

**THE KRZYSZTOF PENDERECKI
ACADEMY OF MUSIC IN KRAKÓW**

Anna Wielgus-Nowak

**Performance and interpretation issues in works for piano duet by
Alexander Tansman.**

**Description of doctoral dissertation with a creative practice component as
part of proceedings for awarding a doctorate degree in the arts of music**

**thesis supervisor: dr hab. Bartłomiej Kominek, prof. AMKP
assisting thesis supervisor: dr Ewa Czachorowska-Zygor**

Kraków 2025

Representation of Thesis Supervisor

I hereby represent that this dissertation was written under my supervision and furthermore confirm that it satisfies the terms and requirements for its presentation within the procedure of awarding the Doctor in Fine Arts degree.

Date Signature of Thesis Supervisor

Statement of the Thesis Author

Being aware of legal liability, I hereby declare that this doctoral dissertation was written by me independently under the supervision of Thesis Supervisor and does not contain any content obtained in breach of the prevailing laws and regulations.

Furthermore, I also declare that the presented dissertation has not been previously the subject of procedures linked with the obtaining of the Doctor of Fine Arts degree.

I furthermore declare that this version of the dissertation is consistent with the attached electronic version as recorded on a CD.

Date Author's signature

Table of contents

Introduction.....	7
I. Aleksander Tansman - life and works.....	10
1. Biographical sketch.....	10
2. The musical language of Alexander Tansman.....	12
3. Piano duet in the works of Alexander Tansman.....	14
II. Analysis and performance issues of selected works for piano duet.....	18
1. <i>Le train de nuit</i>	18
2. <i>La Grande Ville</i>	31
2.1. <i>La Rue</i>	32
2.2. <i>Cité Ouvrière</i>	35
2.3. <i>Dancing</i>	38
3. <i>Fantaisie sur les valse de Johann Strauss</i>	45
4. <i>Trois Fugues</i>	55
4.1. <i>Allegro ma non troppo</i>	56
4.2. <i>Moderato</i>	60
4.3. <i>Vivo - Meno mosso</i>	65
5. <i>Introduction et fugue</i>	69
5.1. <i>Introduction</i>	69
5.2. <i>Fugue</i>	72
III. Alexander Tansman's stylistic idiom in works for piano duet.....	81
1. Technical aspects.....	81
2. Relationship between the two pianos.....	83

3. An attempt to define the compositional idiom.....	85
Concluding remarks.....	88
Bibliography.....	89

ARTISTIC WORK

PROGRAMME

Aleksander Tansman (1897-1986)

Le train de nuit for two pianos

La Grande Ville for two pianos

Fantaisie sur les valse de Johann Strauss for two pianos

Trois Fugues for two pianos

Introduction et fugue for two pianos

PERFORMERS

Novi Piano Duo

Grzegorz Nowak - piano I

Anna Wielgus-Nowak - piano II

Introduction

Since the beginning of the concert activity of the *Novi Piano Duo*, which I create with Grzegorz Nowak, promoting the works of Polish composers has become one of our key artistic objectives. An important moment in our duo's work so far was the participation in the 1st International Stanislaw Moniuszko Polish Music Competition in Rzeszów. While searching for repertoire that we wanted to present during the competition, I came across compositions by Aleksander Tansman. It was then that I discovered that the composer's works for piano duet are not only extremely diverse and interesting, but also - unfortunately - still not sufficiently present in concert programmes. After further research into the composer's oeuvre, I found that some of his works had never been published in print or recorded. Even then, in 2019, the idea of our duo recording an album of the composer's works for two pianos was born.

Although Tansman was one of the most outstanding and highly acclaimed Polish composers of the 20th century in musical circles around the world, his work remained unknown in Poland almost until the end of the 20th century. Despite the growing interest in the composer's work among contemporary performers, his duo works still belong to that part of the piano literature which requires further research and fuller discovery. Given that Tansman was one of the most active Polish composers in the field of literature for piano duet, it seems obvious that these works deserve to be brought closer to performers and listeners both in Poland and abroad. Two of them in particular deserve special attention: *Three Fugues* and *Introduction and Fugue*. The recordings of these works represent world phonographic premieres. These works are the quintessence of the composer's artistry, illustrating the richness of his musical language, aesthetic ideas, musical imagination and outstanding composing technique.

During my analytical work on Tansman's works for two pianos and four hands, I used Mieczyslaw Tomaszewski's method of integral interpretation¹. This allowed me to understand the creative process and analyse the works holistically, taking into account performance, expressive, historical and contextual aspects. All these elements are of great importance not only for the analysis of the music itself, but also for the interpretation of the works.

In my search for sources and information on Tansman and his works for piano duet, I carried out a scientific search at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, where I gained access to the manuscripts of the compositions. Analysis and comparison of the manuscripts with the editions

¹ M. Tomaszewski, *Interpretacja integralna dzieła muzycznego. Rekonesans*, Academy of Music in Kraków, Kraków 2000.

published by Max Eschig allowed me to discover interesting differences and details, which I have described in this thesis.

In the course of studying Tansman's oeuvre, I was in regular contact with the composer's daughters, who supported me in my research and helped me to access a range of information regarding the works for piano duet. Much of this was not available in previous scholarly works. An important element of my research work was a meeting with the composer's daughter Mireille Tansman - Zanuttini. The interview took place in the composer's flat in Paris, which was filled with numerous memorabilia, photographs, books and documents related to his artistic output. During the interview, I learned many interesting facts about his life and work. From Mireille Tansman - Zanuttini I received a scan of the manuscript of the piece *Le train de nuit*, which we used during the recording.

The current number of scholarly works on Aleksander Tansman can be considered quite satisfactory, but the subject of the piano duet, so close to the composer, is still poorly researched. Despite the growing interest in Tansman's legacy among artists and researchers, only two doctoral dissertations have been written on the subject of the piano duet by Dorota Motyczyńska² and Mikołaj Pacholczyk³. Among the disc recordings presenting the composer's duo works, we can distinguish releases by such ensembles as Duo d'Accord, Baayon Duo and a recording by Mikołaj Pacholczyk and Witold Holtz.

When studying the repertoire of albums presenting Tansman's works for piano duet, it turned out that there are still works that have not been recorded. Therefore, when selecting the repertoire for our album, priority was given to compositions that had not yet been recorded. The remaining works were chosen in such a way that the album as a whole is an adequate representation of the composer's compositional style.

The repertoire of the *Cosmopolite* album, which is the artistic work described in this thesis, includes:

Le train de nuit

La Grande Ville

Fantaisie sur les valse de Johann Strauss

Trois Fugues

Introduction et Fugue

The recording was made between 5 - 7 April and 31 October - 2 November 2023 at the Świętokrzyska Philharmonic Hall in Kielce. The recording was directed by Małgorzata Polańska of

2 D. Motyczyńska, *Twórczość na dwa fortepiany i cztery ręce Aleksandra Tansmana - kontekst biograficzny, charakterystyka języka muzycznego oraz problematyka wykonawcza wybranych utworów*, 2020.

3 M. Pacholczyk, *Wzajemna inspiracja wykonawców jako jeden z głównych czynników kształtujących wykonanie dzieła muzycznego w wybranych utworach Aleksandra Tansmana na dwa fortepiany*, 2012.

DUX Recording Producers. The album was released by DUX Recording Producers. The part of the first piano was performed by Grzegorz Nowak, I realized the part of the second piano.

I. Aleksander Tansman - life and works

1. Biographical sketch

Aleksander Tansman is one of the most outstanding Polish composers of the 20th century. He was born in 1897 in Łódź and began his musical education there, which he continued in Warsaw. In 1919, he entered a composition competition announced by the Polish Artistic Club, which brought him his first great success. The composer won as many as three prizes: First Prize for *Romance* for violin and piano (1918-19), a prize for *Impression* for piano (1918-19) and a distinction for *Prelude in B major* for piano (1918-19). Despite this, music critics were not particularly favourable to him. This had to do primarily with Tansman's innovative musical style, which did not fit in with the expectations of the music community at the time, and also with his Jewish background.

Owing to the rather frigid relations with the Polish musical environment, in 1919, with the support of Jan Ignacy Paderewski, Aleksander Tansman decided to leave Poland and settled in Paris. Upon arriving in the French capital, the composer immediately found at the world centre of musical life. He quickly became close to the French artistic milieu centred around Ravel and Stravinsky, whose achievements significantly influenced the formation of his composing technique and his attitude close to neoclassicism.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Alexander Tansman was counted - alongside Igor Stravinsky and the founders of the Group of Six - among the musical avant-garde. In the inter-war period he achieved international fame. His compositions were used by the most eminent artists, such the composers of the Moscow Philharmonic, A. Toscanini, S. Kusewicky, L. Stokowski, B. Huberman, J. Heifetz, G. Piatigorski. In the 1932-33 artistic season he toured around the world - from America via Hawaii, Japan, China, the Philippines, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaya, Ceylon, India, Egypt, Israel to Greece. While in Japan, he was awarded honorary membership of the Society of the Imperial Academy of Music in Tokyo and was awarded the Jiji-Shimpo Gold Medal in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the world arts. In India, he had the honour of being the guest of Mahatma Gandhi. In the 1930s, in addition to his concert activities, he often served as a jury member in composition and performance competitions. After the outbreak of the Second World War, thanks to the help of Charlie Chaplin, he emigrated to the United States. In 1941, he settled in Los Angeles. There he was engaged in composing film music. He met with other composers - Darius Milhaud, Béla Bartók, Arnold Schönberg and Igor Stravinsky. It was not until 1946 that he returned to Paris as an established

composer in the musical world. His works resounded in many concert halls in France, as well as in Brussels, Geneva, London, Rome, Amsterdam, Oslo and Stockholm. After the war, he wrote a lot of 'utilitarian' music, including for theatre plays and radio plays. In 1952, after the death of his wife, Colette Cras- Tansman, he became the sole guardian of their daughters, Mireille and Marianne. Due to family obligations, he limited his concert tours, among others, he gave up a tour to the United States and South America. He was honoured with membership of the Belgian Académie Royale (1977), the Badge of Merit for Polish Culture awarded by the Minister of Culture and the Arts (1983), and the Order of Arts and Sciences Commendation awarded by the Minister of Culture of the French Republic. In 1983, the Association of Polish Composers granted him the status of honorary member, and the Academy of Music in Łódź awarded him a doctorate honoris causa. Aleksander Tansman died in 1986 in Paris, where he was buried in the Saint-Mondé cemetery.

Aleksander Tansman was a worldwide success. The works of the Lodz-born composer were performed by leading conductors and soloists in the most prestigious concert halls all over the world. He was the youngest ever composer to be invited to tour the USA and the first European composer to travel to Japan. He was the first Polish composer to be nominated for an Academy Award in the 'original music' category. Tansman's biographer - Janusz Cegieła - in his history of the composer's life entitled *Child of Happiness. Aleksander Tansman and His Times* wrote:

He did more than anyone else in his time for the propagation of Polish art in the world. His works resounded on the most inaccessible stages and stages, performed by the best orchestras and the most famous virtuosos, conducted by masters of the baton whose names have become legendary. Everywhere about him was written 'Polish composer Aleksander Tansman'⁴.

Despite his enormous recognition abroad, Aleksander Tansman remained underestimated in his homeland. After the composer left Poland, his works rarely appeared in domestic concert programmes or at Polish music festivals organised abroad. Even when his works were performed, they received little critical attention. Tansman experienced this acutely and in 1938 asked for French citizenship, which he received in less than two weeks. It was not until the late 1970s and early 1980s that the achievements of the native composer began to be recognised in Poland. When in 1983 Janusz Cegieła published the first volume of his book on Tansman, the composer wrote a message to her:

Dear Readers, I am delighted that this book will bring you news of me, my life and my work. Although I have been abroad since 1919, I have not forgotten my mother tongue and continue to speak it freely, as these words written by my hand show. Of course, I owe a great deal to France, but no one who has ever heard my works can have any doubt that I was, am and will

4 J. Cegieła, *Dziecko szczęścia. Aleksander Tansman i jego czasy*, Wydawnictwo PIW, Warszawa 1986, p. 43.

always remain a Polish composer. Recently, I have been receiving more and more evidence of affection from the Polish people. I am immensely touched by this interest. Frankly speaking, I have already become a little unaccustomed to it, so that every new manifestation of it grows into a joyful surprise. Janusz Cegiello's book, which are about to pick, is a faithful account of the first period of my life, up to the moment when I took French citizenship. Perhaps you will understand my motives for changing my passport in 1938. My somewhat demonstrative protest at the time has now become history, but my attachment to Poland still remains. I still live every day with the problems of my compatriots, I grieve over their difficulties, I rejoice in their achievements⁵.

Aleksander Tansman's oeuvre is extremely extensive. He left a legacy of more than 400 works, a testament to his versatile artistic interests. This includes symphonies, chamber music, concertos, operas, oratorios, ballets, piano music, works for violin, cello, guitar, flute, organ, harp, as well as theatre, film and radio music.

2. The musical language of Alexander Tansman

Aleksander Tansman is considered the earliest Polish representative of neoclassicism, co-creating this new avant-garde direction in world music. He was - along with Karol Szymanowski - the first composer to link Polish music with the new language and aesthetics of the 20th century. Tansman combined national characteristics and the musical heritage of different generations and traditions with modern compositional means. While in Paris, the composer quickly assimilated the ideas prevailing in the French artistic milieu centred around Ravel and Stravinsky. Tansman's compositions, especially those written after 1924, exhibit features characteristic of French neo-classicism of the time: a tendency towards polyphony, clarity and transparency of formal construction, dissonant harmonics, new metrorhythmic ideas and sometimes elements of popular music. His music is characterised by lyricism, vitality and a refined sound and elegance. Tansman was interested in various types of music. In the works of the Polish composer, one can find Baroque, Classical and Romantic inspirations, as well as elements from the Polish, French, Jewish, American and Oriental musical traditions.

In 1925, the composer wrote an article *On my musical creativity*, in which he made the following musical statements:

- A strong reaction against the pathos of the post-Romantic era;
- against its descriptive or impressionistic concepts;
- against the subjectivism of creative ideology;

⁵ op.cit. 4, p. 6.

– the fight against music as a 'means of expression' through the very individualisation of this means of expression

– the abolition of the spiritual substrate as an intentional factor, reducing it to the cause and result of creativity;

– the endeavour to exclude from the art of music extraneous elements that obliterate its absolute character, i.e. painterly, literary, philosophical elements;

– strong emphasis on the formal-constructive factor, etc⁶.

Tansman's theses represented the quintessential tenets of the neoclassical aesthetics taking shape in the French musical milieu of the 1920s.

The Polish composer's oeuvre is delightful in its abundance and richness. His works, including those for piano duet, have characteristics of French Neoclassicism. In his compositions, the artist often referred to the musical tradition of earlier eras, mainly early Classicism and Baroque - among his works one can easily find instrumental genres of previous eras, including suites, sonatas, preludes and fugues, serenades and fantasias. Adopting classical forms, the composer modifies their course and adapts them to the new 20th-century harmonics, while maintaining a clear form and the order and architecture of the entire work.

