

## PREFACE

### Biographical Note

César Cui has been underrated as a composer for much of the twentieth century, and this in spite of having been at the forefront of Russian music for over fifty years. His oeuvre encompasses 106 works with allocated opus numbers and over thirty works without, and includes sacred and secular vocal music, chamber music, opera, orchestral music, and numerous piano miniatures. The lack of attention his compositions have received compared to the other members of the *Moguchaya kuchka*—known in English as the ‘Mighty Handful’ or ‘Russian Five’—is surprising. He was held in high esteem by many of his contemporaries and colleagues. Balakirev dedicated his first piano sonata to him. Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov and the great music critic Stasov all held a high opinion of Cui’s opera *Angelo*. Both Tchaikovsky and Liszt highly praised his opera *William Ratcliff*<sup>1</sup>. In fact one of the very last works Liszt penned was a piano transcription of Cui’s orchestral *Tarantelle* Op. 12.

Apart from his musical activities, Cui was also a Lieutenant General of the Imperial Russian Army, a renowned expert on fortifications. He held a full time teaching position as Professor of Fortification at the Academy of Military Engineering, where members of the royal family, including the future Tsar Nicholas II, were amongst his students.

Cui was an accomplished man of letters, being a corresponding member of the *Académie Française* and the *Académie royale des sciences, des lettres et des beaux-arts de Belgique*. He was also a prolific music critic and essayist, writing the very first book on Russian music and composers *La musique en Russie* in 1880 and contributing over 700 articles to European and Russian periodicals. Musically he held a succession of important posts, including Chairman of the Mariinsky Theatre opera selection committee and Director of the St. Petersburg branch of the Russian Musical Society.

### 17 Miniatures Op. 105

This is the first publication of some of the very last compositions by Cèsar Cui and the last works of a member of the *Moguchaya kuchka*. Three of the pieces from this opus (Nos. 6, 13 and 15) were published in a Soviet Edition in 1952. However they were not identified as works from Op. 105, which had until now been considered lost. The New Grove Dictionary article on Cui, published as recently as 2001, lists Op. 105 as lost, although Cui’s list of works in this article includes the three pieces “from the last years” erroneously stating that they were a Moscow publication (they were, in fact, published in Leningrad). The original title of this collection as on the title page—which is not in Cui’s hand—is *17 Miniatures Op. 105*. However only fifteen of the seventeen pieces Cui reported having composed have been found.

Although Op. 105 is the penultimate opus in the official catalogue of Cui’s works—the *Petite Sonatine* Op. 106 is the last opus number—most of the miniatures assembled together in Op. 105 were most likely composed after the *Petite Sonatine*. Cui’s opus numbers do not always reflect the real order of composition, as is best exemplified by the Variations-Preludes that were assigned three opus numbers at different times by Cui, starting out as Op. 100, then Op. 103<sup>2</sup> before eventually ending up as Op. 104.

Remarkably, all of the pieces in this opus were notated by several of Cui’s friends—a rapid degeneration of his eyesight left him virtually blind within a year. The friends who notated these pieces were amateur musicians, ill-equipped for the formidable task of providing an error-free,

<sup>1</sup> A. F. Nazarov, *Цезарь Антонович Кюи* [César Antonovich Cui] (Moscow, 1989), 62 and 103.

<sup>2</sup> I. L. Gusin, ed.: *Ts.A.Kyui: Izbrannie Pis'ma* [Selected Letters] (Leningrad, 1955), 474. (Letter number 711, dated 16 January 1917 to the publisher A. K. German).

consistent and orthographically correct notation of what were, in essence, improvisations. The problems posed by the interpretation of the manuscripts in this opus, as well as all instances of editorial intervention are outlined in detail in the Critical Report, published as a supplement to this edition.

There are five documented references Op. 105 in the surviving letters of Cui, spanning almost exactly a year from the 12 of December 1916 to the 11 of December 1917. The letter dated 11 December 1917 also happens to be one of his very last (Cui passed away on the 13 March 1918). Four of these letters, as most of his late correspondence, are addressed to M. C. Kerzina. These letters are an invaluable source of background information about the last years of the last surviving member of the legendary Russian Five. As well as providing us with historical and biographical information, the letters give us an insight into the process of the creation of these works. In the first allusion to Op. 105 in Cui's surviving correspondence is in a letter to Kerzina dated 12 December 1916. He writes:

I compose miniatures for about an hour, during the day and in the evenings. [One sentence illegible.] Three of my friends come over and notate these compositions, but they are having a difficult time doing it.<sup>3</sup>

