RICE UNIVERSITY

The Meditative and the Bacchanalian: A Comprehensive Examination of Structural and Aesthetic Nuances, and Possible Pedagogical Applications within François Morel's *Deux Etudes de Sonorité* (1954)

by

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ABSTRACT


by

Michael Esch

The *Deux Études de Sonorité* (1954) by the French Canadian composer François Morel represent one of the most studied and performed works within the literature for solo piano in Canada. This paper examines what it is about these works that is so appealing to pianists of such a broad range of age and experience. It includes an in-depth examination of structural and textural characteristics of each Etude, and a discussion as to how Morel employs these techniques to enhance his desired aesthetic within each Etude. Furthermore, as these works are designated as study pieces, the paper also includes a discussion of the pedagogical applications of each Etude informed by perspectives from a host of Canada’s leading piano performer/pedagogues.
Acknowledgements

There is no such thing as the self made man. Each of us stands upon the shoulders of our loved ones and those who have blazed the paths before us. In modern times I think we tend to lose sight of the fact that the process is as important if not moreso than the end result; and thus having come to the end of my studies and experienced a number of years now into the transpirings of the “real world,” I can state with unequivocal assurance that I would not be where I find myself today without the love, support, and guidance of some very kindred individuals.

To the love of my life, Jessica, who has seen me through the ups and downs and all the bumps along the way, you have my ever-lasting love, respect and dedication. To my darling daughters, Lauren and Evelyn, you continue to teach me to see the joy in every smile, laugh, and discovery. To my parents Helen and Bill, to have been raised in a family so full of unconditional love, warmth, and support is a gift whose value is immeasurable and which can only be honored by following this example with my own family. It gives me the greatest satisfaction to have been able to complete this achievement for them.

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period in my life. To have gained your friendship and to have benefited from your vast experience means a great deal to me.

I have been blessed to have worked with a number of highly gifted teachers during the course of my studies -- three of whom warrant extra special mention here. My first teacher of some eleven years, Rosemary Collins, instilled in me a crucial foundation and a broad musical education. More than any other during my early developmental years, she urged me to develop my own artistic identity and always to seek a higher, more spiritual purpose to art and music.

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been your student and to call you a friend.

Finally, I would like to thank Berandol Music Limited for kindly agreeing to permit use of the entire score of the *Deux Etudes de Sonorite* for the purposes of this paper.

To all of these individuals and the countless others who have and continue to shape my life, you have my deepest thanks.

*Michael Esch - Toronto, 2007*
# Table of Contents

Table of Contents ........................................................................................................... vi
List of Examples ............................................................................................................... vii

Introduction ...................................................................................................................... 1

Chapter 1: François Morel - A Retrospective ................................................................. 3
  Stylistic Traits .................................................................................................................. 7

Chapter 2: Etude 1 - Analytical Insights ....................................................................... 11

Chapter 3: Etude 2 - Analytical Insights ....................................................................... 25

Chapter 4: Distinguished Perspectives - An overview to the performance and pedagogical applications of the Deux Etudes ......................................................... 39

Chapter 5: Etude 1 - Pedagogical Applications ............................................................... 42

Chapter 6: Etude 2 - Pedagogical Applications ............................................................... 52

Conclusion ....................................................................................................................... 64

Bibliography .................................................................................................................... 66

Appendix 1 ....................................................................................................................... 69
  Appendix 1A – Overview – Questionnaire/Interviews .................................................... 69
  Appendix 1B – Questionnaire – François Morel – Deux Etudes de Sonorité (1954) ... 70
  Appendix 1C – Tom Plaunt Responses ........................................................................ 72
  Appendix 1D – Jacques Després Responses ................................................................. 75
  Appendix 1E – Karin Di Bella Responses .................................................................... 77
  Appendix 1F – Lynn Stodola Responses ...................................................................... 80
  Appendix 1G – Timothy Steeves Responses ................................................................ 83
  Appendix 1H – Kristina Szutor Responses .................................................................. 85
  Appendix 1I – Charles Foreman Responses .................................................................. 87
  Appendix 1J – James Parker Responses ..................................................................... 90
  Appendix 1K – Ireneus Zuk Responses ....................................................................... 92

Appendix 2 – Discography ............................................................................................. 93

Appendix 3 – Annotated Score ....................................................................................... 94
## List of Examples

Example 2-1: Graph Analysis ................................................................. 12
Example 2-2 .................................................................. 12
Example 2-3A ................................................................. 13
Example 2-3B .................................................................. 14
Example 2-3C .................................................................. 14
Example 2-4 .................................................................. 15
Example 2-5 .................................................................. 15
Example 2-6 .................................................................. 17
Example 2-7A .................................................................. 18
Example 2-7B .................................................................. 19
Example 2-7C .................................................................. 19
Example 2-8A .................................................................. 20
Example 2-8B .................................................................. 21
Example 2-9A .................................................................. 22
Example 2-9B .................................................................. 22
Example 2-10 ................................................................. 23

Example 3-1: Graph Analysis ................................................................. 26
Example 3-2A .................................................................. 26
Example 3-2B .................................................................. 27
Example 3-2C .................................................................. 27
Example 3-3A .................................................................. 28
Example 3-3B .................................................................. 28
Example 3-3C .................................................................. 29
Example 3-4 .................................................................. 30
Examples 3-5A, 3-5B ................................................................. 31
Example 3-6 .................................................................. 32
Example 3-7 .................................................................. 33
Example 3-8 .................................................................. 34
Example 3-9 .................................................................. 35
Example 3-10 ................................................................. 36

Example 5-1 .................................................................. 43
Example 5-2 .................................................................. 44
Example 5-3 .................................................................. 46
Example 5-4 .................................................................. 47
Example 5-5 .................................................................. 49
Example 5-6 .................................................................. 50

Example 6-1 .................................................................. 52
Example 6-2 .................................................................. 54
Example 6-3 .................................................................. 56
Example 6-4A .................................................................. 57
Example 6-4B .................................................................................. 57
Example 6-5 .................................................................................. 58
Example 6-6 .................................................................................. 60
Example 6-7 .................................................................................. 61
Example 6-8 .................................................................................. 62
Example 6-9 .................................................................................. 62
Introduction

Every so often a work of contemporary piano music emerges which engages the minds and interpretive prowess of all who allow themselves to be challenged by it. From the seasoned concert artist to the aspiring student, the pedagogue to the auditor, these works stand the test of time by continuing to flourish in concert and teaching repertoires. Like all great pieces of music, they present the interpreter with a seemingly infinite number of conceptual possibilities.

Within the domain of Canadian classical music dating from the second half of the twentieth century, only a handful of solo piano works have garnered such attention. The *Deux Etudes de Sonorité* (1954) by the Canadian composer François Morel belong at the forefront of this selective group. To date, while these works continue to flourish both in performance and re-publication, little has been published in a formalized academic manner as to why these works are so appealing to such a broad range of individuals of differing pianistic backgrounds.

It will therefore be the purpose of this paper to ascertain as to what it is that makes these Etudes so appealing. To commence, the paper will provide a context for the *Deux Etudes de Sonorité* by introducing the reader to François Morel, one of Canada’s most successful Canadian composers. In so doing, a discussion of Morel’s formative career influences will be presented, as well as a synopsis of the various stylistic traits consistent within his larger output as a whole.

In regards to the *Etudes* themselves, extensive analytic insights into the harmonic, linear, and structural nuances for each *Etude* will be highlighted. Furthermore, as these works are entitled under the classification of study pieces, an examination of the
pedagogical merits of each *Etude* will also be carried out. Much of the commentary here will be based upon the cumulative experiences of the author, but it will also be drawn from a range of perspectives from a number of distinguished Canadian piano performer-pedagogues.

It is certainly a truism for performers that we must identify with and be passionate about the music which we play, and nowhere is this more the case than when dealing with contemporary music. Therefore, this paper will endeavor to present, in as comprehensive a manner possible, a contemporary work of solo piano music about which the author is indeed passionate. The end goal is not only to inspire future pianists to engage these works, but also to present one artist’s perspective to the composers of tomorrow, as to what contributes to making a solo piano work both intellectually appealing, and engaging to learn.
Chapter 1: François Morel - A Retrospective

The younger generation will evolve as it will and I have little advice to give, except to be at peace with one’s self regardless of the ups and downs of what the “trend” is - a word I detest! The life of a composer is to be lived intimately and not constantly explaining himself on the public forefront with the media circus like the star system of the American anti-art culture, that is to say “entertainment” which we must henceforth be subjected to like a disease.1 (François Morel)

François Morel ranks among the most successful and internationally acclaimed Canadian composers. His total output covers some seventy published works ranging mostly from large-scale compositions for orchestra, to numerous chamber settings featuring a variety of instrumental ensembles.

Born in Montreal into a family of musicians on March 14, 1926, Morel’s initial music studies focused on the piano at the Académie de Musique du Québec, an examination consortium from which he would graduate in 1942 with diplomas in both performance and piano pedagogy. Shortly thereafter (based upon the success of a few modest works including his first string quartet) Morel enrolled in the Conservatoire de Musique de Montreal as a composition student of the illustrious Canadian composer and pedagogue, Claude Champagne. It was during these studies with Champagne that Morel immersed himself in the works of the twentieth-century French masters, and drew great influence

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from the innovative rhythmic developments inherent within the works of Stravinsky and Bartok.

I was very fortunate to have worked with Claude Champagne, the first musician to produce orchestral works that exceeded the provincial climate of his era, to which we must also not ignore the music of Rodolphe Mathieu. The masters of the XXe Century whom I studied the music are, to name a few, Scriabine; Debussy – Les Nocturnes, Les Images, La Mer, Jeux; Ravel; Stravinsky – works ranging from the Firebird Suite (1909) to the Wind Symphony (1920) known as the Russian period; Bartok – from the Piano Sonata (1926) to the Music for Strings and celesta (1936); Varèse; Messiaen; Boulez; Berio; Carter; Dutilleux; Takemitsu: their music have influenced me greatly throughout my career. Dare I suggest that this is the way in which we perpetuate tradition.2

During his time at the Conservatoire, which lasted through 1953, Morel continued his training as a pianist (he was awarded second prize in piano upon graduation), and further broadened his musical vantage to include studies in acoustics, orchestration, and orchestral conducting. At a time especially when many young French-Canadian composers elected to further their studies in Paris with the likes of Nadia Boulanger, Morel instead chose to stay put in Montreal, thereby becoming the first important Canadian composer to receive his entire musical training in Canada. His first major orchestral work, Esquisse opus 1, for medium sized orchestra was published in 1947 while he was still a student.

In 1953 Morel, along with fellow Quebecois composers Serge Garant and Gilles Tremblay, founded the Musique de notre temps, a new music performance society dedicated to showcasing contemporary music by Canadian and European composers. During one such concert, Morel himself presented the Canadian premieres of Messiaen's

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piano pieces *Île de feu II* and *Neumes rythmiques*. In a 1954 concert for this same organization, he would also perform the world premiere of his *Deux Etudes de Sonorité.*

The year 1958 was a crucial one in Morel's development. Having made several visits to New York to explore the American contemporary music scene, he would eventually meet and befriend Edgard Varèse, whose music and theoretical premises had had (and would continue to have) a profound effect throughout Morel's output. At a celebration of Canadian music presented at Carnegie Hall during October of that year, Morel's second major work for orchestra, *Antiphonie*, was showcased by the New York Orchestra under the direction of Leopold Stokowski. The success of this concert represented a major breakthrough onto the international scene for Morel and would see *Antiphonie* performed on several occasions during the coming year in major centers throughout the United States.

1958 was also a year that would see Morel begin work as a composer in residence at the Societe Radio-Canada, the French-language radio subsidiary of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. He would hold this position for some twenty-one years, composing music for documentaries, dramatic series, and the award-winning play *The Andersonville Trial*. In addition, he served as the conductor for various S.R.C. ensembles, and even had a brief venture into broadcasting from 1964-6, hosting the radio program *Festivals*. During his tenure at the S.R.C., Morel received numerous commissions from that organization. Among the more noted of these was *Prismes*

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2 Andre-Sebastien Savoie, "Deux Etudes de Sonorité," *Program Notes: University of Western Ontario Concerts.* (March 21, 1987) 1 page.
4 Not an actual 'registered' orchestra, but rather the publicity title given to the 'for hire' musicians who were performing the orchestral music during that concert.
Anamorphoses, a work for large orchestra composed in 1967 which was highlighted in a critically acclaimed documentary about Morel's works compiled and broadcasted internationally by Radio Canada International.\(^6\)

The decades of the 60's and 70's would see a flowering of international recognition for Morel. His Boreal for large orchestra, composed in 1960, was featured by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra on their tour of China and Japan that year. In 1976, prior to the opening of the Montreal Olympics, Morel composed Jeux for the Montreal Symphony Orchestra to commemorate the inauguration of the 78'th session of the International Olympic Committee. Increasingly his orchestral works were being performed throughout Europe, Russia, and South America, drawing the attention and admiration of such conductors as Franz-Paul Decker, Pierre Monteux, Zubin Mehta, and Claudio Abbado.

From 1972-8, Morel would serve as the director of the Academie de Musique du Quebec. However in 1979, he left the A.M.Q. and the S.R.C. to pursue a career within academia. After a year long stay at the University of Montreal where he taught composition and orchestration, Morel joined the composition faculty at the University of Laval, a position which he would hold until his retirement in 1997 at the age of 71. It was during his tenure at the University of Laval that Morel founded the Ensemble Bois et Percussions du Quebec, a semi-professional wind, brass, and percussion ensemble for which much of his later chamber music output was composed. When asked as to why he pursued a pedagogical career at such a late date (he was 55 years old at the time of his first appointment), Morel noted: "I waited many years before teaching for one specific

reason: I needed to acquire sufficient life experiences so that my students may benefit from the knowledge gained from real musical life rather than theory."  