Tansman's aesthetic views changed over time as a result of discussions concerning neoclassicism within the musical community in France. Initially, the predominance of the intellectual element in the creative process was emphasised, and the resulting work was to be devoid of the emotion associated with the Romantic era. However, as early as the second half of the 1920s, there was a noticeable shift away from an understanding of music merely as a 'play of sounds'. Polish musicologist Zofia Helman writes in her book *Neoclassicism in 20th century Polish music: 'Tansman emphasised in his speeches that the individual and emotional element always plays an important role in the creative process, and is even a condition for creative inspiration. What remains objective, however, is the technique by means of which the creative fantasy is transformed into a concrete musical work'*⁷.

Aleksander Tansman remained faithful to neo-classical assumptions until the end of his activity as a composer. He did not accept the change in musical thinking that took place in the late 1940s and early 1950s, rejecting new techniques such as serialism, punctualism, sonorism or aleatorism⁸. In his own words: *I don't believe in a revolution in music, only in evolution. Tradition in art is like a tree - dry branches fall off by themselves, uprooting the whole tree is dangerous. The root must remain*⁹.

6 A. Tansman, *O mej twórczości muzycznej*, *Muzyka* 1925, R. II, nr 4-5, p. 207.

7 Z. Helman, *Neoklasycyzm w muzyce polskiej XX wieku*, Kraków 1985, p. 64-65.

8 Z. Helman, *Myśl estetyczna Aleksandra Tansmana* [in:] A. Granat-Janki, *W hołdzie Aleksandrowi Tansmanowi: (1897-1986)*, Wrocław 2018, p. 22.

9 T. Kaczyński, *Rozmowa z Aleksandrem Tansmanem*, *Ruch muzyczny*, 1, 1974, p. 13.

However, this did not mean stagnation in his work. In his later compositions, he still referred to musical traditions, but enriched his compositional technique with new harmonic and timbral solutions. Zofia Helman in her article *The Aesthetic Thought of Aleksander Tansman* emphasises:

In his late works, he continued to refer to the tradition and aesthetic views he had previously professed, however his compositional technique in the range of harmonic and timbral means was significantly enriched, and in terms of expression, dramatic qualities intensified[...]. He has achieved full maturity and artistic individuality: mastery of construction, classical clarity, and at the same time spontaneity of the creative act and deep emotionalism. [...]He then became not only one of the representatives of neo-classicism, but truly - a classic of the modern age¹⁰.

3. Piano duet in the works of Alexander Tansman

Among Tansman's legacy compositions are works for two pianos and four hands. Moreover, Tansman was one of the most active Polish composers of the 20th century in the field of literature for piano duet. Given the fact that, in the times in which he lived and worked, interest in piano arrangements declined significantly in the immediate

Compared to the Romantic period, the number of his works for this performance composition draws special attention. It is not without significance here that Tansman's second wife, Colette Cras-Tansman, was a pianist and the two often performed works for two pianos together.

Tansman composed works for piano duet between 1915 and 1961. Unfortunately, some of his early works that were not published, especially before the Second World War, have been lost and have not been able to be fully reconstructed. The works for this performance composition, which were written over such a long period, perfectly reflect the stylistic and aesthetic changes that were taking place in the composer's style.

Tansman's first work for piano duet was the cycle *Pour deux Pianos*, composed in 1915. The manuscript of this work was lost during the war and has never been fully recovered. Only two movements of the cycle have survived to this day: the *Second Elegy* and the *Third Scherzo*¹¹.

In 1923, Tansman composed *Danse de la Sorcière* for orchestra. After the huge success of this piece, he also created a version for four hands.

10 op.cit. 8, p. 23-24.

11 G. Hugon, *Alexandre Tansman. Catalogue de l'oeuvre*, Paris 1995, p. 75.

The composer wrote the four-movement *Suite for 2 pianos and orchestra* in 1928. The work was dedicated to Robert Schmitz, an accomplished pianist and dynamic impresario, who at the time organised Tansman's first tour of the United States. It was in duet with Schmitz that Tansman premiered *the Suite* in Paris on 9 November 1930 under Gaston Poulet. In the following years, the composer repeatedly performed *the Suite* in duet with his wife.

During his travels around the world, the composer had the opportunity to encounter a variety of musical traditions that enriched his work. During a concert tour in the United States, Tansman, together with Gershwin and Ravel, visited jazz clubs in New York's Harlem, which resulted in jazz influences in the Polish composer's music. An excellent example of such a composition is the *Sonatina Transatlantique* for two pianos, in which elements of American culture can be found. This work was created in 1930 and won great acclaim from the popular choreographer Jooss, who based it - five years later - on his ballet *La Grande Ville*, also for two pianos.

In the same year, Tansman wrote a work for two pianos with a Polish character, dedicated to Wanda Landowska and Jose Iturbi - *Polonaise*. Unfortunately, the manuscript of this work has been lost¹².

Another work from this group of works is *Le Mystère de la Mappemonde et du Papemonde* of 1937, composed as music for an anti-fascist radio play of the same title. Tansman was asked to write this work by the author of the text - the eminent humanist, diplomat, writer and League of Nations activist, former ambassador of the Spanish Republic in Paris - Salvador de Madariaga y Rojo (1886-1978). He developed a close, long-standing friendship with Tansman, the beginnings of which occurred when they collaborated on a radio play. Because of the work's subject matter, it not premiered until after the war, in 1948, on Radio France, with Alexander and Colette as performers¹³.

In 1938, Tansman composed a two-movement work *Introduction et fugue* (I - largo pesante, II - lento). The second movement of this work was also arranged by the composer for organ¹⁴.

One of Tansman's most important compositions for piano duet, *the Sonata for Two Pianos*, was written in Nice in 1940 during the occupation. At the same time, the composer also composed one of his most important symphonic works, expressing his attachment to Poland - *Rapsodie polonaise*. Dedicated to the defenders of Warsaw, the work contains an arrangement of the national anthem, *the Dabrowski Mazurka*, in the finale. The composition also received an arrangement for two pianos, and its premiere took place while the war was still raging, in 1942, in Hollywood, where the composer and his wife sat at the pianos.

12 op.cit. 11, p. 75.

13 op.cit. 11, p. 75.

14 op.cit. 11, p. 75.

In Hollywood, Tansman often received commissions for film music. One such commission was the soundtrack for Julien Duvivier's film *Flesh and Fantasy*. On this, Tansman later composed *Suite Carnaval*, a three-movement work for two pianos (I *Mardi-Gras: molto vivace*, II *Interlude Blues: tempo di Blues*, III *Cakewalk: molto vivace*). This work was premiered in New York 1942 and the performers were again Alexander and Colette¹⁵.

During the same period, he also composed smaller cycles for piano duet inspired by Baroque music, such as *Three Fugues* (1942), *Prelude and Four Little Fugues* (1942) and *Prelude and Three Fugues* (1943). The last of these works was dedicated to Darius Milhaud.

Tansman's last composition for piano duet, created while he was still in the United States, is *Serenade No. 3 for two pianos* (an orchestral version of this work also exists).

On his return to Paris, Tansman resumed his collaboration with choreographer Kurt Jooss, which resulted in *Le Train de nuit* (*The Night Train*) for two pianos¹⁶. This piece tells the story of the daydreams of two train passengers. The musical narrative unfolds on two levels: reality is presented through a variety of sounds imitating the train, while the dreams are depicted through dances: a waltz and a tango. Like *La Grande Ville*, the ballet *Le Train de nuit* offers great interpretative possibilities and exposes the virtuoso skills of the performers, making it a fully-fledged concert work for two pianos that can be successfully performed without a stage setting.

Tansman's last composition for piano duet is the *Fantasy on Waltzes by Johann Strauss*, composed in 1961.

In addition, the composer's output includes six books of didactic works - miniatures for four hands, intended for children and young people¹⁷.

To sum up, Tansman enriched repertoire on duet piano duet of 10 cycles, stand-alone works concert pieces, one piece symphonic and numerous didactic works.

15 op.cit. 11, p. 76.

16 op.cit. 11, p. 6.

17 op.cit. 11, p. 94-95.

II. Analysis and performance issues of selected works for piano duet

1. *Le train de nuit*

Among the musical works found in Alexander Tansman's creative output, ballet music occupies an important place. Some of the most renowned choreographers worked with the composer, including Kurt Jooss (1901-79), Olga Prieobrazenska (1871-1962), Rudolf Laban (1879-1958) and Jean Börlin (1893-1930). Tansman's ballets were performed on many prestigious stages, including the Metropolitan Opera in New York and the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, famous for the premiere of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*. The creator was also involved with ballet on an institutional level - he served as musical director of the Archives Internationales de la Danse (AID). This association organised an international choreographic competition in which leading ballet companies participated, and Tansman was on its jury. He was thus closely associated with the world of theatre and dance, actively working for its development, creating ballets presenting a very high compositional and artistic level¹⁸.

One of Alexander Tansman's two ballet compositions, originally written for piano duet, is *Le Train de nuit* (*The Night Train*). It is music prepared for Kurt Jooss's dance company performing under the name Folkwang Tanztheater der Stadt Essen. The composition was written in 1951 and the work was premiered on 9 December 1952 in Essen¹⁹. It may seem surprising that the composition was never published in print. Courtesy of Tansman's daughter Mireille Tansman-Zanuttini, I was able to gain access to the manuscript of this work.

Kurt Jooss, the 'founding father of German dance theatre', knew and held Tansman in high esteem as a composer. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that he asked him to create the music for his ballet. *Le Train de nuit*, like *La Grande Ville*, offers great interpretative possibilities and exposes the virtuoso skills of the performers, making it a fully-fledged concert work for two pianos that can be successfully performed without a stage setting.

18 Ł. Kaczmarowski, *Muzyka baletowa Aleksandra Tansmana – prezentacja źródeł i perspektywy badawcze*, in: *Muzyka*, 2022/4, p. 150.

19 G. Hugon, *L'œuvre d'Alexandre Tansman. Catalogue pratique*, 2012 (online publication), in: http://www.musimem.com/Tansman_Catalogue_pratique.pdf, p. 18.

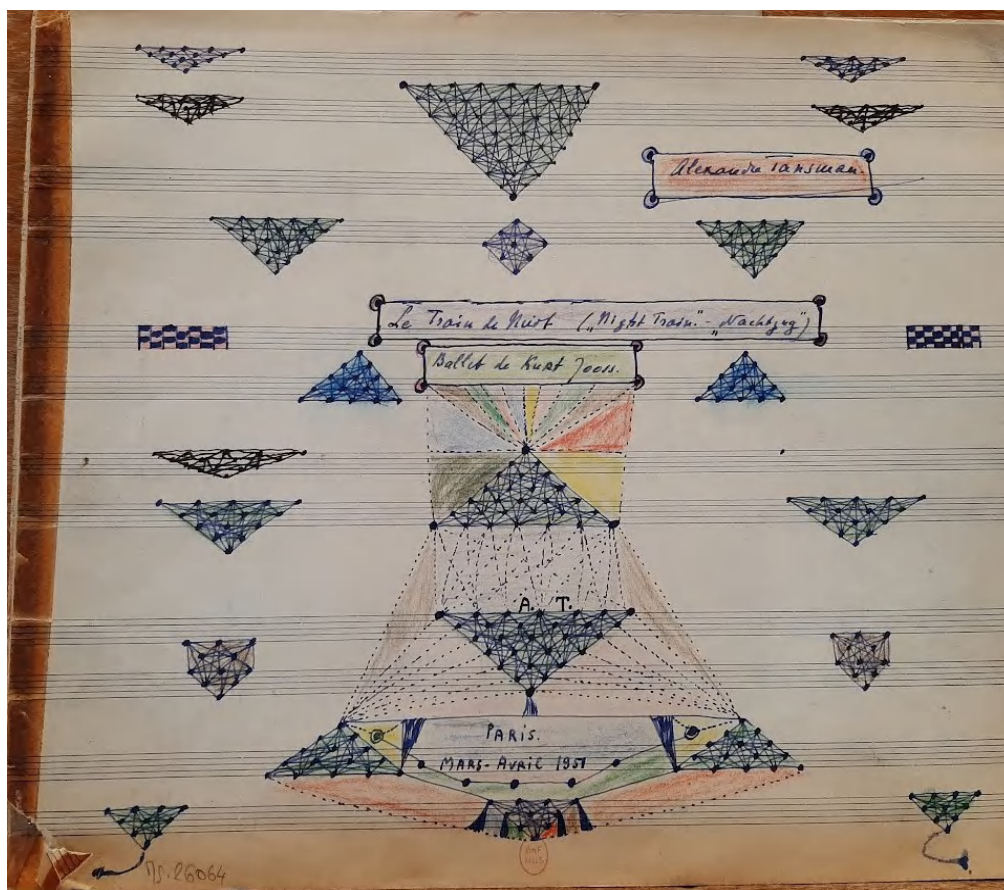


Illustration 1. Aleksander Tansman, *Le train de nuit*, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, photo by Anna Wielgus-Nowak (from the artist's own collection).

The ballet's libretto, which has not been found so far - as suggested by Janusz Cegieła²⁰ - consists of a series of fragments depicting the action taking place in the train compartment, at rest stops, but also in the passengers' dreams. The ballet's plot encompasses six images²¹:

1. On the platform and in the compartment
2. Dreams of a nice girl
3. The artist enters - what do the passengers think
4. Mr Kühnchen's dream
5. Next station
6. Mr Kühnchen's awakening.

The music for Kurt Jooss's work is a composition that follows a similar convention. The narrative unfolds on two levels: reality is presented through various sounds imitating a train, while

20 J. Cegieła, *Dziecko szczęścia. Aleksander Tansman i jego czasy*, tom II, Wyd. 86 Press, Łódź 1996, p. 135.

21 J. Cegieła, in his biography of Aleksander Tansman, describes six paintings that make up the ballet's libretto, but does not indicate sources that would allow this information to be confirmed.

daydreams are portrayed through dances such as the waltz and tango. Tansman freely combines the inspiration of Jooss's ballet with his typical lighter musical language. The work consists of many micro sections and is also very advanced texturally, which is also one of the Polish composer's trademarks.

