

## Great-Rag-Sketches, Source Study for Stravinsky's *Piano-Rag-Music*

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### Résumé de l'article

Le processus compositionnel de Stravinsky durant sa période néo-classique est ici mis en relief et étudié par le biais des esquisses, brouillons et autres copies manuscrites de la *Piano-Rag-Music*. Ces autographes révèlent le matériel initial du compositeur, ses méthodes de travail, l'ampleur de ses préoccupations compositionnelles et les conditions étonnantes d'assemblage de l'œuvre. D'ailleurs, elles confirment que la fusion entre les trois éléments distincts opérée dans le titre de l'ouvrage par le trait d'union définit à la fois le contenu de l'œuvre et son objectif. La virtuosité pianistique et la vitalité rythmique de l'improvisation de type ragtime sont synthétisés en une forme musicale pure qui est ni conventionnelle ni hybride, mais plutôt une résultante du matériel en soi.

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## GREAT-RAG-SKETCHES

### SOURCE STUDY FOR STRAVINSKY'S *PIANO-RAG-MUSIC*

Tom Gordon

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The contrived syntax of its hyphenated title suggests a compositional thesis for Stravinsky's *Piano-Rag-Music*. Virtuoso pianism—hallmarks of the ragtime style—*musique pure*: three dissimilar compositional objectives are forged into a musical alloy remarkable for its concision and abstraction. Despite the precision of its title, *Piano-Rag-Music* seems to propose too much to contain within a three-minute frame. Near empty measures alternate with bursts of rhapsodic pianism. Arch syncopations are set, paradoxically, in one of the few Stravinsky scores that abandons the bar-line. And the patchwork form alternates spontaneously between minutely calculated materials and seeming improvisation. A work which found no favour with the virtuoso who commissioned it and a divided response from the most partisan of Stravinsky advocates, *Piano-Rag-Music* seems to be an anomaly in the composer's œuvre.

At the same time, it occupies a chronological position of importance in the Stravinsky repertoire. In the winter of 1919, consumed with the Russian folk rhythms of *les Noces*, Stravinsky was at the most critical turn in his compositional career. The imminent arrival of neo-classicism had just been announced with the completion *l'Histoire du soldat*. Questions about the historical and intrinsic significance of *Piano-Rag-Music* must be posed. And these questions can be both addressed and expanded in rather remarkable ways by reference to the sketches and autograph manuscripts for *Piano-Rag-Music* held in the Stravinsky *Nachlass* (figure 1). These autographs reveal the composer's starting materials, his working methods, the weight of his compositional preoccupations and the surprising conditions of assemblage of the work. Further, they confirm that the three distinct elements fused by hyphen in the work's title do indeed define both the work's content and objective. Virtuoso pianism and the rhythmic vitality of ragtime improvisation are synthesized in a pure music form that is neither conventional nor hybrid, but an outgrowth of the materials themselves.

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That Arthur Rubinstein never liked *Piano-Rag-Music* is one of the few statements easily verified in the pianist's charmingly exaggerated memoirs. He seems never to have performed it. Sympathetic to the work or not, Rubinstein clearly understood it, as is revealed in the account he gives of his receipt of the manuscript:

It was a meticulously and beautifully written autographed manuscript. He had even drawn some flowers around my name. With awe I put this precious sheet on the desk of my piano and began to read it. It took me four or five readings to understand the meaning of this music. It bore out Stravinsky's indication that it was going to be "the first real piano piece." In his sense, it was just that; but to me it sounded like an exercise for percussion and had nothing to do with any rag music, or with any other music in my sense. I must admit I was bitterly, bitterly disappointed. Good musicians to whom I showed it share my opinion. (Rubinstein 1973, 85)

There is no Stravinsky/Rubinstein correspondence regarding *Piano-Rag-Music*. By mutual agreement, their communication transpired in *bon mots* rather than *belles lettres*. But the composer's autobiography does confirm that one concept in the work was pianism—Rubinstein's, ragtime's, and his own:

.... I returned to Morges and finished a piano piece I had begun sometime before with Arthur Rubinstein and his strong, agile, clever fingers in mind. I dedicated this *Piano-Rag-Music* to him. I was inspired by the same ideas, and my aim was the same, as in *Ragtime* [*pour onze instruments*], but in this case I stressed the percussion possibilities of the piano. What fascinated me most of all in the work was that the different rhythmic episodes were dictated by the fingers themselves ... Fingers are not to be despised: they are great inspirers, and, in contact with a musical instrument, often give birth to subconscious ideas which might otherwise never come to life. (Stravinsky 1962, 82)

This reminiscence belongs to the early summer of 1919. Stravinsky's "finger dictation" emerged across the sketches of the work. Ragtime and Rubinstein's fingers came at its inception.

Like so many Stravinsky works, *Piano-Rag-Music* seems to have been less the result of a commission than the occasion for one. The first reference to the work (figure 2) is in a telegram draft to Mme Errazuriz, dated 23 March 1918, announcing the completion of a ragtime for his Chilean benefactress. In a deft gesture of dual patron stroking, Stravinsky asks her to extend his thanks to Rubinstein. Stravinsky's appreciation would come in the form of a piano piece. Despite the composer's telegraphic pigeon French, we can assume that the phrase "spécialement pour lui"—returned after having been edited out and the placement of "importante" before rather than after "piano" define his preconceptions in the piece. Rubinstein responded through another intermediary. On 1 May 1918 Manuel de Falla remitted Rubinstein's commission, 5000FF, to Stravinsky. A letter dated the next day from Ansermet to Stravinsky confirmed that de Falla had deposited the commission, indicating at the same time, that the first installment of the money came not from Rubinstein, but from Stravinsky's rag-time patroness, Eugenia Errazuriz. Both de Falla and Ansermet establish that Rubinstein had left the subject of the work completely to the composer's discretion.