Many significant works were composed during Morel’s Laval period. Among the more noted of these was Melisma (1980) for piano and orchestra, a work which was commissioned by the fourteenth Concours International de Musique de Montreal. One of Morel’s most revered works, Aux couleurs du ciel for large band was composed in 1987 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Stravinsky’s birth. This work was also inspired by the astrophysicist Hubert Reeves’ book Poussières d’étoiles, and was commissioned and premiered in 1988 by the Montreal Symphony Orchestra under Charles Dutoit.

In 1994 Morel became a Chevalier de l’Ordre Nationale du Quebec, Quebec’s highest ceremonial honor bestowed upon a common citizen. As a result of his outstanding achievements and his contributions to Quebec society and culture, he was subsequently awarded the Prix Denise Pelletier (a lifetime achievement award) by the provincial government of Quebec in 1996.

**Stylistic Traits**

Morel’s music for the most part is born of a sophisticated blend of extended tonal techniques; although this is comprised of (in comparison with many of his contemporaries) a generally conservative use of dissonance. Often, especially throughout his early works, a modal melodic style is prevalent and is combined with a driving

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8 Morel was fascinated by the photos of star clusters in Reeves’ book and set about to capturing these photos in sound.

rhythmic intensity which is immediately engaging.\textsuperscript{10} There is also a spontaneity to the structural unfolding of his works which gives them a seemingly improvisatory feel.\textsuperscript{11}

I was never a tonal musician...Even at the Conservatoire I was not very interested in the classical forms. Not having been subjected to the German influence, I was guided for a long time by instinct alone and I was mostly attracted by sonorities. Chance music? Let’s say that I use aleatoric elements for expressive purposes; but within the limits of a well-defined structure. I really prefer giving the performer more freedom in certain areas of intonation and rhythm.\textsuperscript{12}

The aesthetics which Morel explores within his music are deeply personal and intense. They frequently traverse the extremes of the human psyche, from the sublime to the diabolical (often one immediately after the other within a work). An informative commentary upon Morel’s musical style in general is seen in a 1975 review by Kenneth Winters, the former music critic for the Toronto Telegram. In reference to a performance of L’Étoile Noire, Winters noted, “a dramatic young work in the sound mosaic of Varèse but with Gallic refinements of its own austere, romantic kind. Very cunning and skillful patterns of noises, all of them precisely cut and shaped as the parts of a watch.”\textsuperscript{13}

Morel’s compositions can be divided into four compositional phases. The first of these spans the works culminating with Antiphonie (to 1954) and is marked by an obsession with modal techniques. A second period (to 1959) sees an exploration into total chromaticism while a third and final phase of his development demonstrates

\textsuperscript{11} Morel considered it essential to the development of the burgeoning composer that they be well versed in the techniques of improvisation. He thus considered it a form of composition. (See Lyse Richer: Compositeurs du Québec: François Morel. Montreal: Canadian Music Centre Publications, 1982)
\textsuperscript{12} François Morel, “François Morel, Canadian Composer,” Performing Rights of Canada Ltd. (1975) 4-14
\textsuperscript{13} Kenneth Winters, “(Toronto Symphony Concert - Title Obscured),” Toronto Telegram. (Nov 30, 1966) 12-14. (Accessed through Morel archives at the Canadian Music Centre/Toronto.)
experimentation with 12-tone series.\textsuperscript{14} (\textit{Die Stelle zер Zwellinge} is his most recognized work from this final period deriving its series from Beethoven's String Quartet opus 135.)\textsuperscript{15} During the early 1960's Morel also made very brief forays into the realm of electro-acoustic music, although these did not amount to much of importance and by 1962 he would abandon the process altogether. He would never publish a musical work for fixed mediums.

Morel's chamber music comprises nearly two thirds of his total output, and includes two string quartets, a brass quintet, numerous works for percussion ensemble (most notably \textit{Rhythmologue} for eight percussionists - a work inspired by Bartok), as well as many other settings for various instrument combinations. The vast majority of these works, as with his major orchestral compositions, appear within a single-movement structure, often cast in a modified ternary presentation.

It is not surprising that a composer so concerned with sonority would tend to neglect composing works for solo instruments, as orchestral and chamber settings simply present more timbral possibilities. Of his entire output in fact, only four works are scored for solo instruments. It is curious however, that given his thorough training on the piano, Morel only composed two works for the piano solo.\textsuperscript{16} The first of these \textit{Ronde Enfantine} (1947) is a brief, minute-and-a-half-long work inspired by the sounds of children singing and playing in the street. Although charming, it is a work of relatively little consequence and has since faded out of circulation. It is with the \textit{Deux Etudes de Sonorité} however, that

\textsuperscript{15} François Morel. "Die Stelle der Zwillinge. \textit{Program Notes:Orchestra Symphonique du Québec}. (Dec 9, 1997).
\textsuperscript{16} Morel's other solo works, \textit{Priere and Alleluia}, were composed for organ.
Morel struck a chord with pianists and the general public which continues to reverberate to this very day.
Chapter 2: Etude 1 - Analytical Insights

It is the first etude which best showcases the aesthetically meditative and in certain instances, downright hallucinogenic nature of Morel's character and style. It is comprised of four pages wrought with tonal ambiguity; its melodic motives, modal in nature and reminiscent of chant, frequently waft in and out of fore-grounded and back-grounded textural layerings. The pervading effect here, through its soundworld and idiomatic treatment of the instrument, suggests an influence of the piano preludes of Debussy and Messiaen.

What is most immediately striking about how Morel graphs out this Etude upon the score, is the initial setting of four staves, a rarely encountered setting throughout contemporary piano music. This presentation becomes compressed mid-way through the Etude to two staves, and shortly thereafter expands to a three stave arrangement. With the re-emergence of the Etude's introductory gesture towards the end of the movement, Morel re-introduces the four staff setting. Undoubtedly, Morel's intention here is to illustrate a clear separation of textural strata as the Etude unfolds. As well, this presentation further highlights widely-spaced versus more refined spans of sonority: it is no accident, for instance, that the highest and lowest pitches of the Etude are reserved for the sections presented in four staves, while music sounded within a more confined registral spectrum is presented in two staves.

The form of the movement is a loose-knit ternary structure (see example 2-1); the individual sections of which unfold effortlessly in a state of seemingly continuous improvisation.
A brief five and a half measure section, A, commences the Etude, and here Morel introduces several unique gestures upon which much of the Etude is structured as will be explained below. This initial section gives way to a chant-like presentation (see example 2-2), which will serve as the primary melodic material for the Etude. Note the narrow range of this melody, its Aeolian modal make-up, and its beginning and ending upon the pitch E-flat (or its enharmonic equivalent D-sharp); all characteristics which again demonstrate Morel’s affinity and proficiency in using medieval melodic techniques in his works – particularly those comprising the first phase of his compositional development.

This thematic gesture commences the last beat of measure five, and with it we see the emergence of the second section, B, within the Etude. A third and final section, A’, is introduced in measure thirty and is heralded by a brief cadenza-like flourish comprised of arpeggiated diatonic chords in the preceding measure. At measure thirty, Morel presents an elaboration upon the sextuplet gesture that had comprised the initial anacrusis to the Etude, presenting it on this occasion in a descending fashion and prolonging the passage...
for an additional measure. Following this, in measure thirty-three, he presents a near exact repetition of the opening three measures of the Etude, thus bringing the movement to a close.

As noted, the germination of the melodic and textural nuances of the movement are seen within a number of gestures all found within the initial, A, section. The first of these occurs within the aforementioned anacrusis leading to measure one. Here Morel presents what appears to be an ascending flourish of dyads, each structured upon the interval of a major second (see example 2-3A).

![Example 2-3A](image)

Upon first listening it would appear as if Morel is simply presenting two cleverly guised whole tone scale presentations commencing on the first and fourth dyads respectively. However a closer inspection sees Morel deviate from the second whole tone scale patterning on the sixth dyad: note the E and F-sharp, as opposed to E-sharp and F-double sharp which would of course be the correct extension of the whole tone scale commencing on the pitch ‘A’ (see example 2-3B). As such this second whole-tone scale patterning is disrupted.
An examination of the movement as a whole sees numerous instances of polychordal superimpositions at both harmonic and linear levels, and bearing this in mind, it now becomes evident that the first three dyads can be explained as two augmented triads offset linearly against the other, while the last three dyads form two simultaneously sounded major triads (see example 2-3C).

Morel’s emphasis upon the whole tone comprising each dyad is of no mere coincidence, as he will go to considerable lengths as the movement progresses to emphasize the major second as an important melodic motif. A fine instance of this can be seen in example 2-4 (measure 14), in which the melodic movement of diatonic
harmonies (F-sharp major triad to E-major triad) and the accompanying cluster arrangements feature a static melodic motion based on the major second.

Example 2-4

In addition to creating a passage which borders on the minimalist, Morel’s pervading aesthetic here is most hypnotic.

The two lower staves of measure one present a second instance of polychordal superimposition, this time as a vertical assemblage of one pentatonic-cluster and one diatonic-cluster (see example 2-5). In this case, Morel presents an E-flat pentatonic-cluster within the pianist’s right hand, against which he sounds five notes drawn from an A-major diatonic collection in the left.

Example 2-5
This is a most unique effect not only from the vantage of the resulting sonority, but also in the cleverness demonstrated by the choice of pitches used: as the resulting pitches not sounded by one chord are in turn presented by the other. It should be noted here that two notes of the A-diatonic collection are left outstanding. This is most likely due to the fact that it would simply be impossible for the hand to grip the chord should it be comprised of all seven pitches.

The influence of the music of Edgard Varèse is also felt within this Etude’s initial measures and concern the Varesian ideals of time/space relationships within different levels of texture. In his fascinating article for Perspectives of New Music, John Strawn\(^\text{17}\) presents a discussion of a series of lectures given by Varese concerning his theories of different planes of sound co-existing as a seeming amorphous haze: each born out of the other yet distinct from one another within a static time/space relationship. The article further explores these manifestations in one of Varese’s most revered works, Integrales (1924). According to Varese, three factors play a role for the listener to aurally perceive a sense of distance between two different sounds. Those variables included volume, timbre and reverberation. While Varese’s arguments are presented within the context of computerized music, such concepts proved to have a profound influence on Morel, not only in this Etude, but in later orchestral and chamber works.

In example 2-6, we have two distinct strata of texture demarcated by the open octave B-flats in the upper two staves, versus the polychordal masses comprising the lower two staves. Morel offsets these two gestures most directly by register and creates a reverse planing effect by his use of dynamics (crescendo shapes in the lower two staves versus decrescendo shapes in the upper two staves). As well, each of these textural strata are further accentuated by their rhythmic placement within the passage: poly-chords on strong beats, open octave B-flats on the second half of third beats. These B-flat octaves (through the reasoning's cited forthwith) do constitute a distinctive contrasting entity to the sonorous chords below and one could certainly make the argument that they (or their
A-sharp enharmonic equivalents) are born out of the chords below, in that one or the other is found within the first and last of the polychordal masses.

The two lower staves of measure four sees a series of diatonic collections in the pianist’s left hand versus a presentation of pentatonic collections in the right -- aside from one deviation to an F9 chord (enharmonically respelled) on the strong half of beat two, which nonetheless sounds pentatonic as it is but one semi-tone removed from a diatonic-pentatonic scale. (See example 2-7A.)

Concealed within this poly-chordal progression is a subtle polyphony in which we have our first, albeit rhythmically compressed, presentation of the theme. Here an Aeolian presentation is heard in the pianist’s right hand (see example 2-7B), whilst in the pianist’s left hand the theme is subject to slight interval variations; thereby fluctuating between both a Locrian and Aeolian setting (see example 2-7C).
As can be seen within this latter example, the melodic contour of the first four eighths of measure five are suggestive of a Locrian modal presentation. The Locrian patterning is disrupted upon the fifth eighth however, and sees Morel continuing and eventually concluding the passage within an Aeolian melodic presentation. Each of these two strands (examples 2-7B and 2-7C) are presented simultaneously in each of the remaining four fingers of the respective hand in which the theme or its variant is uttered. The cumulative presentation of these two contrapuntal strands creates a most unique polyphonic effect and subtly obscures the theme’s contour.\footnote{To borrow a favored phrase from Mark Sallmen, a professor of music theory department at the University of Toronto, such passages comes off to the listener in a most ‘crunchy’ fashion.}

The right hand (Aeolian) presentation is sounded in its entirety on two other occasions within the Etude commencing in measures six and twenty-six respectively; both times in an E-flat Aeolian presentation. In each of these cases the original setting of measure four is subjected to rhythmic alterations, which in turn divide this theme into two distinct
motives. These have been referred to in the general analysis\(^{19}\) as “x” and “y” respectively and can also be viewed within example 2-2. A third motive “z” is presented as an extension to this theme in measure eight.

Morel, in the following two pages leading up to the transitional passage commencing measure twenty-nine, suspends these motives against whole tone, pentatonic, and diatonic clusters, as well as various quartal chord collections and extended tertian harmonies including the dominant ninth and augmented-major\(^{20}\) chords. What is unique about all of this is not only the variety and juxtaposition of these chords, but how each is interwoven against the various melodic motives to produce nuanced realizations of the subtleties inherent within a given motive. Example 2-8A sees a rhythmically expanded presentation of the “x” motive in measure nineteen, against which B-major diatonic clusters are sounded within the lower staff.

![Example 2-8A](image)

Here Morel’s indication of secco for the diatonic clusters, affords an opportunity to explore the harmonics inherent within the repeated C-sharps comprising “x”. Another

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\(^{19}\) See Appendix 3: Annotated Score.

\(^{20}\) Chords comprised of an augmented triad with a major seventh above the base
example of how this particular motive is realized through changes in harmony can be seen in measures eighteen and nineteen (see example 2-8B).

In this case, the “x” motive is spun out in an ascending fashion some four times in succession, against which pitches drawn from an A-flat major diatonic series as well as quartal based harmonies are sounded.

