "The Clarinet Compositions of Ruth Schonthal: A Performer's Guide" (DMA thesis, Florida State University, 2011), 6.

Ruth Schonthal composed over one hundred works including three operas, fifty-five keyboard works, twenty-four chamber works, and twenty-seven vocal works. Recordings of her music can be found on such labels as Leonarda, Orion, Columbia Records, Opus One, Cambria and Edel Records.²⁷

Schonthal's awards and recognition include third prize at the Triannual Delta Omicron International Competition for her String quartet *Totengesänge* (1962–63), finalist for both the Kennedy Center-Friedheim Award for *In Homage of... (24 Preldues)* (1978) and New York City Opera Competition for *The Courtship of Camilla* (1980), Certificate of Merit at Yale University School of Music Alumni Association (1981), and Heidelberger Künstlerinnenpreis (1994).

Schonthal's Musical Style and Stylistic Influences

Schonthal's earlest musical influence was her parents who were both amateur pianists who had studied with a pupil of Theodor Leschetizky in Vienna. The family played the piano at home and regularly attended concerts and operas. Her father encouraged her to listen to the music of J. S. Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, and Chopin. The contemporary music of Schoenberg was not welcomed at the Schonthal household. In an interview with Selma Epstein, Schonthal recalled her parents' musical taste: "Both my parents had very conservative tastes in music, favoring the middle-European repertoire, particularly the German-Viennese."

²⁷ Nine of chamber music, twenty-three of piano music, and eight of vocal music.

²⁸ Helmig, 1.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Selma Epstein, "Composer Interview: Ruth Schonthal," *The International Alliance for Women in Music Journal* 1 (February 1994): 6.

Schonthal's study in Berlin, conservatory education and analyzing operas and Beethoven's piano sonatas, had deepened her knowledge of the European tradition. When Schonthal studied with Alfred Meizel in Stockholm, she had focused on the Romantic and Impressionistic piano literature, which played an influential role in her subsequent works.³¹ In Mexico Schonthal's Romantic tendency had still remained, but she had been influenced by Mexican folk songs sung by mariachis, from which she borrowed melodic and rhythmic elements in her subsequent compositions.³²

Schonthal learned much from Hindemith at Yale, and his teaching certainly influenced Schonthal's compositional style during that time. She described two of Hindemith's influences on her style: "the use of harmony as a way of producing tension and relaxation" and "analysis of harmonic development in the melody. However, after graduating from Yale, Schonthal decided that she must redirect her compositional efforts and disassociate herself from Hindemith's style:

Hindemith has often been accused of teaching his students to write and sound like he did. He was very methodical and in order to teach the craft of composition, he felt one had to approach each musical element separately. To this he added his esthetic judgment. Every student did the same exercises and thus it was unavoidable that the music produced sounded imitative. When I was writing my sonata during a semester break, I used to joke that I was writing my "Hindemith Sonata." In spite of all this, I owe a great deal to Hindemith's teaching and I learned much about harmonic control and contrapuntal skills. ³⁵

³¹ Joyce A. Ford, "The Songs of Ruth Schonthal" (DMA thesis, University of South Carolina, 2004), 6.

³² Helmig, 8.

³³ Jun-Ping Lo, "The Cello Works of Ruth Schonthal" (DMA thesis, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2002), 18.

³⁴ Ford, 9.

³⁵ Helmig, 239.

I wanted my music to express different things, and I was a very different person and of different temperament and sensitivity than Hindemith whom and whose music I much admire.³⁶

Schonthal made the decision to compose only in a medium that could be her personal expression when she met Paul Creston in early 1960s, and she wanted to keep her European legacy in her music.³⁷ She addressed specific sources of inspiration in one of her interviews with Epstein:

Other composers have been sources of inspiration, specifically positive have been: Beethoven's motivic development; Hindemith's theory of the harmonic *crescendo* and *decrescendo* and his contrapuntal techniques; Bartók's use of polytonality; Schoenberg's *Sprechstimme* and chromatic expressiveness; Satie's absence of barlines; Stravinsky's changes of meters; Chopin's conciseness (in his *Preludes*); and various twentieth-century techniques, including minimalism—but all of these only when appropriate.³⁸

Schonthal's dynamic upbringing made it possible for her to assimilate many diverse ideas into her compositional style. Being forced to flee to several countries as a young woman, Schonthal had to constantly adapt to new surroundings and new cultures. For instance, her time in Mexico exposed her to South American folk melodies, which she would incorporate into pieces such as *Fiestas y danzas* (1961). Her German roots instilled a respect for the European tradition on which she would base her mature compositional style. Schonthal's music reflected her admiration for the composers of her homeland, and borrowing their music would become the catalyst for her own creativity.

³⁶ Ibid., 240.

³⁷ Ibid., 241.

³⁸ Epstein, 7.

Chapter Two

Modeling I

In 1962, with the publication of her piano work *Miniatures*, Schonthal made her transition away from Hindemith's style. Her music from then on would be founded on the European tradition. While she developed a compositional style that was uniquely her own, she rooted it in the music of the European masters. Schonthal maintained her connection with previous composers by modeling their compositional styles, and in doing so she was able to articulate her own compositional ideas.

After 1962 references to the European tradition would become prevalent throughout her works, and several of her piano compositions are modeled on Romantic piano works by Chopin, Liszt, Brahms, Scriabin, and Rachmaninoff. Burkholder defines the musical borrowing technique of modeling as modeling: "a work or section on an existing piece, assuming its structure, incorporating part of its melodic material, imitating its form or procedures, or using it as a modeling some other way" (see Table 1). Martina Helmig has discussed Schonthal's compositional influences:

Brahms's "developing variation" is a source of inspiration for Schonthal's technique of transforming and metamorphosing the compositional elements with its ensuing emphasis on the total unity of the work. The notion of concentrating the musical idea in Schonthal's compositions is drawn from Chopin, and similarly the technique of pianistic virtuosity. Aside from this, Schonthal's work is characterized by quotations and stylistic quotations; most favored are Schumann, Schubert, Brahms, Chopin, Beethoven, Bach, Wagner, Strauss, Bartók, Hindemith, and Schönberg.²

¹ James Peter Burkholder, *All Made of Tunes: Charles Ives and the Uses of Musical Borrowing* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 3.

² Martina Helmig, *Ruth Schonthal: A Composer's Musical Development in Exile*, ed. Adina Mornell, trans. Vanessa Agnew (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2006), 268.

This chapter will analyze three of Schonthal's piano works, *In Homage of... (24 Preludes)* (1978), *Fragments from a Woman's Diary* (1982), and *Sonata, quasi un'improvvisazione* (1964), which are modeled after works of Chopin, Liszt, Brahms, Scriabin, and Rachmaninoff. I will examine how Schonthal modeled Romantic piano virtuosity in terms of style, emotional context, compositional procedures, and incorporating melodic material.

In Homage of... (24 Preludes) (1978)

In 1978 Schonthal composed a cycle of twenty-four preludes, *In Homage of... (24 Preludes)*, and it received a nomination for the Kennedy Center Friedheim Award that same year. Pianist Alec Chien premiered the work at New York's Carnegie Hall in 1978.

Schonthal admired Chopin's ability to exploit pianistic virtuosity. *In Homage of... (24 Preludes)* alludes to Chopin's twenty-four *Préludes*, Op. 28, and some of her preludes are modeled after several of his other piano works. To fit each prelude into a continuous set, Chopin maintains a striking contrast between one prelude and its successor, contributing to an overall tension and release, which adds to the flow of music throughout the set. In addition, he included a movement between the fifth and sixth scale degrees in each prelude.³ Schonthal's preludes neither mimic the key cycle of Chopin's *Préludes* nor the fifth-to-sixth scale degree motion, but there is a similar contrast between each prelude providing one long listening experience consisting of many contrasting and complementary movements.⁴

³ Andreas Boelcke, "Chopin's Preludes, Op. 28: A Cycle Unified by Motion between the Fifth and Six Scale Degrees" (DMA thesis, University of Cincinnati, 2008), 76.

⁴ Corazon Andres Bisda, "The Piano Works of Ruth Schonthal" (DMA thesis, Manhattan School of Music, 1991), 40.

Chopin's *Etude*, Op. 10, no. 12 (see Example 2.1) served as a model for Schonthal's *Preludes X* and *XXIV*. Chopin composed his etudes as specific technical studies, and Op. 10, no. 12 is a left-hand exercise. The left hand plays continuous sixteenth notes with arpeggios, large leaps, scales, and chromatic scale-like figures in various dynamics. As a result, it creates an energetic and stormy affect.