Macroform *	On the platform	Dreams of a nice girl			The artist enters - what the passengers think	Mr Kühnchen's dream			Next station	Mr Kühnchen's rebuilding
Bar number	1 - 62	63 - 251	255 - 282	255 - 282	283 - 316	317 - 561			562 - 590	591 - 594
Piano I		W	W			T		T		
Piano II		W				T		T		

Real world: the clatter of train wheels - yellow

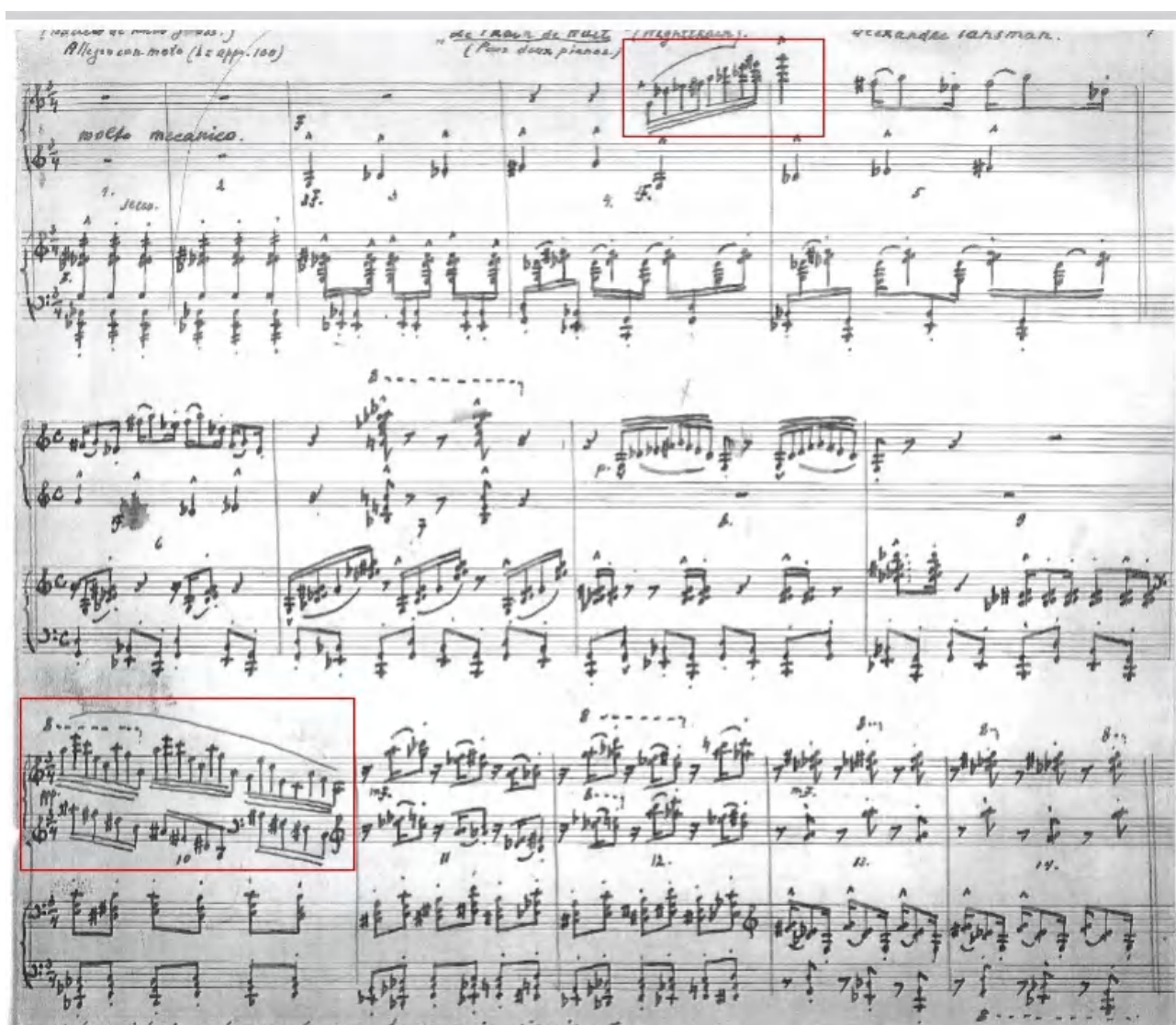
Dream world: orange

waltz: W

tango: T

* An attempt to reflect in music the scenes of the libretto suggested by Janusz Cegiełło in his biography.

The piece begins with a fragment depicting a moving train. Tansman used a number of means here to emphasise the illustrative nature of the music. This makes it easy to read the extra-musical content of the work. The composer noted the performance terms *molto meccanico* and *secco* in the first bar of the work. Characteristic elements appearing in this section are ostinato sixteenth-note rhythms, *staccato* articulation, accent shifts, fast tempo and repetitive rhythmic groups. The performers are able to demonstrate their virtuoso piano skills in this passage, executing a number of technically demanding figures, maintaining a stable internal pulse and executing precise accents that add a motoric, even brutal character to the piece. Passage figures also appear in the first piano part, which add interesting timbral qualities against the monotonous rhythmic groups in the second piano part. They enhance the impression of movement and energy, provided they are performed with light and 'openwork' articulation.



Example 1. *Le train de nuit*, bar 1-14.

From bar 21 to bar 62, the tempo slows down and the narrative calms down. Here it is easy to 'hear' musical figures imitating a conductor's whistle and a train slowly moving out of the station. The performers have the opportunity to present a rich spectrum of extracted timbres. The dynamic ambience is also wide: the tremolo imitating the conductor's whistle is written in the dynamic range *fff*, while in the following bars a fragment depicting a speeding train is written in the dynamic range *pp*. The second piano part is dominated by a characteristic sixteenth-note rhythm and a punctuated rhythm representing the clatter of the train wheels. In the first piano part, on the other hand, polyharmonic chords initially appear, followed by ostinato hexadecimal groups. Gradually, the movement and dynamics are faded out to prepare the next section of the piece. This episode can be seen as a transitional moment between the waking and dreaming of the train passenger. In order to achieve this effect, pianists should look for a delicate, shimmering and even unreal type of sound that would give the impression that the sounds being made are coming from afar.



Example 2 *Le train de nuit*, bar 21-35.

From bar 63 Tansman presents the first daydream of a train passenger. It is an extended and internally divided fragment. At the outset, the composer has labelled this passage with the terms *più lento*, *tempo di valse* and *dolce*. The waltz theme is introduced by the first piano, which alternates between the parts of the two pianists in the following bars. In bar 88, again the waltz theme is exposed, this time beginning in the second piano part. The second demonstration of the theme is given the term *espressivo*, and is more dynamically contrasted and texturally enriched.

For pianists, the performance of this part of the piece brings many interesting challenges. First and foremost, it is very important to maintain the dance-like character by producing a singing and soft sound, fine phrase shaping and a good sense of musical timing. Performers must look for an exceptionally wide palette of colours in this excerpt, which will make the interpretation varied, interesting and intriguing for the listener. An important aspect of performing this section is the creativity of the interpretation of the repeated waltz theme. The re-presentation of the same phrase offers many possibilities in terms of modelling the phrase, planning musical time, constructing a dynamic plan or creating a sphere of colour.

Example 3. *Le train de nuit*, bar 60-89.

At bar 120, the next segment of the waltz begins *in vivo tempo*, *molto capriccioso*. It introduces a new melodic line in *legato* articulation, which alternates between the parts of both pianists. A playful character is given here by numerous figures requiring precision, virtuosity and lightness of execution, including groups of thirty-two, passages, pre-note, predominant *staccato* articulation, trills, leaps, accents. The waltz ends with a compositional bracket, where Tansman presents the theme appearing for the last time in the unchanged form familiar from the first performance.

The segment described above is an interesting example of Tansman's use of variation technique. The opening segment is extremely interesting in terms of performance. The shredded reminiscences of the waltz theme, contrasted with ornamental figurations, provide the pianists with an opportunity to show off their technique and artistic imagination, especially in terms of articulation and colour. In the following movement, performers have the opportunity to bring out a number of motifs loosely related to the first theme of the waltz. From bar 152 onwards, episodes full of verve and energy with the marking *con anima* or *con passione* alternate, juxtaposed with sections *meno mosso*, *dolce*, *calando*. Whatever the level of expression, the main performance goal is to maintain a dance-like character in these sections. In bar 252, train noises appear in the second piano part, as if waking the passenger from sleep. In terms of performance, the pianists should allow the two worlds - the java and the dream - to coexist by listening very carefully to each other. Given the relatively abrupt return of the material depicting the clatter of the train, performers should demonstrate their ability to make rapid changes in expression, tone type and articulation. This section should be performed with flair and massive sound.



Example 4. *Le train de nuit*, bar 250-257.

Bar 282 brings a startling turn in the musical narrative. Industrial sounds abruptly give way to lively, light music with distinctly grotesque elements. Markers of the new character are the *Piu Vivo*, *piano* and *leggiero* markings. The passage is complemented by a fugato, which forms its central part. The pianists' task is to achieve lightness through attention to the activity of the finger tips. Transparency of texture is also important.

From bar 317 onwards, new musical material appears - this is the passenger's second daydream, this time depicted in tango style. In performing this dance, the pianists must discover a new world of musical and aesthetic sensations for the listeners. In this excerpt, the first piano, in *pianissimo* dynamics, introduces a characteristic syncopated rhythm with a ligature on the second sixteenth and an eighth in the bass. At the same time, the second piano presents a tango theme that is differentiated internally in terms melodically, rhythmically, texturally and articulately. In this excerpt, for a change, look for the

subtle, ethereal and sensual means of expression so characteristic of Argentine dance, emphasising from the first notes of the phrase every last detail of it. One can begin the theme in a delicate way, then when the *staccato* punctuated rhythm or the arched rhythmic groups of sixteenths and eighths appear, one can make a sharper sound and shape the tension accordingly. Here, one may be tempted to accelerate the tempo slightly, emphasising the sprightliness and emotional side. The aim in creating the tango - the dance of the feuding lovers - is to find the golden mean between subtlety and mystery, and feistiness and tense expression.

Tempo Le Tango (♩ = app. 104)

Example 5. *Le train de nuit*, bar 311-326.

From bar 356 the fast tempo returns and the mood of the piece changes. Here, the composer introduces new musical material, characterised by motoricity and repetition of motif sequences over longer sections. The timbral element plays a primary role here, dominated by *staccato* articulation, meticulously notated by the composer. It adds lightness and creates an effect of transience.

Example 6. *Le train de nuit*, bar 362-379.

From bar 425 to bar 456, Tansman creates a peculiar mosaic of contrasting short musical segments. Initially, the composer introduces a brief reminiscence of a tango, before presenting completely new motifs, differentiated from each other agogically, dynamically and expressively. Pianists must demonstrate their ability to introduce rapid changes of mood, to vary their keyboard touch instantly and, most importantly, to maintain the continuity of the narrative and treat the passage as a whole. The accumulation of contrasts and varied compositional means gradually builds up the tension through which the next section of the piece is prepared.

Example 7. *Le train de nuit*, bar 425-448.

From bar 463 the climax of the work begins in a *presto* tempo. Tansman uses new motifs in the form of 4-bar differing sections that are in alternating succession. Each of these sections offers a different technical and performance challenge - among them are leaps, repetitions, rapid chromatic runs, trills, passages and chordal progressions. The passage is dominated by *forte* and *fortissimo* dynamics, *staccato* articulation is prevalent and there is a tremendous amount of emphasis.

The image shows a page of handwritten musical notation for the piece "Le train de nuit". The score is written on multiple staves, with various musical notations including notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Two specific passages are highlighted with red rectangular boxes. The first box is located in the upper right section of the page, around measures 160-166, and contains complex rhythmic patterns with many beamed notes. The second box is located in the lower middle section, around measures 176-178, and contains a dense, repetitive rhythmic pattern. The page includes several tempo and performance instructions: "Robusto, poco a poco accelerato" at the top right, "Tempo giusto" in the middle, and "F. Jhingubo" below it. Measure numbers 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, and 180 are visible along the bottom of the staves.

Example 9. *Le train de nuit*, bar 558-580.

2. *La Grande Ville*

La Grande Ville (*The Great City*) is originally composed for piano duet music for the ballet of the same name, written in 1935. The work was premiered that same year in Cologne. Tansman also created an orchestral version of the work in 1944.

Kurt Jooss, a German choreographer, won the Grand Prix at an international competition in Paris in 1932 for his ballet *The Green Table*. The jury of the competition included Tansman, who, when congratulating Jooss on the prize, learned that his own composition, *Sonatina Transatlantique* for two pianos, had been used by the choreographer as music for the ballet *The Great City*. Tansman asked for a presentation of the choreography, after which he felt that changes needed to be made to the musical material to make it more consistent with the content of the libretto and the dance arrangement. So he decided to create new, original music for the choreography that had already been created. He was invited to Dartington Hall Castle in England for a month, where he worked with the Jooss team on the new composition.

The music was written for two pianos for practical reasons - the intense career of the choreographer and the constant travel of his company made it difficult to organise orchestral rehearsals in different cities. The ballet was received with very enthusiastic reviews, and the work was presented in large numbers throughout Europe. According to Jooss, *The Great City* with Tansman's music had more than three thousand performances by January 1962²².

The composition has a classical structure of three parts. Each part corresponds to the images (tableaux) of the ballet: *La Rue* ('The Street'), *Cité Ouvrière* ('The Workers' Quarter') and *Dancing* ('Dancing/Dance Party'). The ballet's themes draw on the early 20th century's popular fascination with big city life. The composer remains faithful to the style presented in the work's prototype, *the Sonatine Transatlantique*, which was written after his return from a concert tour around the world.

La Grande Ville has a three-movement form, with each movement divided into smaller, dance-like sections. The piece is characterised by dances typical of 1920s popular music, such as the foxtrot, charleston and waltz.

The ballet's plot depicts the failure of love, showing the theme of the individual's loneliness and loss in the chaos of the big city:

1. *Street*: a young man dances in the street with his girlfriend, who attracts attention of a rich Casanova.

22 op.cit. 4, p. 250.

2. *Workers' quarter*: in the *workers'* quarters Casanova meets a girl, lavishes her with a glittering dress, which makes her forget the young man.
3. *Dancing*: a young woman dances the charleston in a nightclub with Casanova, while a young man searches for her in a café and, failing to find the girl, starts dancing the waltz with another woman. The two scenes happen in parallel in two locations. The girl, seduced more and more pusillanimously, finally escapes from the hands of the amante. The young man, abandoned by his dancing partner, is left alone in a café. Eventually, they both remain alone in the big city²³.

2.1. *La Rue*

The piece begins with a short four-bar introduction in which the influences of popular music and early jazz (such as ragtime and swing) are discernible from the first moments. In keeping with Tansman's notation, the composition is stylised as a foxtrot. In the introduction, the main melody is played by the first piano against a background of long chords in the second piano. The piece is full of swinging, syncopated rhythms. These elements clearly indicate the musical style to which the piece refers.

Example 10. *La Grande Ville*, I mov. *La Rue*, bar 1-4.

Part I is in the form of ABA', where A' is an abbreviated version of the A section acting as a coda. The main theme of the A section is characterised by a simple, regular structure. The rhythmic layer features syncopations and accent shifts. An important element in the development of the foxtrot is a dense texture that also contains elements of polyphony. The bass is in a low register (major octave) and the space between it and the melody is filled with chords. The main melodic line, is performed

²³ op.cit. 4, p. 250.

chordally by the right hand of the first piano. At the same time, the second piano realises the contrapuntal lines by performing chromatic accented eighth notes in the right hand. In order to maintain the clarity and the lightness and danceability of this movement, pianists should take care to ensure that the various layers of sound are properly proportioned. The melodic line should remain in the , while being supported by the notes in the bass (which may resemble the pizzicato of the double bass in their sound). Any middle voices that thicken the texture should be performed lightly, acting as background.