The first five pages of sketches had already been entered in the "blue sketchbook" by the time Stravinsky received the commission money. The flamboyant squiggles the composer drew to frame the "title page" of the first sketch

group reveal Stravinsky's sense of occasion in undertaking "his first real piano piece." The sketchbook was dated 5 February 1918 just three pages before the first *Piano-Rag-Music* entry amid the short score draft of *Ragtime for 11 Instruments*. The emphatic Rubinstein dedication on both the March telegram and the sketches' first title page suggests that they were simultaneous.

What is vexingly unclear is what the title means. The apparent title "Gran Matshitch" (plate 1) is a puzzle not only as to meaning and reference, but even language. The most plausible interpretation, put forth by Richard Taruskin (1996, 1479<sup>1</sup>), is a Franco-Russian rendering of *maxixe*, the Brazilian relative of the tango. Popular in the late-nineteenth century, this urban dance form was typified by systematic syncopation of both melodic line and accompaniment. Its buoyant tunes and eight-measure phrases grouped into periodic structures were borrowed from the polka. Given the South American connections of both Rubinstein and Mme Errazuriz, together with Stravinsky's war-time interest in national dance conventions (balalaika, espagnola, ragtime, napolitana), *Piano-Rag-Music's* first incarnation as a *maxixe* is possible.

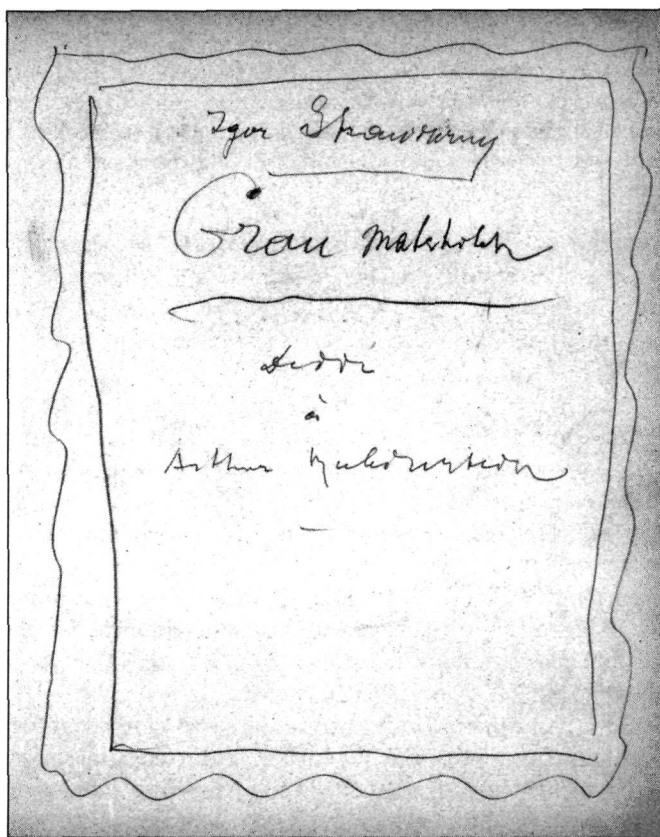


Plate 1. Gran Matshitch title page from Blue sketchbook

<sup>1</sup> It was Carlo Caballero who first forwarded this hypothesis to me after I had read an earlier version of this paper at an AMS conference.

Stravinsky abandoned work on his *Gran Maxixe* after only a day or two of sketching. Though Robert Craft hedges on documenting his evidence, he asserts that the two fragmentary entries of the opening “bell” motive of *Symphonies d’instruments à vent*, which follow the first set of *Piano-Rag-Music* sketches, were made on 26 March 1918 as Stravinsky learned the news of Debussy’s death (1984, 448–452). The majority of *Piano-Rag-Music* sketches are to be found in the “brown sketchbook.” This sketchbook is first dated 27 June 1919 on the penultimate page of *Piano-Rag-Music* materials. Though it is difficult to specify the exact date between March 1918 and May 1919 these were entered, the evidence points to a late, rather quick assembly of the work. The composer’s agenda, dominated by *les Noces*, *l’Histoire du soldat* and its attendant spin-offs, would have left little time for even so condensed a work as *Piano-Rag-Music* until late in the spring of 1919. Based on sketchbook dates, the first continuity draft could not have been entered before March 1919. Indeed, the brown book itself in which most of the sketches were entered was probably purchased in Paris late in the spring of 1919, making it unlikely that anything beyond the initial few sketches were begun before the spring of that year. It was probably an interview with the American consul in Genève on 5 June 1919 and a confirming letter from Mrs. D. G. Mason of Boston that prompted the return to *Piano-Rag-Music*. Fresh money was flowing from the “American Friends”<sup>2</sup> and the major contributor was Arthur Rubinstein. The composer’s final draft was made on 28 June 1919 and the publisher’s fair copy delivered on 16 July 1919. The most likely chronology for the work then suggests that it was written between 23 March and 26 March 1918; and again between 5 June and 28 June 1919.

\* \* \*

Despite the haste of the final assembly of the work, the quantity of sketches for this three-minute, solo keyboard work seems disproportionately large. There are at least sixty entries that pertain directly to this work, entered in up to ten sketching sessions (based on changes of hand and implement). While many entries are brief, nine exceed twelve 2/4 measures in length. The variety in type of entry is also noteworthy. A few are concerned with fixing pitch and simultaneity. But the majority re-work materials for rhythmic refinement, placement of accompaniment, registral and other timbral definitions, and to test out adjacencies of ideas.

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<sup>2</sup> Correspondence in the Stravinsky archives reveals that throughout much of 1919 Stravinsky was the beneficiary of a financial campaign organized by the “American Friends of Musicians in France.” This group included several highly influential musical families from Boston, New York, and San Francisco, among them Mrs. Daniel Gregory Mason, Mrs. Edward B. Hill, and Otto Kahn, the director of the Metropolitan Opera in New York. Stravinsky proposed that the donations he received from the American friends be considered as advances on the performance of his works in the U.S. (likely in an effort to pressure Kahn to produce *le Rossignol* at the Met), but in the end he was persuaded to accept the money as “practical aid” in freeing him to his artistic endeavour. Arthur Rubinstein’s participation in the subscription was a likely catalyst in Stravinsky’s completion of *Piano-Rag-Music*.



