

Analysis of Rachmaninoff's Twenty-four Piano Preludes and Research on Language Characteristics of Music

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Abstract: Based on Russian masters of music of the romantic period, Rachmaninoff's 24 preludes representative works as the research object, from the aspects of style and music language, from the whole to the local music background of the 24 preludes to analysis and research, better artistic and technical point of view, interpret the music style of Rachmaninoff, in order to let the players to play the music have a more profound understanding, appropriate performance works contains more meaningful.

1. Introduction

Sergei Vassilievich Rachmaninoff is one of the outstanding representatives of the Russian and even the world music industry from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century. He is a composer, pianist and conductor. He was born in the most brilliant era of music art in Russia. At the age of 4, he learned to play the piano. At the age of 9, he entered music college and began to learn systematic music knowledge from famous teachers. The war and exile in the second half of his life, the unrest and tension of social unrest, and the cultural differences in foreign countries make his works full of strong personal feelings and the national characteristics of his native Russia. As Russian romantic composers, is also a representative of the Russian national music sent, his creative form which includes many genres, such as symphony orchestra, chorus, piano works and art song, etc., in his piano works is more outstanding achievement, his music touching, easy to sing along to, such as epic grand music style, he is good at combining social status and personal practical life, emotion, music thought embodies the Russian bourgeois democracy thoughts in the society at that time, especially in learning the style characteristics of Russian folk songs, full of full-bodied Russia national style and the love of the motherland land, Fully expressed the rich emotional dimension and profound music connotation.

2. Introduction to the Creation of the Prelude

Preludes, as a genre of piano sketches, were discovered and inherited by Bach. After Chopin's time, no matter from the performance technical angle or music content undoubtedly, the dominant position of the prelude is more obvious. Due to Chopin's successful creation, the preludes gradually developed, and by the Rachmaninoff period, the preludes had been more and more concerned and favored by composers. As one of the representative works in Rachmaninoff's creation, the prelude undoubtedly represents his music style to a large extent. The whole set of preludes consists of 24 pieces in different major and minor keys. On the basis of drawing lessons from the works of Bach and Chopin, the preludes are endowed with deeper significance and broader creative space. It has gone through three creative periods, lasting 28 years. From the creation of the first famous song "Prelude in C-sharp minor", the later creation to its 10 preludes, cousin and teacher at the end of the Rachmaninoff after returning to the motherland after creation of 13 pieces, 24 preludes no matter from beautiful harmony of the melody and the rhythm of the accurate, delicate and playing techniques, each capital represents a unique moral and artistic glamour. Although the length is not long, the motivation is simple, but each theme is controversial and profound, Rachmaninoff seems to

shape a three-dimensional network, each piece of work has compound lines at the same time, but also has various levels, as if every note in the heart of the story of Rachmaninoff. The whole set of works not only inherits the creation of previous composers, but also has his own unique innovation, among which the Russian music school is melancholy and deep, but there is no lack of strong national music characteristics of tension, which is a finishing touch of Rachmaninoff's creation.

3. Rachmaninoff's Prelude in Music Language

3.1. Rich Symphonic Harmony

In the creation of 24 preludes, on the one hand, Rachmaninoff inherited the traditional harmonic techniques of the classical period, and on the other hand, combined with the romantic harmonic characteristics, added the creative techniques and methods of the Russian national music school. The interweaving of theme and theme, the dialogue between melody and melody, and the intermingling of harmony vertically and horizontally all highlight the rich harmony in Rachmaninoff's music. From the perspective of melody lines, different harmonies set off the melody trend is not completely opposite. Many melodies are even similar, but express different musical thoughts. From the harmony part, the melody dynamic is not intense, but the harmony effect is very rich. Especially Rachmaninoff is good at using non-functional harmonic form, adopt the second three degrees from the mold, level three and five tone turns decoration, and chromatic system techniques such as technique, weaken the tendency of leading tone to the tonic, form different tone chords layer, effect that harmony is the inheritance and innovation of classical and romantic, combining tradition and personality, further enrich the harmonic color of music. In Rachmaninoff's works, the full and thick chords as the supporting texture of the melody are undoubtedly the most direct way to create the magnificent music effect. For example, in the influential work "Prelude in C-sharp minor". As shown in Figure 1, the beginning is the solemn and deep octave motivation and the tight chords built on the chromatic scale, leaving a strong and profound musical idea, which lays the whole music's nervous and tragic mood.