Example 11. *La Grande Ville*, I mov. *La Rue*, bar 5-12.

In bar 68, the slow B section begins. The tranquil mood of this section is achieved through a lyrical, singing melody, piano dynamics and a calm, chordal accompaniment. As with the earlier theme, the new melodic material has a regular, eight-bar structure and is supported by counterpoints. Despite the change to a more cantilena-like character, the main melody still retains features of popular music. This is particularly evident in the accentuation of the minor third interval and the use of triplets. In the harmony, despite its simplicity, the characteristic chromatic changes reappear.



Example 12. *La Grande Ville*, I mov. *La Rue*, bar 68-74.

This excerpt should be performed with the freedom characteristic of jazz and blues music. The performance of a beautiful, lyrical melody requires the pianist to bring out a singing and subtle colour, accurately realise legato articulation and give the phrase appropriate expression. The whole is enhanced by rhythmic eighth-quarter note figures or contrapuntal melodic lines, which appear in the background and should be performed with great care in order to coherently complement the melodic line led by the other pianist.

After the lyrical section of the piece, the A' section returns. Several changes occur during the representation of the theme. The texture is expanded - at first the theme is played by both pianos an octave apart, with chordal verticals. The texture then becomes more varied with the addition of eighth-note movement in both parts, and there are even hexadecimal values in the first piano part. Performers should focus on emphasising the shimmering, extended texture and the clearer expression. This kind of variation can be seen as a reference to improvisational technique in jazz music.



Example 13. *La Grande Ville*, I mov. *La Rue*, bar 100-103.

2.2. *Cité Ouvrière*

The second movement of the piece forms a contrast to the extremes of the work in terms of tempo and character. Tansman divided this movement into two sections: the first section was given the tempo designation *Lento* and the second *Un poco piu mosso (Tempo di Blues)*.

At the beginning of this movement, the first piano presents an uncomplicated melody, while in the background the second piano leads a chordal accompaniment that persists throughout the movement. The chords are based on simple harmony, and at the end of the phrases there are schromatised motifs reminiscent of jazz harmonics. Although Tansman chose to use an eighth-note rhythm in the notation of the piece, it can be assumed that in performance practice there is a need to use a triplet rhythmic group to achieve the shuffle rhythm typical of the blues.

Example 14. *La Grande Ville*, II mov. *Cité Ouvrière*, bar 1-12.

In order to maintain the calm and lulling character of this movement, pianists should focus on bringing out the soft and bright tone colour in the melody and the clear arrangement of proportions in the pulsating chords. The pianist performing the second piano part should sensitively realise the accompaniment while emphasising the chordal chromatic motifs that are a counterpoint to the theme led by the first piano.

At bar 17, the second movement *Cité Ouvrière* begins. It is characterised by a revival of the tempo and enrichment of the material - chromatic ornaments appear, *sforzato* terms and *tenuto* markings over the melodic notes in the first piano part. The composer also uses distinctive blues features, including triplet rhythms and chromatic counterpoints in the second piano part.

Un poco più mosso (Tempo di Blues)

The image shows a musical score for piano accompaniment, divided into two systems. The first system consists of two staves (treble and bass clef). The top staff begins with a dynamic marking of *sf*, followed by *mf*. The bottom staff begins with a dynamic marking of *mp*. The second system also consists of two staves. The music is in a blues-influenced style with syncopated rhythms and chordal textures. The tempo is marked 'Un poco più mosso (Tempo di Blues)'. There are various musical notations including slurs, accents, and dynamic markings throughout the score.

Example 15. *La Grande Ville*, II mov. *Cité Ouvrière*, bar 17-22.

It can easily be seen that throughout the second movement there are chords in both pianists' parts that form a common harmony. As such, pianists should take care to execute the risers with precision, while maintaining the correct balance between the accompaniment layer and the melody in the right hand of the pianist performing the first piano part. In addition, pianists can demonstrate in this part skilful timing in the music, freedom of phrasing and dialogue based on motifs intertwined between the two instruments.

2.3. *Dancing*

Dancing is the last part of the cycle with the most dance-like character. In it, Tansman presented two dances, the charleston and the waltz, which intermingle in a very unusual way.

This movement begins with the charleston, a dance popularised in the United States in the 1920s. The composer uses characteristics of this dance in the piece: fast tempo (*vivo*), syncopated rhythms, bipartite metre. Tansman introduces vigorous quarter-note chordal risers in this movement, against

which the melodic line in the first piano part is presented, making use of accent shifts, syncopation and repeated chromatic motifs. The composer's notation is extremely meticulous: \wedge marks are carefully written over individual notes and chords, indicating the method of accentuation.

The performance of this excerpt brings with it an articulatory challenge for pianists. In order to achieve lightness, dynamics and danceability, the performers have to demonstrate precise sound extraction in the chordal verticals and quick execution of repetitions in order to achieve a clear accent on the first note in the bar. On the other hand, the pianist performing the first piano part has to execute the melodic line with a bright, glassy sound and using non legato articulation, which gives the melody a light, energetic character. In addition, this makes it easier to perform the piece at a fast tempo, in order to faithfully convey the specificity of the charleston.

Vivo (Tempo di Charleston)

(*) Dans les mesures de $\frac{3}{4}$ contre $\frac{3}{4}$, la noire n'égale pas la noire, mais ♩ égale ♩ , conservant la valeur identique de la mesure et du mouvement.

Example 16. *La Grande Ville*, III mov. *Dancing*, bar 1-17.

From bar 17, a characteristic charleston motif appears, which the composer will use throughout the third movement of the work. It is presented the first time by the first piano and is a motif led in thirds in a descending second movement in the key of D flat major. Then, after four bars, there are characteristically rhythmic chords in A-flat major with chromatic changes in the middle voice, followed by a cadential turn and a repetition of the whole phrase in a higher dynamic.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for piano and second piano parts, covering bars 17 to 24. The top system is for the first piano (piano I) and the bottom system is for the second piano (piano II). Both systems begin with a circled number '10' in the top left corner and a dynamic marking of 'mp' (mezzo-piano). The notation includes treble and bass staves with various rhythmic values, accidentals, and articulation marks such as accents and slurs. The key signature is D-flat major, and the time signature is 3/4. The music features a characteristic charleston motif in the first piano part, which is a descending line in thirds. The second piano part provides harmonic support with rhythmic chords and chromatic changes in the middle voice.

Example 17. *La Grande Ville*, III mov. *Dancing*, bar 17-24.

In bar 49, the composer used an unusual solution - in order to show simultaneously two dance scenes presented in the ballet's content, a waltz was added to the charleston in the part of the first piano simultaneously in the part of the second piano. In this way, the pianists play in 3/4 and 4/4 metre at the same time, while according to the composer's notation in the score, the first measures of the bars in both pianists must form a vertical line. This kind of procedure poses several challenges for the performers. The pianists must demonstrate a high degree of discipline in maintaining an internal pulse in order to maintain the rhythmic structure of the whole, and they must create musical unity while simultaneously presenting dances with completely different characteristics - a joyful charleston, filled with sharp rhythmic values and accents, is combined with a calm, melodic and dignified waltz. Such a juxtaposition requires the pianists to have a high degree of divided attention, a colour distinction between the dance themes and a perfect execution of pedalling and articulation. To avoid the impression of chaos and in order to familiarise listeners with new musical material, it is worth treating the waltz as an overarching theme.

Example 18. *La Grande Ville*, III mov. *Dancing*, bar 49-64.

From bar 61 onwards, the waltz remains as the dominant theme. This passage is quite extended, with several melodic motifs presented. The first of these is designated *pesante* by the composer, which emphasises the contrast with the earlier section of the piece.

The waltz section also features a motif in *meno mosso* tempo. Here the composer used the terms *legato*, *espressivo*, *rubato*. These suggest greater agogic freedom, more expressive expression, a mood of nostalgia and a slightly improvisatory character. Pianists performing this fragment can allow themselves rhythmic freedom and create interesting timbres, emphasising changes in the harmonic layer.



Example 19. *La Grande Ville*, III mov. *Dancing*, bar 101-106.

After the above passage, Tansman builds to a climax in which the theme of the *ben marcato* waltz returns, this time in forte dynamics and dense chordal texture.



Example 20. *La Grande Ville*, III mov. *Dancing*, bar 114-127.

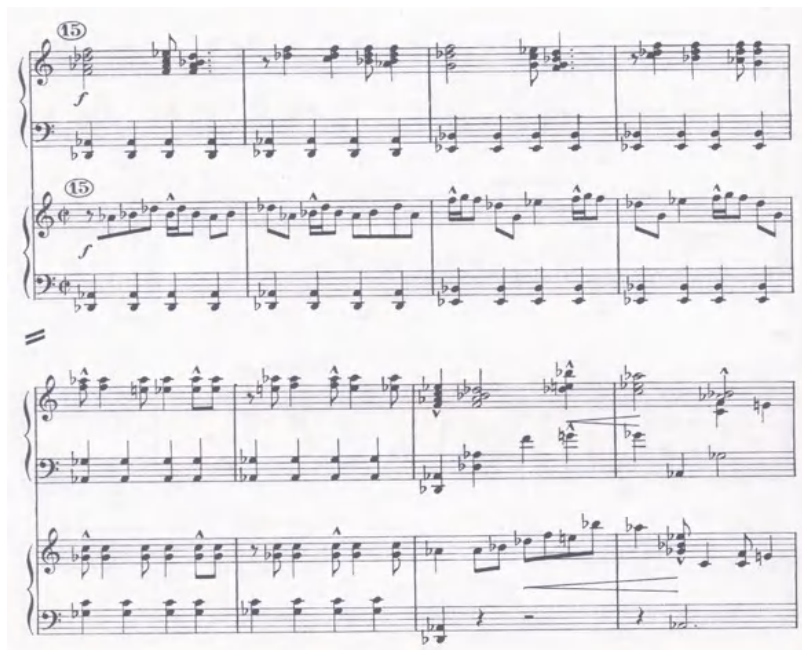
In bar 157, Tansman returns to the idea of superimposing a charleston and a waltz. Here he uses the same arrangement of musical material: the charleston in the first piano part and the waltz in the

second piano. This time Tansman unquestioningly imposes on the performers the dominance of the waltz theme, adding the term *en dehors* at the second piano part.



Example 21. *La Grande Ville*, III mov. *Dancing*, bar 157-164.

In bar 165 the charleston returns in forte dynamics. The right hand of the first piano leads the melody in chords, while the right hand part of the second piano features contrapuntal processions of eighth notes and accented groups of sixteenths. The left hand of both pianists contains quarter-note unison fifths. This leads to a thickening of the texture, an emphasis on the bass base and a build-up of dynamics. Once again, the pianists should precision in the realisation of the chordal verticals. The artist realising the part of the second piano should execute counterpoints in the right hand in a light and brilliant manner, emphasising the accents recorded accurately.



Example 22. *La Grande Ville*, III mov. *Dancing*, bar 165-172.

The entire piece ends with a short codas in which the tempo is calmed and the dynamics are muted. The second piano consistently leads the characteristic chordal accompaniment from the charleston, while a sequence of broken motifs bearing chromatic forewords appears in the first piano part, associated with the beginning of the third movement of the piece. The mood of the final bars may convey the emptiness and meaninglessness of a lonely existence in an amused crowd.



Example 23. *La Grande Ville*, III mov. *Dancing*, bar 229-236.

3. *Fantaisie sur les valse de Johann Strauss*

Johann Strauss's Fantasia on Waltz Themes for Two Pianos is a work in which the composer draws on the tradition of 19th century music. It was composed in 1961 and the work was premiered on 25 March 1963 at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris²⁴. In this case, the reference to music of earlier eras is particularly direct, as the composition is based on quotations from the works of Johann Strauss II. The reference to the work of the King of Waltzes also takes place at the formal level. The structure of waltzes in Strauss's work usually consists of an introduction (often calm and non-danceable, foreshadowing the main theme), a series of waltzes (usually four or five) and an ending in which the melodies return in a shortened form. Tansman adopted a similar structure, although the juxtaposition of themes is freer and the melodies themselves are often superimposed. The composer wrote of this piece:

I have been drawn to the Viennese Waltz since childhood and Johann Strauss proved unsurpassed: approachable (never vulgar), somewhat Schubertian in inspiration, it also had rhythmic panache, combined with a rare lyrical flair. I hope that all this has survived in my piece for two pianos. I worked on this piece with real pleasure. If the means of expression I have used sometimes differ from those that were typical in Strauss's era, it is because I wanted above all to avoid an 'artificial modernisation' whose language does not correspond to the melodic line of the composer himself. (...) The waltzes combine, each other, creating a 'musical divertimento' to which I tried to give a very effective piano texture²⁵.

The form of the composition is not limited to a collection of popular melodies, but has a coherent and well thought-out dramatic feature. Most of the piece is kept in low dynamics and clear texture, but four climaxes can be identified, of which the first three form a preparation for the last - the most important one. It can also be noted that there are long passages in the course of the composition where the composer uses material taken from Strauss's work, such as in the case of the section containing three consecutive melodies from *An der schönen blauen Donau*.

Johann Strauss's Fantasia on Waltz Themes is an interesting example of the use of quotations from popular music of the 19th century. The thematic material is based almost entirely on well-known waltzes by the Viennese composer. For the listener familiar with these works, the quotations are for the

24 op.cit. 21, p. 18.

25 From the composer's statement printed in the concert programme of 25.03.1963 in Paris as a commentary on the world premiere of the *Fantasia* by the Belgian piano duo Janine Reding - Henry Piette; composer's archive. Quoted in J. Cegieła, *Dziecko szczęścia. Aleksander Tansman i jego czasy*, vol. II, Warsaw 1996, p. 214.

most part, easy to recognise, although some passages can be challenging, as the themes do not always appear in full form or are supplemented by other melodies. Analysing *the Fantasy*, it is clear to see how Tansman plays with the chosen material, exploiting the simplicity of the Straussian themes and their ability to be easily combined both vertically and horizontally. This peculiar playfulness can also be heard in the overall character of the *Fantasy*, which is a light and cheerful composition written with finesse, combining the tradition of the Viennese waltz with the *brillante* style and musical language of the first decades of the 20th century.

The Fantasy begins with an introduction using motifs from two waltzes - *Du und du*, Op. 367, from the operetta *Die Fledermaus*, and *Kaiserwalzer*, Op. 437. A fragment of *Du und du* at the beginning as a one-voice recitative in the second piano part. This is followed by the opening motif of the waltz from *Kaiserwalzer*. Tansman tries to give Strauss's melodies an ambiguous, 'hazy' character, which is also reflected in the indications in the score - initially *tranquillo* and then *lontano* ('from afar').

When beginning a piece, pianists should introduce a somewhat mysterious, but at the same time slightly playful character. From the first bars it is important to produce a delicate sound, to vary the articulation within each motif and to plan the musical time appropriately. One can allow oneself agogic freedom at this point by using a slight *rubato*. Care should also be taken with the verticals between the parts of the two pianos.

Example 24. *Fantasia on the themes of Strauss waltzes*, bar. 1-7.