Example 1a. Opening material, first sketch (R-61:1)



Example 1b. Opening material, elaboration with partial accompaniment (R-61:3)



Example 1c. Opening material, continuity draft (R-75:14)

The first sketch entry (example 1a)<sup>3</sup> shows the seminal form of the work's opening two measures. This first form, as well as all subsequent forms of the same material up to the final draft, shows that the bold major triads that open the work came to Stravinsky as an answer or interruption to a snippet of conventionally syncopated ragtime doggerel. Also striking is the free use of enharmonic equivalence from state to state of the same material. This consistently casual approach to pitch name-consistent throughout Stravinsky's sketch books—might suggest that the composer was transcribing from the fingers, rather than reflecting pre-conceived tonal functions in his notation.

Another intriguing entry in the first sketch group introduces the material that would become bars 55–62 (plate 2).<sup>4</sup> Several elements invite comment. Most exceptionally there is the appearance of a percussion part. In this instance, the single measure of rhythmic counterpoint establishes a cross-metric pattern to the already established piano part. The percussion lines recur with some, but not all, reworkings of this material, as well as with one other idea. The percussion drafts are not, contrary to what Robert Craft has stated, sufficiently advanced that they could be reintegrated into the work (1984, 450).



Plate 2. Sketch material for bars 55–62 (double page, R-61:76v-77r)

<sup>3</sup> Musical examples are identified by manuscript designation and sketch number as indicated in column 2 of figure 3. Thus R-61:1 refers to the first sketch entry identified on figure 3 from Blue sketchbook (Rothschild 61).

<sup>4</sup> Plates are identified by manuscript designation and page leaf number as indicated in column 1 of figure 3. Thus R-61:76v-77r refers to pages 76 verso and 77 recto in the Blue sketchbook (Rothschild 61). All plates are reproduced with the kind permission of the Paul Sacher Stiftung in Basel.

Further interest in this sketch entry is prompted by the appearance of five rhythmic variants of the same melodic fragment. Each tests the delay or anticipation of the accented beat while destroying ragtime's convention of metric symmetry through their stretched and shaved meters (9/16 or 7/16). Stravinsky here seems to experiment by distorting a convention of ragtime as written. It is noteworthy that none of these variants were incorporated in the work. Only at this very early state of sketching did Stravinsky try to work out his additive (or subtractive) rhythmic variants on paper. In the later sketches, Stravinsky may have realized that he did not need to "calculate" this distortion of ragtime convention. "Finger dictation" and the spontaneity of improvisation provided a more vital access to ragtime pianism. Similarly, he appears to have discovered he did not need other percussion instruments to enhance the percussive effects of the piano.

Between the preliminary sketching for "Gran Matshitch" in March 1918 and the drafting sessions of June 1919, Stravinsky composed two other rags: the choreographed "Rag-time Dance" for *l'Histoire du soldat* and the stylized ragtime which forms the centrepiece of the Three Pieces for Solo Clarinet. This latter is particularly notable for its identifiable ragtime gestures without contextualizing bar lines. Stravinsky succeeded in abstracting ragtime's characteristic rhythms from an explicit metric context, thereby approximating the performance practice of its hallmark syncopations, rather than their notation. Thus when he returned to *Piano-Rag-Music* in the spring of 1919, he re-focussed his portrait on ragtime as performed rather than ragtime as written.

*Piano-Rag* sketches are resumed as the first material in the "brown sketch-book." Stravinsky's new title page is emphatic: "Great-Rag-Music." The first material entered is the original four bars of an entry from the previous group (figure 3: R-61/7 = R-75/1)—copied verbatim. Here however, no percussion accompaniment is suggested; no variant forms are shown. Dynamic indications, articulations, and the registral placement of the accompanying ninth are carefully positioned. The placement of this material and its quite advanced state of determination imply that it had acquired the status of a head motive. A number of entries follow which are not destined for the completed form of the work, but test the possibilities for typically "ragged" syncopations in pitch manipulation (figure 3: R-75/3). The ninth entry, though only nine eighth-notes length, presents all the essentials of the material that would form bars 33–36 and 42–44 in final form. The nature of the material itself, but especially the fact that its first sketch entry is in its final form suggests that it was improvised at the piano and set down complete with its spontaneity intact: "finger dictation."

Sharing the page with this idea are several forms of what would become bars 37–41 and 50–56. For the first time in the sketches, juxtapositions are tested. The next two pages continue, or perhaps precede in this process. The first sketched material, that which would provide the work's opening, is returned and laid out with its chordal measures internally reprised (example 1c). Here Stravinsky uses a rubric, common to his sketches from this period, to denote the repetition of motivic cells: the first to measures of entry R-75:14, are independently labelled A and B. Their reprise at the end of the entry is indicated by a short-



hand repetition of these symbols. The fact that the two measures are separately labelled implies that they could be recalled independently or in inverted order. The measure becomes a self-contained module available for juxtapositioning at any one of several points. Several other features can be noted in this first sectional draft:

- 1) The slow glissando in the left hand second measure of the right side is not easily seen as pianistic. Was Stravinsky thinking clarinet? Violin?
- 2) The material on the second system of the right side (R-75: entry 15, mm. 8-9 of example 1c) is the same material which was fixed as entry nine the page before. Having just been notated, it is now juxtaposed with the work's seminal idea. As advanced as this entry seems to be these materials are never again juxtaposed, neither in the continuity draft, nor in the final form.
- 3) The final measure of this page dovetails with material from the preceding page. Taken together these four double pages provide thirty-five measures of continuous draft.