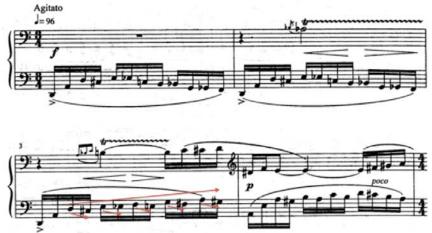
Example 2.1. Frédéric Chopin, Etude, Op. 10, no. 12, mm. 10–19.



Schonthal imitates this affect and adapts it for her *Preludes X* and *XXIV* (see Examples 2.2 and 2.3). She gives the tempo indications of *Agitato* and *Fast and tempestuously* for the two preludes, respectively, which are similar to the emotional content of Chopin's *Etude*, Op. 10, no. 12. The left-hand sixteenth-note figuration dominates Schonthal's *Prelude X*, which is similar to the

figuration in Chopin's *Etude*, Op. 10, no. 12. The progression of the left-hand ascending scale in m. 3 of Schonthal's *Prelude X* resembles Chopin's *Etude*, m. 17 (compare Examples 2.1 and 2.2). What distinguishes Schonthal's *Prelude* from Chopin's *Etude* is that she adds a trill in the right hand in mm. 2 and 3 instead of introducing a melody (see Example 2.2).

Example 2.2. Ruth Schonthal, *In Homage of... (24 Preludes)*, *X*, mm. 1–4.



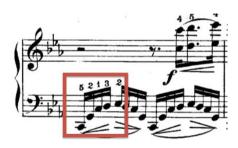
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Example 2.3. Ruth Schonthal, In Homage of... (24 Preludes), XXIV, mm. 1–9.



Prelude XXIV also features Chopin's left-hand sixteenth-note figuration (see Example 2.3). The first two beats of the left-hand passage of *Prelude XXIV* resemble the first two beats of the left-hand passage in m. 10 of Chopin's etude. Schonthal's hand position requires a larger leap after crossing fingers than Chopin's (compare Examples 2.4 and 2.5).

Example 2.4. Frédéric Chopin, Etude, Op. 10, no. 12, m. 10.



Example 2.5. Ruth Schonthal, In Homage of... (24 Preludes), XXIV, m. 1.



What makes *Prelude XXIV* more challenging than *Prelude X* is that Schnthal adds harmony in the right hand, sixteenth-note figuration. Simultaneously, the right hand plays a melody beginning in m. 3. The right-hand rhythmic figure derives from the rhythmic figure of Chopin's *Etude*, Op. 10, no. 12. Here, a downbeat is led by sixteenth notes, which adds to the energy and power of the piece (see Example 2.3).

Scriabin's *Prelude*, Op. 11, no. 6 served as a model for Schonthal's *Prelude XV* (see Examples 2.6 and 2.7).

Example 2.6. Alexander Scriabin, 24 Preludes, Op. 11, no. 6, mm. 1–10.



Example 2.7. Ruth Schonthal, In Homage of... (24 Preludes), XV, mm. 1–17.



Schonthal models to the emotional affect of Scriabin's prelude Op. 11, no. 6 in *Prelude XV*. Her prelude is dramatic and exhilarating yet includes a strong melody. Scriabin's main rhythmic figure—a quarter note tied to the first of two eighth notes—is set in the left hand first; then the right

hand imitates the pattern at the ninth. The same rhythmic pattern appears in Schonthal's prelude, but she notates it as a dotted quarter note and eighth note. Both hands use the same rhythmic figure albeit with an *accelerando* in m. 11. In contrast to Scriabin, Schonthal doesn't use imitation between the hands, but instead has them play in octaves in mm. 1-4.

Schonthal's interval progression also models after Scriabin's (compare Examples 2.8 and 2.9). In m. 2 of Scriabin's prelude, the second beat (E) of the right hand is preceded by B, which makes their interval a perfect fourth. The second beat of m. 3 (G) is also preceded by perfect fourth. Then the left hand contains an augmented fourth, and finally a minor sixth in the right hand in m. 4 (see Example 2.8). Similarly, Schonthal keeps similar intervals in her *Prelude XV*, but in a slightly different order. Her interval progression begins with a perfect fourth. Then it moves from an augmented fourth to a perfect fifth, and minor sixth.

Example 2.8. Alexander Scriabin, 24 Preludes, Op. 11, no. 6, mm. 1–4.



Example 2.9. Ruth Schonthal, *In Homage of.*.. (24 Preludes), XV, mm. 1–5.



In a program note, Schonthal wrote about *In Homage of... (24 Preludes)*:

Chopin's *Preludes* have always been my ideal of expressiveness, beauty and conciseness. With these preludes I am paying homage to him and other composers (Bartók, Hindemith, Scriabin, Rachmaninoff) who wrote idiomatic piano music. Some of the allusions are loving, some serious, and some humorous. The effect is often very fleeting, romantic in content, and impressionistic in treatment with twentieth-century harmonies and sensibilities incorporated.⁵

In Homage of... (24 Preludes) is a representative example of Schonthal using musical borrowing. Preludes X, XXIV, and XV modeled rhythmic figures, intervals, and emotional affect on the works of Scriabin and Chopin.

Fragments from a Woman's Diary (1982)

Schonthal composed *Fragments from a Woman's Diary* in 1982 on commission from the New York State Music Teachers Association. Pianist Rosalyn Tobey premiered it at the New York State Music Teachers Convention in November 1982. Schonthal insisted that her intention was to compose one lengthy work, consisting of many short contrasting and complementary movements. *Fragments from a Woman's Diary is* a collection of nineteen short works each with

⁵ Ruth Schonthal's description of *In Homage of... (24 Preludes)*, quoted in Bisda, 40.

⁶ Ruth Schonthal's letter to Bisda, quoted in Bisda, 50.

its own title, which represents the varied stages in a woman's life in general and Schonthal's life in particular. She wrote in her program note:

Fragments from a Woman's Diary is a statement of female psyche and female experience in musical terms. The WOMAN is a composite of all women and the DIARY is a compendium of the joys and frustrations of women's lives. Although somewhat akin to Robert Schumann's Kinderszenen in form, Fragments differs from Schumann's work in that the various pieces encompass experience of a lifetime.⁸

Schonthal describes the formal similarity between Fragments from a Woman's Diary and Schumann's Kinderszenen, but the general concept of Fragments from a Woman's Diary is modeled after Schumann's song cycle Frauenliebe und —leben, which contains poems that describe the emotional experiences of a woman and her husband from their first meeting until she sees him on his death bier. There is no text or epigram to Schonthal's piece, but according her description and the titles of each movement, it certainly alludes to the different stages of a woman's life.

The WOMAN relives her life while reading her diary, and so the listener hears a story. Memories include her early indoctrination into the "woman's role" (*Kinder, Kuche, Kirche*); her romantic, idealistic self as a young woman (*Introductory Waltz*); and happy childhood experiences (*Days of Innocence*). Thoughts of her wedding recall fears of the unknown, expressed musically as an irregular heartbeat in the lowest bass note. In *In Perpetual Motion*, she recalls the need to rush around in constant breathlessness. While several of the children's pieces express the tenderness, playfulness, and mischief of childhood, others invoke the impatience and frustration that is part of every mother's experience. *In Shattered Silence*, quietude is disrupted by a telephone; unexpectedly, the strains of a gentle, bluesy Foxtrot drift through an open window, only to be enveloped again by the silence.

The right hand of the *Final Waltz* plays a slow, haunting waltz, while the left hand is "out of step" with a foxtrot accompaniment. Like marriage partners, each periodically adjusts to the other by adding or omitting a beat. Gradually, the foxtrot accompaniment

⁷ Ruth Schonthal's interview with Bisda, quoted in Bisda, 51.

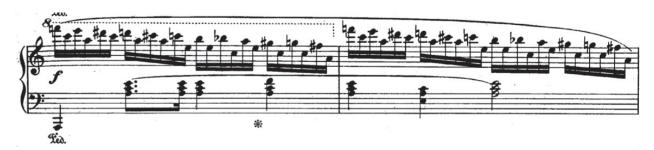
⁸ Bisda, 50.

⁹ Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*, rev. ed. (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2006), 80.

evolves into a waltz pattern, while the right hand is reduced to the repetition of a leftover motive like a scratched record. Alone now, the WOMAN's life is her memories.¹⁰

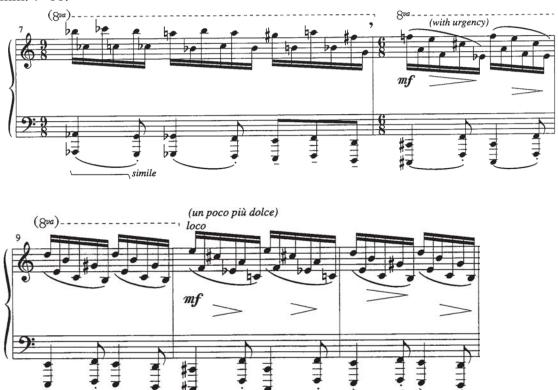
There are several movements from *Fragments from a Woman's Diary* that are modeled after specific piano works of Chopin, Liszt, and Rachmaninoff. Schonthal's "In Perpetual Motion" makes reference to Chopin *Etude*, Op. 25, no. 11 with the right-hand running sixteenth notes with a chromatic descending scale-like passage and a melody in the left hand (compare Examples 2.10 and 2.11).