The remainder of the introduction is based on the interweaving of the two previously presented motifs between the first and second piano parts. There is a gradual fading of the dynamics and a slowing down of the tempo to prepare for the beginning of the waltz. Harmonics play an extremely important role in this section. Tansman uses polyharmonics within the parts of the two pianos to create a sense of

spaciousness, while allowing the performers to bring out an element of colour. Pianists should strive to create an atmosphere of tension and anticipation.

*) Les accords sont marqués séparément pour chaque main

Example 25. *Fantasia on Strauss waltz themes*, bar 9-20.

In the first dance section of the piece, Tansman juxtaposes several Strauss themes. In the initial eight bars, the main theme is led by the second piano, and its source is the piece *Du und du*. The accompaniment is placed in the first piano part, where the *dolce* marking also appears. This short section is an excellent example of the way in which Tansman transforms musical material - he combines themes in a free way, creating unusual counterpoints. At the same time, however, he manages to maintain the regularity characteristic of traditional waltzes, operating mainly in eight-bar fragments, which should be taken into account and clearly marked by pianists. It is also worth noting the openwork and transparency of the texture.

In the new segment of the piece, performers should take care to expose the dance character: subtly modelling the phrase, achieving lightness through appropriate articulation and pedalling, and creating a fine genre of sound.



Example 26. *Fantasia on Strauss waltz themes*, bar 33-40.

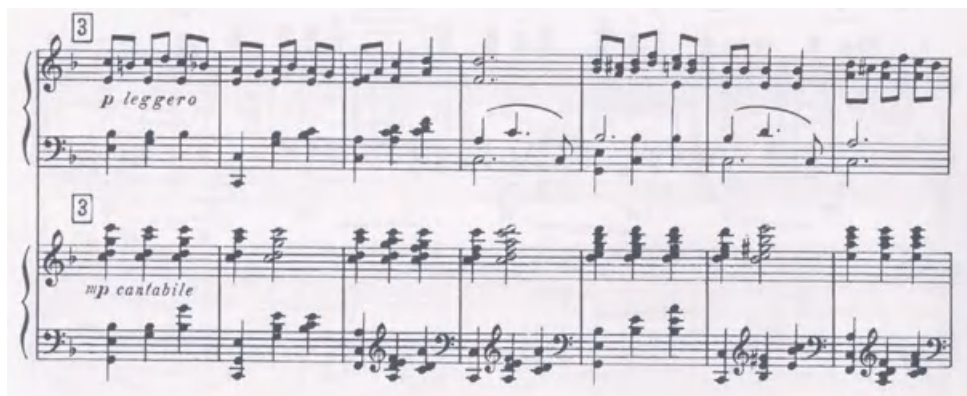
The next dance passage begins with a solo treatment of the second piano part. The melody comes from *Künstlerleben*, Op. 316, and is accompanied by a typical dance accompaniment in which the first measure of the bar in the lowest register is accented. The first piano then joins in, introducing counterpoint, also borrowed from *Künstlerleben*, the key element of which is repetition. By marking each note of this part with a *tenuto* mark, the composer emphasises the expressive entrance of the melody, which is to be performed with a deep, loud sound, while maintaining piano dynamics.

For the piano duo, this passage presents a new performance challenge. The part of the second piano is written in a rather broad arrangement, which repeatedly involves the need to "breaking" chords in the *arpeggio*. In order to preserve the dance character of the piece, the left-hand part should be performed paying attention to the delicacy and springiness of the extracted chords, while at the same time taking care to lead the phrase in thirds in the right hand. When the counterpoint appears in the first piano part, it is important to clearly show the coexistence of the two themes.



Example 27. *Fantasia on Strauss waltz themes*, bar 65-72.

In the following eight-bar sections, the texture becomes more complex: the second piano takes over the melody from *Künstlerleben* from the first piano leading it in a chordal texture, the chromatised melody (familiar from *Du und du*) returns in the first piano part using an eighth-note movement, and in the fourth bar of the following excerpt, the motif from *Kaiserwalzer* appears in the first piano part.



Example 28. *Fantasia on Strauss waltz themes*, bar 73-80.

Tansman's use of polyphony presents a major challenge for the performers of the work. Pianists must skilfully present the complex structure of overlapping melodies in a manner that is diverse in tone and articulation. The second dance fragment ends with a minor climax in chordal texture, followed by a gradual quieting.

From bar 85 to bar 150, Tansman shows the successive themes of the waltz in a light and clear texture, sometimes overlapping them. The final bars of this section prepare for the next segment of the work through the use of *a rallentando*, the introduction of a rhythmic hemiola and the repetition of a melodic motif in the first piano part.



Example 29. *Fantasia on Strauss waltz themes*, bar 73-80.

From bar 151 to 166, Tansman introduces new material that is a display of virtuosity in the *brillante* style. It forms one of the climaxes of the entire composition. The first piano performs the famous waltz theme from *An der schönen blauen Donau* Op. 314, which is written in chordal blocks. It is accompanied by figurations in the second piano, consisting of mordents in parallel sixths, which transition into sixteenth-note quintuplets on notes of the E flat major scale, also in parallel sixths. The climactic effect is achieved through the introduction of chords, leaps between registers, or gamut runs.

This section of the piece requires pianists to be technically proficient in order to emphasise . When conducting a melodic line in a chordal texture, care should be taken to produce a singing sound in the highest voicing of the chords. When realising the gamut progressions, attention should be paid to articulation to ensure that the sixteenth-note runs are light and fast, adding to the shimmering and virtuosic character of the piece as a whole.

a Tempo, con moto

The image shows a page of musical notation for a piano piece. At the top, it is marked 'a Tempo, con moto'. The score is arranged in four systems, each with two staves (treble and bass clef). The first system has a 'piu f' dynamic marking. The second system has a 'p leggero' dynamic marking. The music consists of chords in the right hand and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. There are various musical notations including slurs, accents, and dynamic markings throughout the piece.

Example 30. *Fantasia on Strauss waltz themes*, bar 151-166.

The repetition of the theme gives performers the opportunity to experiment with articulation, dynamics and pedalisaton: sparing use of the pedal will sharpen the clarity of the minor notes, emphasising virtuosity, while a longer and deeper pedalisaton will add drama to the passage, emphasising the climactic character. The proper toning down of the dynamic plan is also an important aspect in this section - the first time through, the theme can be performed lightly, playfully, using quieter dynamics, while repetition gives space to showcase the high volume, as well as the deep sound of the chords and octaves in the bass.

Over the course of a very long passage from bar 167 to bar 359, Tansman uses themes from several works by Strauss:

1. *Du und du* op. 367
2. *An der schönen blauen Donau* Op. 314
3. *Kaiserwalzer* Op. 437
4. *Künstlerleben* op. 316
5. *Geschichten aus dem Wienerwald* op. 325
6. *Die Fledermaus* Op. 362

Motifs from the above-mentioned compositions appear in the parts of both the first and second pianos, repeatedly overlapping. Tansman's treatment of the two parts is equivalent, so this requires the duo to phrase coherently, create a variety of timbral effects together, and refine articulation and pedalling.

At the final climax of the *Fantasy*, the melody from *Du und du*, which opened the piece and recurred repeatedly throughout its course, usually acting as background, appears in an extended and dense texture.

In this passage, the first piano leads the theme in octaves in *fortissimo* dynamics, which the pianist should bring out with a powerful, 'massive' sound. At the same time, there are chordal leaps in the part of the second piano, requiring the pianist to be extremely precise and to maintain a dance-like character.

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The top staff begins with the tempo marking 'un poco meno vivo, a Tempo' and the dynamic marking 'ff rall.'. The bottom staff begins with the dynamic marking 'ff' and the tempo marking 'rall.' followed by 'a Tempo'. The music consists of complex rhythmic patterns with many beamed notes and rests.

Example 31. *Fantasia on Strauss waltz themes*, bar 359-364.

The Fantasy ends with a virtuosic coda in *presto* tempo, in which the links of Tansman's composition with the tradition of the *brillante* style are fully revealed. The beginning of the coda is sonically contrasting to the entire work - the previously long melodic sections have been transformed into short motifs alluding to waltz themes. In this dynamic, figurative section, several stages can be distinguished. The first is based on ostinato rhythmic groups in the second piano part. Tansman employs his characteristic polymetry here. The part of the second piano is accompanied by a tremolo between

octaves, with a mainly colouristic function, which gradually passes into a descending chord progression, and the dynamics gradually begin to build up.

In this episode, it is worth looking for a sound that underlines the narrative shift taking place. The parts of the first and second pianos contrast with each other - the second piano plays an overarching role (the theme), while the first piano introduces figurative embellishments. Each change of texture in the first piano part introduces a new colour, driving the drama and leading to an effective climax. The articulatory aspect is also worth noting here - in order to create a light and shimmering character, care should be taken in the parts of both pianists to make the sound short and bright. Rhythmic precision will also help to give the whole an energetic expression.

The image shows a musical score for Example 32, titled 'Fantasia on Strauss waltz themes', covering bars 377-392. The score is in Presto (CODA) and consists of four staves. The first two staves are for the first piano, and the last two are for the second piano. The first piano part starts with a ppp dynamic and features sixteenth-note progressions and octave leaps. The second piano part starts with a p dynamic and features chromatic chordal risers and accented chords of quartal structure. The score is marked with dynamics ppp, p, pp, and mp.

Example 32. *Fantasia on Strauss waltz themes*, bar 377-392.

In the passage that finalises the coda, the first piano part features sixteenth-note progressions, followed by sixteenth-note septimols in the left hand and octave leaps in the right hand. At the same time, the second piano leads chromatic chordal risers in an ascending dynamic to *fff*, and then crowns the work with a repeated pattern of accented chords of quartal structure.

The final bars of the work are strongly expressive - the accumulation of compositional resources gives these passages exceptional power and monumentality. The rhythmic and dynamic complexity makes this moment both technically and emotionally challenging for the performers. The intensity and the need for precise performance make this passage the expressive climax of the entire work.

The image displays a musical score for piano, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system includes a right-hand staff with a melodic line featuring grace notes and a left-hand staff with a rhythmic accompaniment. The second system shows a more complex texture with triplets and a 'rall.' marking. The score is published by Euteria 1983.

Example 33. *Fantasia on waltzes* by Johann Strauss, bar 423-436.

4. *Trois Fugues*

The cycle of three fugues was composed in 1942 in Hollywood. After the outbreak of the Second World War, the Tansman family name was put on Goebbels' blacklist, forcing the composer and his relatives into exile. Just two days before the German occupation of Paris, Tansman fled the French capital with his wife and two young daughters. For more than a year, the Tansman family went into hiding in Nice. In 1941, thanks to the support of a committee headed by Charlie Chaplin, with the help of Stokowski, Goossens and many others, the Tansmans were given a pass to board a ship bound for the United States. From 1941 to 1946, the Tansmans lived in Hollywood. During this time, Tansman began composing music for films and eventually became a successful film composer. He was even nominated for an Academy Award for his outstanding soundtrack for the film *Paris Underground*. In addition to his work in the Hollywood film industry, he continued to compose chamber music, piano pieces and two more symphonies.

In Hollywood, the composer met many other European artists and intellectuals in exile, including Milhaud, Schoenberg, Toch, Castelnuovo-Tedesco and Mann. It was in Los Angeles that Tansman renewed his long-standing friendship with Stravinsky, of which he said: *Being with Stravinsky helped me consider music for its own sake, as an autonomous and absolute art form, and recover a traditional aesthetics which had been overshadowed by neo-romanticism and expressionism*²⁶.

Tansman's Hollywood contacts with the composer of *The Rite of Spring* inspired the composer to return to the roots of neoclassicism. As a result, between 1942 and 1943, three cycles referring to Baroque music were written, including *Three Fugues*, *Prelude and Four Fugues* and *Prelude and Three Fugues*.

The three fugues are a cycle, in which the perfect construction formal of the work combines with a modernist musical language. According to available sources, the date of the work's premiere has not been documented²⁷. In the title of the work, the composer indicated that the piece could be performed for both two pianos and four hands. Tansman also arranged *Three Fugues* in a version for solo piano²⁸. Each of the fugues has a different type of expression and requires pianists to play a wide

26 Jill Timmons i Sylvain Frémaux, *Alexandre Tansman: Diary of a 20th-Century Composer*, in: <https://polishmusic.usc.edu/research/publications/polish-music-journal/vol1no1/alexandre-tansman-diary/#back10>.

27 op.cit. 21, p. 18.

28 op.cit. 21, p. 18.

palette of performance skills. The fugue cycle shows Tansman from a different perspective. Usually, the fugue is not associated with virtuosity and bravura. The composer breaks this way of thinking and offers a different perspective on the polyphonic genre.

During my research queries at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, I had the opportunity to examine the manuscripts of the *Three Fugues*. Interestingly, I noticed significant differences in tempo and dynamic determinations between the manuscripts and the version published by the publisher Max Eschig. In addition, Tansman arranged the fugues in a different order in the manuscript - the fugue that was published first in the sequence is written last in the manuscript and, conversely, the fugue that was last in the published version is numbered first in the manuscript. Tansman's family is unsure what could be the cause of such a phenomenon. However, given the build-up of drama throughout the cycle, the choice of the third fugue from the version published in print as the last seems appropriate. It is the only one of all the fugues to have an elaborate and monumental codas ending in a C major chord, which perfectly crowns the whole cycle.

4.1. *Allegro ma non troppo*

The first of the fugues is written in a four-voice arrangement in 4/4 metre and has no key marks. In addition, the composer added a note under the staff that each chromatic mark applies only to the sound at which it is located. This treatment suggests the absence of a tonal centre in the piece. The fugue begins with a pre-tempo theme in the right hand of the second piano in piano dynamics. The theme is based primarily on a motoric sixteenth-note movement. The first three motifs of the theme begin with a hexadecimal pause and maintain a consistently similar melodic direction; moreover, each motif begins with an increasingly higher note. Such procedures differentiate the rhythmic layer and strengthen the expressive side. The melodic line is schromatic. It is dominated by a second movement in a descending direction, balanced by leaps upwards by larger straight intervals.

The pianist presenting the theme gives it a character, which should consistently be maintained until the end of the piece by both pianists. Its performance requires articulatory precision and logical phrasing. The rather fast tempo of the piece suggests that the sixteenths should be performed with lightness, the use of *non legato* articulation and attention to the expressiveness of each motif.

Allegro ma non troppo

*les altérations sont indiquées
pour chaque main séparément*

Example 34. *Trois Fugues*, I. *Allegro ma non troppo*, bar 1-5.

In bar 3 a response appears in the right hand of the first piano. Tansman begins the demonstration of the theme from a note a fifth higher and fully preserves the shape of the melody and the thematic rhythm. The piano dynamics are still maintained. At this time, the first piano implements counterpoint based largely on chromatic progressions and a rhythm using eighth notes or groups of two sixteenths-eighths.