In an effort to further obscure the tertian harmonies, Morel will frequently insert ‘extra notes’ (most often a fourth above the root of the chord) which appear to have no functional relation to the chord itself, but are nonetheless emphasized by Morel as an important addition to the chord through various articulative indications (see examples 2-9A, 2-9B).
Example 2-9A sees an A-flat augmented-major chord in the pianist’s left hand, against which a C-flat augmented-major chord is presented in the right. Each of these chords features the addition of an augmented fourth above their respective roots. In example 2-9B, the same notes which appear within the pianist’s right hand of example 2-9A, appear at the onset of measure thirteen; only this time, Morel refigures the chordal assemblage such that the tritone above C-flat is given a specific emphasis against the diatonic harmonies unfolding above it. Such moments require a creative voicing approach by the pianist to delineate the passage along two textural strands.
The tonal focus of the movement is also ambiguous and appears upon initial inspection to oscillate between two large-scale tonal centers: B-flat and E-flat respectively. As noted, Morel reserves the tonal center of E-flat primarily for statements of the theme and presentations of its various motives, while B-flat is reserved for a pedal gesture which appears at various textural levels throughout the Etude. To make the issue more complex, Morel concludes the Etude on a B-flat. However, E-flat is in fact the primary tonal center of the work. In addition to the reasons just cited, the initial downbeat of the movement and its ensuing return in measure thirty-three are focused in the right hand around an E-flat pentatonic cluster (which to the listener is more aurally fore-grounded than that of the left). Thus the first clear harmony which the listener perceives in the Etude is one built upon E-flat. Furthermore, the climax of the movement in measures twenty-seven and twenty-eight also arrives upon a strong E-flat cadential gesture (see example 2-10).

Thus, while Morel has not completely broken free from the confines of tonality in this Etude, he is nevertheless testing the waters by being as ambiguous as possible.
A final characteristic that is striking about this Etude is how Morel achieves a metric stasis of sorts throughout. The Etude is set in 3/4 time, although one would be hard pressed to realize this from an initial listening. Morel goes to considerable lengths to conceal downbeats by utilizing accents and or changes in articulation upon other beats within a given measure. Melodic motives often commence on the last beat of a measure, and repetitions appearing soon thereafter will often enter upon a different beat than the entry before. Furthermore, such techniques leave the listener completely unaware as to shifts to 4/4 time in measures four and fifteen respectively, not to mention the retransition to 3/4 time in measure twenty-nine. Such an approach to rhythm and meter thus leave the listener quite aloof as to the predictability of the placement of a motive within a given measure, and thus significantly contributes to the aura of suspension which pervades the Etude as a whole.

By way of conclusion then, Morel within this Etude, through a wide range and innovative combinations of extended tonal harmonies, produces nuanced realizations of motives drawn from a modally constructed theme. This unique tapestry of sound is further suspended both through registral contrast and a pervading rhythmic stasis through an avoidance of strong beats, as well as near unnoticed shifts in meter. All this contributes to creating the effect of improvisatory spontaneity as the movement progresses, and evokes a pervading sense of gentle meditation throughout.
Chapter 3: Etude 2 - Analytical Insights

The second Etude de Sonorité represents the diametric opposite to the character of the first. Throughout, it features frantic cadenzas, rhythmically jarring ostinatos, as well as melodic figurations marked by syncopations and frequent changes in articulation. The pervading effect here is one of torrential onslaught and its wild and pulsating rhythms conjure up vestiges of the rites of Bacchus.21

The movement commences with a chromatic flourish in octaves split between the hands. This is immediately followed by pentatonic clusters in each hand moving in contrary motion leading to a descending arpeggiated cascade based upon the four pitches E, D-sharp, B-flat, and A. This cascade pervades the Etude at numerous instances and serves primarily as a linking gesture between sections. The frantic assemblage of the opening measure serves as a fitting foreshadowing of the music to come.

As in the first Etude, the architecture of this movement is that of a modified ternary structure (see example 3-1). The initial measure serves an introductory function while the A section proper commences in measure two, signaled by a left hand ostinato built upon the tritone A - E-flat. A contrasting B-section occurs in measure fifty, giving way to an extended transition passage in measure eighty-one. This in turn heralds a modified return of the opening section, A’, in measure ninety two.

21 It should be noted that the author is using descriptive license here concerning metaphorical analogies. Morel is unspecific in his testimony concerning any specific inspiration for this Etude (or the first for that matter). Having said this, those who have an affinity for John Cage’s Bacchanal (1940), or P.P. Ruben’s painting of the same title, will be quick to grasp this Etude’s intended gesture.
Example 3-1: Graph Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intro</th>
<th>A Theme 1</th>
<th>B Theme 2</th>
<th>Retransition</th>
<th>A' Theme 1</th>
<th>Cadenza</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>M2-49</td>
<td>M50-80</td>
<td>M81-91</td>
<td>M92-146</td>
<td>M147-end</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tonal centers between each of the three primary sections of the Etude unfold along tertian relationships. Both the A and A’ sections are focused around the pitch A, while the B-section is grounded by a recurrent pedal gesture based upon the pitch C-sharp. Morel extends the A’ section by adding a cadenza in measure one hundred, forty-seven, at the end of which he brings the Etude to a close with one final declamatory cascade down the keyboard comprised of the same arpeggiated figure which was encountered within the introductory measure.

The emphasis upon the interval of the tritone from measure two to six (see example 3-2A) is significant to the movement as a whole, both in terms of melodic contours and harmonic motion.

Example 3-2A

(Presque) Vif el Joyeux (Presque)  \( \text{MM } 104 \) (circa)

\( \text{Lift} \) (Percute)
In the case of example 3-2B, the root motion of the ascending second-inversion diatonic chords is structured upon the tritone C – F-sharp; while example 3-2C demonstrates the importance of the tritone to the melodic contour of measures twenty through twenty-five, which as we shall see is drawn from the Etude’s first theme.

Within the respective A and A’ sections, Morel makes significant use of passages drawn from the pitches of an octatonic scale. Most often these collections are drawn from the octatonic scale commencing on the pitches A - B-flat, although it should be

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22 Messiaen’s second mode of limited transposition.
noted here that these presentations often do not include the complete scale, and thus the analytic realizations are arrived at based upon the respective passage's skeletal outline. The first such instance of this can be seen in regards to the E, D-sharp, B-flat, A arpeggiation of measure one (see example 3-3A).

Example 3-3A

Another example lies with the primary theme of the movement, which is sounded in the pianist's right hand in measures six through fifteen and includes all of the pitches of the A, B-flat octatonic scale save that of B-flat and F-sharp (see example 3-3B).
Other passages such as measures twenty through twenty-two which accentuate the driving dance energy of the movement, present further opportunities for using this octatonic scale (see example 3C).

Attempts within this particular passage to prescribe a common practice analysis eventually prove cumbersome, and simply the passage is better aurally perceived when heard as a general series of octatonic collections.

Morel achieves a most interesting effect in measures sixteen through eighteen by expanding a single melodic strand into a brief but intricate four voice imitative polyphony (see example 3-4).
While a similar approach is used in measures twenty-eight through thirty, what makes this first instance so striking is that while Morel uses exactly the same pitches in each contrapuntal strand, he introduces each strand at a different interval within the triplet breakdown of each quarter beat. Thus, the top line in the pianist’s right hand enters upon the second triplet subdivision of beat one, while a second strand enters squarely upon beat two. The upper strand in the pianist’s left hand also enters upon the second beat of measure sixteen; however, this entrance comes upon the third triplet division of that beat. Yet a fourth strand is added in measure seventeen on the second triplet division of beat one, and eventually all four strands cadence in measure eighteen. While this passage lasts only a brief few measures (and is subsequently repeated in A’), one has to appreciate Morel’s ingenuity at offsetting the rhythmical placement of each entrance and arriving at
an outcome which is not only compositionally sound, but intelligible and engaging as well.

The *Plus Modere* commencing measure thirty-five sees the emergence of a new chordal assemblage (see example 3-5A) based upon two perfect fourths, each separated by a semi-tone. This figure is subsequently transposed downwards at the interval of a minor third some nine times in succession. This passage is preceded by a syncopated gesture in measures thirty and thirty one (see example 3-5B) in which Morel superimposes a hybrid meter effect (following a triple, triple, duple beat subdivision) upon a simple duple setting.

The effect of these two gestures, coupled with the ensuing echo repeat in measures forty-one through forty-seven, is most engaging and provides a hair-raising contrast to the thrusting rhythms comprising the preceding octatonic material.

The B-section of this Etude represents a fitting reprieve from the *perpetuom mobile* of A. Extended tertian sonorities abound throughout and the overall nature here has become considerably more tranquil.²³ At the section’s onset, Morel achieves a quality of suspension both through a change in tempo (*Tres Lent* – very slow) and surface tempo,

²³ One assumes that, with the exception of a few volcanic outbursts from the throngs, the frenzy has abated for the time being, and that all attention is now focused upon a scene of great sensuality.
which, outbursts aside, has slowed to quarter pulses. (The outbursts such as the one in measure fifty-two, demonstrate a melodic contour derived from the primary theme of the A section. (See example 3-6).

![Example 3-6](image)

Morel evokes ethereal timbrel effects at the onset of this section by presenting widely-spaced sonorities simultaneously, thus further highlighting the sonorous extremities of the instrument. Additionally, there are many instances throughout this middle section where the novel sonorities evoked are reminiscent of jazz, and Morel underscores these in the music through gestural fluctuations including several instances of *rubato*, as well as various localized tempo changes.

A new theme is presented in measure fifty-five (see example 3-7) which is supported by a series of dominant seventh, ninth, and eleventh chords, emerging one out of the other, in the pianist’s right hand. Morel doubles this melody in the thumb and creates a haunting change of color through his indication to voice all chords towards the thumb in the right hand.
Simultaneously, as an accompanimental gesture in the pianist’s left hand, Morel presents a transformation of a portion of the principle theme of the Etude (see example 3-7). Concealed by a sober dynamic marking and a rhythmically elongated presentation, this theme is transformed from a foregrounded character of rhythmic drive and percussiveness to a background texture; that is a more sensual apparition of its former self. The effect of both themes presented simultaneously is striking.

With all of the intricate harmonies and rhythmic complexities of this Etude, it is surprising to see in measures sixty-four through sixty-eight an example of relative
compositional simplicity: an employment of the most basic of all sequential patterns – the circle of fifths (see example 3-8).

It is almost as if Morel is poking fun at the common practice tradition here, as the perception of such a progression is surely lost on the listener due to its rhythmic placement within the respective measures, and the pacing of the material unfolding above it. Indeed Morel seems to include the sequence merely as a clever afterthought.
The opening measures of the B-section are recapitulated in measures seventy-nine through eighty-one and evolve into a retransitory passage leading to A’. The energy of this eleven measure passage, which features some six changes in time signature, is enlivened through a torrent of jagged rhythms and melodic fragments drawn from the principle theme. Again the tritone serves as the underpinning of the section, appearing throughout as a pedal gesture as well as the interval of root motion within the diatonic harmonies unfolding above (see example 3-9). The frenzy has resumed.

At the commencement of A’ Morel insists on a temperament far more visceral than the Vivace and Joyeux (fast and joyful) of A: here demanding Brutale and Percute (brutal and percussive). With some minor elaborations upon the octatonic material both
preceding and following the return of the *Plus Modere*, most material remains the same in the two large-scale outer sections.

The closing cadenza of the Etude (see example 3-10) commences in measure one hundred, forty seven, and emerges out of the overtone series commencing on the pitch A. It lasts some three lines in the score and explores three further exploitations of the sonorous possibilities of the instrument.
The first of these involves the *laisser vibrer* indications which Morel specifies at the end of a flourish up the keyboard which includes fully one-half of the notes comprising the eighty-eight keys of the piano. Morel adds further drama to this passage by writing into the music an accelerando proceeding from eighths to sixteenths, then to thirty-seconds and sixty-fourths as the passage ascends. Three different scale presentations are used here: first an A-diatonic scale, next a whole tone scale commencing on G, and finally the octatonic patterns (semi-tone/tone) commencing on the pitches F-double sharp (with added A-natural), and B respectively. The cumulative effect of all the piano’s vibrating strings, each adding a plethora of overtones to the pitches which have been sounded, is most dramatic, and it is clear that this was as a sound mass which intrigued Morel (as can be seen through his reinforced indication *lunga pausa*).

Immediately following this ascent we have an additional instance of Morel exploring the sonorous potential of harmonics. This time, Morel indicates a silent depression of an F-sharp pentacluster while the resulting sonorities from the aforementioned ascension still hover. With the release of the pedal in measure one hundred and forty nine, the resulting harmonics from this pentacluster create an altogether different quality of sound. In this case Morel achieves something of an eerie quirkiness which is further accentuated by the staccatissimo left hand octaves in measures one hundred fifty and one hundred fifty one. To bring the listener back into the moment, a final tumultuous arpeggiation down the keyboard brings this barnburner of an Etude to a fiery close.

In short, this Etude features Morel at his compositional best. A driving rhythmic energy is coupled with a harmonic language largely grounded in the chromatic-dissonant
tradition. All this is presented within a Bacchanalian-like fervor, which, for the listener, is both easily grasped and immediately compelling.
Chapter 4: Distinguished Perspectives - An overview to the performance and pedagogical applications of the Deux Etudes

The Deux Etudes de Sonorité belong to the genre Etudes de Concert, meaning that they are not merely practice exercises for the development of the student’s technique, as would be the case in the etudes of Czerny, Clementi, or Cramer for instance. Rather, through their length, demands upon the artistry of the performer, and pervading bravado (particularly within the second Etude), Morel’s works follow in the vein of the etudes composed by Chopin and Liszt, and as such are meant for public performance.

As these works do represent one of the most studied solo piano works by a Canadian composer, it was deemed prudent to enhance the discussion of the various endearing qualities, uses, and pedagogical applications inherent in each Etude, by enlisting the perspectives of a number of Canada’s distinguished piano performer-pedagogues. Their perspectives were amassed via questionnaire interview, and the questionnaire itself and their complete responses are included in Appendix 1. The following offers a brief sampling of their impressions, and serves as a point of departure from which to enter into our discussion of the pedagogical uses of these Etudes.