Example 2.10. Frédéric Chopin, Etude, Op. 25, no. 11, mm. 13–14.



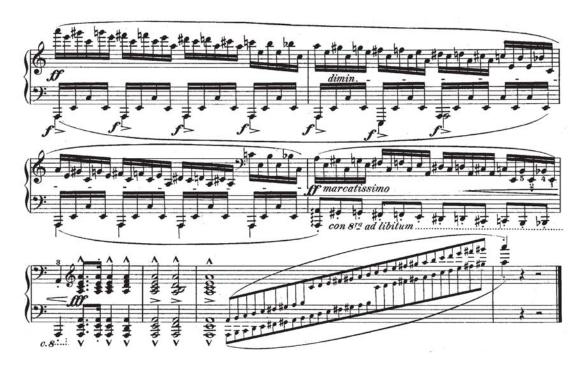
¹⁰ Ruth Schonthal's description of *Fragments from a Woman's Diary*, quoted in Bisda, 42–43.

Example 2.11. Ruth Schonthal, "In Perpetual Motion" from *Fragments from a Woman's Diary*, mm. 7–11.



Moreover, the last eight measures of the two pieces are stylistically similar (compare Examples 2.12 and 2.13). In m. 87 of Chopin's etude, the melody begins with a descending A-minor chromatic scale starting on A6 followed by an A-minor chord in both hands in m. 93 to finish with an ascending A-minor melodic scale embellishment (see Example 2.12).

Example 2.12. Frédéric Chopin, Etude, Op. 25, no. 11, mm. 87–94.



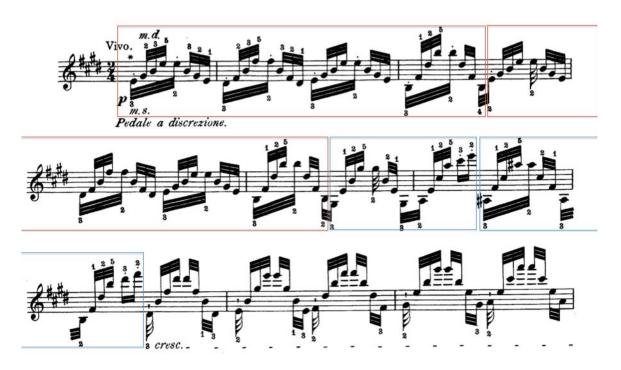
Similarly, Schonthal begins the last eight measures of "In Perpetual Motion" with a descending A-minor chromatic scale in m. 16, but in the left hand (see Example 2.13). Schonthal's movement differs from Chopin's etude. First, Schonthal adds harmony to the chromatic descending scale with the right hand playing a wedge figure of descending major sevenths above the left hand scale. Second, she adds A minor chromatic descending scale on the left hand starting in m. 16, requiring a careful coordination and balance between the right and left hands. Last, Schonthal switches the placement of the finishing chord and embellishment. Even though the last chord is not an A-minor triad, the rhythm certainly derives from Chopin's etude.

Example 2.13. Ruth Schonthal, *In Perpetual Motion* from *Fragments from a Woman's Diary*, mm. 13–23.



"Children at Play," "Introductory Waltz," and "Days of Innocence" from *Fragments from a Woman's Diary* depict a woman's childhood. She expresses the playfulness and mischief of a child through the use of repeating sixteenth-note patterns and *staccatissimo*, which shares rhythmic-procedure similar to Liszt's *Grandes études de Paganini* no. 4 in E Major (compare Examples 2.14 and 2.15). Both pieces use a close hand position. Liszt requires a quick left-hand crossing immediately after each downbeat, a technique that Schonthal imitates in mm. 7 and 8 (see Example 2.15). Liszt groups the first four beats as one phrase, and then repeats the phrase once more. In the next phrase, he groups two beats, and then repeats it a whole step higher (see Example 2.14).

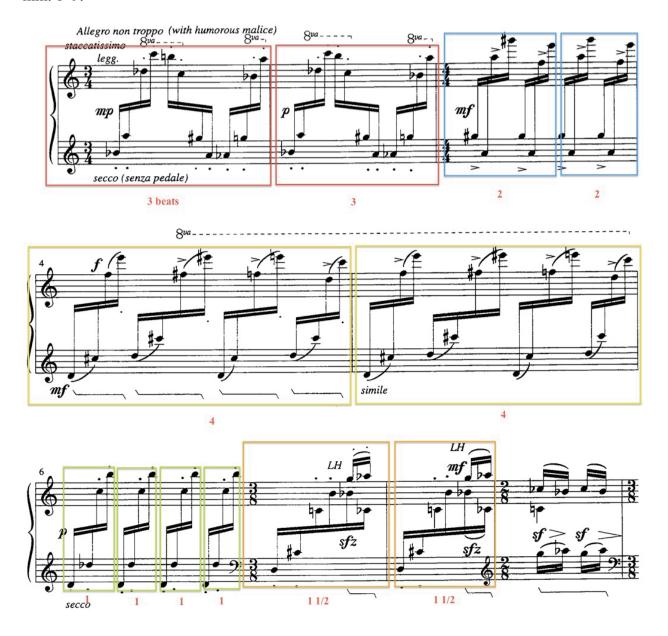
Example 2.14. Franz Liszt, Grandes études de Paganini, S. 140, no. 4 in E Major, mm. 1–8.



Schonthal groups the first three beats as one phrase and then repeats it in the next measure.

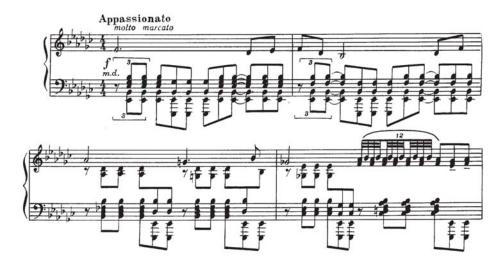
In m. 3, she repeats the same pattern over two beats. For measure mm. 4–5 and 7–8, she switches to four- and one-and-a half beat phrases, respectively. Last, she includes four one-beat phrases in m. 6 (see Example 2.15).

Example 2.15. Ruth Schonthal, "Children at Play" from *Fragments from a Woman's Diary*, mm. 1–9.



"Passionate Interlude," the longest movement of *Fragments from a Woman's Diary*, alludes to Rachmaninoff's *Etude*, Op. 39, no. 5 in its use of rhythmic figures (compare Examples 2.16 and 2.17). Both composers use triplets as an accompaniment to a melody, which creates an atmosphere that accommodates the musical indication of *appassionato*. Also, they both favor using two eighth notes against a triplet throughout the piece. While Rachmaninoff avoids placing the triplet accompaniment on the downbeat, Schonthal emphasizes each downbeat to create a bass line that to supports both the melody and the accompaniment.

Example 2.16. Sergei Rachmaninoff, Etude, Op. 39, no. 5, mm. 1–4.



Example 2.17. Ruth Schonthal, "Passionate Interlude" from of *Fragments from a Woman's Diary*, mm. 34–42.



Schonthal admired Romantic piano virtuosity, and Chopin, Liszt, and Rachmaninoff were her inspiration in composing piano works. *Fragments from a Woman's Diary* shows how she used their compositional style and modeled her music after them.

Sonata, quasi un'improvvisazione (1964)

Ruth Schonthal composed five piano sonatas and a *Sonatina* (1939). *Sonata, quasi* un'improvvisazione is one of her three one-movement sonatas; the other two are *Sonata Breve* (1972) and *Sonatensatz* (1973). Schonthal composed *Sonata, quasi un'improvvisazione* in 1964,

and she played the premier performance at the Delta Omicron 26th Annual WNYC Festival of American Music at the New York Public Library. The 1960s were an important decade for Schonthal. Her mature style had rejected Hindemith's influence. Paul Creston had helped her publish her piano works and affirmed her new style. Many critics' reviews of her music mentioned the relation or similarity to the European tradition, and the composer herself wrote in a description of *Sonata, quasi un'improvvisazione*: "Rhapsodic, contrasting concert piece with a kinship to Brahms, but individually contemporary approach."

Schonthal claimed that *Sonata, quasi un'improvvisazione* was the most rhapsodic of her five sonatas in an interview with Bisda.¹³ It is chock full of fermatas, rests, frequent tempo changes, and rubato, and alludes to Brahms's *Rhapsody*, Op. 79, no. 1. The opening triplets of Brahms's *Rhapsody* are an important rhythmic figure that he used as a motive throughout the piece (see Example 2.18).