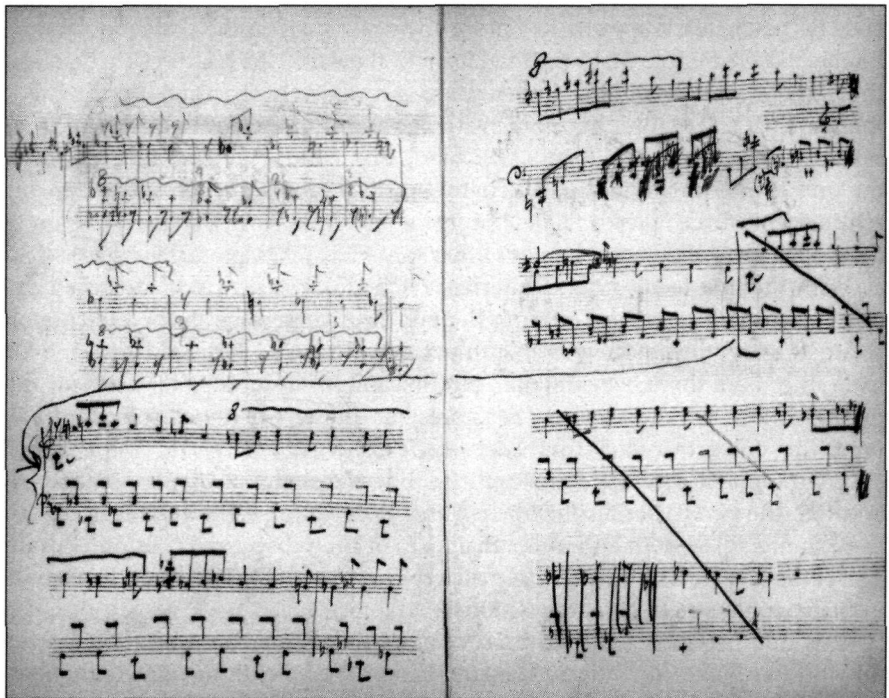


Plate 3. Draft of material for bars 55-64 and 20-32 with percussion (R-75:12v/13r)

In the six pages which follow, Stravinsky notates several fragmentary ideas defining stride bass patterns, the ostinato accompaniment that would pervade the second half of the work, and the cadential chords that will be abruptly dropped into bar 24. Two larger ideas are sketched before the composer drafts

another set of juxtapositions. The first of these (example 2a) is the first entry for material that would require the most reworking of any in the sketches. This is the material which Richard Taruskin suggests originated in a lost piece of Latin sheet music once in Stravinsky's possession, going so far as to reconstruct its hypothetical original form (1996, 1479, 1482, example 18.15c). The conjecture is intriguing, but unlikely since by this point in the sketching process Stravinsky had abandoned the *maxixe* model for pure ragtime. More tellingly, Stravinsky rarely devoted a lot of sketch book attention to materials he was recomposing. By contrast, there are seven entries for this material from the first sketch to the autograph, even though its initial appearance as shown here is quite developed. Across the evolving states of this material Stravinsky probes questions of metric definition, ostinato placement, and the means and material of adjacency. The three entries shown in example 2 demonstrate successive solutions. The first (example 2a) is quite advanced, suggesting again that the material was already worked out at the keyboard. The percussion part provides a further layer of syncopation and the treble material is meticulously registered. The three interruptive measures identify the origins of the material that would become bars 10–11. This material appears in a more advanced state on the sketchbook's next double page (example 3). In the final form of the work, the relationship between the F-major melody and this interruption is completely obscured. Yet the F-F#-E motive (or any of its enharmonic variants) is one of the few figures to recur at several points in the final form of the work. Subsequent sketches incorporating the unmeasured material vacillate between surprisingly unsophisticated forms reminiscent of the "pièces faciles" of just a few years earlier (plate 3), to quite developed tests of adjacencies with other materials (example 2c).

With the first form of this material sketched out, Stravinsky attempted another draft of adjacencies, offering the eye the richest page in the sketchbook (plate 4). Not only are the percussion parts meticulously notated (this time for five rather than three instruments), but the composer doodles a lay-out for the percussionist. This draft on pp. 12–13 presents different material from the drafts preceding on pp. 6–7–4–5 (this order will be explained below) and could be read as its consequent. Again, one notes the mobile placement of a figure marked "A" and that the two materials juxtaposed at the top of the right hand leaf are not to be found adjacent in either the final form or the subsequent continuity draft. The composer treats his near-complete repertoire of materials as modular units available for a variety of juxtapositions.

This draft is again followed by several entries before the composer breaks off work on *Piano-Rag-Music*. The entries on the sixteenth to eighteenth pages of the sketchbook refer to *Symphonies d'instruments à vents*. When he returns to *Piano-Rag-Music* (entry no. 40, example 2c), it is with a clear sense of determination. This is the first sketchbook entry in ink. It is, more importantly, the first and only entry for the material which opens the second half of the work (bar 83 in the published score). The security of an ink entry, despite the fact that the accompaniment is not fully positioned, plus the fact that this material is subsequently referred to in the sketches only by its first two notes and an "etc" suggests that this as an idea "fixed" at the keyboard and not on paper. The

The image contains two musical sketches. The top sketch, labeled 'Example 2a', consists of two systems of staves. The first system has four staves: two treble clefs and two bass clefs. The second system has three staves: two treble clefs and one bass clef. The bottom sketch, labeled 'Example 2b', also consists of two systems. The first system has three staves: two treble clefs and one bass clef. The second system has two staves: one treble clef and one bass clef. Both sketches show various musical notations including notes, rests, and accidentals.

Example 2a: Sketch forms for bar 83 (R-75:20)

This musical sketch, labeled 'Example 2b', consists of three systems of staves. The first system has two staves: one treble clef and one bass clef. The second system has three staves: two treble clefs and one bass clef. The third system has two staves: one treble clef and one bass clef. The sketch includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and accidentals, with some staves marked with 'cp.' and 'mar'.

Example 2b. Sketch forms for bar 83 (R-75:30 + 31)

This musical sketch, labeled 'Example 2c', consists of two systems of staves. The first system has two staves: one treble clef and one bass clef. The second system has two staves: one treble clef and one bass clef. The sketch includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and accidentals.