The next documented mention of miniature piano works is four months later in a letter to the publisher B. P. Jurgenson dated 10 April 1917. He writes:

...but I am unable to read a single word or write a single note, therefore my compositional activity has come to an end. The only thing left to me is to compose short piano pieces that are then notated by someone else.<sup>4</sup>

The very next day—11 April 1917—he writes to Kerzina:

Recently I composed several little piano pieces. In their midst are some that are successful and are not in my typical manner. I had them notated. That the rhythm and pitch is correct and precise is without doubt, but what of correctness and beauty of orthography, who will correct this?<sup>5</sup>

In a letter to Kerzina dated 11 June 1917, we have a fascinating account of the process of composition and Cui's frustration by the limitations of blindness. The number of pieces he has already collected is mentioned for the first time.

Now about my creative process and its fixation on paper. Vocal works are out of the question, as I am unable to read, and can't learn it by memory due to a lack of [illegible], memorising does not suit my age. What remains is therefore instrumental piano music, and even so in miniature forms. Let's suppose I get a good idea but am unable to write it down, so I have to remember it. I repeatedly play it on the piano about 25 times, go for a walk, come back, and mostly cannot recall it. How can I consider composing anything large in such circumstances? Let's suppose the work is composed and it has to be written down. A friend comes along, I play it through slowly, in parts, first one, than the other hand, and they write it down. Then they play it through to me and we correct mistakes. The notes should all be correct, but whether it will be orthographically beautiful is questionable, other than if they will be edited by a *real* musician. Of such pieces I already have fifteen. Some are different to my usual manner [illegible], there are tragic and humorous ones.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Gusin, 471. (Letter number 706).

<sup>4</sup> Gusin, 476–477. (Letter number 718).

<sup>5</sup> Gusin, 477. (Letter number 719).

<sup>6</sup> Gusin, 477–478. (Letter number 720).

The last mention of the miniatures is on 11 December 1917<sup>7</sup>. Cui also writes that he plays the piano no more than three-quarters of an hour, and that there are days when he does not touch it.

Nevertheless during my blindness I wrote seventeen little pieces (not wrote, but composed), a little Sonatina [Op. 106], and am now working on a little theme with variations.

The little theme and variations that he mentions cannot possibly be the grand Variations-Preludes Op. 104 which were finished before the onset of Cui's blindness. Unfortunately the manuscript of the smaller set has not been discovered.

### Structure and Key-relationships

This set of pieces, although collected into a single opus, does not, and was not intended to form a cycle. The fact that the pieces that follow each other on manuscript are not numbered consecutively—on paper the March, number 10 precedes the miniature number 9 and miniature 8 follows number 3—reveal that Cui thought about and decided on the order of the pieces after most or all of them were written down.

The following table provides an overview of Opus 105. It illustrates the proportions of the individual pieces as well as providing an overview of the keys, time signatures and tempo indications in the opus. An approximate duration of each piece is provided for convenience. The approximate duration of the complete opus is 32 minutes.

Op. 105 Number:	Key	Time signature	Tempo indication	Number of Bars	Approximate Duration
<b>1</b>	G minor	3/4	<i>Allegretto</i>	53	1m 30sec
<b>2 Berceuse</b>	E major	4/4	<i>Moderato</i>	28	1m 10sec
<b>3</b>	B flat major	C	<i>Allegro non troppo</i>	27	1m 00sec
<b>4</b>	D minor	2/4	<i>Moderato</i>	47	1m 10sec
<b>5</b>	G major	2/4	<i>No tempo indication</i>	56	1m 40sec
<b>6</b>	E flat major	2/4	<i>Moderato</i>	77	2m 25sec
<b>7 Mazurka</b>	D major	3/4	<i>Tempo di mazurka</i>	72	1m 35sec
<b>8</b>	D flat major	2/4	<i>Allegretto</i>	57	1m 45sec
<b>9</b>	A major	3/4	<i>Allegretto</i>	64	2m 00sec
<b>10 March</b>	G major	2/4	<i>No tempo indication</i>	133	2m 40sec
<b>11</b>	F major	3/4	<i>Allegretto</i>	113	2m 45sec
<b>12</b>	E minor	2/4	<i>Allegretto</i>	158	3m 00sec
<b>13</b>	C sharp minor	C	<i>Andante</i>	64	3m 30sec
<b>14</b>	D flat major	3/4	<i>Andantino</i>	95	2m 30sec
<b>15</b>	D minor	4/4	<i>Moderato</i>	77	3m 15sec
<b>16 (lost)</b>					
<b>17 (lost)</b>					

### Sources

This edition is based on the only available source, the original manuscripts of the pieces. These notations were made by three individuals on paper of diverse types and sizes, with some manuscripts lined horizontally and others vertically. The first pages of the manuscripts of Nos. 1, 9 and 15 are reproduced after the preface, illustrating each of the three individual handwriting types.