Molto passionato ma non troppo allegro

Example 2.18. Johannes Brahms, *Rhapsody*, Op. 79, no. 1, mm. 1–2.

¹¹ Bisda, 33.

¹² Ruth Schonthal, Sonata, quasi un'improvvisazione (Kassel: Furore Verlag, 2002), 1.

¹³ Ruth Schonthal's interview with Bisda, quoted in Bisda, 33.

The opening of Schonthal's sonata also uses triplet figures as a motive, and she employs thematic transformation throughout the piece.¹⁴

Example 2.19. Ruth Schonthal, Sonata, quasi un'improvvisazione, m. 1.



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Additionally, Brahms anchors D4 as a pedal tone in right hand in mm. 20–22 along with the triplet figuration while the left hand plays the melody (see Example 2.20).

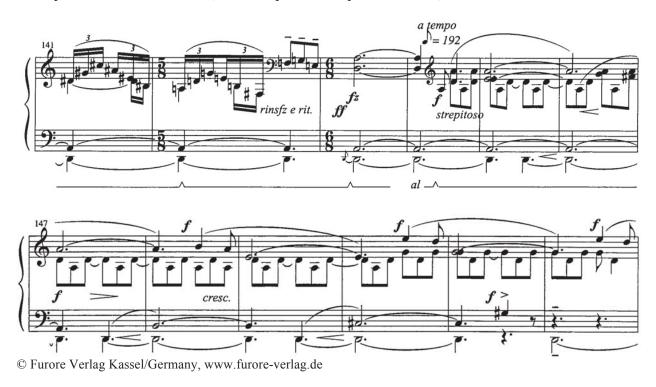
Example 2.20. Johannes Brahms, Rhapsody, Op. 79, no. 1, mm. 20–22.



In mm. 144–50 Schonthal also employs a D4 in the right hand, but in the alto part with an alternating A3 (see Example 2.21). These repeating eighth notes in the right hand also resemble the triplet figures of Brahms's right-hand part. In addition, she adds a D2 pedal tone in the left hand.

¹⁴ Bisda, 33.

Example 2.21. Ruth Schonthal, Sonata, quasi un'improvvisazione, mm. 141–52.



Schonthal used modeling as a compositional technique to establish her connection to the European tradition. In using this technique, she borrowed specific rhythmic figures and intervals, and alluded to the compositional background and emotional affect of a piece.

Chapter Three

Modeling II

In the previous chapter, I discussed how Schonthal modeled her works on virtuosic Romantic piano literature. As a piano teacher, Schonthal was active in composing method books. She also adopted models from the standard teaching repertoire for her piano works. In order to examine Schonthal's modeling of teaching repertoire, I will analyze three of her works: *Fourteen Inventions* (1984), *Sonatina* (1939), and *In Homage of...* (24 Preludes) (1978). This chapter will focus on how Schonthal modeled these pieces after the works of Bach, Ravel, and Bartók in terms of form, compositional procedures, and structure.

Fourteen Inventions (1984)

J. S. Bach's fifteen *Two-part Inventions* served as a model for Schonthal's *Fourteen Inventions*. She composed hers in 1984 and revised them in 1991. Harpsichordist Gerald Ranck premiered the set on October 1984 at the St. James Capital Hill in Washington, DC. In the program note, Schonthal wrote:

Fourteen contrapuntal short works, inspired by Bach's two-part inventions, in a contemporary idiom. As a set, this should be performed in order. Otherwise, different orders are possible as long as contrasting inventions follow one another.¹

J. S. Bach's *Two-part Inventions*, BWV 772–786, were originally titled *Preambulae* and included as a part of the *Clavier-Büchlein vor Wilhelm Friedemann Bach*, which Bach collected as study material for his eldest son, Wilhelm Friedemann.² Bach's later fair copy of the set begins with the following title:

¹ Ruth Schonthal's program note to *Fourteen Inventions*, quoted in Corazon Andres Bisda, "The Piano Works of Ruth Schonthal" (DMA thesis, Manhattan School of Music, 1991), 45.

Upright instructions wherein the lovers of the clavier, and especially those desirous of learning, are shown a clear way not alone (1) of learning to play clearly in two voices, but also, after further progress.... furthermore, at the same time not alone to have good "inventions," but develop the same well, and above all arrive at a singing style in playing, and at the same time to acquire a strong foretaste of compositions.³

Bach's *Inventions* are all imitative,⁴ and Schonthal's *Fourteen Inventions* model this. Her inventions are in two-parts with the exception of the *Invention in D* and *Invention in A*. Several of Bach's inventions, such as those in C Major, F Major, and D minor, begin with a one-to three-measure subject in the right hand, which is imitated by the left hand (see Example 3.1).⁵ This imitation procedure also appears in a number of Schonthal's inventions.⁶ For example, the beginning of her *Invention in e* resembles Bach's *Invention* in D minor in its imitation procedure. It also shares a time signature and use of sixteenth-note and eighth-note groupings (see Example 3.2).

² Stewart Gordon, *A History of Keyboard Literature: Music for the Piano and Its Forerunners* (Belmont, CA: Schirmer, 1996), 62.

³ Hans David and Arthur Mendel, *The Bach Reader* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1945), 85, quoted in John Gillespie, *Five Centuries of Keyboard Music* (New York: Dover Publications, 1972), 134.

⁴ David Schulenberg, *The Keyboard Music of J. S. Bach*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2006), 188.

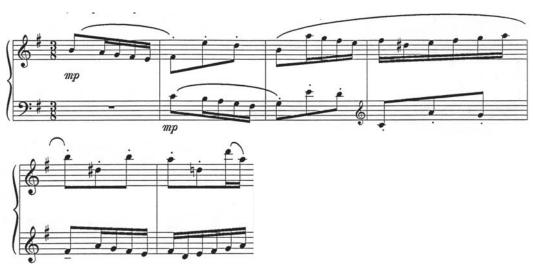
⁵ Bach Inventions in C minor, D Major, D minor, F Major, and G Major.

 $^{^6}$ Schonthal Invention in F, Invention in Bb, Invention in e, Invention in f, Invention in e, and Invention in b.

Example 3.1. J. S. Bach, *Invention* in D minor, BWV 775, mm. 1–10.



Example 3.2. Ruth Schonthal, *Invention in e*, mm. 1–6.



In Bach's *Invention* in D minor, the composer introduces imitation at the octave between the right and left hands (see Example 3.1). While Bach keeps the imitation an octave apart for mm.1–5, Schonthal employs imitation at the major seventh in mm. 1–3.

Schonthal deviates from two-part imitation in her *Invention in Bb* and adds parallel first-inversion triads in the right and left hands (see Example 3.3). It still features imitation at the octave, but requires well-balanced voicing for the chords in each hand.

Example 3.3. Ruth Schonthal, *Invention in B b*, mm. 1–5.



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In his *Invention* in E minor, BWV 778, Bach introduces a subject with left-hand accompaniment, before the left hand imitates the right. Schonthal has several inventions, such as her *Invention in d*, that follow Bach's procedure (compare Examples 3.4 and 3.5).⁷

Example 3.4. J. S. Bach, *Invention* in E minor, BWV 778, m. 1.



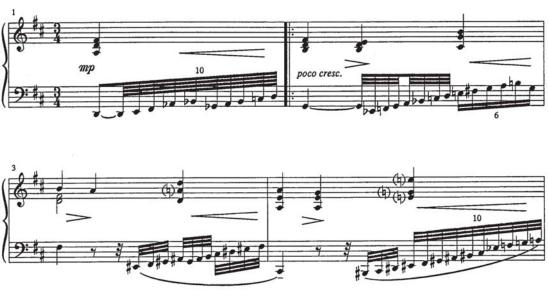
⁷ Schonthal's *Invention in d, Invention in a, Invention in G, Invention in E*, and *Invention in Ab*.

Example 3.5. Ruth Schonthal, *Invention in d*, mm. 1–2.



Schonthal's *Invention in D* and *Invention in A* are not modeled after Bach's inventions. Instead Schothal places a choral-like melody in the right hand assisted by left-hand figuration in *Invention in D* (see Example 3.6). Although the left hand accompaniment is written out, it sounds as if it were improvised, which creates the effect of a Baroque *embellishment adagio*.

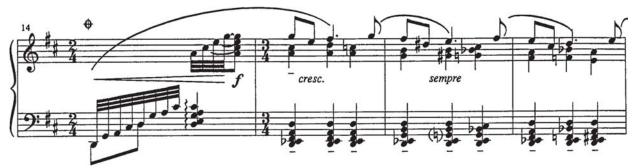
Example 3.6. Ruth Schonthal, *Invention in D*, mm. 1–4.



