

A Musical Analysis of Sergei Rachmaninoff's Named "Two Sacred Songs: Prayer, Glory to God"

Zoumroud Alieva Ozdemir*

Doctor, Department of Music, Istanbul University State Conservatory, Istanbul, Turkey

Abstract: Sergey Rachmaninov, who is known as a composer and pianist in the last phase of the Romantic period and stands out with his unique style in his musical approach, focused on musical forms such as concerto, symphony, suite, symphonic poem, variation, sonata, prelude, rhapsody, chamber music, opera and lied. The composer has approximately 80 works for piano and vocals. Rachmaninov's unpublished song cycle "Two Sacred Songs; Prayer, Glory to God", written in 1916, is the last of these works. It was published by Belwin-Mills Publishing in 1973, the 100th anniversary of the composer's birth. The song cycle "Two Sacred Songs; Prayer, Glory to God" is a work open to research, scientific and artistic interpretation since it was the last work written for piano and vocals and the publication process took place after the composer's death. Accordingly, the aim of this article is to give information about the musical structure of the work and to convey the findings obtained as a result of the analysis. The compilation method was applied in the research, and the findings obtained were conveyed through a table with the titles of form section, measure numbers, tonal information, vocal range of the vocal part and tempo unit. Various rhythmic structures were preferred to be used in the piano score of two songs. "Prayer" is written in 12/8 metre and is in the key of D Major. "Prayer" is symbolised as 'A', 'B', 'A' in 3-part lied form. Glory to God's is written in the key of E Major. Measure numbers of 4/4, 3/4, 2/4 are used. "Glory to God" is symbolised as 'A', 'B', 'A' in three-part lied form. Two Sacred Songs is composed of 2 songs, "Prayer" and "Glory to God". Both songs contain themes such as 'God', 'nature' and 'love' and were arranged by Nina Koshetz. Intense and atonal chords are used in the piano score of both songs. In this article, Rachmaninov's song cycle "Two Sacred Songs: Prayer, Glory to God" is analysed and interpreted in terms of musical features related to vocalisation, which is a useful resource for pianists and soloists.

Keywords: Sergei Rachmaninoff, Piano Accompaniment, Voice.

1. Introduction

Sergey Vasilievich Rachmaninoff (1873-1943), a Russian composer, conductor, and pianist, is one of the most important figures of the Romantic Period, due to the originality and emotional depth of his works. Rachmaninoff embarked on his musical journey he was directed to piano training. Later, he pursued further studies in piano and composition at the Moscow State Conservatory. He collaborated with important composers of his period such as Nikolai Zverev (1833-1893), Aleksandr Siloti (1863-1945), Sergey Taneyev (1856-1915), and Anton

Arenski (1861-1906), and he also received lessons in harmony, counterpoint, composition and fugue (Alkan, 2019: 2-3). His piece titled "Symphony No.1 Op.13", which he created for his graduation from the Moscow State Conservatory in 1897, earned the highest score at the school. However, it faced negative criticism after its first performance. This situation caused the composer to suffer from a profound depression and rendered him unable to create new works.

In 1899, he assumed the role of assistant conductor at the Moscow Private Russian Opera and continued his works crafting small pieces, but his depression deepened during the same period. In 1900, he underwent a professional psychotherapy session with Nikolai Dahl (1860-1939), who was doctor and also an amateur musician, and after a successful four-month treatment, he completed his piece titled "Second Symphony No.2 Op.27" in 1901, and dedicated it to Nikolai Dahl (Kivrak, 2019: 14-15). Between 1901 and 1917, the composer created profound and poetic works. During this period, he experienced the most productive period of his creativity. Despite the influence of other Russian composers of the period, Rachmaninoff did not favor the emerging trends of nationalism and adhered to his distinctive style in his works; these qualities made Rachmaninoff one of the foremost composers of the 20th century. In this regard, he crafted emotional and touching works. "Piano Concerto No.2 Op.18", "Suite for Two Pianos No.2 Op.17", "Sonata for Cello and Piano Op.19", "Spring Cantata Op.20", "Preludes Op.23" and Opera "Francesca da Rimini Op.25" can be given as examples of Rachmaninoff's distinctive style.

The process of Rachmaninoff's artistic creation is rooted in the Romantic Period, which covers the 19th century. This period emerged as a movement that developed in early 19th-century Europe and expanded globally as a response to the rule-based structures of Classical Period. In the musical understanding of this period, significant changes occurred in the realm of expression, harmonic structure and forms of works, and there was an expansion in the physical structure of orchestras. The Romantic Period was a period when the focus was on solo piano and solo voice works, and the sound ranges utilized within the works were expanded during this period.