Example 2c. Testing adjacencies for bar 83 material (R-75:40)



Example 3. Elaboration of material for bars 10–11, compare with second bar of example 2a (R-75:20)



Plate 4. Material for bar 83 (R-75:15r)

connection to the incipit of entry 20 (example 2a) suggests that both ideas were developed and bridged at the keyboard.

The next entry works out some of the contrapuntal relationships in the material that would become bars 65–80, relationships that may have been encouraged by a decision to omit other percussion instruments. On pages 24 and 25 of the sketchbook the material for bar 94 makes its first appearance, again in a finalized form. With an ink draft of the material first seen as entry 20, the composer seems to have been satisfied that he was ready to put together a continuity draft.

This draft was entered in the latter part of the “blue sketchbook.” Fourteen pages (71 measures) in length, its material is drawn from the first twenty-five pages of the “brown book” sketches. The adjacency of materials varies considerably from continuities suggested in the sketchbook, as do many details within

each material. Figure 4 shows a concordance between this draft and the published form of the work. There are, again, many variants in detail, but some notable consistencies, particularly from (draft) bar 53 to the end. This material which consists chiefly of the “finger dictated” material and which appeared sometimes only skeletally, as entries 40 to 45 in the brown book, will have varied least from first notation to published form. This further supports the suggestion that Stravinsky’s choices finalized at the keyboard were gaining priority over those drafted and revised on paper.

The two notable disparities between this draft and the published form are the absence of the first nine measures of the published form in this draft, and considerable differences in continuities between draft bars 8–34 (example 4) and score bars 15–56. Among the features to note are:

- 1) At bar 12 in the draft a strong connection is made across two materials by the common F#. In the final form these ideas are never contiguous and the F# in bar 13 material is eliminated. Instead, at this point in the final form, (draft) bar 10 is repeated, leading to a broad parody of a tonal cadence. This is succeeded by an eight-measure material which further separates the two elements of (draft) bar 12.
- 2) Draft bars 17a and 17b were scratched out in the draft itself and the connection of 17 and 18 is what is actually heard in the final form.
- 3) Draft bars 25 and 26 are eliminated in the final version, as are bars 31 and 32. In the first case, this merely eliminates an internal repetition. But in the second it removes a transition which in some respects “explained” a connection between two quite dissimilar materials, by relating them back via bar 17.

On the whole the many discrepancies between the continuity draft and the published score suggest that the composer’s revisions obscured the connections between adjacent materials. Across the compositional process Stravinsky masked the similarities between adjacent and repeated materials: never eradicating, only obscuring their common connections. Thus, while the draft form tends to highlight the continuity between materials, these same juxtapositions are likely to appear interruptive in the final form.

The composer returned to the brown sketchbook after the continuity draft. Entries 46 and 47 show refinements of keyboard figuration perhaps deemed too ponderous in the draft. The one significant material previously sketched, but omitted from the draft, is entered and then ink-corrected in its final form (entry 50). This will provide the work’s opening measures.

What remains unsketched is the work’s conclusion. The continuity draft in the “blue sketchbook” stops, but clearly does not conclude. The final six pages of the brown book are devoted to sketching coda materials. These six pages must be considered as a whole, and not in succession, for Stravinsky’s working process is clear: the tops of the pages all show pencil sketches of ideas, some new, some previously identified; while the bottoms of the same pages expand and draft from these ideas. Many are overwritten in ink, identifying final forms.

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Example 4. Continuity draft (R-61). Compare with bars 15-56 in published score.

The other intriguing feature to this last sketch group is a pair of arithmetic calculations entered with entry R-75:55 (figure 5). These figures calculate the durational proportions used by the composer in the final assembly of the work. The base number for the calculations, 138, is the number of 2/4 measures in the R-61 continuity draft, as verified on Figure 4. The multiple by two gives the number of quarter-note values in the draft. Stravinsky then calculated a third of the number of quarter notes in the draft. That third, i.e., 92 quarter notes, is the exact duration of the material sketched on pp. 30 to 35 in the brown book and subsequently entered as the coda in the composer's autograph (figure 6). The conclusion to be drawn is that Stravinsky calculated simple proportions as a guide to the final assembly of his work. Given the "mobility" of individual materials, already demonstrated by the variety of adjacencies in sketch, draft, and final forms; and given that mobility was facilitated by the progressive "composing out" of continuities between adjacent materials; Stravinsky seems to have sought the large-scale assurance of simple durational proportion in the final assembly of the work. The validity of this hypothesis is supported by the fact that the exact centre of the final form of the work is articulated by an abrupt

shift to the more improvisatory material and is notationally identified in the autograph.

The composer's autograph raises many more questions. It prefaces the body of the work with three self-contained materials (example 5), that are not included in the published form. These materials suggest a germinal relationship to the complete work, but in fact they were virtually the last identified in the sketchbooks. It is plausible that Stravinsky intended this material to serve as the clichéd ragtime introduction. His eventual decision to delete the material is probably due to the fact that it was incapable of being incorporated into the work in an articulating function, as the introduction had done in *Ragtime pour onze instruments*.



Example 5. Materials in composer autograph not found in published score (R-55:5)

More puzzling still is the actual arrangement of this autograph. The score begins on p. 5 of the manuscript, directs the reader to p. 4, then 1, 2, and finally 6. Pages 5 and 4 notate self-contained material. Robert Craft's suggestion (1984,451) that Stravinsky may have envisioned the final form as a mobile, is tantalizing, and certainly encouraged by the free interchange of material in the sketches and drafts. Unfortunately the autograph only permits a mental interchange of the materials; playing them from pages one to six is not possible. But the arrangement of the autograph, which is in truth a final draft, confirms the sectional organization of the work which has been implicit in the sketches and preliminary drafts from the outset. *Piano-Rag-Music* is a composite of five self-contained units, any one of which could have been—or indeed *was* at an earlier stage—the opening material. Each section is completely self-contained, but the ensemble of materials is also compatible, not only in its family resemblance being derived from ragtime, but in harmonic relationships as well. Some materials bear dominant relationships to each other. Others have “dominant comparable” relationships in the context which Stravinsky himself establishes in the work's

opening harmonic gesture. The overall formal/tonal plan of *Piano-Rag-Music* is, then, an abstraction and objectification of the formal/tonal plan of the rag: four more or less self-contained sections which are individually exclusive in material but complementary in style. What's missing, of course, is the conformist periodicity (which was, however, a consistent assumption in *Rag-time pour onze instruments*). Stravinsky's tonal plan in *Piano-Rag-Music* is integrated, binding each section to the other through common language rather than complementation.