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After this *embellishment adagido* section, she introduces a melody in the treble with a chordal accompaniment requiring balance between the melody and accompaniment (see Example 3.7). In general, *Invention in D* necessitates the development of *cantabile* playing.

Example 3.7. Ruth Schonthal, *Invention in D*, mm. 14–17.



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Schonthal's *Invention in A* does not feature imitation. However, this invention resembles the offbeat rhythmic figures of Bach's *Invention* in E Major (compare Examples 3.8 and 3.9).

Example 3.8. J. S. Bach, *Invention* in E Major, BWV 777, mm. 1–4.



Example 3.9. Ruth Schonthal, *Invention in A*, mm. 1–4.



Both inventions share triple meter and syncopated rhythms in the right hand. In the first two measures of Bach's *Invention* in E Major, the right hand and left hand move in a contrary motion. While the right hand descends in primarily step-wise motion, the left hand moves in step-wise but in ascending motion. In Schonthal's *Invention in A* the right and left hands also move in primarily contrary motion (see Example 3.9). However, Schonthal requires large leaps in both hands. Morover, Schonthal adds the description "Schumanesque," which requires both *rubato* and *legatissimo*. Even though Schonthal's *Invention in D* and *Invention in A* do not include imitation, she evidently aligned these two inventions to Bach's fair copy description, "above all arrive at a singing style in playing."

Schonthal's decision to differentiate her inventions from Bach's can also be found in the *Invention in b* and *Invention in Ab. Invention in b* introduces the subject in the left hand, which Bach never did (see Example 3.10). *Invention in Ab*, which is fifty-seven measures long, changes meter twenty-three times.

⁸ David and Mendel, *The Bach Reader*, 85, quoted in Gillespie, *Five Centuries of Keyboard Music*, 134.

Example 3.10. Ruth Schonthal *Invention in b*, mm. 1–4.



Schonthal wrote that Bach's *Two-part Inventions* inspired her *Inventions*. Bach's imitation contributes to an equal balance in the both hands, and Schonthal adopted it with modern compositional characteristics, such as non-chord tones and various meters, in her *Fourteen Inventions*.

Sonatina in A minor (1939)

Schonthal composed her *Sonatina* in A minor in Sweden at the end of 1939 when she had been exposed to the piano literature of Ravel and Debussy. The composer premiered the work at the Moscow Conservatory in 1941 while she and her parents stopped in Moscow for two days on route to Mexico City. Schonthal's *Sonatina* was modeled after Ravel's *Sonatine* (1905) in structure, texture, and format. Ravel composed his *Sonatine* in homage of late eighteenth-century classical structure. According to Manuel Rosenthal, Ravel's pupil and close friend, the work resembles "any composition by Bach or Mozart: a melodic line with bass line."

⁹ Richard Dowling, "Sonatine (1903–5) by Maurice Ravel," 2003, accessed July 29, 2014, http://www.richard-dowling.com/SonatinePreface.html

¹⁰ Manuel Rosenthal, quoted in Lin-San Chou, "Classical Elements in Ravel's Sonatine" (DMA thesis, California State University, Long Beach, 2004), 3.

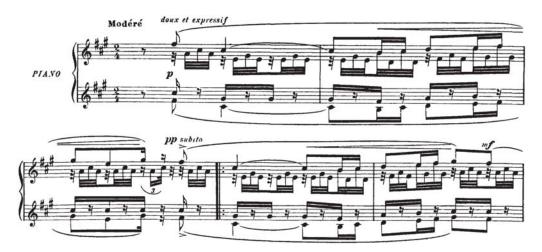
Both Ravel and Schonthal included three movements in the typical fast-slow-fast cycle of movements (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1. Cycle of movements in Ravel's *Sonatine* and Schonthal's *Sonatina*

	Ravel Sonatine	Schonthal Sonatina
1 st Movement	Modéré	Allegro
2 nd Movement	Mouvement de menuet	Andantino
3 rd Movement	Animé	Allegro scherzando

Schonthal also imitated Ravel's melody-accompaniment texture. Ravel put the melody in the treble an octave apart with a sixteenth- and thirty-second-note accompaniment in the middle voices (see Example 3.11).

Example 3.11. Maurice Ravel, *Sonatine*, first movement, mm. 1–5.



Schonthal also sets the melody in the treble but with a continuous sixteenth-note accompaniment in both hands at m. 3. She adds harmony to the melody having the left hand double the melody in parallel major tenths, rather than in octaves (see Example 3.12).

Example 3.12. Ruth Schonthal, Sonatina, first movement, mm. 1–6.



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The *Sonatine* can be considered cyclical in its use of a descending perfect fourth and its inversion, an ascending perfect fifth, in each movement as a unifying motive (compare Examples 3.13, 3.14, and 3.15).¹¹

Example 3.13. Maurice Ravel, Sonatine, first movement, m. 1.



¹¹ Dowling.

Example 3.14. Maurice Ravel, Sonatine, second movement, m. 1.



Example 3.15. Maurice Ravel, *Sonatine*, third movement, mm. 56–59.



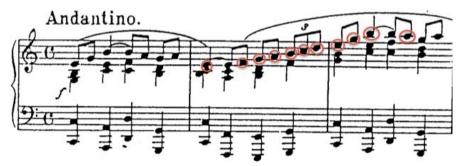
Schonthal's *Sonatina* can also be considered cyclical, but the composer distinguishes her work from Ravel's by using parts from the first movement in the second and movement. Schonthal creates an ascending scale-like melody using sixteenth notes and eight notes in mm. 5–6 of the first movement of *Sonatina* (see Example 3.16). She reproduces this melody in the beginning of the second movement by using eight notes and a triplet rhythm (see Example 3.17).

Example 3.16. Ruth Schonthal, *Sonatina*, first movement, mm. 4–6.



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Example 3.17. Ruth Schonthal, *Sonatina*, second movement, mm. 1–3.



In the third movement, Schonthal quotes the same motive from the first movement but sets it an octave above with a different accompaniment (compare Examples 3.18 and 3.19).

Example 3.18. Ruth Schonthal, *Sonatina*, first movement, mm. 35–36.



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Example 3.19. Ruth Schonthal, *Sonatina*, third movement, mm. 1–2.



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Ravel's original inspiration for composing *Sonatine* was a 1903 competition sponsored by a fine arts and literary magazine called *Weekly Critical Review*, not for pedagogical purposes. ¹² However, Rolf Coenen, the editor of G. Henle Verlag, labels Ravel's *Sonatine* as medium level teaching repertoire. ¹³ Also, *Sonatine* is representative of teaching repertoire for intermediate to early advanced students. It introduces impressionistic harmonic language – frequent use of fourths, parallel fifth, and octaves – within a classical format. ¹⁴ Schonthal modeled Ravel's procedure using a similar format, texture, and cyclical elements.

In Homage of... (24 Preludes) (1978)

Bartók's *Mikrokosmos* (1926, 1932–39; Sz.107) served as a structural and procedural model for two of Schonthal's preludes, *Prelude V* and *Prelude VI*, in *In Homage of... (24 Preludes)*. Bartók originally composed the six volumes of *Mikrokosmos* for pedagogical purposes and arranged them in order of progressive difficulty. ¹⁵ In Vol. 1, no. 23, Bartók introduces imitation at the octave between the right and left hands (see Example 3.20).

¹² Dowling.

¹³ Rolf Coenen wrote about labeling repertoire for teaching: "After careful deliberation I have settled on nine levels of difficulty, which I have divided into three groups: 1–3 (easy), 4–6 (medium), 7–9 (difficult). A number of parameters have been considered when assessing the level of difficulty. I have not just looked at the number of fast or slow notes to be played, or the chord sequences; of central importance are also the complexity of the piece's composition, its rhythmic complexities, the difficulty of reading the text for the first time, and last but not least, how easy or difficult it is to understand its musical structure. My assessment is measured by the ability to prepare a piece for performance," quoted in "The Levels of Difficulty of the Piano Music Published by G. Henle Publishers," 2010, accessed September 22, 2014, http://www.henle.de/us/detail/index.html?Titel=Klaviersonatine 1018.

¹⁴ Chou, "Classical Elements in Ravel's Sonatine," 3.

¹⁵ Gordon, 455.

Example 3.20. Béla Bartók, *Mikrokosmos*, Vol. 1, no. 23, mm. 1–5.



Mikrokosmos, SZ107 by Béla Bartók © Copyright 1940 by Hawkes & Son (London) Ltd. Definitive corrected edition © Copyright 1987 by Hawkes & Son (London) Ltd. Reprinted by permission.

Schonthal similarly introduces imitation between the right and left hands in her *Prelude V*, but at a perfect fourth (see Example 3.21).

Example 3.21. Ruth Schonthal, In Homage of... (24 Preludes), V, mm. 1–3.



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While Bartók remains in the five-finger position in the Dorian mode, Schonthal's use of chromaticism requires a more advanced finger position and close hand position.

