

TOLKO RAZ

FOR PLANO

DA VID CALDINE

Golden Lion Music

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Boris Ivanovich Fomin



Boris Fomin was born in 1900 in St. Petersburg, Russia and was a descendent of the great scientist and writer, Mikhail Vasilyevich Lomonosov. He showed talent in accordion and piano at age 4. He studied music at the St. Petersburg Conservatory and piano in the class of the great pianist Anna Esipova-Lechetitsky. A brilliant student and improviser, he appeared to be a rising star. Esipova died when he was 14 and his career faded. An invitation from Lenin drew his family to Moscow in 1918. He enlisted in the Army and went to the front during the revolution in 1919. While there he was engaged as entertainer and also wrote songs.

After the war he tried singing, writing operettas, ballets, and comedies, with little success. In 1929, much music was banned including romances, which were often labeled "counter-revolutionary rubbish." Far from Moscow, this music could be performed without fearing the authorities. In 1937 he was arrested for trivial charges and spent a year in the notorious Butyrskaya Gulag. He served at the front again in World War 2, and wrote about 150 more songs. After a period of bad health, complicated by a shortage of antibiotics, he died in 1948.

Fomin wrote the music to "Tolko Raz" ("Only Once") before 1924, with Russian lyrics by Pavel German. It became popular in his time and today is a favorite of all romance singers. His most successful song "The Long Road," with words by the poet Konstantin Podrevskii, was also written around 1924. However, Gene Raskin rewrote the lyrics in English in 1926 as "Those Were the Days." This was recorded, with Fomin's music, by many musicians, including Bing Crosby and Mary Hopkins. In 1968 Hopkin's recording was produced by Paul McCartney in four languages (not Russian!) and became a #1 hit in the UK and #2 in the US for six weeks.

Notes on the music

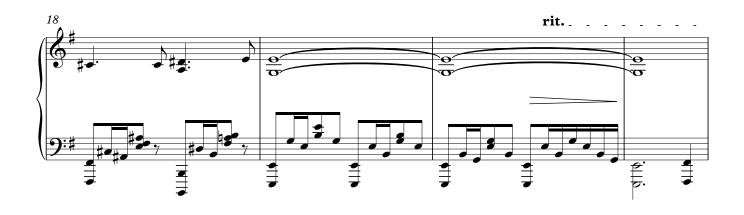
The typical Russian or romance tells the story of passionate, heartbreaking love. They are also distinguished from art songs of famous composers such as Glinka, Tchaikovsky, and Rachmaninoff. Many romances are set to poems of Pushkin, Lermontov, and other great Russian poets. Many are performed widely today and continue to give life to the unique beauty of this exclusively Russian art form.

This arrangement for solo piano is basically in three sections. The first section retains Fomin's melodic content, with slight changes in harmony, and an extended ending provides a little suspense. This romance is about the heartache of a missed chance at true love. However, the middle section provides original material, with an uplifting change of mood and a passionate crescendo. The rising sixth and soaring melody reflect "my heart expresses fondness" (роняет сердце ласку). Double notes in the right hand and sextuplets in the left imitate "my head spins around" (кружится голова) from German's text. The whole section represents the "impassioned fairy tale" (взволнованною сказкой) expressed in the lyrics, but hardly realized by Fomin's music.

The Tolko Raz theme returns in the third section with a "three hands" technique made popular in the 19th century by composers such as Franz Liszt and Sigismond Thalberg. "The thread of life is torn by fate but once;" (Только раз судьбою рвётся нить,) coincides with a huge climax in measure 73. This effect is usually minimal in vocal versions, but becomes the central culminating point in this version. Indeed, the heartache of lost love (thread of life) is the result of fate. The Molto Affettuoso expresses "...I so much desire to love" (...Мне так хочется любить!), which is the normal ending. But in bar 77, a suicide is depicted as the lonely lover panics, runs into the street, climbs to the top of the Brooklyn Bridge, leaps from the pinnacle, and plunges into the East River. - David Caldine