The *Piano-Rag-Music* sketches and drafts reveal much about the route along which the work evolved and about the dual roles of pianism—especially Stravinsky's own attentiveness to finger-dictation—and ragtime in the work. At the same time, the final assembly of the work offers insights on the perennial questions of continuity and discontinuity in Stravinsky and the integrity of the total form. Ernest Ansermet, the composer's first and perhaps most insightful apologist, challenged the first generation of Stravinsky listeners to hear *Piano-Rag-Music* as a synthesis of pianism and ragtime on the level of the purest of musical forms:

The incessant movement, the dynamism of musical activity, the shifts of tonal planes, the ever richer digressions, the perpetual rebounding of the form in a never transgressed line; these traits produce in us an inexhaustible source of emotions which—controlled as they are by pure form—create a whole. In both its effect and its essence, *Piano-Rag-Music* is a work of pure music: a sonata in the original sense of the word.<sup>5</sup>

The continuity drafts, the calculations which suggest a guiding principle in the assembly of the work, even the unique layout of the autograph of *Piano-Rag-Music*, all suggest a preoccupation with pure musical form. Early sketches for the work point to the composer's interest in establishing coherence through a narrow vocabulary of tonal elements. As the materials are elaborated across the sketches, their most blatant elements of unity are progressively obscured and the quest for coherence is shifted to the larger level of constructed form. The asymmetric surface rhythms of the ragtime references and the improvisation-like spontaneity of finger-dictated passages find their counterbalance in the simple proportions which guide the large outlines of the work. The *musique pure* of Stravinsky's neo-classical period is already operative in this piano rag.

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<sup>5</sup> "Ce mouvement incessant, cette verve de l'action musicale, ces changements des plans [tonales], ces épisodes toujours plus nourris, ce perpétuel rebondissement de la forme dans sa ligne jamais transgressée sont en nous une inépuisable source d'émotions, qui — étant dominées par une forme — feront une somme. C'est proprement l'effet et la nature de l'œuvre musicale pure. C'est une sonate, au sens originel du mot."



## FIGURES

Figure 1. Summary of autograph materials

	Category	Identification	Location <sup>6</sup>	Nr of pages / entries / meas.	Dates	Notes
a	Sketches	PSS III; R-61; S- Sketchbook "F"	PSS	7pp/12 entries	1918/02/05 to 1918/12/28	The blue sketchbook
b	Sketches	PSS IV; R-75; Sketchbook "G"	PSS	35pp/61 entries	before 1919/06/27	The brown sketchbook
c	Sketch		RC	1p/1 entry	undated	
d	Draft	PSS III; R-61; S- Sketchbook "F"	PSS	14pp/95mm	after 1919/03/01	
e	Autograph	R-55	PSS	12pp/113mm	1919/06/28	
f	Autograph	BL Loan 75-49	BL	9pp	undated	Autograph ms. with editing and corrections in unidentified hand (José Iturbi?). On loan from J & W Chester Publishers, Ltd.
g	Autograph	Presentation holograph	nf			For Rubinstein. See Chronology entry for 1919/08/20.
h	Ms copy	Rental copy	BL	9pp	undated	Copy made by J & W Chester for pre-publication rentals. See Chronology entry for 1920/01/12.
i	Presentation copy		nf			An additional ms copy may have been made for Chester and released to Rubinstein. See Chronology entry for 1919/10/15.
j	Corrected proofs		nf			Two proof stages are confirmed in correspondence. See Chronology entries for 1920/05/14 & 1920/05/26.


6. Abbreviations BL British Library  
 nf unlocated  
 PSS Paul Sacher Stiftung  
 R Rothschild Inventory (Paul Sacher Stiftung)  
 RC Robert Craft personal collection  
 S Shepard Inventory (Shepard 1983-84).