The first performance with a short internal link is created according to strict Baroque principles - it is complete, each demonstration of the theme has the same internal structure, and the counterpoints are conducted in a consistent manner. The first outer link uses the material of the front of the theme, which is interwoven between the voices in both pianists. The link builds tension and, through a consistent increase in dynamics, prepares for the next performance.

Example 35. *Trois Fugues*, I. *Allegro ma non troppo*, bar 12-17.

From bar 17 begins the second performance, which shows Tansman's freer treatment of the form. The first demonstration of the theme is presented in doubled octaves by the second piano in forte dynamics. At the same time, the first piano leads the counterpoint in a thickened, chordal texture. Next, the theme in inversion appears in the middle voice (in the first piano part), after which two demonstrations of the abbreviated theme are introduced in the second piano part, covering only the front of the theme. From bar 24, the second piano presents a demonstration of the theme in augmentation, which is taken over by the first piano in bar 26.

The accumulation of elements used by Tansman in the second movement requires pianists to use different performance means. Due to the thickening of the texture, the chordal technique still needs to

maintain a lightness, glassiness of sound and clarity of the individual layers of sound. At the same time, pianists should bring out a new type of expression and strive for dramatic development in relation to the first performance.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a piano piece. The first system, starting at bar 24, features a first piano part with a melodic line and a second piano part with a more active, rhythmic line. A red box highlights a sequence of notes in the first piano part across bars 24 and 25. The second system, starting at bar 26, continues the first piano part's melodic line, with a red box highlighting a specific phrase in bar 26. The second piano part in the second system features accented pedal notes in the bass register. The notation includes various musical symbols such as clefs, notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'f'.

Example 36. *Trois Fugues*, I. *Allegro ma non troppo*, bar 24-27.

After the end of the second lead-in, the composer builds to a climax in *fortissimo* dynamics, repeating the front of the theme several times in the low registers in the second piano part, while conducting a chord sequence in the first piano. This passage leads to a coda in which the second piano shows the front of the theme for the last time against accented pedal notes in the bass (tone c). The first piano at the same time leads the chords to complete the drama of the coda. In the final bars, a tonicisation based on the C7 chord is perceptible, which resolves into an F major chord in the last bar.

Example 37. *Trois Fugues*, I. *Allegro ma non troppo*, bar 32-35.

When performing this fugue, it is worth noting the conscious and consistent motivic work throughout the piece. Rhythmic groups of eight-two sixteenths or two sixteenths-eighteenths, often based on schromatic motifs, repeatedly appear in counterpoints. When performing these, it is important to create an effect of restlessness and to arouse animation against the motoric sixteenths in other layers of sound. Another important aspect of performance is the differentiation between demonstrations of themes and counterpoints. This polarity of sound should take place primarily in terms of articulation and timbre, not just at the level of dynamics. Counterpoints shown by the performers in softer tones, pastel colours, combined with jagged aggressive chromatic motifs, are an excellent complement to the thematic material.

4.2. *Moderato*

The second fugue forms a contrast to the first in both tempo and character. The narrative is also conducted in a different way. If it were not for the enormous amount of dissonances and complexities,

the piece could be considered lyrical. In this case, the slow tempo allows the listener to follow the ingenious way in which the voices are conducted and the relationship between each of them.

The fugue has a four-voice arrangement, like the first has no key marks, and is written in 4/4 metre. It begins in piano dynamics; Tansman also added the performance terms *legato e tranquillo*.

The piece begins with the second piano presenting a theme based on a descending progression of a motif built from jumping up a semitone, returning to a sound half a tone lower than the initial one and going down another second.

Moderato
Alexandre TANSMAN

p *legato e tranquillo*

Moderato
p *legato e tranquillo*

les altérations sont indiquées pour chaque main séparément

mp

Example 38. *Trois Fugues*, II. *Moderato*, bar 1-7.

The performance of the fugue theme requires the pianist to bring out a subtle tone, create a singing, deep sound and precisely realise *legato* articulation. The particular value of the interpretation is added by the demonstration of the tensions created between leaps and second movements. An interesting performance aspect is the emphasis on the chromatic lower line of the melody. Consequently, internal polyphony can be discerned in the theme, making it possible to treat the thematic material as a double voice. The clear use of the pedal in the theme is a key procedure for achieving the intended tonal effect.

In bar 3 the first piano introduces a response, reproducing the shape and characteristics of the first theme. At the same time, the second piano leads the counterpoint with a melody of second movement. The rhythmic layer features groups of eight-two sixteenths, two sixteenths-eighths, punctuated rhythm, syncopation, among others.

Pianists performing this passage should concentrate on maintaining a calm course and maintaining a timbral balance between the demonstration of the theme and the counterpoint. At the same time, the pianist performing the counterpoint in the finer rhythmic values must take care to bring out a dark, soft tone colour and a strict legato articulation that does not interfere with the first piano's delivery of the theme.

The first performance is complete and features a two-bar internal link between the third and fourth demonstrations of the theme. These two demonstrations are also marked by Tansman with *mezzo piano* and *mezzo forte* dynamics, adding a *crescendo* mark during the fourth demonstration of the theme, thus building tension. After the conclusion of the lead-in, there is an outer link based on a sixteenth-note movement and a strongly chromaticised melody. A violent *crescendo* is built up over the space of this link, followed another carry-out in *subito meno forte* dynamics.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for piano and counterpoint. The first system (bars 14-15) shows a piano part with a melodic line and a counterpoint with sixteenth-note accompaniment. The second system (bars 16-18) continues the piano part with a melodic line and the counterpoint. The counterpoint in the second system is marked with *sub. meno f*. The piano part in the second system also has a *sub. meno f* marking. The score is written in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature.

Example 39. *Trois Fugues*, II. *Moderato*, bar 14-18.

From bar 16 onwards, a second progression appears - an incomplete one that features three demonstrations of the theme in *stretto*, so that they all fit within the space of four bars. It becomes a challenge for pianists to ensure that the demonstrations of the theme, which overlap, are clear. Shaping the phrase equally in each demonstration facilitates this task and ensures that the passage remains clear in perception.

In bar 23 in the left hand of the second piano, the theme appears in octaves in forte dynamics. The composer has added the marking \wedge at each note of the phrase, clearly suggesting to the pianist performing the theme to produce a deep, bell-like sound at this point. In the bars that follow, Tansman consistently builds tension, preparing a powerful climax in which the pianists can exploit the full range of dynamic possibilities afforded by the combination of the two pianos. Such a large-scale climax requires skilful management of musical time and building space for the chords to ring out in the acoustics of the concert hall.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system, labeled '25', contains four staves (two for each piano) with complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings. The second system, labeled '29', continues the piece with similar complexity, including a 'ff' marking and several 'A' markings above notes. The notation is dense and detailed, showing various note values, rests, and articulation marks.

Example 40. *Trois Fugues*, II. *Moderato*, bar 25-28.

From bar 33, after the climax, there is a gradual quieting, calming and slowing down. In the final passage, the fugue theme appears for the last time in the right hand of the first piano, while the left hand and the right hand of the second piano are led by the chromatic melodic lines in eighth notes. The left hand of the second piano holds the pedal notes. Throughout the passage, pianists should consistently build a dynamic plan, completely changing the type of expression relative to the previous musical section. Here, the performers are tasked with ensuring perfect risers in the eighth-note progressions, which are achievable by arranging the right timbral proportions between the different layers of the text,

as well as precise and consistent sound extraction. Furthermore, in the aforementioned eighth-note progressions, it is useful to introduce subtle phrase shaping resulting from the direction of the melody. This maintains the fluidity of the movement while fading out the narrative.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for piano accompaniment. The first system, covering bars 34 to 40, consists of a treble staff and a bass staff. The treble staff begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and a piano (*p*) dynamic. The bass staff also begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system, covering bars 37 to 40, also consists of a treble staff and a bass staff. The treble staff begins with a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic and a *rall.* (ritardando) marking. The bass staff begins with a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic and a *rall.* marking. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and phrasing slurs.

Example 41. *Trois Fugues*, II. *Moderato*, bar 34-40.

4.3. *Vivo-Meno Mosso*

In the last fugue, the motoric and - to some extent - bravura narrative type returns. This time, however, the texture of the piece is denser and even more absorbing, giving the whole a striking and virtuosic character.

Like the previous fugues, the composition is written in 4/4 metre, in a four-voice arrangement, has no tonal centre and begins with a theme presented by the second piano in piano dynamics. Tansman added the performance term *leggiero*.

The theme is mostly based on hexadecimal values and eighth notes, which emphasise the motoric character of the melody. The composer uses *staccato* articulation in the notation and a \wedge mark

over one note, which can be considered the climax of the theme (this mark appears consistently at each demonstration of the theme).

The pianist performing the theme imposes a fast tempo and a light, dynamic character to the piece, while at the same time ensuring 'loose', selective articulation. In order to differentiate the inner theme, it is useful to use a deeper touch on the keyboard at longer rhythmic values, maintaining a vigorous hand movement.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a piano piece. The first system consists of two staves: the upper staff is marked 'Vivo' and the lower staff is marked 'Vivo' and 'p leggiero'. The second system also consists of two staves, with the lower staff marked 'p'. Between the two systems, there is a French instruction: '1 les altérations sont indiquées pour chaque main séparément'. The notation includes various rhythmic values and dynamic markings.

Example 42. *Trois Fugues*, III. *Vivo-Meno Mosso*, bar 1-5.

The first performance - complete - has four demonstrations of the theme and, as before, retains the principles of form-building. The first two demonstrations of the theme are described in *piano* dynamics, while the third appears in *mezzo piano* dynamics, developed in the phrase's *crescendo* ending. From bar 14, an internal link begins, using the theme's front motif and introducing new musical motifs. The dynamics gradually build up, preparing the entrance of the next and final showpiece in *forte* (second piano in bass).

This excerpt presents a textural challenge to the pianists - special attention must be paid to the fact that the individual voices are intertwined between the two pianos, and an important element is to maintain the clarity of each sound layer, while building the dynamic level coherently and consistently.

Example 43. *Trois Fugues*, III. *Vivo-Meno Mosso*, bar 14-19.

From bar 24 begins the second lead-in, in which the first piano presents the theme in inversion in *subito piano* dynamics. Over the course of the following bars, the building of the climax is noticeable through increasing dynamics, the upward direction of the melody and the thickening of the texture. At the climax of this fragment, new motifs also appear, which Tansman transfers to successive voices creating dialogues between the pianists, which, combined with the reaching to lower and lower registers, helps to build tension. In bar 34, the theme appears again in the part of the second piano, which is inscribed in a large *rallentando*, preparing the final climax, which is also the conclusion of the entire cycle.

In this excerpt, the performers are tasked with building the drama together. The gradual intensification of tension becomes crucial, through restrained narrative and dynamic direction leading to an intense sub-expressive climax in a short section. The performers' clear and deliberate display of imitation in bars 31-33 ensures that the musical movement and tension are maintained despite the muted dynamic.

The image displays three systems of musical notation for a piece titled 'Trois Fugues, III. Vivo-Meno Mosso'. The first system (bars 32-33) shows a complex texture with multiple voices. The second system (bars 34-35) has a red box highlighting the right-hand piano part and the organ part. The third system (bars 36-37) has red boxes highlighting the right-hand piano part and the organ part, with 'rall.' markings above and below the organ part.

Example 44. *Trois Fugues*, III. *Vivo-Meno Mosso*, bar 32-37.

From bar 38 begins the *Meno mosso* movement, the climax of the fugue, in which the way of building texture and expression is completely different from the previous part of the piece. Up to this point, the performers may have treated the sound extraction in a percussive manner, whereas in this passage one can find an organ-like, pompous sound almost in the style of Max Reger. Pianists should bring out the chord risers with precision and with the right balance. The notes marked with accents by the composer and the final demonstration of the theme in the right hand of the second piano, which the composer has written in *fff* dynamics, should be given priority.

Meno mosso

ff

Meno mosso

ff

ff

ff

rall.

rall.

The image displays a musical score for a piano piece, specifically Example 45 from 'Trois Fugues, III. Vivo-Meno Mosso', bars 38-43. The score is arranged in two systems. The first system consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The tempo is marked 'Meno mosso' and the dynamics are 'ff'. The second system also consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a grand staff. The tempo remains 'Meno mosso' and the dynamics are 'ff'. The third system consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a grand staff. The tempo is marked 'rall.' and the dynamics are 'ff'. The fourth system also consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a grand staff. The tempo is marked 'rall.' and the dynamics are 'ff'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, accidentals, and dynamic markings.

Example 45. *Trois Fugues*, III. *Vivo-Meno Mosso*, bar 38-43.

5. *Introduction et fugue*

One of the most interesting examples of neo-classical aesthetic principles in Tansman's oeuvre is the *Introduction and Fugue*. The composition was written in 1938. The second movement of the work (*Fugue*) has two versions - for two pianos and for organ. According to available sources, the date of the work's premiere in the duet version has not been documented (the premiere of the arrangement for organ took place in June 1972 in Salt Lake City)²⁹.

The introduction and fugue stand out for their great originality. The piece draws freely on the piano works of Ferruccio Busoni. The narrative in the *Introduction* is based on powerful, majestic passages that prepare the listener for the climax, *the Fugue*. In the *Fugue* itself, the tension develops slowly. The composer begins with a delicate theme that develops into a powerful, texturally complex climax as the piece progresses.

5.1. *Introduction*

The Introduction is a short, two-page composition, possessing a monumental and dramatic character. Tansman set it to a *Largo pesante* tempo, which emphasises the majestic character, while at the same time allowing the work to pose a whole range of performance challenges to the pianists in terms of narrative, sound or strictly duet.

The foreground element of the piece is the juxtaposition of quarter-note octaves in the bass, performed by the second piano, and chords based on a distinctive rhythmic group involving two thirty-two notes and a ligature between an eighth with a dot and a quarter note. In performing these, the pianist should aim to consistently develop the drama of the piece, producing sounds in the bass reminiscent of the relentless, pulsating ringing of a great bell. This requires the performer to have the right technique for creating the sound - the speed of the key stroke is important to give impetus to the onset of the sound. In order to achieve a carrying, powerful and long resonating sound, during the recording of the CD I performed octaves with a large hand momentum while maintaining a continuous elliptical movement of the whole arm. This allowed energy to be imparted to the sound, after which bouncing the arm off the bottom of the key allowed the aliquots to ring out naturally. During this time, the arm can be pulled back to prepare for the next consonance to be produced. At the same time, the proportion

²⁹ op.cit. 21, p. 17.

between components of the octave - in the case of the CD performance of the work, more emphasis was placed on the higher interval sound.

Complementing the powerful chords in the bass are the chords in the first piano part and in the right hand of the second piano. Tansman has written the marking \wedge at the beginning of each chordal vertical between the pianists. The precise execution of these accents enhances the dramatic character of the piece. It is also important to execute the entire rhythmic group broadly and bluntly, with a heavy and embedded sound. The attention to every detail in the shaping of the chordal motifs and the execution of the octaves in the bass in the manner described above makes the realisation of the chordal verticals between the pianists at such a slow tempo a considerable performance challenge.