Tolko Raz **Boris Fomin David Caldine**





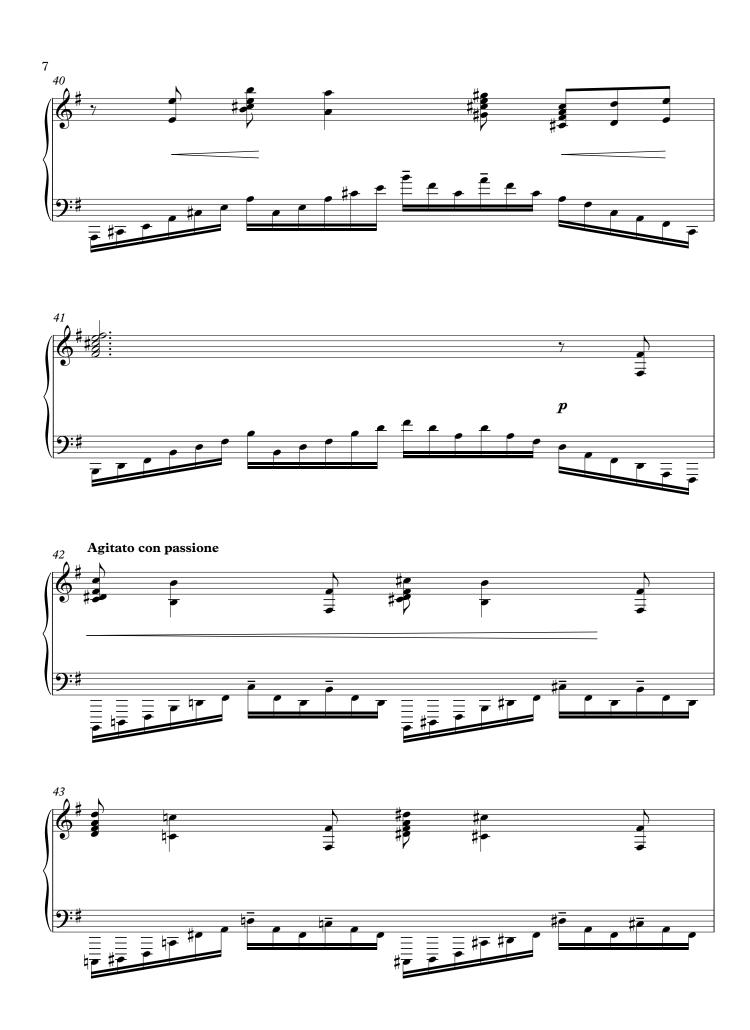






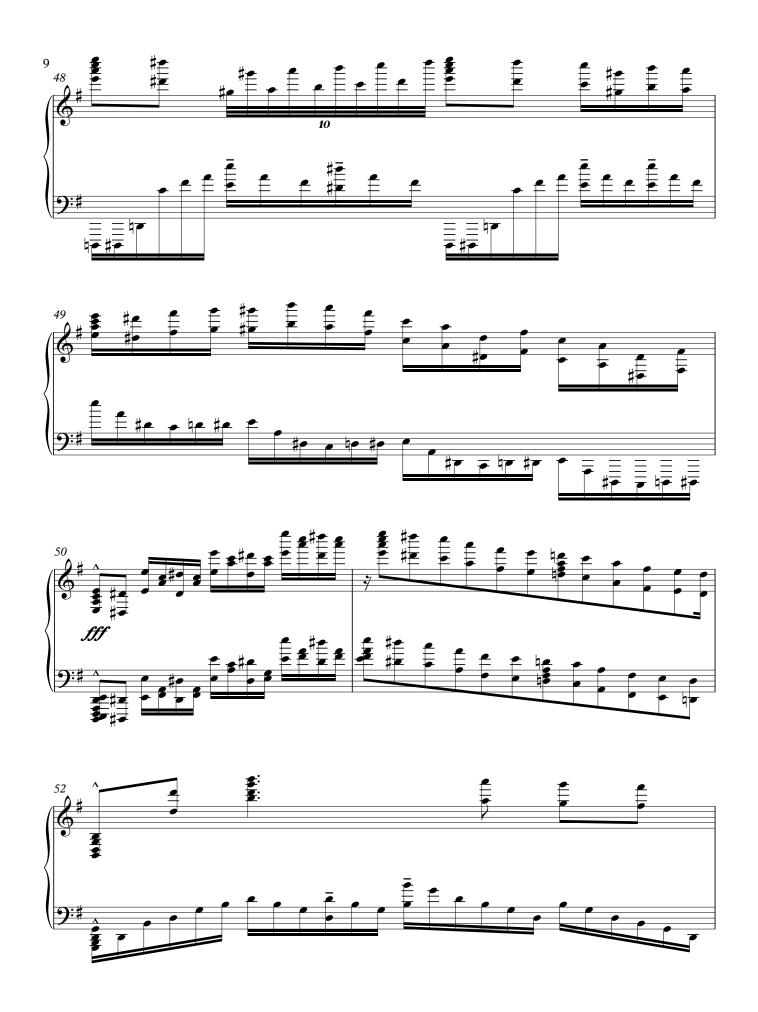








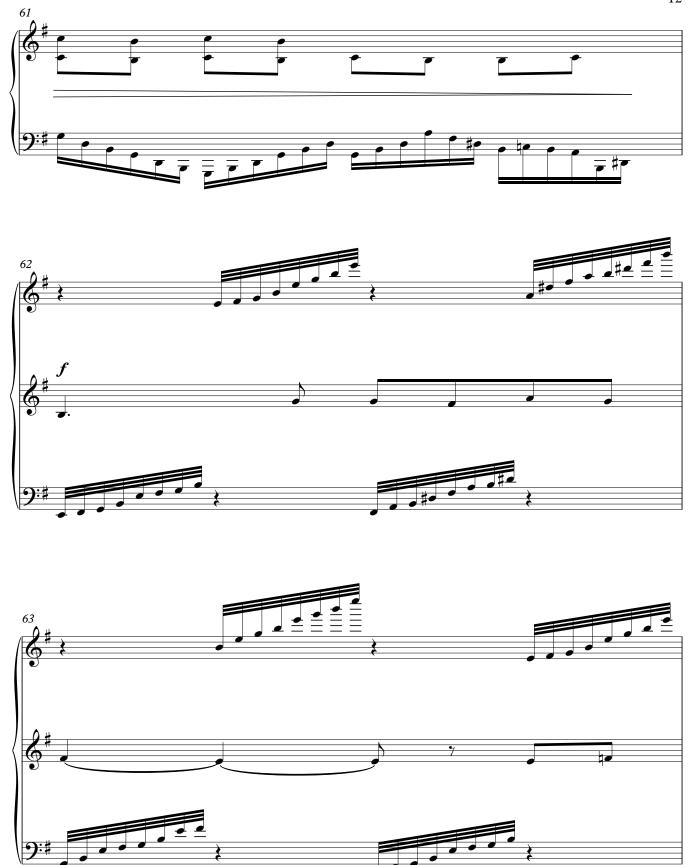


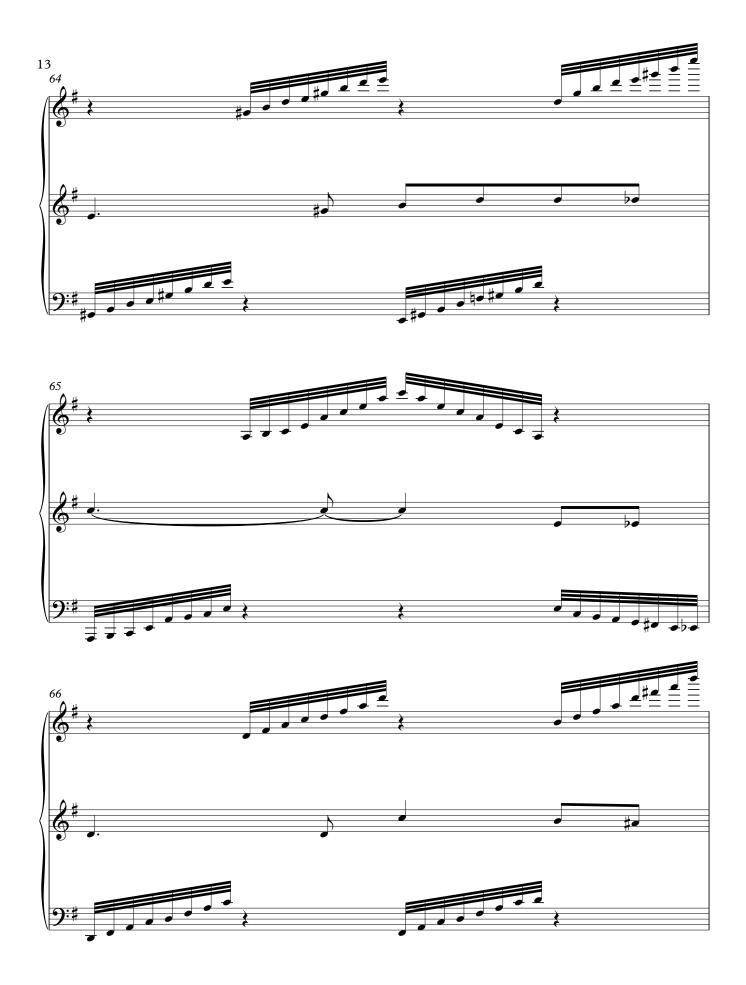


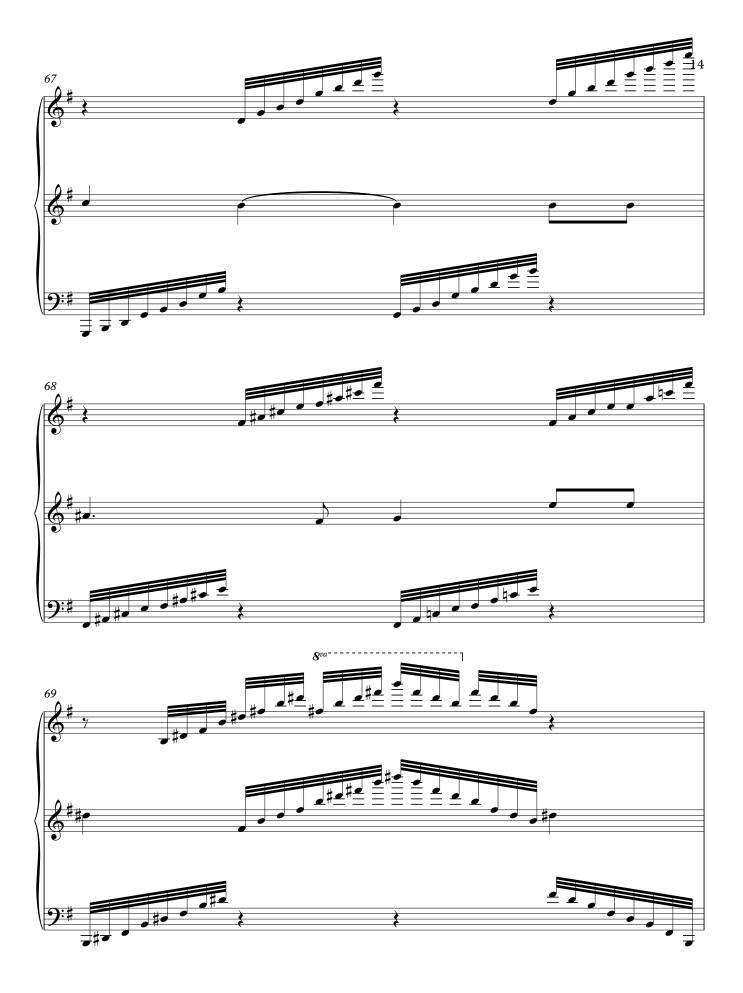


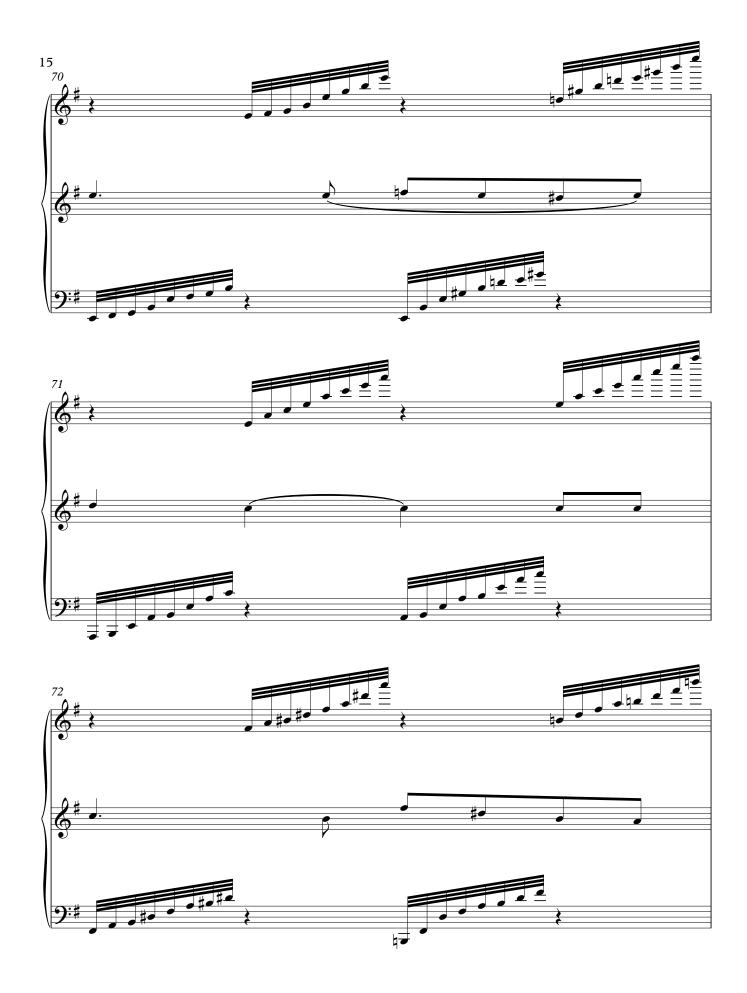


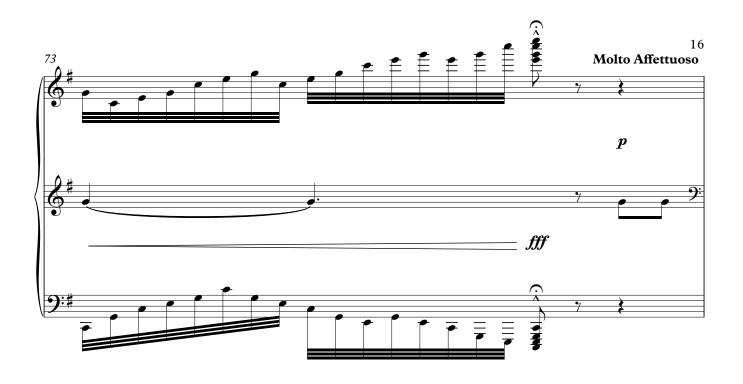