Figure 2. Documentary chronology of *Piano-Rag-Music*

Date	Source <sup>7</sup>	Information
1918/02/05	a	Sketchbook date amid the short score draft of <i>Ragtime pour onze instruments</i> , three pages before the first <i>Piano-Rag-Music</i> sketches.
1918/03/23	telegram draft	IStr. to Mme Errazuriz: "Remercie chaleureusement Rubinstein <del>lui</del> <b>composerai spécialement</b> en été / travaillera une pièce <b>piano</b> importante piano <b>spécialement pour lui</b> vous enverrai prochainement un ragtime récemment composé pour vous. Votre. Str.
1918/05/01	letter	DeFalla to IStr: Remitting 5000FF, this being Rubinstein's commission for <i>Piano-Rag-Music</i> . No restrictions as to the nature or breadth of the work are indicated.
1918/05/02	letter	Ansermet to IStr: Confirming that the commission has been deposited and that the first instalment of the money came from Errazuriz, not Rubinstein. The subject of the work is completely at the composer's discretion.
1919/03/01	d	Sketchbook date amid sketches for <i>Chant dissident</i> , six pages before the continuity draft for <i>Piano-Rag-Music</i> .
1919/06/16	letter	Mrs D. G. Mason to IStr: Writing on behalf of the Society of American Friends of Musicians in France, Mrs Mason identifies Arthur Rubinstein as among the most generous contributors to the subscription to support Stravinsky.
1919/06/27	b	Sketchbook date two pages before the end of <i>Piano-Rag-Music</i> sketches.
1919/06/28	e	Manuscript date: "Morges / 1919 / 28 juin à midi / Igor Stravinsky / Les cloches de l'église sonn midi; à 3 heures j'entendrais les canons à la frontier qui tonneront la signature de la paix à Versail."
1919/07/24	letter	O.M.Kling (at J & W Chester in London) to IStr: Acknowledging receipt of the ms. for <i>Piano-Rag-Music</i> which had been delivered to the publisher by Ansermet. This ms (f) is now on loan to the British Library.
1919/10/15	letter	Postal receipt: An autograph ms. (g) of <i>Piano-Rag-Music</i> was sent to Rubinstein c/o Mrs F. E. Brooks (NY) as confirmed in a letter to Naomi Pernessi Raymond dated six days later. Although Rubinstein acknowledges receiving this ms., it may not have been until some time later since he requested a copy from Chester in October, 1919.
1919/11/19 1919/12/15 1919/12/22	letters	O.M.Kling to IStr: Requesting overdue return of corrected first proofs of <i>Piano-Rag-Music</i> .
1920/01/12	letter	O.M.Kling to IStr: Requesting permission to make a ms. Copy of <i>Piano-Rag-Music</i> for performance rentals. This may be the ms. copy (h) in the British Library.
1920/05/14	letter	C. Desbaillets (J & W Chester in Genève) to IStr: Acknowledging receipt of corrected proofs. Proofs and ms. had been sent to Stravinsky on 1920/04/26.
1920/05/26	letter	C. Desbaillets to IStr: Acknowledging receipt of corrected final proofs. Proofs had been sent to Stravinsky on 1920/05/18.
1920/09/24	letter	O.M.Kling to IStr: Accompanying 10 author's copies of <i>Piano-Rag-Music</i> , just published. Kling hopes Rubinstein will perform it soon.


<sup>7</sup> Letter sources refer to items from Figure 1: Summary of autograph materials. All materials are housed in the Paul Sacher Stiftung.

Figure 3A. Inventory of Sketch Entries in Blue Sketchbook (R-61)

Page no.	Entry no.	Duration in 	Sketch category <sup>8</sup>	Previous occurrence	Concordance w/published score	Notes
1	0					Title page: "Gran Matshitch"
2	0					blank
3	1	12	PA		mm 1-7	Ex. 1a
	2	36	RPS		none	
3-4	3	39	PA	61:1	mm 1-7	Ex. 1b
5	4	12	FT		(mm 55-62)	
	5	16	FT	(61:4)	(mm 55-62)	
6	6	15	PA		mm 25-32	
6-7	7	34	FT	(61:3-4)	mm55-62	4 variants of the material are compared; percussion included
8	8	8	FT		(mm 33-36)	
	9	26	PA			Symphonies à vents
9	10	9	FT			Symphonies à vents
	11	7	FT			Symphonies à vents
	12	11	FT			Symphonies à vents


- <sup>8</sup> Abbreviations: PS Pitch sequence without fixed rhythm  
RPS Rhythmicized pitch sequence  
Frag Textural fragment (figuration, ostinato form, etc.)  
PA Sketch material that includes partial accompaniment  
FT Full texture sketch  
RD Rough draft  
( ) Concordances shown in parentheses are related materials

**Figure 3B. Inventory of Sketch Entries in Brown Sketchbook (R-75)**


Page no.	Entry no.	Duration in 	Sketch category <sup>9</sup>	Previous occurrence	Concordance w/published score	Notes
1	0					Title page: "Great-Rag-Music"
2-3	1	16.5	FT	61:7	mm 55-62	Verbatim from R-61:7
	2	10	PA			
	3	30	PS			
	4	8	FT			
	5	16	RPS			
	6	11	PA	75:5		
	7	5	PA			
4-5	8	16	RPS		(mm 30-32)	
	9	9	FT		mm 42-45	1st occurrence is final form
	10	27	PA	61:6	mm 40-41	
	10a		PS	75:10	mm 37-39	
	11	73	PA	75:10	mm 37-41	
	12	68	PA		mm 50-56	
	13	17	PA	75:12	m 51	
6-7	14	48.5	RD	61:1 + 3	mm 1-9	Ex. 1c
	15	9	FT	75:9	mm 42-45	includes percussion
	16	8	FT	75:11	mm 37-38	
8	17	19	PA		mm 21-23	
	18	40			mm 18-19	
	19		PA	75:17	mm 22(-24)	
9	20	53	RD		m 83	Ex. 2a; includes percussion
10	21	10.5	PA	61:7; 75:1	mm 55-59	
	22	20	PA	75:20	m 95; m 11 (treble); m 83 (ostinato)	
11	23	34	RD		mm 10-17; m 95	1st occurrence of mm. 10-17 in an advanced state; Stravinsky includes fingerings!

(Figure 3B continued on next page)

(Figure 3B continued from previous page)

Page no.	Entry no.	Duration in 	Sketch category <sup>9</sup>	Previous occurrence	Concordance w/published score	Notes
12-13	24	62.5	RD	61.7; 75:1/18/19/21	mm 55-64; mm 20-32	Detailed percussion indications, including performer set-up
	25	5	PA	75:8	(mm 30-32)	
	26	8.5	Frag			
14	27	4	Frag	75:24	m 15	
15	28	6	RPS			
	29	9	RPS	75:25		
	30	12	RPS	75:20	m 83	Ex. 2b
	31	19	RD	75:20 + 31	m 83	Ex. 2b
16	32	6	RPS			<i>Symphonies à vents</i>
	33	14	PA			<i>Symphonies à vents</i>
	34	6	Frag			<i>Symphonies à vents</i>
17	35	17	PA			<i>Symphonies à vents</i>
	36	8	FT	75:12 + 13	(m 51)	
	37	10	PS			
	38	8	PA			<i>Symphonies à vents</i>
18-19	39	26	PA	61:9		<i>Symphonies à vents</i>
	40	52	RD	75:14 + 20	mm 81-83	Ex. 2c
20-21	41	66	RD	75:14	mm 65-80	
22-23	42	47	PA		mm 83-88	1st occurrence is in an advanced state.
	43	14	RPS			Not <i>Piano-Rag-Music</i>
24-25	44	40	RD		m 94	1st occurrence is in an advanced state.