Similarly, in *Mikrokosmos* Vol. 2, no. 48, Bartók has the right hand play a melody while the left hand plays a repeated ostinato based on a triadic accompanimental figure (see Example 3.22).

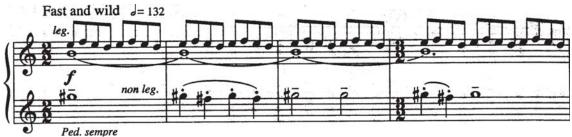
Example 3.22. Béla Bartók, *Mikrokosmos*, Vol. 2, no. 48, mm. 1–6.



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Schonthal modeled her *Prelude VI* on Bartók's compositional procedure. However, she has the right hand play an ostinato and the left hand play the melody. She adds complexity by having the right hand play a drone to accompany the ostinato and by using overlapping hand position (see Example 3.23).

Example 3.23. Ruth Schonthal, *In Homage of... (24 Preludes)*, VI, mm. 1–4.



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Schonthal modeled the structure, procedure, texture, and form of some of her piano works on Bach, Ravel, and Bartók. Throughout her career, Schonthal was a devoted teacher, both at formal institutions and in her private studio. She saw Bach, Ravel, and Bartók as providing structured pedagogical repertoire to aid in her teaching and chose to model these

pieces on their works, either because they were pedagogical in nature or since they were standard teaching repertoire.

Chapter Four

Setting

Schonthal employed modeling for basing a piece on an existing work, borrowing its structure, incorporating part of its melodic material and formal procedures. She also used the much more explicit borrowing technique of setting, which quotes an existing melody.

Burkholder defines setting as "setting an existing tune with a new accompaniment." The melodies she quoted were not limited to classical music but also included folk songs from her youth. In order to examine this borrowing technique, I will focus on three of Schonthal's piano works: *Reverberations* for piano with added timbres (1967/74), *In Homage of...* (24 Preludes) (1978), and *Sonata Breve* (1973). These pieces incorporate melodies of German folksongs as well as melodies from works by Chopin and Prokofiev.

Reverberations for Piano with Added Timbres (1967/74)

Schonthal began *Reverberations*, a prepared piano piece, in 1967 and finished it in 1974. Schonthal premiered the piece at New York's Carnegie Hall in September 1975, and in 1983 it was selected to be performed in "Education for Peace through Music" programs throughout Germany.² *Reverberations* is comprised of ten short movements that the composer suggests can be performed in order. Prepared piano is an atypical procedure for Schonthal, and not one

¹ James Peter Burkholder, *All Made of Tunes: Charles Ives and the Uses of Musical Borrowing* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 3–4.

² Corazon Andres Bisda, "The Piano Works of Ruth Schonthal" (DMA thesis, Manhattan School of Music, 1991), 37.

typically associated with the composer. In following interview with Bruce Duffie, she explains her thoughts on the piece:

Reverberations, which is supposed to be a portrait of Germany and what happened to it, the destruction and all, to a country with such a humanistic background. I wanted to create something with a spiritual quality that was destroyed like a bombed-out cathedral. The piano was no good for that, so I experimented and put all kinds of objects on top of the strings. Nothing was safe and I ended up with an orchestration on the strings, which gave me that shattered-beauty effect that I was looking for. I used these sounds to express something conceptually that I wanted to bring across. But it's not my point of departure. The sound itself was so pretty, so beautiful that I could have written other pieces using it, but that was not what I wanted to do.³

Schonthal intended the fifth movement, "Ich hatt' einen Kameraden," to express a lament at loosing a comrade.⁴ The composer quoted a traditional lament of the German Armed Forces, "Der gute Kamerad (the good comrade)" with the alterative title "Ich hatt' einen Kameraden" (I had a comrade) (compare Examples 4.1 and 4.2). Schonthal set the original tune in B-flat Major with three voices in a chorale-like texture in the right hand. She did not change the melody except that she replaced the dotted eighth and sixteenth notes with two eighth notes. The left-hand figure, a tied F#2 with grace note, is reminiscent of a drum roll.

³ Bruce Duffie, "Ruth Schonthal: A Conversation with Bruce Duffie (1988)," 2004, accessed August 12, 2013, http://www.bruceduffie.com/schonthal2.html.

⁴ Bisda, 37.

Example 4.1. German Folksong "Der gute Kamerad."



Example 4.2. Ruth Schonthal, "Ich hatt' einen Kameraden" from Reverberations.



Kameraden," she added in her own harmonies.

While Schonthal quotes "Der gute Kamerad" with minimal changes, in "Ich hatt' einen

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In the eighth movement, "Vulgarheit," Schonthal quotes "Du, du liegst mir im Herzen" in C Major. Instead of using whole melody, she omits the last phrase of "Du, du liegst mir im Herzen" in her "Vulgarheit" (compare Examples 4.3 and 4.4). She also adds ninth chords on the downbeat of the left hand, which alludes to a jazz-like sonority (compare Examples 4.3 and 4.4). She also gives a musical indication of *Walzer*, retaining the original meter.

Example 4.3. German folksong, "Du, du liegst mir im Herzen."



Example 4.4. Ruth Schonthal, "Vulgarheit" from Reverberations.



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These two movements from *Reverberations* show how Schonthal incorporates folk song melodies into her music with different settings.

The tune of Chopin's *Waltz* in A-flat Major, Op. 42 is presented in Schonthal's *Prelude XV* and *Prelude XVII* from *In Homage of... (24 Preludes)* but with a slightly modified tune and different accompaniment (see Example 4.5).

Example 4.5. Frédéric Chopin, Waltz in A-flat Major, Op. 42, mm. 9–16.



Schonthal modifies Chopin's tune by starting with G#3 instead of C5 in m. 5 (see Example 4.6). She also includes a four-measure introduction before the melody begins. In addition, Schonthal simplified Chopin's rhythmic figure. Even though Chopin's waltz time signature is 3/4, the melody sounds as though it were in two because of the persistent hemiolas. Schonthal avoids the hemiolas and sets her *Prelude XV* in 4/8 with the same rhythmic figure in both hands, which emphasizes the tune.

Example 4.6. Ruth Schonthal, In Homage of... (24 Preludes), XV, mm. 1–17.



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Conversely, Schonthal's *Prelude XVII* has the same rhythmic figure, but she shortens it to 3/8. Schonthal chromatically modifies Chopin's tune by starting with Bb4. She also adds a perfect fourth to the melody, which creates tension through chromatisism (see Example 4.7).

Example 4.7. Ruth Schonthal, In Homage of... (24 Preludes), XVII.

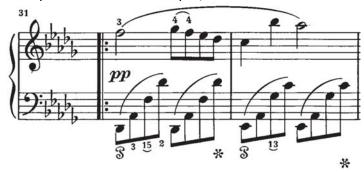


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Schonthal also favors taking short motives from a melody and setting them in various ways. Sometimes she elaborates the motive, and other times she obscures it within a new melody. There are three of Schonthal's preludes that share a motive from the third movement of Chopin's Sonata in B minor, Op. 35. Schonthal treats this motive differently each time. The third movement of Chopin's Sonata in B minor, Op. 35 (*Marche Funèbre*) follows an ABA form, and the B section's D-flat-Major is to be performed *cantabile* followed by the previous B-flat-minor march (see Example 4.8). The first two measures of the melody play an important role in the B section as Chopin repeats and modifies it in a transposed key.

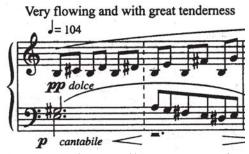
⁵ John Gillespie, *Five Centuries of Keyboard Music: A Historical Survey of Music for Harpsichord and Piano* (New York: Dover Publications, 1972), 231.

Example. 4.8. Frédéric Chopin, *Marche Funèbre* from Sonata in B minor, Op. 35, mm. 31–32.



Schonthal takes Chopin's five-note motive (F5–Gb5–F5–Eb5–Db5) and sets it in *Prelude IV*, *IX*, and *XX*. Both *Prelude IV* and *XX* share a similar setting. Schonthal places Chopin's motive in the left hand in *Prelude IV* in E Major and *Prelude XX* in A-flat Major, assisted by eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand (compare Examples 4.9 and 4.10).

Example 4.9. Ruth Schonthal, *In Homage of... (24 Preludes)*, *IV*, m. 1.



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Example 4.10. Ruth Schonthal, *In Homage of... (24 Preludes)*, XX, mm. 1–2.



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Schonthal treats Chopin's motive differently in *Prelude IX*. She sets it in E Major, the same key as *Prelude IV*. However, she obscures the four-note motive with a new melody in the right hand (see Example 4.11). The musical indication of these preludes is *dolce* and *cantabile* (*Prelude IV*), *tranquillo* and *cantabile* (*Prelude XX*), and *dolce* (*Prelude IX*), which resemble Chopin's original indication.