*Corresponding author: zoumroudalieva@hotmail.com

There were changes in the musical forms inherited from the Classical Period, and atonality was developed through the use of classical harmony, chromaticism, alterations, and enharmonic techniques. In this context, atonal chords and chromatic marches began to be preferred within the melodic structures of works. Furthermore, new perspectives have been applied to diatonic music, tempo and nuances (Say, 1997-340). In this period, as composers started using music as a means of expression and placed importance on melody, it is quite possible to see that each composer composed pieces with a distinct and original structure.

In the lieder form, which is one of the most important forms of the Romantic period, the form of enhanced self-expression in instrumental music and the closeness-sincereness in the human voice are harmoniously used. The lieder form, whose origins date back to the 15th century, consists of short verses turned into songs accompanied by the piano. This song form has also inspired lyrical instrumental music themes such as prelude, intermezzo, nocturne and song without words (İlyasoğlu, 2009-106).

Rachmaninoff composed around 80 of his pieces for vocal - piano, and created the majority of his works during the latter half of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th century. Emotional transparency, carelessness and passion that defined the composer's early romantic romances are marked by the fragility and incomprehensibility of his emotional state in his final vocal works. "6 Romances Op. 4", "6 Romances Op. 8", "12 Romances Op. 14", "12 Romances Op. 21", "15 Romances Op. 26", "14 Romances Op.34" and "6 Romances Op. 36" are the most important works that Rachmaninoff created for vocal and piano. Apart from these pieces, the composer did not compile 12 different romances into a single collection but chose to publish them separately (Eryong, 2021). Aleksandrovna (2018) expressed that Rachmaninoff's piano accompaniment in enhancing the vocal lyrics is significant, as he can produce a unique melodic sound that results in an impressive dialogue between the two instruments. In terms of popularity, Rachmaninoff's vocal-piano works are comparable to his solo piano pieces.

Romance 6 in Op.38 represents the most important outcome of Rachmaninoff's vocal creativity, and more broadly, it represents his musical language, which underwent a significant transformation thanks to his engagement with symbolist poetry. "Don't Sing Near Me, My Beautiful", a piece he created using the texts of Symbolist Russian poets of the period, with the lyrics credited to Alexander Pushkin, "In the Silence of the Mysterious Night" by Afanasi Afanasievich Fet, "Jasmine" by Igor Severanin, "It's Good Here" by Glafira Galina and "Spring Waters" by Fedor Ivanovich Tyutchev can be given as examples. Following the "6 Romans" song series, Rachmaninoff turned his focus to his work titled "Two Sacred Songs; 'Prayer' and 'Glory to God'". It is seen that the text of this piece directly reflects the lyrical flexibility and the presence of the author's "I". Furthermore, it is in a style which is close to Rachmaninoff's Op. 38 Romances due to the fact that the vocal part of this work exhibits a metro-rhythmic and intonational freedom. Rachmaninoff introduced new tonal areas,

emphasized elements of modal stability and instability, and altered the rhythmic aspect of the poetic structure through by introducing pauses and compositional connections, all of which represent his artistic freedom in his piece. The work created during this period for voice and piano are characterized by their unexpected combination of vocal and piano patterns, and they feature diverse textural elements enriched with various thematic currents. "Two Sacred Songs", written by the composer in 1916, holds significant value within his body of work since it contains the final expression of the composer's artistic interpretation of the romantic genre (Gusteva, 2003). Although not published by the composer, his last piece, known as "Two Sacred Songs; 'Prayer' and 'Glory to God'" and written for vocal and piano, is the subject of this research since it contributed to Russian music and is important in understanding the evolution of the composer's creativity.

After the preparation of the draft for his romantic series titled Op.38, Rachmaninoff completed his work titled Two Sacred Songs, which was examined in the research, in 1916. He handed over the sketch of the song series to Nina Koshetz (1891-1965), to whom he dedicated his works. Following Koshetz's death in 1965, his daughter Marina Koshetz (1912-2001) donated these works to the Rachmaninoff collection at the Library of Congress in 1970. The piece was published by Belwin-Mills Publishing (Belwin-Mills Publishing Corp. Melville, N. Y) in 1973. Since it was written after the Op.38 series, there was an initial consideration of its inclusion within that series; however, it was not included and was cataloged as unpublished songs owing to its unsuitability for this series (Sylvester, 2014: 259).