<sup>7</sup> Gusin, 479–480. (Letter number 724).

With the exception of No. 11, all manuscripts are notated in ink and are fair copies, although they contain some corrections and additions. The initial notations would have been made in pencil and must have contained numerous corrections.

Only miniatures 2, 7, 10 and 15 bear Cui's name as the composer on the manuscripts. Miniature 15 is also the only piece that is dated (20 March 1917, Petrograd).

To add to the confusion, and in spite of all the evidence that Cui considered the Opus complete—correspondence, ordering of pieces, title page—the pieces were archived under independent archival unit numbers in separate folios with no mention of opus number.

The necessary proof that these individual pieces are in fact from the lost Op. 105 and the information required for reassembling this opus comes from Cui's correspondence, the original title page preserved in the RNL and the numbers pencilled in at the top of the individual pieces. The various handwriting types and the inept notation, the stylistic characteristics of the piano writing along with thematic similarities to earlier works—compare Op. 105 No.1 to the Theme of the Variations-Preludes Op. 104 completed less than a year earlier—leave no room for doubt that these pieces are in fact those that Cui dictated over the year 1917, and comprise the lost Op. 105.

Below is a full list of the archive numbers under which the individual pieces of this opus are archived in the manuscript section of the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg, under **Estate 413, C. Cui**.

<b>Op. 105 Number:</b>	<b>Archive No.</b>
<b>1</b>	No. 64
<b>2 Berceuse</b>	No. 81
<b>3 *</b>	No. 70
<b>4</b>	No. 86
<b>5</b>	No. 102
<b>6 **</b>	No. 84
<b>7 Mazurka</b>	No. 82
<b>8 *</b>	No. 70
<b>9 *</b>	No. 83
<b>10 March *</b>	No. 83
<b>11</b>	No. 62
<b>12</b>	No. 63
<b>13 **</b>	No. 71
<b>14</b>	No. 72
<b>15 **</b>	No. 85

\* Two of the manuscripts contain two pieces each:  
No. 83: miniatures 9 and 10;  
No. 70: miniatures 3 and 8.

\*\* The 1952 Soviet edition of three of the pieces (marked \*\* in the adjacent table) was consulted in preparation for this publication. All other pieces are published for the first time in this edition.

I sincerely hope that this edition will contribute to the revival and re-evaluation of César Cui's piano works and of his standing within the nineteenth-century musical world, as well as increasing the available literature for the piano and in doing so being of use to the ever increasing number of professional pianists, teachers, students and scholars. May it also bring the pleasure of discovering neglected works to music lovers.

Kirill Monorosi  
Sydney  
January 2013

E. T. Henschel's son

*Allargato.*

This is a handwritten musical score for a piece titled "E. T. Henschel's son". The score is written on ten systems of two staves each, with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The piece begins with the tempo marking "Allargato." and includes dynamic markings such as *p* (piano) and *f* (forte). A section of the score is marked with "rit." (ritardando). The piece concludes with a double bar line and a fermata over the final notes. The handwriting is in ink on aged paper.

This page contains a handwritten musical score for a piano piece. The score is written on ten staves, organized into five systems of two staves each. The notation is dense and includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and dynamic markings. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The piece begins with a *ritardando* marking. The first system consists of two staves. The second system begins with a *ritardando* marking and includes a *fine* marking. The third system includes a *p.* (piano) dynamic marking. The fourth system includes a *p.* marking. The fifth system includes a *p.* marking. The score is characterized by complex rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and frequent use of accidentals. The handwriting is clear and legible.

5  
C. Cui, op

*Moderato.*

A handwritten musical score for a piece titled "C. Cui, op". The score is written on five staves. The first staff is the treble clef, and the second is the bass clef. The tempo is marked "Moderato." and the time signature is 4/4. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score consists of several measures of music, including a melodic line in the treble and a more complex accompaniment in the bass. There are various musical notations such as notes, rests, and slurs. The handwriting is in black ink on aged paper.