Tom Plaunt, the revered Schubert specialist and former chair of piano at McGill University in Montreal, provides a concise overview of these Etudes noting:

These etudes display mystery and emotional catharsis, rhythmic and dramatic flair. They are entertaining to play and to learn, as well as being excellent concert and examination material…From their style and compositional material these Etudes belong to the early period of Canadian modernist works and are clearly based on French models, especially Messiaen…They are more accessible in the “learning sense” than works which follow later [Mather, Cherney, Vivier, Tremblay ] and
seem more closely related to the pieces of Jacques Hetu, which also utilize standard harmonic chordal figuration plus colorful use of dissonance.\textsuperscript{24}

These sentiments are echoed by Jacques Després, Chair of piano at the University of Alberta. During his student days, Després had occasion to perform the second Etude for François Morel.

I believe that the interest in these works stems from many facts. First, they are very attractive works. Second, they are very well-written and effective. Third, although Morel uses idiomatic musical treatment from the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, these pieces are quite conservative (one only has to think that Boulez had already written his first two piano sonatas and was about to complete the third one). Another reason could be that the length of the etudes makes them fit very easily in a recital program, a program for competition or audition purpose, particularly when a Canadian work is required.\textsuperscript{25}

Lynn Stodola, the current Chair of piano at Dalhousie University in Halifax provides an eloquent commentary on the pervading aesthetic gestures inherent within each Etude.

These works are easily accessible to both the performer and the listener in terms of their tonal colors and structures. No.1 with its chromaticism and neo-impressionistic textures allows great freedom and scope of imagination. No.2 contains those allowances in the "B" section alongside the barbaric rhythmic and technical thrusts of the outer "A" sections. No. 2 is an audience barnstormer that works when strategically placed in a recital program or as a fine encore on its own, the quintessential "Canadian" requirement in some competitions/grant applications, and, most effectively when coupled with No.1.\textsuperscript{26}

James Parker, the Chair of piano at the University of Toronto and member of the internationally acclaimed \textit{Gryphon Trio}, provides a highly informed perspective as to how the Etudes rank in within the general output for piano solo by Canadian composers.

I think there is a really visceral quality with Morel’s music that musicians and audiences alike respond to, and the Etudes have already stood the test.

\textsuperscript{24} See Appendix 1C – Interview with Tom Plaunt
\textsuperscript{25} See Appendix 1D - Interview with Jacques Després.
\textsuperscript{26} See Appendix 1G - Questionnaire interview with Lynn Stodola.
of time (in a relatively short span of history, granted, but so few Canadian works can be talked about with familiarity by different generations of pianists.) I would rank these works as in the top 10 piano compositions since 1950.\textsuperscript{27}

Finally, the illustrious Canadian pianist Charles Foreman succinctly notes:

Clearly, this work is a Canadian classic...They also speak in a reasonably contemporary voice for the 1950's (comparing them to works by Samuel Barber, Aaron Copland or Rodion Shchedrin from the same decade) so they are not out of place in a wider-than-Canadian context.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{27} See Appendix 1J - Questionnaire interview with James Parker.
\textsuperscript{28} See Appendix 1I - Questionnaire interview with Charles Foreman.
Chapter 5: Etude 1 – Pedagogical Applications

Morel’s expressive indications at the commencement of this Etude Reveur, Presque Lent, Sans Rigour (Dreamy, quite slow, without force) encourage the student towards an evocation of introspection throughout. Within a movement steered by such a generally slow surface tempo, the technical issues encountered focus less upon raw transcendental execution and instead challenge the imaginative resources of the student to explore poetic approaches to voicing, inflection, and the coloristic possibilities achieved through a sophisticated use of the pedals.

The first difficulty which the student encounters within this movement concerns a successful rendering of the sextuplet leading to measure one. Morel’s suggested fingering of L.H 5/4, 3/2, 1/1, R.H. 1/1, 2/3, 4/5 (see Example 5-1) is an interesting (although pianistically awkward) one, and should at the very least be attempted, as it is important to have a frame of reference in mind as to what resultant sonorities can be achieved from such fingering specifications. As Tom Plaunt notes, “This small moment cannot be achieved without the training of a supple hand/wrist/arm technique and coordinative exercises away from the keyboard…i.e. playing that fingering and coordinating the LH 5/4, 3/2, 1 motions on a flat surface until particularly the 3/2 is precise and comfortable.”  

29 See Appendix 1C – Interview with Tom Plaunt.
Needless to say, a tremendous degree of manual dexterity and suppleness of movement is required to execute Morel’s fingering; however one will find that with practice, the passage comes off with a unique luminescence as well as a surprising ease of momentum carrying through to the B-flat octaves which close the anacrusis.

Having said this, there are simply occasions in which matters of hand size, general dexterity, and quite frankly time will pose obstacles to a successful execution of this passage. The eminent Canadian pianist Charles Foreman has no concern about refingerinng the passage: “I personally play that opening set of seconds l.r.r.l.r.r., avoiding the thumb on two notes: this improves my speed and control. This is a useful “takeover” for some students, but not all.”^{30}

Yet another possibility, and the one in great favor with the author, would see a partitioning of the seconds into three sets of two: the first groups being taken by the left, the second by the right and the third coupling by the left; thus employing a fingering of L.H. 4/3, 2/1, R.H. 1/2, 3/4, L.H 4/3, 2/1. This fingering not only facilitates a greater control of melodic shaping and rhythmic evenness within in the sextuplet, but also frees up the right hand in preparation for the ensuing leap to the B-flat octaves, making an

^{30} See Appendix 11 – Interview with Charles Foreman.
accurate execution of the leap a virtual guarantee. Interestingly, in the descending version of this motif which appears in measure thirty, Morel employs this very fingering.

Morel emphasizes seven articulative markings throughout the Etude; including legato, staccato, staccato-tenuto, tenuto, sforzando, accents, and sforzando-accents used in combination. All require a distinctive rendering by the student in regards to sound production and choreography of attack; students must also calculate their placement within the changing aesthetic and dynamics of the movement. One area of articulative contention which appears to arise upon listening to recordings of this work\textsuperscript{31} concerns the execution of the chords comprising the two lower staves of measures one through three. Morel ascribes each chord and its subsequent tie with a different articulation marking; first tenuto and then staccato (see example 5-2).

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{example5-2.png}
\end{center}

It would seem as if two possible renderings are at the disposal of the student. The first is to repeat the tied notes as the staccato would imply; thus enhancing the organicism of the crescendo shape which pervades the two lower staves through measure three\textsuperscript{32}. A second and perhaps more sonorously inventive possibility would be to exit the tied notes with something akin to a pizzicato touch (taking care not to re-sound the notes which

\textsuperscript{31} See Appendix 2 – Discography

\textsuperscript{32} Andre Laplante’s live recording (see appendix 2-Discography) featured at the Canadian Music Centre audio archives, adopts this first rendering.
have been previously depressed). The resultant acceleration in the vibrations of the strings in question accentuates the harmonics inherent in each of these chords, creating a unique backdrop haze of sound throughout the passage.

The staccato-tenuto is an uncommon articulation in piano music outside of the music of Bartok. However within the four pages of this Etude, Morel gives it an unusual emphasis, employing it some thirty times. In most of these cases, an effective and visually engaging rendering of this articulation is to stroke the keys in a brushing fashion such that the arm pulls the hand towards the body; making sure that fingers release the key(s) in a continuous, upwardly caressing fashion. A greater degree of tonal sensuousness will be achieved through the employment of such approaches, especially if the student takes care to use the pads of the fingers versus a more direct attack from the tip. While this may all seem like splitting hairs, nothing could be further from the truth. In writing which is this heavily legislated by the composer, and which requires such innovation of sonority by the interpreter, it is incumbent upon the student to assure a consistent rendering of each articulative indication as the movement progresses. Indeed, such indications are often among the very first details to be neglected by the student, particularly in contemporary music.

In spite of the slow surface tempo of the movement, the negotiation of the wide leaps shifting to five note polychords within the initial three measures (see example 5-3) requires a precision of choreography which takes time to refine. Assuming that the student will adopt a voicing of the polychords such that the hand is inclined towards the fifth finger in the right hand and the thumb in the left, the issue then becomes a question of how to approach these chords from the B-flat octaves in both hands which precede
them from a span of nearly two octaves higher. It is therefore suggested that the general shaping of the leap from the B-flat octaves be executed in a curvaceous, semi-circular manner as opposed to direct linear shift.

Example 5-3

A purely horizontal shift exiting the B-flat octaves would more likely cause a forced attack into the chords, resulting in a harsher tone quality, whilst a semi-circular exit from the B-flats would allow for a more oblique entry into the chords, thus further enhancing Morel’s tenuto markings. As a method of practice, it may be of use for the student to rapidly exit the B-flat octaves and freeze the hands over the top of the desired chords without actually sounding them. The objective being that each finger is centered squarely over the key which it is to play. This will not only assist with accuracy and thus give the student more security in negotiating the distance of the respective leap, but it will also assist in the securing of visual and tactile memory of the passage as well.
The progression of pentachords as seen in measure four (see example 5-4) presents a unique challenge to the student in terms of voicing, and in physically maneuvering the transitions between chords using all five fingers in both hands simultaneously. 

Example 5-4

It is paramount to first master this passage hands alone, for as we have seen in the analysis of this Etude, a different melodic strand is sounded within each hand. This will strengthen the student’s comfort of the passage and should make a hands together rendering considerably easier. Morel includes the expressive indication *molto espressivo la melodia* (much expression to the melody), and this in itself warrants much potential for some creative voicing outcomes.

What really discerns an average rendering of this Etude from an exceptional one is the level of proficiency which the student has achieved with the pedals, and as such, this first Etude serves as an excellent pedagogical tool for developing pedal technique. Much of the pedaling within the Etude is left to the discretion of the performer, however, Morel does occasionally mark in a specific pedaling to achieve a desired effect and these should be considered by the student. As Tom Plaunt notes:

\[33\] Albeit on a considerably less virtuosic scale, this passage is reminiscent of similar challenges within the opening measures to the fifth movement of Stravinsky’s piano reduction of the Petrouchka Suite.
The pedaling is given precise indications at rests and accented points, creating sonic effects with the mixing of chords, dynamic lines and specific voicings. [The title is, after all, Etude de Sonorité] Any excessive worry about blurring is counter-productive here. But listening for the main lines, plus the precise pedal effects depicted in the score, combined with shaping and voicing of those lines is very important, as well as the rehearsal of the exact arrhythmic pedaling, geared primarily to the ear. “What do you hear? What are you saying?” should be the primary leitmotives. The pedaling will grow in ability and sensitivity as soon as it is placed in the ear and not in the ankle.\footnote{See Appendix 1C – Interview with Tom Plaunt.}

Measures such as the aforementioned succession of polychords present excellent opportunities for the student to acquaint him/herself with micro-changes at rapid intervals. Crescendo shapes can also be enhanced through the use of pedal. For instance, if one were to adopt the aforementioned fingering of L.H. 4/3, 2/1, R.H. 1/2, 3/4, L.H. 4/3 within the opening anacrusis, one could employ three damper pedal changes such that the pedal depth would increase with each ensuing change of hand (i.e. quarter, half, full).

Another possible employment of this technique could be used in measure twenty eight (see example 5-5). In this case, there is also an opportunity (although unspecified by Morel) for the student to employ the sostenuto pedal.
In this case the student will need to ensure that the sostenuto pedal is prepared within the preceding measure, such that the octaves sounded upon the downbeat of measure twenty-eight can be caught before the cadenza-like flourish is engaged. With these octave sonorities serving as an enhanced underpinning for the cadenza, the pianist can augment the crescendo shape of the diatonic flourishes by making similar increases to damper pedal depth as noted previously -- the frequency of changes and the range of pedal depths to be left to the discretion of the student.

In a work such as this featuring multiple staves, frequent changes to register, uncommon progressions of harmony and numerous rhythmic complexities, memory issues will always be a factor and should be addressed as early on within the learning process as possible. Memory as it relates to piano playing in general assumes four different facets (tactile, visual, analytical, and aural), and it goes without saying that all of these must be satisfied before a successful rendering from memory can be achieved. A helpful practice suggestion to solidify memory is presented by Lynn Stodola: "Much of the memorization here is visual on the keyboard; patterns from the clusters. One could
isolate the sustained long melodic line (sans chords) in certain areas to retain the line/direction. This would be of benefit should the clusters go astray in a performance, the principal line could still be maintained.\footnote{See Appendix 1G – Interview with Lynn Stodola.} Furthermore, the student would be well advised to establish specific landmarks within the Etude which coincide with changes in texture or moments of structural significance; such landmarks would be easy to pick up from in the event memory issues were encountered during performance.

The one matter which might be of discouragement to the student when deciding whether to study this Etude, are the numerous wide chordal distributions such as those seen in measure six (see example 5-6). Issues of hand size and manual flexibility come to the forefront here, and the student will need to ensure that he or she is able to comfortably manage five note chords featuring an outer interval span of a major seventh.

While arpeggiating these chords is a possibility, it is not desirable as it disrupts the timing of registral leaps both preceding and following the chord; it also misses the point of Morel’s tenuto specification. Therefore, hand size will be an important issue to consider when determining as to which student to assign this Etude.
Ireneus Zuk, the Chair of piano at Queen’s University provides an informative commentary on the artistic challenges of this Etude noting:

I have found that the first etude can cause more problems to some younger students than the second because a greater level of musicianship is required. The study is not as showy and the student has to work at (various textural) levels and singing sound and projection. Control here is paramount. As with any work I try to assign these almost before students are ready because of the thrill of seeing them grow with the work.\textsuperscript{36}

Zuk is absolutely correct in his assertions that this Etude is more challenging to the student’s general musicianship than the second. As such, it is a work which should only be undertaken by the advanced student, and one who has achieved a comfort with the language and gesture inherent in the works of Debussy, Satie, and others dating from the turn of the twentieth century France. The rewards which this Etude can produce in the development of a student pianist are well worth the enterprise.