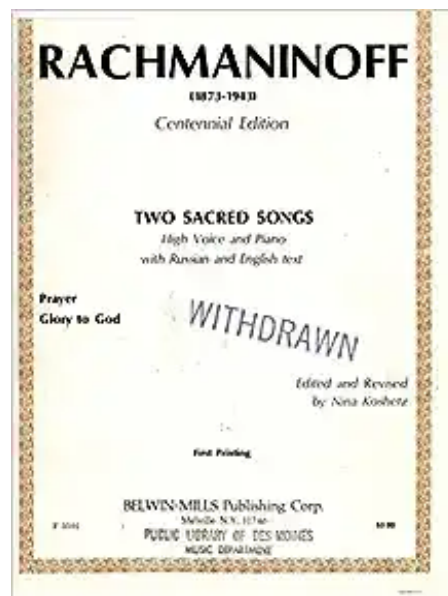


Fig. 1. Cover for Centennial Edition of "Two Sacred Songs; "Prayer, Glory to God"

The lyrics of the "Prayer" in the Two Sacred Songs series belong to Konstantin Romanov (1858-1915).

Научи меня, Боже, любить	Teach me, o God, to love
Всем умом Тебя, всем	Thee with all my mind,
Помышленьем,	all my thoughts,
Чтоб и душу Тебе посвятить	To consecrate to
Посвятить	Thee my soul

И всю жизнь с каждым сердца биением.	And all my life with each beat of my heart.
Научи Ты меня соблюдать	Teach me to obey
Лишь Твою милосердную волю,	Only Thy gracious will.
Научи никогда не роптать	Teach all of us here
На свою многотрудную долю.	Not to complain of our difficult lot.
Всех, кого Ты пришел искупить	All whom Thou came to redeem
Ты Своєю Пречистою Кровью,	With Thy precious blood
Бескорыстной, глубокой любовью	With Thy deep, pure love,
Научи меня, Боже, любить!	Teach me, o God, to love!

Romanov wrote the text of this piece in 1886 in his palace in Pavlovsk, outside the city of Saint-Peterburg. The work was notated by Rachmaninoff in 1916 (Sylvester, 2014: 259). The piece was edited by Nina Koshetz while it was translated into English by Marina Koshetz.

The piece is based on a religious text. It consists of 3 stanzas. The poetic theme of each stanza can be described as follows:

Stanza 1: A request to God for guidance in learning how to love God.

Stanza 2: It is about an individual praying to herself the difficulties she is facing.

Stanza 3: The call "Teach me how to love, God" expresses a demand to love everywhere, to the entire world.

The text of the piece titled "Glory to God" consists of two stanzas excerpted from a poem written by Fyodor Sologub (1863-1927) in 1898. The first stanza, which contains the characteristic images of Russian nature, is about the world (steppe grass, forest, field, dusty road) while the second stanza is about human images, words, laud and renewal in eternal time (Sylvester, 2014: 260). The translation and editing process of the work was performed by Nina Koshetz.

Всё хочет петь и славить Бога, —	All things want to sing and glorify God, -
Роса, и ландыш, и ковыль,	The dew, the lily-of-the-valley, the tall steppe grass,
И лес, и поле, и дорога, И ветром зыблемая пыль.	And forest, and field, and road, And the dust blown by the wind.
Ah, (vocalise, repeated).	Ah ah...
Они зовут за словом слово, И песню их из века в век	They summon word upon word, And their song from age to age
В иных созвучьях слышит снова И повторяет человек.	In other harmonies is heard again And sung anew by man.
Ah... (vocalise, multiple repeats).	Ah ah...

2. Method

The research method consists of the research purpose, problem statement, research model, sample, data collection and analysis of the study titled "A Musical Analysis of Sergei Rachmaninoff's Named "Two Sacred Songs; Prayer, Glory to God".

The subject of this research is Sergey Rachmaninoff's works, "Prayer" and "Glory to God", which are included in the song series titled "Two Sacred Songs", written for vocal and piano. The research's objective is to determine the musical structure of the selected works and provide insights into the work's musical structure for readers who will study and interpret it based on the findings. Additionally, an answer is sought to the question "What is the musical analysis of Sergey Rachmaninoff's work,

known as "Two Sacred Songs; Prayer, Glory to God"?".