(Figure 3B continued on next page)

(Figure 3B continued from previous page)						
Page no.	Entry no.	Duration in 	Sketch category <sup>9</sup>	Previous occurrence	Concordance w/published score	Notes
	45	85	RD	75:40 + 30 + 20	m 83	Sketching breaks off here. Internal evidence suggests that the continuity draft in R-61 was made at this time. See Figure 4.
26						blank
27	46	16	PA	75:23	mm 10-11	
	47	8	Frag	75:23	m 15	
28	48	37	FT			Material appears in autograph, but not in the published score; Ex. 5
	49		FT	(75:9)		
29	50	69	RD	61:1 + 3; 75:14 + 41	mm 1-9	Final form
30-31	51	28	RPS		mm 96-98; 100-101; 103-10	
	52	18	FT	75:51		
	53	9	FT	(75:50 + 51)	mm 105-12	
	54	23	FT	75:50 + 51	mm 105-12	
32-33	55	39	FT		m 113	Metered in sketch
34	56	11	RPS	75:46 + 23		
34-35	57	66	RD	75:56 + 53	mm 95-101	Entered in ink.
31	58	10	FT	75:57		Entered in ink.
32-33	59	25	RD	75:57 + 53	mm 99-102	Entered in ink.
30	60	14	RPS		mm 113	Entered in ink.
32-33	61	25	RD	75:60	mm 113	

- <sup>9</sup> Abbreviations: PS Pitch sequence without fixed rhythm  
RPS Rhythmicized pitch sequence  
Frag Textural fragment (figuration, ostinato form, etc.)  
PA Sketch material that includes partial accompaniment  
FT Full texture sketch  
RD Rough draft

Figure 4. Concordance between R-61 Continuity Draft and Published Score

Draft (R-61)		Published Score		Notes
Meas no.	Duration in	Meas No.	Duration in	
1-7	26	10-14	20	Draft has internal repetition and denser accompaniment.
8-12	20	15-19	18	Published score repeats and varies this material in mm. 20-24.
12-17	19	33-41	19	Draft is denser in treble; two measure transition (17a/b) deleted in draft.
18-24	18	42-50	20	Published score has internal repetition
25-28	10	51-54	8	Draft attenuates opening chord.
29-37	16.5	55-64	20.5	Published score has internal repetition.
38-41	16	65-72	16	Identical
42-46	21	73-82	21	Draft elides 32-33; disjointed as 76-77 in published form.
47	13	83	13	Identical except for accompaniment form.
48	32	83	61	Considerable variance of internal repetition and ostinato placement.
49-50	8	10-11	8	Draft reintroduces its opening two measures at this point.
51	13	83	16	Published score has additional material at the beginning of the phrase.
52-53	5	84-87	5	Identical.
54	11	88	11	Identical.
55-56	18.5	93	21.5	Published score adds internal repetition at upper octave.
60-69	16	94	16	Identical.
70-71	13	95	13	Identical.
276		Total quarter-note duration of R-61 draft		

Figure 5. Arithmetic calculations entered in sketch R-75:55

A:	138	B:	276 / 3
	x 2		
	<hr/>		92
	276		

Figure 6. Concordance between R-75 Continuity Draft for conclusion and Published Score

Sketches (R-75)		Published Score		Notes
Entry no.	Duration in	Meas No.	Duration in	
57	32	95-101	36	Draft does not contain mm. 97-98.
59	8	102	8	
53	4.5	103-112	19.5	Published version adds internal repetition.
54	11.5			
55	17	113	17	Sketches indicate segue to entry 61.
61	12	113	12	Published score shows 12.5, but autograph shows 12.
			92.5	Total quarter-note duration of conclusion.

## REFERENCE LIST

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- Stravinsky, Igor. 1962 *An Autobiography*.<sup>10</sup> New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.
- Taruskin, Richard. 1996. *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, Vol. 2: *A Biography of the Works Through Mavra*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

## ABSTRACT

Sketches, drafts and the composer's fair copy for *Piano-Rag-Music* are explored in this study of Stravinsky's compositional process during his early neo-classicism. These autographs reveal the composer's starting materials, his working methods, the weight of his compositional preoccupations and the surprising conditions of assemblage of the work. Further, they confirm that the three distinct elements fused by hyphen in the work's title do indeed define both the work's content and objective. Virtuoso pianism and the rhythmic vitality of ragtime improvisation are synthesized in a pure music form that is neither conventional nor hybrid, but an outgrowth of the materials themselves.

<sup>10</sup> Stravinsky's autobiography was ghost-written by Walter Nouvel (1871-1949), an amateur musician (celebrated in the *Polka* from *Three Easy Pieces*) and music critic for the journal *Mir iskusstva* (*World of Art*) through which Diaghilev unleashed Russian art on the West.



## RÉSUMÉ

Le processus compositionnel de Stravinsky durant sa période néo-classique est ici mis en relief et étudié par le biais des esquisses, brouillons et autres copies manuscrites de la *Piano-Rag-Music*. Ces autographes révèlent le matériel initial du compositeur, ses méthodes de travail, l'ampleur de ses préoccupations compositionnelles et les conditions étonnantes d'assemblage de l'œuvre. D'ailleurs, elles confirment que la fusion entre les trois éléments distincts opérée dans le titre de l'ouvrage par le trait d'union définit à la fois le contenu de l'œuvre et son objectif. La virtuosité pianistique et la vitalité rythmique de l'improvisation de type ragtime sont synthétisés en une forme musicale pure qui est ni conventionnelle ni hybride, mais plutôt une résultante du matériel en soi.