\textsuperscript{36} See Appendix 1K – Interview with Ireneus Zuk
Chapter 6: Etude 2 - Pedagogical Applications

The demands upon the transcendental abilities of the performer within this second Etude are significant. As such it is a work which should only be undertaken by the advanced student who features not only a strong technical foundation and wide tonal palate, but also a temperament raucous enough to negotiate the frenzied atmosphere which pervades it.

The first measure to this Etude features three brief but thorny challenges, with which the student who has just progressed into the advanced ranks may not yet be familiar. These include: alternating octaves within an ascending chromatic presentation, glissando penta-clusters in each hand, and finally the awkwardly formed descending arpeggiation requiring a sophisticated cross-handed execution (see example 6-1).

Example 6-1

Needless to say, a Herculean ability would be required to fit each beat of this measure (especially the twenty note cascade comprising beat three) within Morel’s tempo approximation (based upon a quarter note at M.M. 104 in measure two: in which case an

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37 A rarely encountered technique outside the virtuoso works of Liszt.
eighth in measure one would equal M.M. 208). As such, the student should rightly choose to adopt some license in the pacing of their approach to measure two.

Concerning the alternating octaves, the student would do well to ensure that the passage can first be successfully executed in tempo using the thumbs alone, ensuring meanwhile that the hand remains molded within the octave shaping and that the distance from the key within each successive shift of hand is kept to a minimum. Additionally, the thumbs of each octave should progress in as straight a line as is possible along the keys so to ensure that excessive ‘in and out’ maneuverings of the arm are avoided, thus saving energy and enhancing accuracy. A pedaling which lifts upon the final octave is appropriate in this case, so to better capture Morel’s indication of arrache (to snatch).

Pentacluster technique has already been discussed previously in this paper; however as a further point, it is suggested in this instance that the chords here be approached with one general motion of attack. Therefore, the second pentacluster (being situated on a lower key-plane than that of the first) would be played as a result of the energy of motion derived from the attack of the first, as opposed to separate prepared attack. This large-scale motion will facilitate Morel’s desired glissando effect, as well as afford the student more potential for a successful rendering of the fff indications.

The shifting of hands which Morel correctly suggests towards the end of the measure requires considerable diligence to be exercised by the student in their initial study of this passage. First it will be important to ensure an organicism of line throughout the arpeggiation, taking care especially to avoid excessive accentuation of cross-over fingers. To solve this issue, the student should consider practicing the passage stopping upon the fifth note, then the sixth and so on, ensuring that there is both rhythmical and tonal
evenness from note to note. Rhythmic variation exercises such as right hand at final
tempo/left hand at half-tempo and vice versa (or a host of fast-slow rhythmic permutation
exercises within each grouping of four) will also be useful in such passages.

Measures two through fourteen represent a section of great pianistic ingenuity. Here
Morel specifies the employment of the third finger in each hand for the entire passage
(with the exception of the brief interspersion in the right hand in measures ten and
eleven). (See example 6-2.)
For those who can accomplish this feat at the speed which Morel indicates, the percussiveness and barbaric nature of the passage is realized in a degree of ferocity which is difficult to capture when adopting other fingerling alternatives. A general point of suggestion would be to ensure that the pad of the third finger of each hand is braced with the tip of thumb. This will ensure that the third finger, bridge, and hand function as one unit, thus facilitating greater control over dynamics, accentuation markings, as well as allowing for a more supple wrist-based approach to shifts within the passage as a whole.

For the developing student however, leaps such as the tritone and perfect fifth in the left hand, as well as the minor third and tritone in the right will frequently bring issues of accuracy into the forefront. Charles Foreman notes:

I play the whole passage with finger three, right up to the slurs in measure three of page nine. However, I find some students just can’t manage this up to tempo, and I have fingered the passage for them, insisting always, however, that the hand and arm be involved in the playing of each note, to produce the powerful, percussive sound that Morel evidently wants.38

Indeed this was the general consensus among questionnaire respondents. One alternative fingerling, which perhaps comes the closest to suggesting the visceral temperament achieved by Morel’s, would see the right hand continuing with its presentation of the third finger (the descending momentum of the right hand makes the passage as a whole easier to execute), while the left would deviate from the pattern in measure six to adopt a 2/1/5/4 fingerling of the D-sharp/E-natural/A/A (see example 6-3).

38 See Appendix II - Interview with Charles Foreman.
This change achieves a greater ease in negotiating the left hand tritone leaps especially, and also enhances the contrast in articulation within the passage.

Measures fifteen and twenty-eight, respectively, present the student with particularly awkward passages in double note technique (see example 64A and 6-4B). Frequently alternating between perfect fifths, tritones and major and minor sixths (never the same in either hand at any one time), the respective passage requires not only flexibility of wrist in the negotiation of the descending figurations, but a visual awareness and comfort of the passage as a whole which can only be achieved from many hours of slow and prudent work.
A useful exercise here would be to perform the passage very slowly on a flat surface such as a table top; visualizing each chord in the progression while anticipating the next. A similar exercise could be repeated at the keyboard, but without actually depressing the keys. As well, the student will find the rhythmic variation exercises discussed previously of use in eventually mastering the transcendental challenges of this passage at tempo.

39 Tom Plaunt suggests this approach in his discussions of Etude 1, however, it is perfectly applicable in this instance as well. See Appendix 1C – Interview with Tom Plaunt
The thirty-second note configurations found within the *Plus Modere* are moments which sound considerably more difficult than they actually are. Such a passage affords the student opportunities to highlight the farthest reaches of the instrument within a brief span of time. Therefore, the student should explore voicings such that the pitch E comprising the octave grace note in measure thirty-five, and the right hand thirty seconds at the top of the keyboard in measure thirty-eight, are projected over other textures (see example 6-5). Additionally, as the thirty-seconds continue to proceed in a downwardly fashion, one could adopt a more equal voicing between the hands, so to accentuate the middle registers of the keyboard and its vast richness of sonority. The cumulative effect of these extremes in sonority in such a concentrated span can be most engaging for the listener.
The passage as a whole can be enhanced by pedaling as well, particularly when it is repeated in *echo* form in measure forty-one. Presuming the student is looking for a more shimmering effect than would be achieved by merely holding the damper pedal down throughout, opportunities are abundant in this instance for exploring flutter pedal technique, or micro-changes on every chord change within the thirty-second note groupings. The concept of the pedal crescendo discussed within Etude 1, could also be most effective here.

The B-section, with its continuous unfolding of chords, can be problematic in terms of achieving a sustained legato effect throughout; indeed this is further compounded by the unusual request to voice chords towards the thumb. In this case, considerable care in regards to the molding of the hand will need to be exercised by the student to ensure an ease of transition from chord to chord. Here, perhaps more than anywhere else within the Etude, the student’s tactile and visual awareness of the section will need to be secure enough so that the ever changing shifts in aesthetic (from the sensuous to the jazzy, the suave to the effervescent) unfold in a manner which is effortless and deeply internalized.

The re-emergence of the Bacchanalian fervor in measure eighty-two places the most demands upon the transcendental wherewithal of the student within this Etude. Here one hand doubles the other in a series of rapidly shifting chords, interrupted by perilous octave leaps in the left hand. All of this occurs as Morel jacks up the drama by noting *crescendo et accelerando*. The writing here is not at all “pianistic” and therefore this is simply a passage where the student will have to capitulate to extensive practice. The most practical fingering for a successful execution of this passage is illustrated in example 6-6.
The penta-chordal diatribe up the keyboard which follows this passage, as well as the ensuing arpeggiated cascade downwards (see example 6-7), offer opportunities to explore rapid lateral movements along the keyboard and the weight transference issues which are inherent therein. The student will do well to ensure that the body remains centered along the keyboard, and that shifting of the body is kept to an absolute minimum.
The final challenges which the student encounters in this work are found within the closing cadenza. Morel’s fingering of the initial flourish of the cadenza is cumbersome in its use of the left hand thumb to strike the pitches A-natural and B-natural simultaneously. A stronger fingering redistribution (see example 6-8) which enhances not only speed but organicism of line, sees the right hand thumb inserted underneath that of the left; thereby sounding the A-natural and taking the ensuing four notes within a basic five finger position.
The harmonics which the pianist strikes at the tail end of measure one hundred forty seven (see example 6-9) can be further enhanced by employing a vibrato technique upon the five keys comprising the pentachords. This action adds a rhythmic pulsation to the harmonics, thus resulting in additional aural subtleties for the listener. A pizzicato attack on each of the ensuing left hand octaves, versus a more direct forearm attack, will also augment these reverberations.
Finally, because the last note of the piece, A, is the lowest note of the keyboard, efforts will have to be made to ensure that the student does not oversho射 the note and provoke injury by striking the leftmost wood block of the piano instead (this is known in pianistic lingo as the proverbial 'thud'). The potential for this is considerable in light of the descending cross handed arpeggiation preceding it, and so to avoid the thud, the student will do well to ensure that, in the words of Charles Foreman: "As with all thuds, it disappears when attacked from the surface of the key."\textsuperscript{40}

This Etude is in all likelihood the most performed Canadian solo piano work to date, by Canadian concert artists and students alike. It has also served as the imposed piece at the 1974 Montreal International Piano competition. Its language and drive are immediately appealing to the student; and its gesture represents less of an enigma than that of the first. Timothy Steeves of Memorial University concurs, noting:

Emotionally I don’t find this piece to be too much of a challenge for young students. They tend to get it. I find they don’t feel intimidated by it at all and are eager to practice it. I think this allows them to open up and really go for it. They relate to it quite well maybe because it does have a bit of a “pop/modern” sound. A good performance of the piece, however, really requires an excellent technique. This is the big challenge for young players.\textsuperscript{41}

It is of hope that some of the challenges which have been laid out hitherto will be of use to the student who aspires to the study this work. Having mastered them, they will have conquered a great tour de force within the literature for solo piano in Canada.

\textsuperscript{40} See Appendix 11 – Interview with Charles Foreman.
\textsuperscript{41} See Appendix 1G – Interview with Timothy Steeves
Conclusion

It is difficult to assess in any concrete terms just how much of an impact these Etudes have had upon piano music composed within Canada since their original publication in 1954. The most performed works among the newest generation of Canadian piano masterworks (such as Variations pour Piano by Andre Lamarche, Piano-Soleil by Denis Gougeon, I leap through the sky with Stars by Alexina Louie, Fantasia opus 57 by Jacques Hetu to name but a few) do invariably feature the neo-impressionistic textures, modality, and fearsome rhythmic drive coupled with extreme aesthetic gestures which pervade Morel’s Etudes. As a further similarity, such works often appear within similar eight to ten minute castings: Morel’s Etudes run between eight to nine minutes depending upon the performer. (This choice of length could also in part be due to the phenomenon of the competition commission, although it will be recalled that Morel’s Etudes were not composed for any such purpose -- nor incidentally are the vast majority of solo piano works in Canada.)

While the author is in no way asserting that the new generation of Canadian composers have endeavored to imitate Morel’s style or his idiomatic treatment of the instrument (as each has found their own unique voice within this pervading style of writing), it is certainly fair to recognize that Morel had a good thing going with these Etudes, and that matters such as audience accessibility and performer interest are always important issues to be considered by composers when looking to achieve success and recognition in a most competitive field. In the final analysis, however, much of this is tied up within the realm of speculation, and is an issue perhaps best left for others to
pursue.

The Royal Conservatory of Music (Toronto) lists the *Deux Etudes de Sonorite* within its examination syllabus as possible choices for inclusion on senior level recital examinations throughout Canada, as well as internationally. This in itself represents an impressive endorsement as to the pedagogical values and challenges in these works. Questionnaire respondents also verified this finding, noting that the Etudes were most appropriate for study by students ranging in developmental levels from the gifted pre-college pianist, to the university level performance major. In addition, it was unanimously agreed that both Etudes were perfectly suitable for use in a variety of performance forums: from recitals to auditions, examinations to competitions.

It is indeed lamentable that Francois Morel never felt inclined to compose again for the piano solo after 1954: as noted earlier, his conceptual vision in regards to his solo instrumental works far outshone the medium within which he chose to showcase it. One cannot help but speculate as to what more he could have said with the piano, and it would now regrettably appear as if this question will never be answered. Nevertheless, he has left Canada and the world with a work of solo piano music which is important and deserving of performance. It is one of the rare solo piano works within the post 1950 era which is both intellectually appealing and engaging to hear and learn. Within the ever dwindling catalogue of solo piano music within Canada, it remains a Canadian classic.
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Appendix 1

Appendix 1A – Overview – Questionnaire/Interviews

As a compliment to the research undertaken for this project, input was requested from a number of Canada’s leading piano performer/pedagogues in regards to their experiences in teaching and performing the *Deux Études de Sonorité*. Answers appear within the coming pages, and were submitted by the following individuals:

**Tom Plaunt** – Former Chair of Piano, McGill University.

**Jacques Després** – Chair of Piano, University of Alberta.

**Karin Di Bella** – Chair of Piano, Brock University

**Lynn Stodola** – Chair of Piano, Dalhousie University

**Timothy Steeves** – Chair of Piano, Memorial University

**Kristina Szutor** – Professor of Piano, Memorial University

**Charles Foreman** – Former Chair of Piano, University of Calgary

**James Parker** – Chair of Piano, University of Toronto

**Ireneus Zuk** – Chair of Piano, Queen’s University

Questions ranged from matters dealing with general perceptions, to specific pedagogical issues. The complete questionnaire is listed as Appendix 1B.
Appendix 1B – Questionnaire – François Morel – Deux Etudes de Sonorité (1954)

General Overview

1. In your view, what is it about these works that has so captivated the interests of students, performers/pedagogues and audience goers alike for such an extended period of time (67 years is an unusually long life-span for contemporary works)?

2. How would you rank these Etudes within solo piano works by Canadian composers, particularly from the second half of the 20th century onwards?

3. Would you recommend these Etudes for contests or recital/examinations or both? Why?

4. Whose recordings of these Etudes would you recommend? Why?

Etude #1

1. How has this Etude factored into your past teaching and/or concert activities?

2. Did you or your students perform this work for François Morel? If so, please offer his comments and/or suggestions as to matters of interpretation, performance etc.