This research was designed as a compilation study. The objective of the review articles is to structure the examined studies and to convey to the reader the knowledge and intellectual perspectives within a specific subject area. They also emphasize the strengths and weaknesses of these studies and address the missing aspects of the studies on the subject. In this regard, the sample of the research consists of a musical examination of the referenced work. In this context, the sample of the research consists of a musical examination of the referenced work. The subject of the research is limited within the scope of the data acquired through an examination of the work's musical structure.

Since the notes for the works titled 'Prayer' and 'Glory to God' in Sergey Rachmaninoff's song series "'Two Sacred Songs", published by Belwin-Mills Publishing Inc. (Belwin-Mills Publishing Corp. Melville, N. Y.), were not available in print, the research utilized electronic sources to obtain the examined notes and sound recordings of the work. Content analysis technique was employed to assess the data obtained from the sources from a musical perspective. The texts of the works analyzed in the research were translated by the author of the research. Two distinct notations of the work were found in internet resources. The records identified as original within these notations were examined. In the literature review, the article Unknown pages of S. Rachmaninoff's Vocal Creativity by Gusteva (2003) was accessed and used as a source.

3. Findings

A. Prayer (Молитва)

Table 1

Stylistic Analysis on Prayer

Work Name	Key	Meter Signature	Vocal Range	Tempo
Prayer (Молитва)	D	12/8	Do1- La2-flat	Slowly

The work is in the form of a three-part liet.

Table 2

Form Analysis on Prayer

1st Part "A"	2nd Part "B"	3rd Part "A"
Between the bar 1 and 7	Between the bar 8 and 19	Between the bar 20 and 27

The song was composed in 12/8 time. The theme, expressed through piano nuances, was requested to be performed "slowly and with deep expression", specifying the character of "slowly, with deep feeling." In the piano part, there is a D major Dominant Seventh chord, while in the voice partition, there is an introduction featuring the VII degree of the chord after a 1-beat pause. Following the piano chord, there is a transition to the A-flat Major chord. The C sounds in both chords are connected with extension tie.

Dedicated to Nina Koshetz
TWO SACRED SONGS

Prayer
Молитва

KONSTANTINE ROMANOFF English translation by Marina Koshetz [Slowly, with deep feeling] **Ноты с сайта - www.notarihiv.ru** SERGEI RACHMANINOFF (1916) Edited and Revised by Nina Koshetz

Музыкальная партитура для голоса и фортепиано, охватывающая первые два такта произведения. Включены русские и английские тексты, а также динамические и темповые указания.

Fig. 2. Bars 1-2 for "Prayer"

In the bar 3, there is a transition to the 9/8 time number. In this time number, the chords in the first staves are repeated. In both partitions, the notes sharing the same beat are used to emphasize the phrase "Thee with all my mind,." In the bar 4, a return to the 12/8 time number was executed with a mezzo-forte nuance. Additionally, the g clef is switched in the left hand of the piano within this measure. There are F Major Dominant Seventh and C-flat Major chords. E-flat sounds, which are the common sound of both chords, are connected by extension tie. In this time number, the piano accompanies the vocal melody.

Музыкальная партитура для голоса и фортепиано, охватывающая такты 3-5. Включены русские и английские тексты, а также динамические и темповые указания.

Fig. 3. Bars 3-5 for "Prayer"

The vocal enters the bar 6 of the piece with chromatic descending, starting from the previous measure. The piano provides accompaniment featuring D major Dominant Seventh and A-flat Major chords. In the bar 8, the piano introduces the note D in the major octave and articulates the sounds of the chord through arpeggios. A transition is made to the beginning of the vocal in the next piano nuance. At the end of the porte, the piano takes over the chromatic march.

Музыкальная партитура для голоса и фортепиано, охватывающая такты 6-8. Включены русские и английские тексты, а также динамические и темповые указания.

Fig. 4. Bars 6-8 for "Prayer"

The piano introduces the sounds of D Major Dominant Seventh and A-Flat Major chords as arpeggios by playing the pedal sound in the D note. The vocal ascends from the III degree of the D Major Dominant Seventh chord to the VII degree, and this march ends at the V degree in the next porte. The piano performs a movement that contrasts with this march of the vocal.

Музыкальная партитура для голоса и фортепиано, охватывающая такты 9-10. Включены русские и английские тексты, а также динамические и темповые указания.