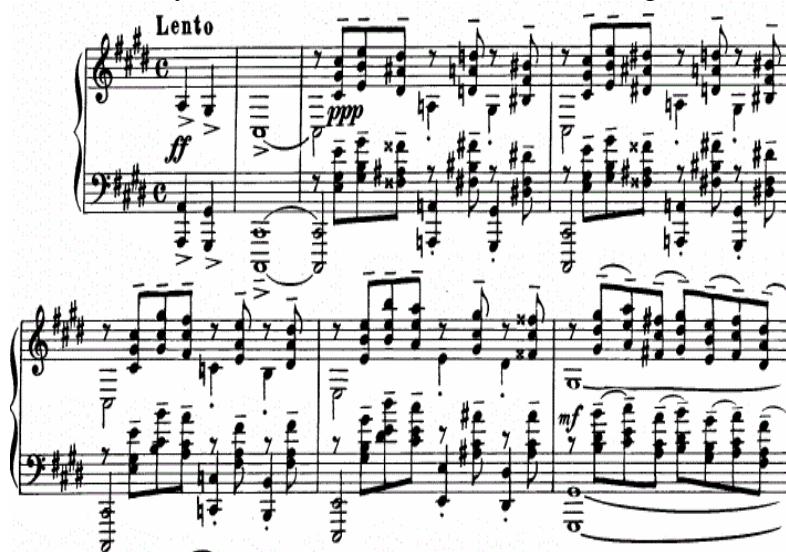


Figure 1 Octave motivation and tight chords lay the tragic tension.

In the Figure 2, Then the spiral harmonic motivation around a main tone forms a rhythm trend that goes up and down in waves, pushing music forward in a smooth way. Such harmony creation technique, although the motive is short, but with the accumulation of short sentences to form a long sentence, so that the emotions in the lingering tension in the atmosphere gradually to the climax, music natural extension ups and downs, so that the swing and turbulence of the emotions to vent to the extreme.



Figure 2 Spiral harmonic motive undulates forward.

Such a roaring effect, in Rachmaninoff's works, is often referred to as "the bell of the heart" because it resembles the ringing of church bells. Heavy machine actively and directly changing motivation in staggered but not disturb each other, mutual echo, between multiple parts and contact closely, like a journey of people who suffered from mental torture, the soul of his fear to die, afraid in despair, hope to have god bless him, but the but again appear so helpless and physical and mental haggard. This is how Rachmaninoff felt when he began to write preludes. This multi-level and multi-angle creative technique not only makes the performance of the piano a typical music effect, but also enhances the ability of the piano to imitate the band, so that the works reach the acoustic effect of the band in terms of acoustics, rich, full and magnificent. Rachmaninoff's exploration of piano acoustics is unprecedented and has exerted a profound influence on modernist music creative techniques.

3.2. Complex Figurative Rhythms

As a representative of a Russian music school, Rachmaninoff has been studying and specializing in the use of folk music in his own works. The characteristic rhythm of folk music in Russia is undoubtedly fully inherited and innovated in the Rachmaninoff's prelude. The sound patterns of the folk dance rhythm, mostly captured with folk native music, show more enthusiasm and bright joy. Several of Rachmaninoff's 24 preludes are scenes of the joyful and joyful life of the people through such a national dance rhythm. In the "Prelude in G minor", there is a rhythm material of national dance music, and it has a Russian-style melody. As shown in Figure 3, the opening theme draws on the rhythm of Russian folk dance. The regular rhythm consisting of eighth notes and sixteenth notes is similar to the footsteps that mimicking the march of the army. It is uniform, bright and clear, with obvious motives. In particular, with the unique law of strength and weakness, the development of the theme is more "dynamic", very energetic, and set off a magnificent momentum.



Figure 3 Drawing on the rhythm of Russian folk dance, the regular rhythm consisting of eighth notes and sixteenth notes.

Later, while the second section repeatedly emphasized the same rhythm of the previous rhythm, it increased the intensity, strengthened the accent in the rhythm, and pushed the music to the first climax. In the middle part, the left-handed voice is like a fluent rhythm and the right-hand chord is like a song-like rhythm. It is complemented by the rhythm, and the beautiful scenery of the motherland seems to appear in front of you. Rachmaninoff's yearning for his motherland came to him. Such as Figure 4.