3. What aspects of this Etude have you found the most useful in regards to addressing a given students’ developmental deficiencies – or in other words, how has this Etude served as a developmental tool for students within your pedagogical activities?

4. At what level of development would you assign this Etude to a student? Why?

5. Despite the slow surface tempo of this movement, there are many technical challenges throughout this Etude. Where were the areas which presented the most technical difficulties and what practice methods were devised to overcome these instances?

6. How strictly did you observe Morel’s suggested fingerings (for instance, the initial dyad ascension opening the movement features the fingering 5-4, 3-2, 1-1, 1,1 2-3, 4-5 might prove to be problematic for the developing hand)? What were your reasons for following or changing such fingerings? (Please cite specific examples.)

7. This Etude requires a sophisticated approach to pedaling, and (while not always indicated in Morel’s markings), present opportunities for the employment of all three pedals. Please comment on the merits of this Etude as a study piece to develop the student’s proficiency with the pedals and elaborate on any unique pedaling possibilities which you encountered/discovered?
8. The multiple stave graphing, metric displacement and extended tonal make-up of this Etude all contribute to making this Etude a real challenge to memorize. What suggestions would you put forth on how to tackle memorization in a layout such as this?

9. Are there any additional perspectives which you would like to present in regards to this Etude?

Etude #2

1. How has this Etude factored into your past teaching and/or concert activities?

2. Did you or your students perform this work for Morel? If so, please offer his comments and/or suggestions as to matters of interpretation, performance, etc.

3. This Etude is fraught with technical and interpretive challenges. What were some of the more prominent issues which your students faced when learning this work and how were they addressed?

4. The expressive indications in this work span the emotional spectrum from ‘Alanguí’ to ‘Brutale’ and near everything in between; demanding a considerable amount of emotional wherewithal from the performer. At what level of development would you assign this Etude to a student? Why?

5. Did you follow Morel’s fingering specifications for employment in both hands of the 3’rd finger from measure two onwards. If not – why? If so, how many measures did you extend application of the third finger in the left hand (as Morel is unclear)?

6. The middle section of this Etude is difficult to memorize with its ever-changing chordal texture in both hands. What suggestions would you put forth for approaching the memorization of this section?

7. What suggestions would you propose to avoid the proverbial ‘thud’ on the last note of this Etude?

8. Are there any additional perspectives which you would like to offer in regards to this Etude?
Appendix 1C – Tom Plaunt Responses

Currently chair of the Piano Department of McGill University’s Faculty of Music, where he has taught since 1974, Professor Plaunt is noted for his performances of new compositions, as well as his strong affinities for music of the classical period. His recording of Charles Ives’ “Concord” Sonata and his performances in Canada, the US and Europe have won him high praise. Presently, he is involved in an extensive study of the keyboard works of Franz Schubert and is performing, and recording for CBC broadcast, a series of all-Schubert recitals which he is also performing across North America and in Europe.

General Overview

1. These études fit the adult hand well and are not too difficult for a Gifted intermediate-advanced player. They display mystery and emotional catharsis, rhythmic and dramatic flair. They are entertaining to play and to learn, as well as being excellent concert and examination material.

2. From their style and compositional material these Études belong to the early period of Canadian modernist works and are clearly based on French models, especially Messiaen. [François Morel gave the Canadian premiere performances of Messiaen’s piano pieces Île de feu II and Neumes rythmiques.] They are more accessible in the “learning sense” than works which follow later [Mather, Cherney, Vivier, Tremblay] and seem more closely related to the pieces of Jacques Hétu, which also utilize standard harmonic chordal figuration plus colorful use of dissonance.

4. **Valerie Tryon:** [CBC Records, 1993] This recording is characterized by beautiful sound, played in a grand manner, brilliant, effective, romantic-emotional, but perhaps too intuitive? Perhaps it is too closely miked, as there are details of voicing and expression which go missing, but on hearing the careful attention to detail of **Allen Reiser:** [Signal Hill Music Works 2001] in which every detail is taken seriously… pedaling, voicing, phrasing, dynamic demands it is clear that Tryon is more concerned with the general effect of sound and rhythm. For Reiser the pieces emerge as very spare and colorful. Étude II does not have the same rhythmic intensity that Tryon achieves, and unfortunately Reiser’s recorded sound is poor, the piano being of a lesser caliber than the CBC recording. Two older LP recordings, both with quite decent sound reflect again two different generations, one trained the 30-40’s, one trained in the 50’s. **William Stevens** (b. 1921) [Impressions: Ravel Schubert - Brahms – Debussy - Morel. 1967. Laurentien CTM-6036] plays the études with great style and spaciousness, but **Andre Sebastian Savoie** (b. 1935) [ J. Hétu - Morel - Papineau-Couture - Somers. 1965. RCI 251] plays with more fidelity to the details as well as with the nervous energy and intensity required for these pieces. This Radio Canada International recording from c. 1960 is my favorite of the four. Both the Savoie and Reiser recordings can be used to demonstrate the possibilities of the piece in voicing, pedaling, phrasing. Go to Tryon for wonderful tonal qualities of a much later recording. Go to Savoie for the guts of the piece.
Etude #1

1. Two or three students were attracted to these pieces over the years and I have worked with them to reach examination level, both in Performance and Non-Performance programs.

3. After playing [or concurrently with] some Mikrokosmos V or VI pieces...[e.g. 144 Major 2nds Minor 7ths] the student can embark on such pieces as this etude. Learning and listening to the combination of harmony with dissonance, getting the hands around different positions in sequence are all major items in the student’s wider development. Above all, memorization and learning is THE valuable experience...the discovery of an expanded capacity for learning being a major moment in a student’s growth.

4. A gifted intermediate student possessing a comfortable technique could handle the first etude. It is accessible to the average hand, and provides considerable stimulus in acquiring pedaling and voicing skills, as well as developing a sensitivity to tonal qualities and “mystical” yet flamboyant rhetoric.

5. Learning the parallel chord passages presents considerable challenge. It is necessary to learn it very slowly and see/hear the harmonic basis in each chord.

6. While there are alternative solutions to the division of hands they are inferior to the fingering as Morel conceives it, which is by far the best solution. This small moment cannot be achieved without the training of a supple hand/wrist/arm technique and coordinative exercises away from the keyboard...ie playing that fingering and coordinating the LH 5/4, 3/2, 1 motions on a flat surface until particularly the 3/2 is precise and comfortable.

7. The sostenuto pedal is not mentioned because it is both unnecessary and inappropriate for the style of the piece. [See the laissez vibre notation from Debussy / Ravel /Messiaen.] The pedaling is given precise indications at rests and accented points, creating sonic effects with the mixing of chords, dynamic lines and specific voicings. [The title is, after all, Etude de Sonorité] Any excessive worry about blurring is counter-productive here. But listening for the main lines, plus the precise pedal effects depicted in the score, combined with shaping and voicing of those lines is very important, as well as the rehearsal of the exact arrhythmic pedaling, geared primarily to the ear. “What do you hear? What are you saying?” should be the primary leitmotives. The pedaling will grow in ability and sensitivity as soon as it is placed in the ear and not in the ankle! In non-specified pedaling sections it is still necessary to use small dashes of half-pedal to maintain sound quality and some durational effects.

9. Learn the piece in small increments, singing [in solfege?] melody lines, and counting/conducting in standard patterns. Play skeleton versions by section [melody
and bass lines separate and together assembling the final product when both the larger scheme as well as the small details are confident in the mind and “lie well in the hand”. Basic mental confidence reduces the tension of playing and increases the likelihood of successful performances.

10. The student needs to relate the musical experience to imagined emotional states and events. Lyrical moments? Mystical? Sudden apparitions? A sensitive and gifted performer will require less stimulus. A more inhibited or analytical student may need the imaginative elements spelled out in greater detail. They may open up emotionally as a result.

**Etude #2**

1. I first encountered this piece at the Montreal International Competition in 1976 when it was selected as the imposed work after the commissioned work [ from Jacques Hetu ] was not available in time. I remember hearing several first round contestants including the eventual prizewinners Eteri Andjaparidze, Nicolai Demidenko, Naum Grubert and Gerhard Opitz, performing Etude No 2.... played as never again, by brilliant, superbly schooled young pianists full of passion and the desire to win.

3. As there is considerable passage-learning involved it is important to have a hand and wrist technique which is comfortable playing the 32nd note cascades b. 38-40; b. 44-47 and the repetition at b. 132. The rest of the piece rests comfortably in the adult hand and poses problems of text-learning, rather than virtuosic display. The cascades must be approached slowly and comfortably, and memorized immediately. I would urge students to practice blind over a period of time to maximize their tactile sense of these riffs.

4. When the student has the physical capability, is mature and musically capable [quality of ear, learning capacity, ability for focused work ] of learning it with reasonable mental agility I would assign this quite happily. In addition, there are students who have all these qualities yet display a certain temerity[ technical, emotional ] of execution which could not survive a successful learning of Etude 2.

5. To give these specific bars the surprise tonal effect of the 3rd finger martellato I followed the direction 33333; however, to give the student respite from these repeated impacts, I used other fingering for the bars in which Morel left me that option, deliberately or not.

6. Playing hands separately, verbally describe the harmonic basis of each chord, ignoring the spelling when necessary. Memorize by short section. Gradually add the “dissonant” notes to the chords. Sing, conduct, count while playing a skeleton of the melodic lines.

Appendix 1D – Jacques Després Responses

Since his debut with the Montréal Orchestra Symphony Orchestra in 1978, Dr. Després has appeared as soloist with many other symphony orchestras under the baton of conductors including Otto-Werner Muller, Franz-Paul Decker, Jens Nygaard and Simon Streatfield. He also shared the stage, in gala concerts, with internationally renowned pianists Radu Lupu, Lazar Berman, Ilana Vered, David Owen Norris, and Nicolai Petrov. Dr. Després' tours have included numerous recitals in Canada aired on CBC radio, and performances at summer festivals in North America.

General Overview

1. I believe that the interest in these works stems from many facts. First, they are very attractive works. Second, they are very well-written and effective. Third, although Morel uses idiomatic musical treatment from the 20th century, these pieces are quite conservative (one only has to think that Boulez had already written his first two piano sonatas and was about to complete the third one). Another reason could be that the length of the etudes makes them fit very easily in a recital program, a program for competition or audition purpose, particularly when a Canadian work is required.

2. Although I am not that familiar with the whole piano literature of solo piano works by Canadian composers, these etudes occupy a unique place. They are particularly exciting the performer and listener alike.

3. Certainly although now one can find more works from Canadian composers that have some of the same appeal (Piano-Soleil by Gougeon for example).

Etude #1

1. I played the first etude once for a doctoral recital at SUNY Stony Brook in the late eighties.

2. With the first etude, a pianist has to become a colorist. The indications given at the opening are telling of the mood of the piece. In addition, in measure 22, there seems to be another clue of the character of the piece with a very strong allusion to Debussy’s Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l’air du soir. From there, one can make a direct link with the poem Harmonies du soir by Baudelaire (not to mention Liszt’s composition). In other words, not only do you have many opportunities to experiment for a very coloristic performance, you have references of previous works that can help establish a very poetic approach. It is an etude, but as with Debussy’s prelude and Liszt Harmonies du soir, there is more that meets the eyes.

4. Nowadays, a pianist with sizeable hands can learn this etude very at an early age. On the other hand, it is a bit more difficult to render a worthwhile performance without a certain amount of imagination and maturity. The pianist becomes quite the creator in
a performance and she or he has to adjust to the surroundings and quality of the instrument. A certain amount of performing experience can only help.

6. I was very faithful to his fingerings. I might not be anymore.

7. Of course pedaling is an issue. In situations such as the ones presented in this etude, I only have two advices: your ears must be your guide and be prepared to change some of the well-prepared pedaling planning from your practicing in your performance. In other words, a flexible approach is very useful.

8. Eventually, this piece is not all that hard to memorize if one ultimately plays it “by ear.” It takes a while but the colors have to be treated as such without too much analysis when in played in public. A musical line will help find a very healthy sense of direction.

Etude #2

1. Although I have not played this etude in about 2 decades, I did perform them for about 10 years in various settings: examinations, auditions for scholarships requiring a Canadian work, competitions and recitals. I have yet to have a student learn it but it might change this year.

2. M. Morel did hear me play the second etude at a competition in 1980. At a subsequent dinner following the competition, he indicated that he liked my performance (he was quite pleased). He had no suggestion. He was a very succinct person or he was at that specific function.

3. As I did not have a student performing it, it is difficult to answer. Nonetheless, if a student has a virtuoso personality, the temperamental élan required will help solve many difficulties. In addition, a rhythmical integrity is essential. The accents are very important and the rhythmical strength is quite a challenge.

4. A student needs to learn how to pace him/herself. The indications from the composer must be followed and by being that respectful to the composer’s markings, the performance will hold together very well. It is very well-written (very clearly as a matter of fact).

5. This percussive element is extremely important. His fingering is very good but I would not have any objections to a different fingerling as long as the implied musical effect is achieved.

6. The parallelism of the textural chords helps with the memorization. In addition, the thumb melody is a safe melodic guide for memorization.

8. It is a fabulous piece that has become a classic. It also will keep be as attractive for many years to come. It is aging very well.
Appendix 1E – Karin Di Bella Responses

Dr. Di Bella brings to her performing a strong interest in historical and theoretical issues. Areas of expertise include contemporary Canadian repertoire, music and politics of the 1920s and 1930s, and historical instruments and techniques of the 18th and 19th centuries. She is very active as a soloist, collaborator, coach, clinician, lecturer, and adjudicator, and is a member of the college of examiners of the Royal Conservatory of Music. Concerto appearances include orchestras in St. Catharines, St. Louis, Kitchener, and North Bay. She performs regularly with percussionist Devon Fornelli, cellist Gordon Cland and violinist Xiaoing Li. Dr. Di Bella teaches piano lessons, master classes, accompanying, and piano pedagogy at Brock University, where she is Chair of Piano.