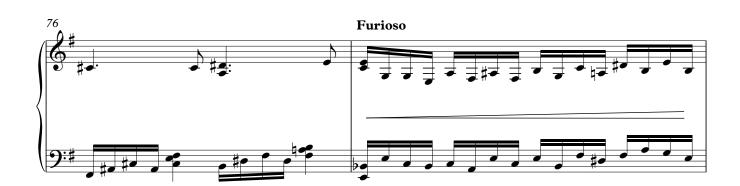


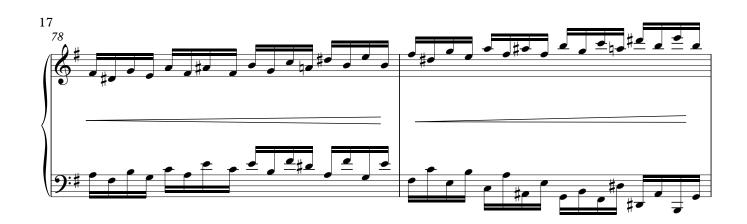


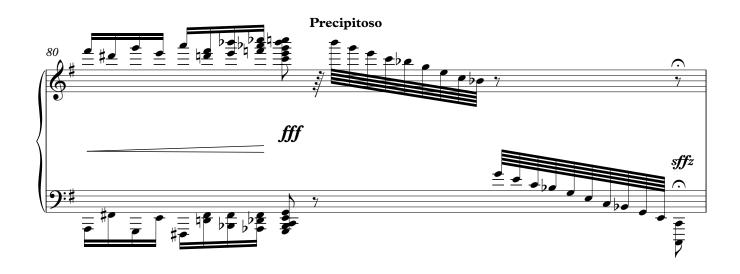














Only Once

Text by Pavel Davidovich German (1894 – 1952)

Day and night my heart expresses fondness, day and night my head spins around.

Day and night, like an impassioned fairy tale, your words resound in my ears.

A true encounter happens but once in life, the thread of life is torn by fate but once; only this once, on a cold, wintry evening I so much desire to love.

The ray of the crimson sunset fades, the flowers are wrapped in the blueness of dusk. Where are you, the one I once so desired; where are you, who planted these dreams in me?

Только Раз

Слова Павла Давидович Германа (1894 – 1952)

День и ночь роняет сердце ласку, День и ночь кружится голова, День и ночь взволнованною сказкой Мне звучат твои слова.

Только раз бывают в жизни встречи, Только раз судьбою рвётся нить, Только раз в холодный зимний вечер Мне так хочется любить!

Тает луч пурпурного заката, Синевой окутаны цветы. Где же ты, желанная когда-то, Где, во мне будившая мечты?