The chord at the beginning of bar 4 can be regarded as a suspension of the first musical thought, which is emphasised by the harmony and the direction of the melodic line. The thickening of the rhythmic layer, combined with the ascending direction of the melody, the widening of the ambitus and *the crescendo* to *fortissimo* build tension leading to a climax in bar 5. This is the place to showcase the enormous sonic potential inherent in the combination of the two pianos. Powerful chords in dynamics *fortissimo* made on background octaves in bass in even lower register, using a long pedalisation make the volume and expression come to the maximum.

Largo pesante Alexandre TANSMAN

The image displays a musical score for two pianos, labeled 'Largo pesante' and 'Alexandre TANSMAN'. It shows the first five bars of the 'Introduction et fugue' section. The score is written in a 2/4 time signature with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first piano part (P1) and second piano part (P2) are shown on separate staves. The score includes various musical notations such as accents (A), slurs, and dynamic markings (p, ff). The tempo is 'Largo pesante'. The score shows the first five bars of the piece. Bar 1 starts with a piano (p) dynamic. Bar 4 features a suspension of the first musical thought. Bar 5 reaches a climax with fortissimo (ff) dynamics. The score includes various musical notations such as accents (A), slurs, and dynamic markings (p, ff).

Example 46. *Introduction et fugue*, bar 1-5.

In bar 8 begins a passage in which the type of expression changes to a more nostalgic and elegiac one. The term *pesante* appears in this bar, moreover, until the end of bar 9 the chords are marked *tenuto*.

In this part of the piece (up to bar 13), particular attention should be paid to the correct arrangement of the chord proportions between the pianists, the production of a singing, carrying sound in the highest voice and the precise realisation of the *legato* articulation. An interesting aspect of performance is the shaping of phrasing, which, due to the outline of the melodic line in the highest voice, is distinguished from the metrical arrangement. Consequently, successive phrasing arcs start not from the first, but from the second measure in bars. At the end of the phrase, in bars 12 and 13, a *crescendo* mark appears, then after bar 13 a repetition mark is written.

During the recording of the CD, in order to vary the performance of the work, after bar 13 we decided to introduce a caesura and then to return to the beginning of the piece in *piano* dynamics. This solution allowed us to broaden the colour spectrum in the piece and also to surprise the listener. Moreover, by creating a wide dynamic ambitus, the performance of the climactic passage in bar 5 is even more impressive this time around.

After the repetition (which this time ended with a large *crescendo* with a slight *rallentando* moving directly into the next segment of the piece), the material from the first bars of the piece returns for the last time in bar 14. Particularly noteworthy here is the performance of the octaves in the bass by the second piano with an even more deep, poignant sound. From bar 16 there is a *diminuendo* marking which continues until the end of the piece. What follows here is a calming and extinguishing of the tension that was built up so intensely throughout *the Introduction*.

6 8^{va} *pesante* *loco*

meno f più legato

f

10 14

Example 47. *Introduction et fugue*, bar 6-18.

5.2. Fugue

The Fugue is an example of Tansman's excellent compositional technique and his ability to combine the fugue form with modern means of expression. It is an expansive and internally varied work,

both in terms of form and texture, which makes it pose various technical and artistic challenges to the pianists. The composer has noted a *lento* tempo at the beginning of the piece, which allows for accurate tracking and shaping of the successive demonstrations of themes. The piece has a 4-voice arrangement.

The fugue begins with a theme presented by the second piano in *piano* dynamics. The use of tritones and chromatic derivations in the second movement in the theme emphasises its atonal construction. With eighth notes predominating in the rhythmic layer, the fluidity of movement in the music is maintained. When performing the fugue theme, care should be taken to achieve a soft, delicate sound and to ensure that the *legato* articulation is accurately realised. With the prospect of gradually building tension and increasing dynamics and thickening the texture, it is advisable to begin in a quiet, almost ascetic manner. It is also important to remember to shape the phrase according to the direction of the melodic line and the rhythmic pattern - longer values and notes after the melody jumps a quarter up can be brought out with a slower key entry for a deeper sound.

The image shows two systems of musical notation. The first system consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a 'Lento' marking above the first staff. The second system also consists of two staves with a 'Lento' marking above the first staff and a 'p legato' marking below the first staff. The notation includes eighth notes, rests, and some accidentals.

The image shows two systems of musical notation. The first system consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a 'p legato' marking below the first staff. The second system also consists of two staves with a 'p legato' marking below the first staff. The notation includes eighth notes, rests, and some accidentals.

Example 48. *Introduction et fugue*, bar 19-26.

From bar 23 onwards, further demonstrations of the theme appear in successive voices. In the formal course of the composition, Tansman maintains the traditional way of processing the theme - it retains its internal structure, rhythm and direction of the melodic line. From bar 29, with each demonstration of the theme, there is a gradual gradation of dynamics: through *mezzo piano*, *più forte* up to *forte* in bar 41, after which a *crescendo* marking still appears. At the same time, in the part of the

second piano, octave progressions in the bass striving to bar 45 are introduced, followed by a demonstration of the theme in *subito piano*, creating a narrative contrast.

Pianists performing this passage should build tension consistently and with restraint. Conscious leading of the voices and maintaining the right proportions between them is needed to preserve the clarity of the texture, which is gradually thickened.

The image displays a musical score for Example 49, 'Introduction et fugue', covering bars 40 to 48. It is presented in two systems of two staves each. The first system (bars 40-41) shows a complex texture with many notes in both hands. The second system (bars 42-43) continues this texture. The third system (bars 44-45) features a 'sub. p' (subito piano) dynamic marking and a triplet of notes in the right hand. The fourth system (bars 46-48) continues with the 'sub. p' dynamic and triplet markings. The bass line in the first system shows octave progressions.

Example 49. *Introduction et fugue*, bar 40-48.

From bar 45 to bar 64, another link in the work can be discerned, creating a new dynamic and dramatic arc. The composer expands the dynamics again from *subito piano* to *forte* in bar 57, then from bar 62 brings the dynamic level back to *piano*. In the passage in question, Tansman used new compositional means to deepen the expression in relation to the previous section of the piece. Among the elements mentioned is the depiction in the part of the second piano of a theme doubled in octaves (a

performance term *marcato il basso*), while simultaneously conducting parallel sixths and thirds in the part of the first piano, reminiscent of the textures characteristic of Johannes Brahms's piano works, which add to the monumental, majestic character by achieving a dense mass of sound. In this passage, Tansman also began to use *tenuto* markings and accents (\wedge), thus enhancing the dynamics in the piece.

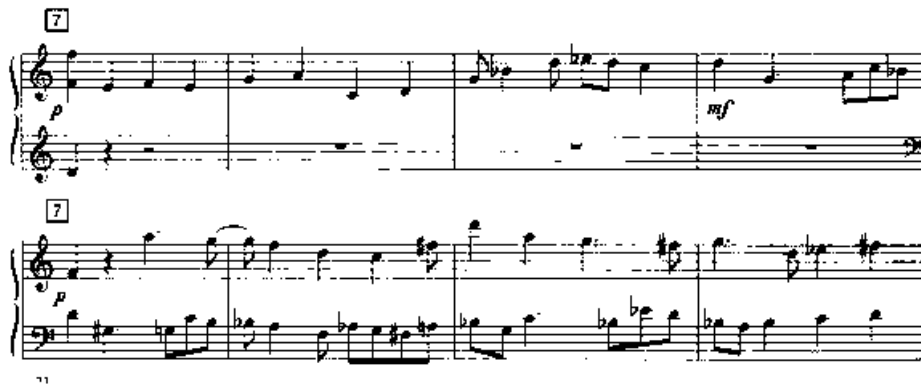
This section of the piece brings with it further performance issues. Performing a demonstration of the theme, interspersed between the parts of both pianos, requires the pianists to maintain clarity of texture, consistency of phrase leading and skilful gradation of drama. In the bars that follow, a particularly interesting treatment is the introduction of parades of parallel sixths and thirds. In order to intensify the organ character of the place, it is necessary to achieve a full and singing sound in these progressions. Legato and the conscious leading of the two-note sonorities in the right proportions is a key element to achieve the desired effect.

Example 50. *Introduction et fugue*, bar 58-61.

From bar 65 to bar 73 there is a noticeable return to the narrative presented at the beginning of the fugue (simplicity and clarity of texture, restrained and legato sound), which creates a kind of compositional bracket for the first part of the work. The motifs used throughout bars 69-72 and the characteristic descending progressions may be a direct reference to Baroque music.

In this section, pianists can demonstrate their ability to produce a bright, delicate sound. The calm nature of the music provides an opportunity to ease the tension after the previous exciting section and prepare both performers and listener for the next climactic segment of the work.

From bar 73 begins a new, very long and extended section of the fugue, which based on a continuous development of tension and drama until the very end of the piece, crowning it with a powerful and monumental climax. In bar 73, Tansman applies *piano* dynamics for the last time. At this point, a demonstration of the theme appears in the left hand of the second piano, and shifts of rhyme are created between the first and second pianos in the other voices. The performers use this passage to display a beautiful, almost unreal timbre and create a mysterious and mystical mood.



Example 51. *Introduction et fugue*, bar 73-76.

In the bars that follow, successive demonstrations of the theme are presented, each carrying an increasing emotional and dynamic charge. They are accompanied by extended counterpoints that contribute to the drama and thicken the texture.

Bearing in mind the dramatic plan of the whole passage, performers should maintain maximum control over the genre of sound, the realisation of texture and the gradation of dynamic level.

From bar 89, a new element appears to emphasise the tension: the second piano presents the theme (accentuating each note of the phrase) against a background of powerful octaves in the bass, reminiscent of the ringing of a bell. When performing this section, similar sound production to the octaves described in the *Introduction* can be used.

The image shows a musical score for piano, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system covers bars 87-91 and includes a 'rall...' marking. The second system covers bars 92-96 and includes 'a tempo' and 'ff' markings. The score is written in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The notation is dense, with many sixteenth notes and complex rhythmic groupings.

Example 53. *Introduction et fugue*, bar 87-91.

In bar 101, a passage begins with a completely new structure and character. The second piano begins with a series of sixteenths doubled in octaves between the right and left hands in *fortissimo* dynamics, joined in the next bar by the first piano (also in octaves). Due the characteristic structure of the preceding phrase, suspended on a diminished chord, one can again find references to elements of Baroque music. , we have chosen to treat this place as a fragment of a cadential-improvisatory character. We have allowed ourselves some agogic freedom and emphasised the virtuosic character of this fragment. In bars 101-103, suggesting the direction of the melodic line, we used hemiola, combining sixteenth notes into groups of, for example, three or six values.

Example 54. *Introduction et fugue*, bar 100-103.

In bar 104, Tansman doubled the existing texture by an extra octave in the parts of both pianists and added accents on each note of the gamut progressions and on each successive chord (there is also *rallentando* and an octave transposition and fermata on the last octave in the bass in the second piano part). The continuation of the virtuosic cadence in the *fff* dynamic (second piano) is accompanied by a return to the original tempo. The use of octave doublings enriches the texture leading to a monumental chordal cadence crowning the whole, resolving in C major.

When performing the final section of the piece, it is particularly important to demonstrate technical proficiency while maintaining risers between the pianists. Given the fast tempo and simultaneous use of rubato, this can be quite a challenge. At the same time, care must be taken to balance the dynamic proportions between the different layers. In concluding a work of such great expressive and majestic character, one must allow oneself to produce a powerful sound, taking advantage of the possibilities that arise from the combination of two pianos.

a tempo
 a tempo
 fff
 loco
 loco
 rall...
 106
 108
 110
 1938

Example 55. *Introduction et fugue*, bar 106-112.

III. Alexander Tansman's stylistic idiom in works for piano duet

1. Technical aspects

When considering Tansman's stylistic idiom in the area of his works for two pianos, it is impossible not to lean towards aspects of a technical nature. This notion can be understood as the totality of techniques, skills and predispositions necessary to convey the content contained in a musical work.

The modernism of my means of expression strives for immeasurable simplicity, but we are so used to the overload of content and form of the post-Romantics that the test of simplicity is somewhat lost (...)³⁰.

The above quotation of the composer's words quite vividly describes Tansman's treatment of musical material and is reflected in the pianistic technique required to perform the works featured on *Cosmopolite*.

In the works I have discussed, among the most important elements of pianistic technique are the chordal, two-note and octave technique. When performing these works, one has the irresistible impression that there is not a single superfluous sound in them. At the same time, one should pay attention to specificity of chordal technique applied by the composer in the discussed works. Non-standard chord arrangements and combinations can pose considerable challenges to pianists, especially at the initial stage of becoming acquainted with the composer's piano works. This is a characteristic of all the works presented on my disc.

At the same time, I would like to draw attention to the almost total absence of the fine technique so characteristic of piano music of the 19th and first half of the 20th century. *Leaving* aside some exceptions from *Le Train de Nuit* or *Strauss's Fantasia on Waltzes*, one can look in vain for scales, passages or brilliant runs that would form part of a virtuoso display. Also lacking is the use of these means to create a musical narrative.

30 *Muzyka* 1925, no. 2 from II, p. 106-107, quoted in J. Cegięła, *Dziecko szczęścia. Aleksander Tansman i jego czasy*, Warsaw 1986, p. 158-159.

Individual instances of the use of scales or passages are merely a means to achieve specific colour qualities or, like onomatopoeia in poetry, are sonorant (e.g. the conductor's whistle in *Le Train de Nuit*).

Another feature of Tansman's duo works is the variety of articulation. Pianists tackling these works must have at their disposal a full range of sound production skills - from the singing, deep legato necessary both in the *Moderato of the Three Fugues* or in the *Introduction and Fugue*, and in the stylistically so radically different *Cite Ouvrière of La Grande Ville*, to the energetic short and ragged, and sometimes even brutal, sounds in *La Train de Nuit* or in the *Three Fugues*. Related to this second world of articulation and modes of sound production is the motoricity and toccata-like quality present in some of the works discussed. It requires pianists to have not only great proficiency in their piano technique, but above all impeccable control over every aspect of sound production and keyboard movement.

In terms of narration pianists should be prepared to tell a story "wide-breathing". This is another element that can be considered multi-faceted. On the one hand, it is important to create melodic lines and phrases over long stretches in a way that is coherent and interesting to the listener, as exemplified by the waltz from *La Train de Nuit* or the *Fantasia on the theme of Straus waltzes*. On the other hand, it stems from the formal structure of the work (a key aspect in the skilful presentation of the content contained in the fugue from *Introduction and Fugue*, among others).

When discussing aspects of pianistic technique, the colour element cannot be overlooked. As I mentioned earlier, Tansman avoided enriching his works with elements that were not a direct reflection of his proposed content. As a result, the colouring of the work is usually a result of the overall character of the piece or its fragment. An example of this is the piece *Le Train de Nuit*, in which the choice of pianistic means of colouring is dictated by the desire to achieve a particular timbral, stylistic or sonorous effect. Some effects are linked to the industrial sounds of the train, others lend finesse and lightness to the waltz or tango, and still others symbolise the transition from java to dream. The colour element in the second movement of *La Grande Ville*, on the other hand, can be interpreted differently, where the type of sound is dictated by the changing tensions between harmonic functions, phrase leading and subtle shifts in the narrative. Sensitivity to these elements and attention to every musical detail is one of the most valuable aspects of performance and is one of the factors determining the artistic value of a performance.