General Overview

1. - effective use of the color capabilities of the piano
   - atmospheric effects (1st one)
   - driving percussive rhythms (2nd one)
   - length – not too long
   - great contrast between the two pieces
   - technically accessible
   - “brilliant but not difficult” for their technical level

2. Their longevity certainly attests to their appeal. “Rating” is difficult without some sort of means of knowing exactly what it is you’re trying to measure. There are certainly some excellent works by Canadians in this time frame. I would certainly say the Etudes sit among my top 15 favorite works of this time by Canadians.

3. Yes, especially the 2nd one. See the reasons in question #1, particularly having to do with effective use of the piano, technical accessibility, and length.

Etude #1

1. I’ve only taught this one once, and have never played it. I needed a work for a student who likes contemporary sonorities but who did not have a lot of technical facility (weak fingers). I also used this work as a way to help the student work on memorizing contemporary idioms. In addition to being a study in colour, it proved to be an excellent study in voicing and phrasing.

2. My student did perform this work in a student recital (with other students). He had a difficult time at first relating to the “idea” of the piece but eventually was able to create a character that spoke to him. In the end he found it a satisfying experience.

4. I would give this to a student who has some level of musical maturity and who has the patience and intelligence to learn the score carefully. Also the student must have a desire to learn non-tonal works and be comfortable working within that idiom. I
would not thrust this piece upon a student who does not possess these qualities. Technical facility is not a big priority, but there are many issues that can be developed, as mentioned above.

5. "Flourish" sections of course demanded correct fingering, choreographic rehearsal, slow practice in rhythmic patterns. Voicing involved getting used to where the melody actually is, by playing just the melody and getting used to how that sounds, then adding in the outer part(s) of the chords; right hand alone with pedal for melodic continuity and attention. Phrasing can only be worked on once the melody is figured out, and was approached in a similar was as voicing in chordal sections.

6. My students are all adults, so the "developing hand" issue does not really apply. I do like that fingering, but I can't remember what the student ended up using.

7. I've already mentioned this generally. I taught this piece a few years ago and can't remember specific details, but I do know that we worked a lot on shadings, flutter, partial pedal. I don't recall whether we used the sostenuto or not. I probably tried to convince them not to, rather to use the pedal shadings instead. The specifics elude me right now.

8. It is precisely because of the complicated layout that the student should memorize it, and do so as they're learning the piece, not after it's learned. The complications with the reading hold students back from learning the work as quickly as they otherwise might.

**Etude #2**

1. I've taught it a couple of times and I played it for a recorded competition for a scholarship which I ended up winning. I learned it in a very short time, but it was so effective a piece that the jury was impressed with the performance.

3. Rhythm: The syncopated left hand was difficult for one of the students. We did the usual things with ignoring the tie to repeat the down beat note, walking and vocalizing, tapping both hands, etc. Getting in and out of the triplet subdivision was hard for most, and we worked on this by putting the metronome on the quarter note, and eventually the half note, to check accuracy. The flourishes were approached the same way as those in #1. Voicing and phrasing like #1. Different touches for staccato, accent, etc. were approached through arm choreography.

4. Again, I only teach university students. This piece worked very well for a student who is a bit shy and needed a piece to force her to play out, and she loved it. Another student who plays very rambunctiously and who is very rhythmic ended up not being able to handle the rhythmic demands of the work. In the end, it takes a student who has the hand strength to be able to bring across the emotional demands of the work.
5. Some students did the 3 and some students didn’t. The ones who memorized the piece early in their learning process used the 3 because it makes a better sound. Otherwise accuracy was an issue.
Appendix 1F – Lynn Stodola Responses

As a soloist, Ms. Stodola has appeared on the Symphony Nova Scotia Mozart Series with Maestro George Tintner, and with several orchestras in the U.S. including the Chicago Civic Orchestra, the Arkansas Philharmonic and the North Shore (Chicago) Philharmonic. She has performed with her husband, violinist Philippe Djokic, in major cities throughout the United States, Canada, England, Belgium, Holland and Yugoslavia. They have recorded As a soloist, Ms. Stodola has appeared on the Symphony Nova Scotia Mozart Series with Maestro Georg Tintner, and with several orchestras in the U.S. including the Chicago Civic Orchestra, the Arkansas Philharmonic and the North Shore (Chicago) Philharmonic. She has performed with her husband, violinist Philippe Djokic, in major cities throughout the United States, Canada, England, Belgium, Holland and Yugoslavia. They have recorded frequently for CBC radio and television. Ms. Stodola has performed regularly in music festivals in Alaska (Juneau Jazz and Classics), and the Ottawa Chamber Music Festival. She is currently Associate Professor of Music and Department Chair at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and director of the "Chamber Music at Dalhousie" concert series.

General Overview

1. These works are easily accessible to both the performer and the listener in terms of their tonal colors and structures. No.1 with its chromaticism and neo-impressionistic textures allows great freedom and scope of imagination. No.2 contains those allowances in the "B" section alongside the barbaric rhythmic and technical thrusts of the outer "A" sections. No. 2 is an audience barnstormer that works when strategically placed in a recital program or as a fine encore on its own, the quintessential "Canadian "requirement in some competitions/grant applications, and, most effectively when coupled with No.1.

2. They definitely have their merit, particularly in comparison with other more tonally structured works. My sense is that they are, today, less likely to be programmed by current established artists in favor of more recent or complex works. But that in no way diminishes their importance and value within the Canadian composition circuit. They are among my favorites.

3. I think these are good transition works for students who have not explored a great deal of contemporary works...they are like extensions of Debussy/Ravel (No.1) and Bartok (No.2). They offer opportunities to demonstrate imagination/colors as well as technique.

Etude #1

1. Actually, I haven't taught this one (or perhaps I forgot someone in the past). But I've played it and programmed it (with the 2nd) at least twice.

2. N/A, since I haven't actually taught this one, but I would think that this would be a good example for teaching "layerings" of sounds and melodies within a large tonal canvas. As well, the multiple staffing with their various functions is a good "reading
and deciphering" example.

3. The student would have to have a good rhythmic foundation (yes, even in this slower, lyrical setting) for the purpose of feeling and establishing pulse and maintaining rhythmic consistency. This is definitely for the advanced student who is not timid in their expressiveness; they must be good readers and memorizers with a fairly fluid technique. Unless this has changed, I'll never, ever understand why this was listed in Grade X and No.2 in ARCT. At least that was the case some years back (I'll look this up...). It definitely is not to be taken lightly or considered at a lower level than No.2.

7. Again, n/a in terms of teaching, but I, myself, followed the prescribed fingering for that opening ascension. I don't see the clustering of notes here being that ungainly, but if such a problem presented itself the 3rd demisemiquaver (f#g#) could be split between r and l thumb, resuming the next 2 with the rh, and finishing off the ascension with L.H. over. It works.

8. I don't really see that much need for the UC as the tonal clusters and groupings seem destined to create a foggy overlapping effect within the established basses (3rd and 4th pages especially). One of course has to use good judgment on the 2nd page where the pedal has been clearly left out of the score, yet it's needed, I feel, in that dolce subito section, for example. This work teaches the student to listen to the underlying tonal units for pedal guidance and to avoid the temptation to (over)pedal (change too frequently) for fear of overlapping. No easy answer to that one. Much of the memorization here is visual on the keyboard; patterns from the clusters. One could also isolate the sustained long melodic line (sans chords) in certain areas to retain the line/direction. This would be of benefit should the clusters go astray in a performance, the principle line could still be maintained.

Etude #2

1. Taught it; Played it myself

3. Descending triplets in intervals; had to experiment with various fingerings - sometimes a more crude fingering worked better than a more refined one. I've seen it work fingerling these in groups of two rather than three. A Tempo 2/4 pg. 4 - students have difficulty with the speed, leaps, cross-overs, etc. They usually read this wrong at first. Visual landmarks help.

4. Definitely advanced. But I've seen various levels of advancement have success with this. I've also heard some good fakers get away with it.

5. I thought about that - I know it's his marking, but I didn't always execute it as such. I think the gesture of using both hands in the beginning is quite effective letting the lh take over in the last bar (approx.). But the same token, the subsequent triplets with that standard fingering seems out of place in comparison - I like this to be played with a more barbaric fingering, as in the beginning to inject a bit of brutality (or to keep it
going).

6. Similar to my comments above...to know the train of thought melodically and to identify it in practice; have a good visual knowledge of the patterns...often just knowing that pattern and its "feel" (shape) guides much better than trying to remember every stack of notes and their spelling.

7. Just "nail it". It is "sec"...so just the velocity and it being the bottom - most key is inviting a thud of some sort. Nothing nice about this ending.
Appendix 1G – Timothy Steeves Responses

Canadian pianist Timothy Steeves has performed extensively as soloist and chamber musician in both North America and Europe. As one half of Duo Concertante with violinist Nancy Dahn, Duo Concertante has released two commercial recordings on the Montreal-based ATMA Classique label: ‘a deux (music of Ravel, Beethoven, Brahms and Stravinsky) which was nominated for Best Classical Recording at the 2000 ECMA’s, and, most recently, Of Heart and Homeland (music of Janacek, Dvorak, de Falla, Parker, Smetana). Critics have described their playing on their latest recording as “vigorous, passionate... red-blooded and romantic...” (Rick Phillips, CBC’s Sound Advice), and praised the “exceptional warmth and intimacy of its presentation” (The Ottawa Citizen). The Duo champions new Canadian music and its next recording, scheduled for release in spring of 2003, will include works written especially for them by some of the nation’s finest composers.

General Overview

1. I think the main reason is that Morel clearly borrows from other composers (Debussy, Messiaen, Prokofiev) which makes these etudes sound somewhat familiar and accessible. Take, for example, the Beckwith etudes for piano which, I think, are better pieces but have a more personal style and for this reason are perhaps not as popular.

2. One of the best sets in the Canadian repertoire.

3. They are very effective. Number 2 is a real crowd pleaser.

4. I have yet to hear an outstanding recording, though I have heard Andre Laplante do them live and they were excellent. He hasn’t recorded them unfortunately.

Etude #1

1. It hasn’t and I tend to leave it alone, not because I don’t think it a good piece of music, but because I find the second far more compelling. No. 2 is also the perfect length. In general I and my students have used No. 2 for juries, auditions and competitions, where time is limited. No. 2 is quite a substantial etude and there was no need or time to play No. 1. I either would use the second Morel or some of the Beckwith etudes. These are far shorter and very contrasting which allowed me to play two or three of them in a competition program. I’m really not very familiar with the first Morel and don’t feel that I can really answer questions about it satisfactorily.

Etude 2

3. I find the big issues are rhythmic clarity, sensible use of the pedal and voicing in the B section. If it goes too fast it can be a mess. It is also important to really pay attention to the dynamics. I find most students play it way too fast. It often sounds way too heavy and plain messy. One of the great things about Laplante’s performance
was that he did have great speed, but his performance light and had a super dance feel. His voicing was excellent and he didn’t “slam” the chords. It really sparkled.

4. Emotionally I don’t find this piece to be too much of a challenge for young students. They tend to get it. I find they don’t feel intimidated by it at all and are eager to practice it. I think this allows them to open up and really go for it. They relate to it quite well maybe because it does have a bit of a “pop/modern” sound. A good performance of the piece, however, really requires an excellent technique. This is the big challenge for young players.

5. I didn’t. I tried it but couldn’t make it work. I thought it was just one of those composer things.

6. Sectionalize it. It takes a lot of time to memorize it well.

7. As short as possible. Don’t play it too loudly and lift the pedal almost before you play the last note!
Appendix 1H – Kristina Szutor Responses

Kristina Szutor holds a masters degree from the Juilliard School of Music and a doctorate in piano performance from the University of British Columbia. She has concertized throughout Canada and in Switzerland, Spain, New York, Washington D.C. and most recently, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. She can be heard frequently on CBC radio both locally on Musicraft as well as nationally on shows like Two New Hours, Music for a While, Take Five and In Performance. She has a CD of solo piano music entitled Bookends in Time which features music from the beginning and the end of the twentieth century and she can also be heard on soprano Jane Leibel’s CD entitled Songs and Sonnets as well as Newfoundland composer Michael Parker’s CD Lyre. Voyage to Canada, her newest collaborative CD with colleague, soprano Carolyn Schiller is soon due for release. Kristina has been a juror for Canada’s Juno Awards as well the Eckhard-Grammate competition for excellence in contemporary music. Kristina is also a recipient of the University’s prestigious President’s Award for Outstanding Research.

Etude 2

1. Morel’s Etude #2 has been a staple of my teaching and performing repertoire ever since I first heard it almost 15 years ago now. I can rely on it to be a certain hit with most students, even those who have limited experience with 20th century repertoire.

3. I find that the first hurdle is the rhythmic organization of the first bar. I’ve never quite understood myself what the flagged notes in brackets, especially the extra sixteenth is meant to convey. And is this really in 3/8 in relation to the following system? Seems to me that it’s a quarter pulse that stays constant between the first two systems and so the first bar is really in 3/4 not 3/8. Technically, I find that the arrache octaves usually don’t pose a problem unless a student gets too tight too soon. “Crack the whip at the end” I often say, and before that, stay loose. Next, the idea of a glissando between chords is unfamiliar to most students, though once it’s understood what is required, it’s not really problematical to play. The next recurring issue perhaps is the repeated use of the 3rd finger for the percussive LH introduction in the second line as well as the following RH theme. Most every student I’ve had has wanted to ignore this directive in order to finger the LH with thumb on the e flat in that second system. I usually say, well that works OK in terms of just playing the notes but listen to the sound when it’s played with that single finger! I’ll play it for them and then get them to play it and they can’t believe what a difference it makes. It’s a great deal more percussive and martele of course with that 3rd finger and also consistently so. With different fingers, the sound quality varies much more. After they hear what this “tool” can do and are convinced of the need for its use we’ll usually discuss a way to brace that 3d finger using support from a closed hand position as well as support from the thumb. This is comfortable for most students.