Example 4.11. Ruth Schonthal, *In Homage of.*.. (24 Preludes), IX, mm. 1–2.



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These three preludes are an example of how Schonthal used one of Chopin's motives in three different settings.

Sonata Breve (1973)

Sonata Breve is one of Schonthal's three one-movement sonatas. The others are Sonata quasi un'improvvisazione (1964) and Sonatensatz (1973). She composed Sonata Breve in 1973, and Oxford University Press published it in 1976. The composer premiered the piece at New York's Donnell Library for the Delta Omicron 34th Annual WNYC Festival of American Music in February 1973.

Schonthal does not mention a specific compositional reference for *Sonata Breve*, but the opening resembles the composer's *Sonata, quasi un'improvvisazione* (compare Examples 4.12

and 4.13). Schonthal quotes the melody and rhythmic motive from her own sonata with a new accompaniment. She employs the triplet rhythm figure from *Sonata, quasi un'improvvisazione* as a motive throughout *Sonata Breve*. Schonthal wrote in her program note:

The opening theme with its ascending triplets appears in many transformations. The rhythmic flow is rhapsodic. The second theme is more metric with under-lying even triplets and a two-note harmonic motive in the bass. The development uses these triplets climactically in both hands, with great leaps over a pedal point in an agitated fast tempo.⁶

Example 4.12. Ruth Schonthal, *Sonata, Quasi un'Improvvisazione*, m. 1.



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Example 4.13. Ruth Schonthal, *Sonata Breve*, mm. 1–2.



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In the second theme of the sonata, Schonthal quotes a melody from Prokofiev's Piano Sonata No. 6, Op. 82, using the triplet figures in the right hand and an accompaniment in the left hand, which is transformed from the opening triplet motive (compare Examples 4.14 and 4.15).

⁶ Ruth Schonthal's program note to *Sonata Breve*, quoted in Bisda, 35.

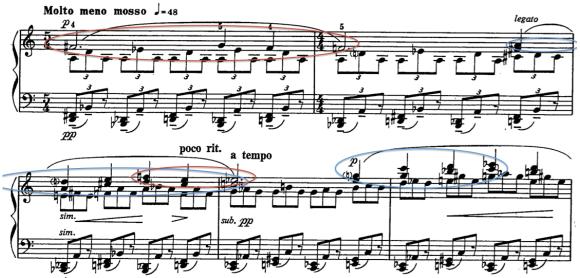
The opening theme of the third movement of Prokofiev's Sonata No. 6, Op. 82, is a motive that he develops throughout the entire movement. Schonthal takes this motive and divides it into two phrases (see Example 4.14). She sets the first phrase a whole step higher than Prokofiev's melody and augments the rhythm as well (see Example 4.15). Schonthal puts the second phrase a perfect fourth higher than the original melody. She then combines the last three notes of the first phrase at the end of the second phrase, but up a minor seventh. She repeats the second phrase in the next measure a diminished eleventh higher than Prokofiev's original theme.

Example 4.14. Sergei Prokofiev, *Piano Sonata* No. 6, Op. 82, m.1–2.



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Example 4.15. Ruth Schonthal, *Sonata Breve*, mm. 43–47.



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Setting is a more specific borrowing technique than modeling, and one that Schonthal employed with great affect. By quoting another melody and applying a new accompaniment, Schonthal was able to develop the musical potential of a folk song, another composer's piece, or her own previous work.

Chapter Five

Patchwork

Schonthal used setting to harmonize a borrowed melody. Additionally, she used a combination of borrowed melodies in quick succession to form new melody. Burkholder defines musical patchwork as follows: "in which fragments of two or more tunes are stitched together." To examine this type of musical borrowing, I will discuss selections from Schonthal's *From North and South of the Border* (1982–85) and *In Homage of... (24 Preludes)* and how she used the patchwork technique to stitch together melodies from Robert Schumann and Chopin as well as from traditional Irish folksongs to form a new melody.

From North and South of the Border (1982–85)

In addition to being a composer, Schonthal was also a dedicated piano teacher. She was interested in creating new teaching method books for intermediate piano students. Paul Creston reviewed Schonthal's *Miniatures* as follows:

Ruth Schonthal is just the proper person to write these attractive piano pieces for the young student. She is eminently qualified in the three areas of musical activity involved in such a project: as teacher, as pianist and as composer. As pianist and teacher she understands fully the technical problems encountered by the students in the course of his studies and as composer she sees too it that musical alludes are not lost in the process of developing technique.... The field of piano teaching has often been flooded with inept material. Ruth Schonthal's contribution to the field, fortunately, is a welcome breath of fresh air.²

Schonthal composed ten sets of teaching method books, and each set contains from three-to twenty-five short pieces. She published nine of them: *Miniatures* Book I (elementary) (1955),

¹ James Peter Burkholder, *All Made of Tunes: Charles Ives and the Uses of Musical Borrowing* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 3.

² Paul Creston, preface to Schonthal's *Miniatures*, quoted in Corazon Andres Bisda, "The Piano Works of Ruth Schonthal" (DMA thesis, Manhattan School of Music, 1991), 47.

Miniatures Book II (Junior) (1961), Miniatures Book III (lower intermediate) (1955),

Minuscules (early grade educational pieces) (1964–73), Near and Far: Thirteen Musical Scenes

for the Older Student (Intermediate) (1975), Potpourri (elementary/junior) (1975–76), Bird Calls

(junior) (1981), Three Elegies (senior) (1982), and From North and South of the Border (1982–85).³

From North and South of the Border is comprised of four short pieces: "Sweet Americana," "Leisurely Ride," "Duet in the Fields," and "Memories from Mexico." Yorktown Music Press published the collection in 1985. The first piece, "Sweet Americana," exemplifies how Schonthal employed patchwork in her music. Schonthal quoted the first phrase of Schumann's "Sehr innig und nicht zu rasch" from *Kreisleriana* in m. 1 of "Sweet Americana." (see Examples 5.1 and 5.2). While Schumann begins the melody in octaves, Schonthal harmonizes the melody in triads. In mm. 3–4, she modifies this melody by repeating the third beat of m. 3 in the right-hand part.

Example 5.1. Robert Schumann, "Sehr innig und nicht zu rasch" from *Kreisleriana*, Op. 16, mm. 1–2.



Example 5.2. Ruth Schonthal, "Sweet Americana" from *From North and South of the Border*, mm. 1–2.



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³ The composer labeled the difficulty level.

Schonthal also quoted an Irish folk song, *Londonderry Air*, and stitched the two melodies together (compare Examples 5.3 and 5.4). After quoting *Londonderry Air*, Schonthal again includes Schumann's melody in mm. 7–8.

Example 5.3. Irish Folksong *Londonderry Air*, mm. 1–2.



Example. 5.4. Ruth Schonthal, "Sweet Americana" from *From North and South of the Border*, mm. 1–4.





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One can observe how Schonthal constructed this patchwork in Example 5.5.

Example 5.5. Robert Schumann, "Sehr innig und nicht zu rasch" from *Kreisleriana*, Op. 16, mm. 1–2; Irish Folksong *Londonderry Air*, mm. 1–2; Ruth Schonthal, "Sweet Americana" from *From North and South of the Border*.

Schumann, "Sehr innig und nicht zu rasch."



Schonthal, "Sweet Americana."



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Irish folk song, Londonderry Air.



Schonthal, "Sweet Americana."



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Schumann, "Sehr innig und nicht zu rasch."



Schonthal, "Sweet Americana."



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In over fifty years of Schonthal's living in the United States, one may ask why she did not explore the music of American composers. Martina Helmig has claimed that she was influenced by general and aesthetic characteristics of American culture, such as poems and folk songs, rather than its classical composers. Schonthal composed her song cycle *By the Roadside* in 1975 using the poems of the American poet Walt Whitman, and three of her songs, "These Are the Days," "Wild Nights," and "The Dove Descending," from *Seven Songs of Love and Sorrow* (1977) are based on poems of Emily Dickinson and T. S Eliot. However, in "Sweet Americana" Schonthal quoted an Irish folk tune, which was sung by many Irish-Americans and has similarities with the music of American composer Steven Foster. Schonthal may also have expressed her appreciation of the United States through titling this movement "Sweet Americana." Her musical description of the piece reads: "with great sweetness and tenderness."

⁴ Martina Helmig, *Ruth Schonthal: A Composer's Musical Development in Exile*, ed. Adina Mornell, trans. Vanessa Agnew (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2006), 296.