It seems interesting to note the absence of any pedalling markings. This gives pianists full autonomy to use all three pedals.

One of the biggest challenges I encountered in terms of piano technic or - to put it more broadly, technical and performance, was to capture each time the wealth of styles in which Tansman moves, as he mentions in one of his statements:

The question of style as an exclusive creative goal is untenable: in seeking to develop an individual style in terms of a broad and independent melodic line, an original harmonic language, rhythmic movement and orchestral atmosphere, I believe, however, that I do not use style as a pre-moulded system, as a similar application yields laboratory or academic results: style should derive from the content of the individual work³¹.

The artistic work that is the *Cosmopolite album*, as well as this description of it, constitute indisputable proof and confirmation of the truth of Tansman's statement above. It is the role of the performer to make every effort to adapt the means to the musical language and content carried by the specific work in a fully conscious manner. The extent to which the above-described performance aspects are realised in *La Grande Ville*, in which jazz elements are clearly present, will be radically different from the means chosen in Strauss's post-Romantic *Fantasia on Waltz Themes*, and still different in the *Three Fugues* or *Introduction and Fugue*. In this respect, *Le Train de Nuit* is extremely interesting, in which the richness and variety of style and narrative requires the pianists not only to have all the above-mentioned performance means in their technical arsenal, but also to use them consciously and to be able to switch smoothly and seamlessly from one to the other, e.g. the danceability, lightness and finesse of a waltz juxtaposed with the mechanics and pulse of a train.

Taking into account all the above-mentioned technical and artistic aspects, while working on the disc I realised that the wealth of resources accumulated in this music gives pianists the opportunity to present Tansman's works with full interpretative panache. Bringing the full brilliance and value of these works to the listener requires the performers to move freely through a wide range of timbral, articulatory, dynamic, stylistic and narrative possibilities.

2. The relationship between the two pianos

Formulating Tansman's stylistic idiom in his compositions for piano duet requires defining the relationship between the parts of the two pianists. By analysing and performing the repertoire presented on the CD album, I attempted to draw conclusions in this respect.

31 op.cit. 30, p. 158-159.

In the piano duet pieces I have recorded, the dynamic interaction between the pianists can be observed. Tansman skilfully builds relationships between the parts using a variety of compositional and structural techniques to emphasise their interdependence, but also to differentiate their functions within the composition.

The composer gives pianists the opportunity to demonstrate an unparalleled ability to accompany each other, to listen attentively to their co-performer and to build form and shape timbre coherently. The creation of musical narrative in the composer's works is achieved by combining two important aspects - the shaping of the melodic layer and the complementation by the other musical elements.

Given the disposition of the various components of the work, Tansman often uses a contrast between the parts of the two pianos. One of the pianists usually has a melodic function, while the other emphasises the harmony, creates an accompaniment or a kind of rhythmic foundation.

In terms of melodics, dialogues between the two pianists are noticeable. This dialogue can take the form of exchanging themes, imitating motifs or building tension together. The part of the first piano may introduce a theme, which is later taken up by the second pianist, or the two parts develop the theme together, creating a sense of mutual responsibility for shaping the entire composition. One of the best examples of this equal treatment of the two parts is in *Strauss's Fantasia on Waltz Themes* and the dance passages in *Le train de nuit*, where the form is constructed on the basis of a thematic dialogue between the performers.

Tansman, being associated with the tradition of polyphonic music, also uses contrapuntal techniques in his works for piano duet. In this case, the melodic lines in the two pianists' parts are equal voices that interact with each other. The counterpoint is particularly evident in passages where the two piano parts enter into dialogue and mutually 'intertwine', creating a complex web of motivic relationships. The composer makes excellent use of this balanced and equal partnering of the pianists in the *Three Fugues* and in the *Introduction and Fugue*.

It should be noted at this point that *La Grande Ville* is the only piece included on my disc in which the equivalence of the two parts is shaken. The texture in piano I is largely denser and more complex. In the case of chord doubling, piano I is always presented in a higher register, as is the case when the chords are broken up between the pianists. From the part of the piano II is primarily primarily complementary harmonic and contrapuntal musical material led by a second pianist.

To summarise the issue of the relationship between the two pianos, it can be noted that Tansman was very adept at dealing with a chamber composition such as the piano duet. Due to the fact that the composer performed his compositions with his wife, Colette Cras-Tansman, he was well aware of the

importance of the performance aspects concerning this unique chamber formation. Consequently, Tansman took care in most of his works for piano duet to balance the parts of both pianists in terms of narrative direction, saturation of texture and complexity of pianistic technique. The composer skilfully creates performance challenges for each pianist while allowing them to dialogue and partner each other.

3. An attempt to define the compositional idiom

Summing up the already discussed performance aspects in Alexander Tansman's works and the conclusions formulated in the previous chapters, I would like to attempt to define the compositional idiom that characterises Tansman's works for two pianos.

One of the most important features of the composer's oeuvre is stylistic eclecticism - Tansman was an artist who combined various musical trends, from neoclassicism to the avant-garde. His oeuvre bears witness to exploration, experimentation and adaptation of new musical currents while respecting tradition. Tansman's creative output for piano duet covers a wide stylistic range: from music based on classical forms to influences from romantic, popular and jazz music, with elements of modernism present. The skilful juxtaposition of different aesthetics constitutes the artist's individual style. Nonetheless, his work remains coherent and thoughtful, which testifies to his mastery as a composer.

The scale of his interests and creative inspirations gives performers a wide range interpretation of Tansman's works. In order to convey the full complexity of his works, pianists should be aware of the influence of a number of factors on the final shape of a work, and move freely between different musical styles, maintaining unity of tone and narrative in the piano duet. The ability to accommodate these changes, while maintaining artistic coherence, is essential to fully convey the character of Tansman's works.

Another distinctive element in Tansman's work for piano duet is rhythm, which can often be complex and presents one of the most demanding challenges for pianists. The composer used a variety of metre, polyrhythm, rhythmic changes and structures ostinato, which formed the advanced rhythmic layer of his works. In some cases, rhythm becomes one of the main formative elements, giving the pieces dynamism and expressiveness. An excellent example in this regard is the third movement of *La Grande Ville*, where Tansman used polymetry. This unique musical phenomenon is an extremely interesting and expressive compositional procedure that introduces an additional layer of rhythmic complexity and expression in the piano duet.

The composer used a rich harmonic language and complex contrapuntal structures in his works for two pianos and four hands. The multiplicity of voices and the subtle blending of different layers of sound can be seen in his works, giving his duet music depth and intensity. In addition, interesting harmonic treatments in Tansman's oeuvre include elaborate polyharmonic complexes, which have become known as *les accords Tansman* or *accords gratte-ciel* (French for 'skyscrapers'). They can be found, for example, in *J. Strauss's Fantasia on Waltz Themes*. Just as the name of these harmonic structures suggests, they are intended to create a monumental effect in sound, resembling skyscrapers in modern architecture. The combination of polyharmonic chords in the parts of the two pianists creates space for a fascinating play of sonic colours. Through the use of complex chords that sound in different, sometimes very distant registers, the composer achieves a harmonic richness that allows for a sophisticated shaping of sound.

In his works for piano duet, Tansman often used the technique of contrasts, combining extremely opposite sound and expressive phenomena. This is perfectly illustrated in *Le train de nuit (The Night Train)*. While depicting the image of a speeding train, the composer simultaneously evokes the passengers' daydreams, using the performance apparatus to present two separate but parallel worlds. By combining two pianos, Tansman achieves a quasi-topophonic effect, creating an impression of spatiality or a multilayered soundscape, as if the music came from different sources distributed in space. Using this kind of means, Tansman separates the dream world and the real world, creating a clear contrast between the two, which intensifies the expressive side. A similar treatment appears in the ballet *La Grande Ville*, in which Tansman proposes a fine combination of extremely different dances - foxtrot and waltz. The composer using rhythmic and stylistic contrasts in a masterly way shows scenes that take place simultaneously in two different locations, which enriches the ballet's narrative. The composer was able to move seamlessly between different styles, combining them in a way that not only enriched the sound layer, but also gave the music a certain drama and narrative coherence.

The characteristic stylistic features of Alexander Tansman outlined above make his works for piano duet stand out from other composers, offering an extremely rich and varied musical language. Tansman's first biographer, Irving Schwerké, stated that there is an individual sound idiom in his music. He wrote: *Tansman speaks his own language (...). He has his own style, that is, he creates his melody, his harmony and his rhythm, marking them with the stamp of his personality in such a way that these elements are always associated with Tansman and no one else*³².

32 I. Schwerké, *Alexandre Tansman, compositeur polonais*, Paris 1931, p. 42.

Concluding remarks

Aleksandr Tansman was an outstanding artist whose work won acclaim around the world, leaving an indelible mark in the history of 20th century music. His extraordinary ability to combine tradition with modernity and his individual style made him one of the most important composers of his time. Tansman's chamber works are an extremely valuable and rich contribution to the musical repertoire, and among them compositions for two pianos and four hands occupy a special place. Few other composers of the era had such a significant impact on the development of musical literature for piano duets. Tansman, through his originality and ingenuity, significantly enriched the repertoire of this performance ensemble.

Having recorded Tansman's works, I am convinced that these compositions allow for a significant development of performance skills. The rhythmic, harmonic and textural complexity, as well as the necessity for precise collaboration between the pianists, make these works demanding but at the same time extremely intriguing.

The composer's duo works offer unique and captivating items that are not only technically challenging, but also enable the artists to fully themselves in the composer's fascinating musical world. The varied structure with elements of neo-classicism, jazz, ballet music or applied music, opens up a wide range of interpretative possibilities for performers. In addition, Tansman's works for piano duet offer great joy and satisfaction in their performance. With an unusually rich palette of harmonic, dynamic and colour nuances, the composer allows performers full artistic expression.

Tansman's works for piano duet deserve to be brought closer to a wider audience. Including them permanently in the concert repertoire will contribute to showing the full mastery and artistic genius of this still underrated Polish composer.

Bibliography

Aleksander Tansman - life and works

Cegiełła Janusz, *Child of Happiness: Aleksander Tansman and His Times*, Vol. 1 - 2, 2nd edition, 86 Press Publishing House, Łódź 1996.

Florin Ludovic, *Alexandre Tansman: Un musicien entre deux guerres Correspondance Tansman - Ganche (1922 - 1941)*, Éditions L'Harmattan, Paris 2018.

Gamrat Małgorzata, *Aleksander Tansman in Paris (1919-1940) in light of the composer's memoirs and diaries*, in *Między Warszawą a Paryżem (1918-1939)*, edited by Beata Bolesławska-Lewandowska, Jolanta Guzy-Pasiak, 57-83, Institute of Art PAN, Warsaw 2019.

Granat-Janki Anna: *Forma w twórczości instrumentalnej Aleksandra Tansmana*, the Karol Lipiński Academy of Music in Wrocław Publishing House, Wrocław 1995.

Granat-Janki Anna (ed.), *W hołdzie Aleksandrowi Tansmanowi: (1897-1986)*, the Karol Lipiński Academy of Music Publishing House, Wrocław 2018.

Hugon Gérard, *Alexandre Tansman, catalogue de l'oeuvre*, Éditions Max Eschig, Paris 1995.

Hugon Gérard, *Hommage au compositeur Alexandre Tansman (1897-1986)*, Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, Paris 2000.

Schwerké Irving, *Alexandre Tansman: Compositeur Polonais*, Éditions Max Eschig, Paris 1931.

Tansman Aleksander, *Regards en arrière. Itinéraire d'un musicien cosmopolite au XX e siècle*, Edited by Cédric Segond-Genovesi, Marianne Tansman Martinozzi, Mireille Tansman Zanuttini, Éditions Aedam Musicae, Paris 2013.

Tansman Aleksander, *Une voie lyrique dans un siècle bouleversé*, edited by Mireille Tansman-Zanuttini, Éditions L'Harmattan, Paris 2005.

Szoka Marta (ed.), *Aleksander Tansman (1897-1986)*, the Grażyna and Kiejstut Bacewicz Academy of Music in Łódź Publishing House, Łódź 1997.

Wendland Wojciech, *W 89 lat dookoła świata: Aleksander Tansman u źródeł kultury i tożsamości*, Astra Publishing House, Łódź 2013.

General music literature

Ciesielski Raphael, *Refleksja estetyczna w polskiej krytyce muzycznej dwudziestolecia międzywojennego*, Wydawnictwo Poznańskie Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauk, Poznań 2005.

Gamrat Małgorzata, *Karol Szymanowski w refleksji Aleksandra Tansmana*, Polish Yearbook of Musicology 18 (2020): 292-315.

Helman Zofia, *Neoklasycyzm w muzyce polskiej XX wieku*, PWM, Kraków 1985.

Kaczyński Tadeusz, *Młodzi kompozytorzy polscy w Paryżu w latach 1926-1950 a stosunki muzyczne polsko-francuskie*, "Muzyka" 1972, no. 2, pp. 106-127.

Lazzaro Federico, *Écoles de Paris en Musique 1920-1950: Identités, Nationalisme, Cosmopolitisme*, Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, Paris 2018.

Moldenhauer Hans, *Duo Pianism: A Dissertation*, Chicago Musical Press, Chicago 1950.

Roberts Maynard Wesley, *An Introduction to the Literature for Two Pianos and Orchestra, 1915- 1950*, pp. 246-254 ['Alexandre Tansman: *Suite for two pianos and orchestra*'], Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville 1981.

Suchowiejko Renata, *Muzyczny Paryż à la polonaise w okresie międzywojennym. Artyści – wydarzenia – konteksty*, Księgarnia Akademicka Publishing House, Kraków 2020.

Suchowiejko Renata, *Recepcja muzyki polskiej w Paryżu w latach 1919-1939. Analiza krytyczna źródeł prasowych*, In: *Between Warsaw and Paris (1918-1939)*, edited by Beata Bolesławska- Lewandowska, Jolanta Guzy-Pasiak, 9-29, Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw 2019.

Tomaszewski Mieczysław, *Interpretacja integralna dzieła muzycznego. Rekonesans*, Academy of Music in Cracow, Cracow 2000.

Online sources:

<https://culture.pl/pl/tworca/aleksander-tansman> [accessed 15.05.2024].

Hugon G rald, G. Hugon, *L' uvre d'Alexandre Tansman. Catalogue pratique*, 2012 (online publication), in: http://www.musimem.com/Tansman_Catalogue_pratique.pdf. [accessed 24.03.2024].

<https://tansman.org.pl/Museum/aleksander-tansman-tekst> [accessed 13.09.2023].

http://www.duodaccord.de/audio/tansman/tansman_booklet_en.html?fbclid=IwAR3x4LGWepW11h6JO8zHdEjLJxMoLBkifQRfxgJilb604ew1wQqgv161qMQ [accessed 2.08.2023].