The next persistent technical challenge seems to be the fingering of the double interval passage (5ths and 6ths) on the second page. This is tricky. I haven’t really found one fingering for this passage that suits all or even most students. Hand size and flexibility both play a part in what students find comfortable here. What I’ll
usually do is start with the last triplet to eighth figure; (B#-A-G-A in the soprano), establish what feels good here and then work backwards, that way the student is always coming into an area of comfort at the end of a passage that can tend to get tight or fatigued. If there are less than comfortable fingerings or movements to accommodate then let them be at the beginning or the middle.

The 32<sup>nd</sup> passage in the Plus Modere section is made easier to play for students by helping them understand the pattern of the pitch content. After discovering that the passage is composed of all perfect fourths we’ll block each individual fourth, walking our way down the passage, noting where the pattern begins again (and again). Then we’ll do it by blocking all four notes in one group, this time also noting the intervallic distance between the upper starting notes of each group—seeing that they form a diminished seventh in their outline: G-E-C#-Bb. Finally we’ll open it up and play the passage in single notes. This should clarify and smooth out the passage of notes coming downwards, the only move left to incorporate at this point being that of the thumb which flexibly links the end of one to the beginning of the next with a little semi-circular shape.

The next prominent issue in the piece is helping the student hear and navigate their way through the central chordal section. We’ll usually begin working on this by just taking out the melody line played by the thumb of the right hand and get to know this very well without attaching any other voices to it at first. We’ll sing the melody together, get to know it as a lovely tune. Once they have this firmly in their ear, we’ll attach the soprano to it noting that the interval between the bottom and the top is either a sixth or a fifth. Once they have this outer shell in place and their ear on board to guide the movement of the lower voice, then it’s usually not too hard to insert the other voices. Seeing the phrase structure as basically an eight bar idea with an extended little cadential section (from the piu accel) leading to a repetition of the opening pattern up an octave is a relief to all! (I guess I’m answering your question #6 here with all this.)
Appendix II - Charles Foreman Responses

Charles Foreman, Pianist, teacher, b East Chicago, Ind. 11 May 1949; B MUS (Indiana) 1971, Artist Diploma (Toronto) 1972, M MUS (Toronto) 1973. Before moving to Canada in 1972 Foreman studied piano with Rudolf Reuter in Chicago and Abbey Simon at Juilliard. At the University of Toronto his teachers were Anton Kuerti and Katharina Wolpe. He made his debut with the Chicago Civic Orchestra in 1972, playing Brahms's Piano Concerto No. 2. Foreman was twice awarded Canada Council grants to study and perform in Europe. In 1975 he won the Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels.

General Overview

1. These are appealing works in the tradition of Prokofieff or early Messiaen, expressing 20th century moods without (completely) abandoning tonality. They are also fun to play, with original textures (I am thinking primarily of the middle section of No. 2), and, like Liszt or certain works by Kabalevsky or Prokofieff, sound more difficult than they actually are. There is also an element of jazz influence in No. 2 (the slower parts of the outer sections).

2. Clearly, this work is a Canadian classic (if there is such a thing). They also speak in a reasonably contemporary voice for the 1950's (comparing them to works by Samuel Barber, Aaron Copland or Rodion Shchedrin from the same decade) so they are not out of place in a wider-than-Canadian context, though they certainly do not match works by Stockhausen, Boulez, or Takemitsu in terms of expanding the sound world of the piano.

3. I would: see answer to No. 1. As well, there are things to be learned specifically from these pieces: using Morel's fingering for the main theme of No. 2 is quite a useful trick, properly balancing and creating the pedaled/non-pedaled contrasts of the middle section of this piece and all of No. 1 is excellent preparation for some of the more ambitious works (Vingt Regards, some of the Preludes) of Messiaen, and so on.


Etude #1

1. I have personally performed this etude frequently (always with its companion), and recorded it. I have also taught it a number of times to students.

3. This etude is a great bridge between the sound-world of Debussy, Ravel, and Poulenc and that of Messiaen, and I have used it most often pedagogically in this way.

4. This depends entirely on the student. I have used it both as a "true" study (to improve lightness of touch, speed, and aural perception) with no intention of it being
performed (i.e. assigning it well “over the head” of a particular student) and also as an effective concert piece.

5. Learning to play really soft and fast is the obvious challenge, along with acquiring more sensitivity to a quite sophisticated harmonic language. I suggest pp finger staccato practice for the former (which is actually played more legato and with more wrist/hand involvement), and very slow practice for the latter.

6. I personally play that opening set of seconds l.r.r.l.r., avoiding the thumb on two notes: this improves my speed and control. This is a useful “takeover” for some students, but not all. I also use 532, not 531, in the right hand Db major chord in m. 8: this helps me bring out the successive c-flats with the thumb. I use the second finger rather than the third of the left hand on the top d-flat on p. 6 (Berandol), system 3, m. 3; in the very next measure (bottom system) my r.h. fingering on the final quarter note is 541, not 531, and I then am free to use the third finger on the final eighth note. These changes are mere questions of comfort in legato, whether it is produced with the pedal or more with the finger (I fall into the finger legato camp every time possible). I do use Morel’s fingerings on m. 2 of p. 7 (the l.h. 21 on f#/e is brilliant, and should not be reversed!), but take the next set of seconds r.l.l.r., with the l.h. on the single notes, as indicated. Again, this is a question of comfort, and works well for me and some of my students: others will prefer the equally practical fingering as given in the score.

7. I do not use middle pedal, as I think Morel wants the complex sounds created by the right pedal. I do remove the soft pedal on the pickup to m. 12, and replace it eight bars before the end. The depth of pedaling is, of course, always an issue, as is the possibility of flutter-pedaling. I also find the non-use of pedal very important to the color palate of this piece, where indicated. This is, of course, a wonderful piece to use to explore pedaling possibilities, and – again – a good bridge between the styles of Debussy, Poulenc, Ibert and Honegger on one hand and the music of Messiaen, Hétu, Dutilleux, and Boulez on the other.

8. Sorry, I am blessed with a good memory, and am frankly not a lot of help in this regard. Of course, musical memory is a mix of the intellectual, the habitual (motor or finger), and the aural, and weaknesses tend to show themselves in the latter category: students must really hear the sonorities, individual sounds as well as the complexities created with the pedal.

Etude #2

3. The key technical issue here is rapid movement of the hand, whether in the frequently encountered descending hand-over-hand arpeggio (as at the end of m. 1), the use of exclusively finger 3 in the main theme (m. 2 ff.), the position shifts necessary in the double-note passages, or even the chords of the middle section. I recommend practicing conglomerations of notes in one hand position (playing the opening descending arpeggio as four-note chords, for example, or playing the double notes on
p. 9, system 1 – 2 as four-note chords where the fingering allows) and focusing on the most efficient movement of the hand from one position to another. I also recommend various types of voicing practice which involve playing notes with one finger or one part of the hand and touching, but not playing, the other notes, then reversing the procedure, etc.

4. Obviously only an efficient technician who can play at least some of the middling difficult Chopin and Liszt etudes should attempt this piece, otherwise the musical and emotional content will suffer at the hands of too much focus on technique alone. While this piece could be a challenge for a particular student, it should eventually be fun and easy for them to play (assuming that it’s fun to “play the bad guy,” or should I say “l’homme brutal?”).

5. I play the whole passage with finger 3, right up to the slurs in m. 3 of p. 9. However, I find some students just can’t manage this up to tempo, and I have fingered the passage for them, insisting always, however, that the hand and arm be involved in the playing of each note, to produce the powerful, percussive sound that Morel evidently wants.

6. See my comments on memory above. Again, I don’t find it difficult, possibly because of the originality and uniqueness of the sounds (despite the obvious debt to Messiaen, Jolivet, et al). I have much more trouble memorizing a Bach fugue!

7. As with all thuds, it disappears when attacked from the surface of the key.

8. No, good job again. This has been more fun and less work than I feared.
Appendix 1J – James Parker Responses

Celebrated by audiences and critics alike, he has performed with every major Canadian orchestra, and has given recitals across North America. James studied with Lee Kum-Sing at the Vancouver Academy of Music and at the University of British Columbia, where he received his Bachelor of Music degree in 1985. For over a decade, James attended the Banff Centre, studying piano with Marek Jablonski, and chamber music with Lorand Fenyves. James then went to the Juilliard School in New York, studying with legendary pedagogue Adele Marcus, receiving his Master of Music degree in 1987, and his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in 1992. During this period, James was a finalist and prize winner in the Montréal International and Gina Bachauer International Piano Competitions. Dr. Parker was an Associate Professor at Wilfrid Laurier University from 1996 until this past year, when he joined the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto as the Rupert E. Edwards Chair in Piano Performance. Jamie is also a member of the Gryphon Trio, one of Canada’s preeminent chamber music ensembles. Well known to CBC listeners, they have been nominated for Juno Awards, have toured many parts of the world, maintain a residency at Music Toronto, commission works from Canada’s best composers, and have just celebrated their 10th Anniversary season.

General Overview

1. For me, what I loved about learning the second Etude as a young student was the great rhythmic pulse in it, and getting to really get into the percussive potential of the low end of the keyboard.

2. I think there is a really visceral quality with Morel’s music that musicians and audiences alike respond to, and the Etudes have already stood the test of time (in a relatively short span of history, granted, but so few Canadian works can be talked about with familiarity by different generations of pianists.) I would rank these works as in the top 10 piano compositions since 1950.

3. The Morel Etudes combine many pianistic skills. The first one requires an imaginative sense of tone color and quality, and the second one requires a powerful rhythmic drive – making them ideal student works for a variety of performance situations.

Etude #1

1. I teach this Etude on occasion, but have not performed it.

3. As stated above, “The first one requires an imaginative sense of tone color and quality.” Also, subtle shades of dynamic contrasts are important here.

4. In the first year or two of an undergraduate degree. There are more recent works that I prefer to teach in later years.
7. This etude does provide a good opportunity to explore layers and levels of pedaling. Sustaining bass notes while changing higher harmonies is always good for pianists to practice.

8. I always encourage students to try to memorize pieces from the very end of the piece, and work their way backwards. This helps make up for the fact that we learn pieces from the beginning, and as we proceed through a piece, we have the sense of going from the more familiar to the less familiar. Memorizing from the end of a piece helps make up for this.

Etude #2

1. I enjoyed playing this piece when I was a high school student. I haven’t performed it since then though.

3. Maintaining rhythmic pulse and accuracy is always a challenge in this piece. If a student can’t play it with rhythmic accuracy, a dreaded metronome must be used until the pulse is felt correctly.

4. I think this work is most suitable to late high school and early university level students. As mentioned, it helps stretch young musician’s emotive range, and pushes them to explore their own emotions.

6. I would again suggest that students start memorizing this section from the end of the section.

7. Frankly, I don’t mind a percussive thud at the end of this work. It’s only important that the performer doesn’t do either of two things: - play the key so quickly that it doesn’t sound, - play the last night without enough volume. Beauty of sound is not a concern here, in my opinion.
Appendix 1K – Ireneus Zuk Responses

Ireneus Zuk is a graduate of the Conservatoire de Musique de Québec and McGill University in Montreal, the Royal College of Music in London, and the Juilliard School in New York. He received the Doctor of Musical Arts Degree from the Peabody Conservatory of John Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD, where he studied with Leon Fleisher.

General Overview

67 years may seem long and yet these works are hardly "contemporary" at this point. They were never avant-garde in my opinion, but what makes them durable is the composer's wonderful manipulation and toying with sound(s). And as to length of survival - good works last! I would recommend the works for performance by students because even if they are not always entirely successful in solving the problems, they learn a great deal from the experience of trying to solve and perhaps the next time, they will succeed. I don't know the recordings and I prefer my students NOT to listen but to form their own understanding of the work before listening.

Etude #1

I have found that the first etude can cause more problems to some younger students than the second because a greater level of musicianship is required. The study is not as showy and the student has to work at levels and singing sound and projection. Control here is paramount. As with any work I try to assign these almost before students are ready because of the thrill of seeing them grow with the work.

Etude #2

The second study is better for more advanced players - you may know that in one of the first Montreal competitions a very large number of foreign contestants chose this work and the interpretations were as diverse as can be imagined. That proves that it is a good work because most of the performances were convincing irrespective of speeds chosen. It also permits the player to show personality. Again as implied in the title it is good for sound resources and also for brilliance. The greatest difficulty that I think about here is consistency in tempo and maintaining a pulse through the syncopated accents. I never insist on a fingering but I like this one as it prevents excessive speed?

The last note problem is also partly the piano used - I always would prefer to her a longer more resonant sound in spite of the indication.
Appendix 2 – Discography

There are five recordings of the Deux Etudes de Sonorité by important Canadian pianists which are presently in circulation. They are listed below:


Appendix 3 – Annotated Score

Francois Morel

Appendix 3

ETUDE DE EXPRESSITE N° 1

Réveur, Presque lent
Sans-rigueur, M.M. d = 50 circa

A

(Ancr.uis f (pre court)

Anacr.uis (pre court)

m. 2

m. 4

Acclam melöy majo-l (Concerted Work) espr.

A

avec plus d'élan et Rubato

(Ric...)

Acclam melöy majo-l (Concerted Work) espr.

(Ric...)

Acclam melöy majo-l (Concerted Work) espr.

(Ric...)

Acclam melöy majo-l (Concerted Work) espr.

(Ric...)

Acclam melöy majo-l (Concerted Work) espr.

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Acclam melöy majo-l (Concerted Work) espr.

(Ric...)

Acclam melöy majo-l (Concerted Work) espr.
Emphasis on the melodic motion.

Dolce sensibile

Dolce subito
ÉTUDE DE SONORITÉ NO. 2

François Morel

1. Vif (d') Introductory

2. (Presque) Vif et Joyeux (d') MM d' 104 (circa)

3. (Percuté) Ostinato

4. (martelé) Pianissimo (without Pedal)

5. glisser tout naturellement des touches noires aux touches blanches, sans Pédale.

6. slip over freely from black keys to white Keys, without Pedal.

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Le main inclinée vers le pouce qui chante la mélodie.
Hand inclined toward the thumb to sing out the melody.