In Homage of... (24 Preludes) (1978)

Schonthal used patchwork in two of her preludes from *In Homage of... (24 Preludes)*. *Prelude I* takes several fragments from the *Marche funèbre* of Chopin's Sonata in B minor, Op. 35, and *Préludes*, Op. 28, nos. 15 and 24. Schonthal combines these various fragments to create her own melody. Even though these three pieces employ different tempo markings, the emotional content of Schonthal's *Prelude I* is reminiscent of Chopin's *Marche funèbre*. Schonthal adopted the left-hand figure of her *Prelude I* from *Marche funèbre* (see Examples 5.6 and 5.7).

Example 5.6. Frédéric Chopin, Marche Funèbre from Sonata in B minor, Op. 35, mm. 1–4.



Example 5.7. Ruth Schonthal, *In Homage of.*.. (24 Preludes), *I*, mm. 1–5.

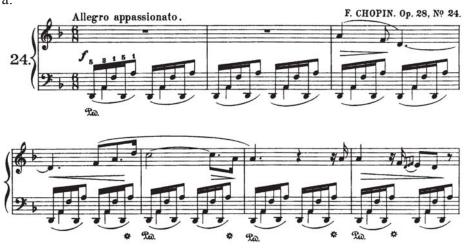


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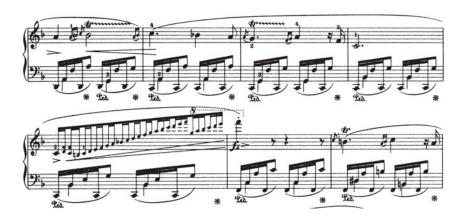
Chopin's left-hand figure rotates between open chords in B-flat minor and G-flat Major in second inversion creating a march-like accompaniment. However, Schonthal keeps the same notes on the top of the chords to create a pedal tone, which Chopin did with Bb3 in the right-hand melody.

The opening melody of Schonthal's *Prelude I* is reminiscent of the beginning of Chopin's prelude no. 24 (compare Examples 5.7 and 5.8a).

Example 5.8. Frédéric Chopin, *Préludes*, Op. 28, no. 24, mm. 1–7 and 12–18. a.



b.

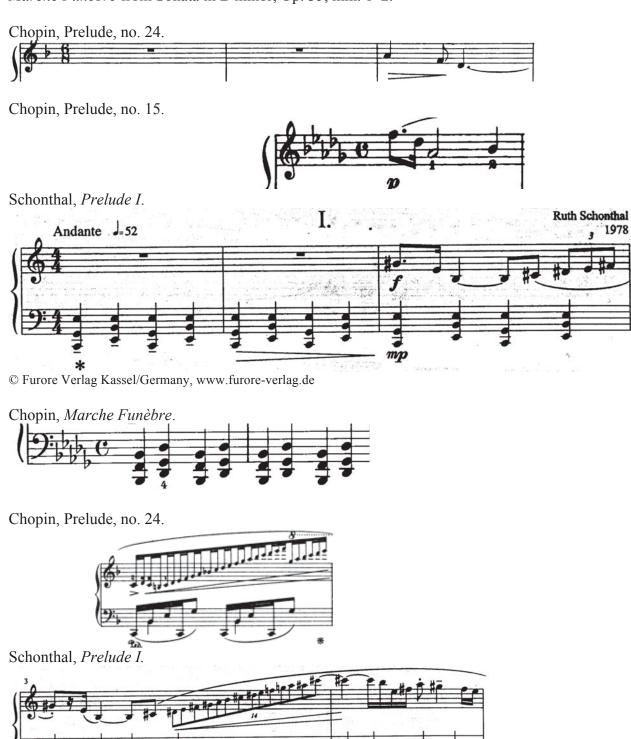


Both Chopin's *Prelude* no. 24 and Schonthal's *Prelude I* begin with two measures of a left-hand introduction, followed by the melody in the right hand. The first three notes of Chopin's right-hand melody in Op. 28, no. 24 appear slightly modified in m. 3 of Schonthal's *Prelude I*. This melodic motive is also reminiscent of Chopin's Prelude no. 15 (see Example 5.9). While Chopin's *Prelude* no. 24 keeps a long-short rhythmic figure (a quarter note and eighth note), Schonthal diminutes it with a dotted eighth- and sixteenth-note figure. This is also found in the melody of Chopin's Prelude no. 15 (see Example 5.9). In m. 4 Schonthal also borrows an ascending scale-like ornament, which is typical of Chopin's piano music (see Example 5.8b). Example 5.9. Frédéric Chopin, *Préludes*, Op. 28, no. 24, mm. 1–2.



One can observe the patchwork that Schonthal used in her *Prelude I* (see Example 5.10).

Example 5.10. Frédéric Chopin, *Préludes*, Op. 28, no. 24, mm. 1–3 and 16; Chopin, *Préludes*, Op. 28, no. 15, m. 1; Ruth Schonthal, *In Homage of.*.. (24 Preludes), *I*, mm. 1–5; Chopin, *Marche Funèbre* from Sonata in B minor, Op. 35, mm. 1–2.



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Schonthal admired Chopin's ability to write expressive melodies with pianistic virtuosity. One can argue that Schonthal's *Prelude I* is an allusion to Chopin's piano works. However, Schonthal stitched fragments of Chopin's music together into one prelude yet is still able to create her own music.

Patchwork is one of the more complicated borrowing techniques that Schonthal employed, as it combines more than one melody and can also combine other musical borrowing techniques.

Conclusion

During the nineteen fifties and sixties, American composers focused on experimenting with compositional techniques such as serialism, electronic music, and minimalism. Schonthal also experimented with such techniques. She made use of prepared piano, developed by Henry Cowell, in *Reverberations* (1964/74).¹ She also experimented with phasing in the second and third movements of her piano work *Canticles of Hieronymus* (1986), which shows influences of minimalism. However, even these compositions maintained a deeply rooted connection with the European tradition. She adopted German folk melodies into two movements of *Reverberations*. Schonthal claimed that she had been inspired by Dutch painter Hieronymus Bosch's masterpiece, "The Garden of Earthly Delights," to compose *Canticles of Hieronymus*, and it made her create virtuosic, dramatic and contrasting musical elements.² For her, experimentation was not the focus of any one composition, but rather a tool to advance her compositional style.

Martina Helmig claims Schonthal's use of new compositional techniques was as follows:

She never used new techniques just for the sake of doing so, but only, if these techniques made sense in terms of the underlying conception of individual pieces. For Schonthal, new compositional techniques represent the potential for expanding expression. Her interest is not principally in developing new compositional techniques, but in making use of different styles in order to create more comprehensive syntheses.³

The program note for *Seven Songs of Love and Sorrow* best shows her compositional philosophy: "At a time when Anton Webern and John Cage were the American role models, [Schonthal]

¹ Martina Helmig, *Ruth Schonthal: A Composer's Musical Development in Exile*, ed. Adina Mornell, trans. Vanessa Agnew (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2006), 254.

² Ruth Schonthal's interview with Corazon Bisda, quoted in Corazon Andres Bisda, "The Piano Works of Ruth Schonthal" (DMA thesis, Manhattan School of Music, 1991), 43.

³ Helmig, 255.

followed her own musical path never denying her own classic-romantic heritage."⁴ For Schonthal, musical borrowing was a tool to connect her music with that of her predecessors.

Schonthal's musical borrowing was not limited to her piano works. For instance, she adopted Yugoslavian folk melodies for her clarinet work *Bells of Sarajevo* (1993). *Love Letters* (1979) for cello and clarinet is comprised of nine movements, and uses the theme and variation form, as stated in her program note.⁵ The third movement of *Love Letters* includes a fugato texture. The piano motive of "Die Spanierin" from her song cycle *Totengesänge* (1962–63) is reminiscent of the guitar technique *rasqueado*, common to Spanish folk music.⁶ While her other instrumental works borrowed materials of general formatting and texture, Schonthal's piano music shows more specific, direct, and detailed musical borrowing. As an accomplished pianist, Schonthal focused her compositional energies on her piano music.

Schonthal believed that much of the compositional experimentation of her contemporaries was taking music in a direction with which she didn't agree. In an interview with Epstein, Schonthal said: "I deliberately combine the good old with the good new, because of my background and because I believe that every revolution throws out the baby with bath water." Schonthal aimed to advance music by building on the work of past composers, not by rejecting them. For her, the classical/romantic music of her youth was the foundation on which to build

⁴ Ruth Schonthal, Program note to *Seven Songs of Love and Sorrow*, quoted in Joyce A. Ford, "The Songs of Ruth Schonthal" (DMA thesis, University of South Carolina, 2004), 12.

⁵ Lauren J. Cox, "The Clarinet Compositions of Ruth Schonthal: A Performer's Guide" (DMA thesis, Florida State University, 2011), 33.

⁶ Helmig, 286.

⁷ Selma Epstein, "Composer Interview: Ruth Schonthal," *The International Alliance for Women in Music Journal* 1 (February 1994): 4.

her own compositional style. By borrowing music from previous composers, she was able to maintain a connection with the past while forging her own compositional style.

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