Fig. 5. Bars 9-10 for "Prayer"

In bar 11, the rubato technique is applied, and it is performed in the piano nuance. In bar 12, it returns to its original tempo and continues with a mezzo-forte dynamic level. In bar 12 of this work composed by Rachmaninov in 12/8 time, there is an unusual motif characterized by the ascending vocal melody, and this motif is accompanied by a piano part featuring a quarta consisting of 3 eighth notes. The piano enriches the theme and reveals itself by playing more vibrant nuances. In this section, it is seen that the piano shifts to the F clef in the right hand and uses octave sounds as the vocal line descends chromatically. And then, it returns to the g clef. The piano accompanies the unison march of the vocal by descending in triple intervals.

Музыкальная партитура для голоса и фортепиано, охватывающая такты 11-12. Включены русские и английские тексты, а также динамические и темповые указания.

Fig. 6. Bars 11-12 for "Prayer"

Музыкальная партитура для голоса и фортепиано, охватывающая такты 13-14. Включены русские и английские тексты, а также динамические и темповые указания.

Fig. 7. Bars 13-14 for "Prayer"

The unison march that started in the previous porte in the vocal (Figure 7) ends in this section, and the triple and atonal march of the piano is also seen at the beginning of this porte. In this section, there is a notable explosion effect achieved through the marcato technique, accompanied by an ascending movement characterized by the Si-La (Flat)-Fa dominant seventh chords played forte. The intonation resulting from all the previous development ends the process of internal tension with the crescendo. In terms of the key of the work, it is possible to feel the first half of the locrian mode in bars 15 and 16.

Музыкальная партитура для голоса и фортепиано, охватывающая такты 15-16. Включены русские и английские тексты, а также динамические и темповые указания.

Fig. 8. Bars 15-16 for "Prayer"

In this section (Figure 9,10,11,12), where the last two verses of the poem are sung, the piano pauses by playing rolled chords in the D Major Dominant Seven Nine chord. It begins with a mezzo-forte vocal nuance, leads to piano dynamics with a bar of crescendo and decrescendo, and finally emphasizes the corde “With Thy deep, pure love” with another decrescendo and pianissimo. As the work approaches its conclusion, the piano arpeggiates the chord it previously played as broken chords, with the sound of the sustain pedal. Later, the vocal piano leaves the melody to the piano with the phrase “Teach me, o God, to love” in piano nuance. The piano switches to the G clef in the left hand. The piano sets the stage for the vocal to enter the final part in a piano nuance and calm (tranquillo) manner. The vocal emphasizes saying “Teach me, o God, to love!” with a nearly whispered delivery. The piano accompaniment gradually slows down and ends the work.



Fig. 9. Bars 17-19 for “Prayer”

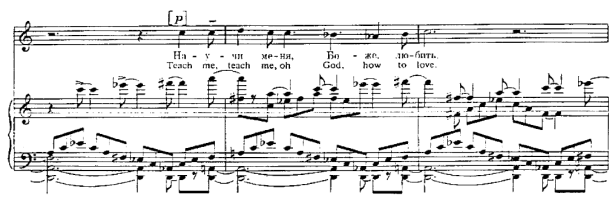


Fig. 10. Bars 20-22 for “Prayer”



Fig. 11. Bars 23-24 for “Prayer”



Fig. 12. Bars 25-27 for “Prayer”

Table 3
Stylistic Analysis on Glory to God

Work Name	Key	Meter Signature	Vocal Range	Tempo	Theme
Glory to God (Всѣ хочет петь)	E Major	4/4	Mi1-La2 Flat	Slowly	Love for Nature and God

B. *Glory to God (Всѣ хочет петь)*

The work is in the form of a three-part liet.

Table 4
Form Analysis on "Glory to God"

1st Part "A"	2nd Part "B"	3rd Part "A1"
Between the bars 1-16	Between the bars 17-25	Between the bars 26-32

This work, in the E Major key, begins in 4/4 time with a forte dynamic, starting with an incomplete time. In the first two and three times of the work, the piano introduces the vocals with a sequence of rapid 32nd and 16th notes, which will be used frequently in the piece, and continues with the vocals. After the introduction of the vocal, it dynamically switches between 4th octave left and 5th octave left. Following the three-time introduction, the work switches to 3/4 time number. The piano accompanies with arpeggios in the Dominant Seventh chord in the E Major key while the vocal performs the melody using the phrase “All things want to sing and glorify God” on the I, III, VI, and VII degrees of the chord.



Fig. 13. Bar 1 for "Glory to God"



Fig. 14. Bars 2-3 for "Glory to God"



Fig. 15. Bars 4-5 for "Glory to God"

In the bar 7, the piece undergoes modulation and switches to the A minor key. The A minor and F minor chords continue to be played in forte dynamics in various forms as arpeggios, with 32nd notes on the piano and 16th notes on the vocals.



Fig. 16. Bars 6-7 for "Glory to God"



In the bars 12-13, the piano once more slows down, introducing a ritardando. During these measures, a two-time cycle is executed, featuring C Major chords enriched with the addition of the Flat 6th degree and D Major chords with the addition of the 9th Degree. These chords are played faster and faster (acellerando) with the accelerando technique. Cantabile (like singing) and meno mosso (slightly slower than the pace of the piece) are introduced in 4/4 time in the next part. There is a transition to the g clef and the left hand on the piano. The motifs used before this section change, and the triplet patterns are created from eighth-note in the introduction of this section. Following the ornament with trill in the introduction, the vocal is performed in mezzo-piano dynamics.



to the new 3/4 section (B) of the work is accomplished through a three-time march with chromatic steps in both parts. The piano accompanies the vocal's rise to the A-flat note by playing one octave higher. With crescendo, there is a short emphasis in 2/4 time.



In the bar 28, the transition to the 3/4 time is executed once more, and the fortissimo nuance is brilliantly achieved. The vocal introduces an arpeggio on the A-flat minor chord while the piano diversifies the melody by using sequences of these same chords, creating a sense of approaching the conclusion. In the bar 32, there is a key shift to A minor, with the piano transitioning to mezzo-forte dynamics, while the vocals change from forte to mezzo-forte and eventually to piano dynamics. The piano and vocal gradually reduce their dynamic intensity as the motif used in the previous chord is repeated in the Dominant seventh chord of this key. The vocal, accompanied by the piano, provides a transition to the next key. During this transition, the syllable "a" is performed legato on III, V and VII degrees of the key, almost a staccato (quasi staccato).



There are triplets at wide intervals on the left hand. The shift



Fig. 26. Bars 30-31 for "Glory to God"



Fig. 27. Bars 32-33 for "Glory to God"

Starting from the 34th bar (A1), the vocal is in E Major key, initially in forte and then transitioning to piano dynamics. The piano plays arpeggios with 16-notes. It is accompanied with the arpeggios consisting of 32-notes and in mezzo-piano nuance. As the vocal completes the arpeggio motif, a short ritardando is performed. After one bar, the main tempo returns with the piano's enharmonic arpeggios and its rise in dynamics. While both instruments are in forte nuance, the vocal is in degrees I and III of the key. The piano, on the other hand, provides a rapid rise through seventh chords and quadruplets by using pedals. A vibrant and powerful final effect is achieved in Fortissimo nuance.



Fig. 28. Bars 34-35 for "Glory to God"



Fig. 29. Bars 36-37 for "Glory to God"



Fig. 30. Bars 38-40 for "Glory to God"

4. Results and Conclusion

In this section, the song series "Two Sacred Songs; Prayer, Glory to God", whose lyrics belong to Konstantin Romanov and Fyodor Sologub, among the vocal and piano works of the Romantic Period composer Sergey Rahmaninov, is the subject of the research, and the results found in the work are presented.

"Two Sacred Songs" is composed of 2 songs called "Prayer" and "Glory to God". Both songs contain topics such as 'God', 'nature' and 'love', and the songs were arranged by Nina Koshetz. In the piano partitions of both songs, dense and atonal chords are used. In the piano partition of both songs, various rhythmic structures were preferred. 'Prayer' was written in 12/8 time, and it was created in the D Major key. 'Prayer' is in the form of a 3-part liet. These parts are symbolized as 'A', 'B', 'A'. 'Glory to God' was composed in the E Major key. Time numbers of 4/4, 3/4 and 2/4 were used. 'Glory to God' is in the form of a three-part liet. These parts are symbolized as 'A', 'B', 'A'.

This work, created by the composer for vocal and piano, was examined and interpreted in terms of musical features related to vocalization. It aims to benefit pianists and soloists by developing a compilation-based model. This research, prepared to raise technical and interpretive awareness both soloists and pianists, is an educational illustration of collaborative interpretation between pianists and soloists. It is an encouraging research example both for pianists and soloists to proceed in the light of this study, comprehend the text, interpret the text accurately, and include this piece into their repertoire. It is aimed to serve as a model for future research endeavors within the field of piano by conducting studies similar to this one.

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