The image shows a page of sheet music for piano, page 10, containing five staves of musical notation. The music is in common time and consists of measures 35 through 39. Measure 35 starts with a dynamic of $\frac{3}{4}$ and a forte dynamic. Measures 36 and 37 continue with eighth-note patterns. Measure 38 begins with a dynamic of $\frac{2}{4}$ and a piano dynamic. Measure 39 concludes with a dynamic of $\frac{3}{4}$ and a forte dynamic. The score includes various dynamics like ff , poco - rit. , f , pp , and sf . Fingerings such as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 are indicated above the keys. Measure 39 ends with a repeat sign and a double bar line.

Figure 4 The left-handed voice is like a rhythmic rhythm and a right-hand chord like a rhythm.

In the second part of the reproduction section, similar to variations of the theme, a large number

of chords appear, which are still the passionate and firm national rhythms. With the ascending semitones, a large number of dynamic rhythms and skips are combined, making the climax layer upon layer and presenting the passionate emotional color of Rachmaninoff. The seemingly complex rhythm of the whole song vividly reflects the deep feelings of Rachmaninoff. The intense and orderly syncopated rhythm is his call to the motherland, while the undulating arpeggio rhythm is his attachment to the motherland. The chords rhythm is his praise to the motherland. Each phrase is gripping and gives people a strong inner feeling. This is the personal emotion Rachmaninoff wants to express through the rhythm of rich images.

3.3. Sincere Tragic Emotion

At the core of romantic music is the expression of emotion. The music visual sense formed by auditory intuition is the most direct inheritance of romanticism music trend of thought by Rachmaninoff. He once said, 'Music requires me to create and express with my heart. This is the music I want.' If Chopin's prelude is through specific music language to the pursuit of images of music, the Rachmaninoff is through the description of music to music together as a whole, the distinctive music image expressed strong personal feelings, have to the motherland the deep love and miss, there are the inner contradictions and conflicts, and so on in the process of the complex emotions. Throughout Rachmaninoff's age and his life experiences, both our country and he is experiencing the variables, in the situation of social unrest, the people's life in hot water, his body and mind are also hit by the great impact and influence, let his work had to be filled with sincere lost sad and gloomy romantic thoughts, especially the prelude to a melancholy temperament and unique tragic feelings. In the "Prelude in C-sharp Minor", the sound effect of "bell" running through the whole music seems to reveal a gloomy and uneasy mood, outlining a gray space. The whole C-sharp minor is a sorrowful and sad tone, accompanied by a melancholy long sound, and a tightly-packed eighth-note, just as Rachmaninoff was in a foreign country, his confusion about the art direction, and his concern about the status quo of the motherland. No one complained about the helplessness of the heart, every note seemed to be the helplessness of him. Then the mid-tones, which were changed by the theme, gradually became brilliant and bright, until they finally went to victory. The music trend of the whole song, all of which represents the emotional change of Rachmaninoff, leads the audience into the inner world of him. The period of creation of "Prelude in G minor" was in the period when Russia was subjected to Tsarist autocracy and imperialist aggression. The motherland and compatriots suffered. The young Rachmaninoff heard all this. The feeling of powerlessness in a foreign country stirred him up. This song is full of anger. G minor lay a piece of dark tone, compact type with dynamic rhythm and the interval of two degrees, small two degrees are passionate and pessimistic mood like angry storm broke out, the middle interspersed with stretch of melody, seem to see the hope of life, shows that Rachmaninoff was still full of hope about the future, believe that the motherland will usher in a happy life with him. Rachmaninoff's prelude was as full of emotion as himself. These factors are not only the finishing touch, but also the key factors for the abortion of his works.

4. Conclusion

As one of the great masters of the late Romanticism, Rachmaninoff undoubtedly pushed the creation of the prelude to a higher artistic level. This "Twenty-four Piano Preludes", the creative techniques are inherited, the sound color is bright, and the characteristics of Russian national music are combined. It not only retains the style characteristics of the original preludes, but also infuses sincere emotional colors, giving full play to the musicality of Rachmaninoff. Among them, the graceful and fluent melody, brilliant and gorgeous harmony, the ethnic rhythm with Russian characteristics, and the unique music style all speak his soul. Nowadays, whether as a practice, an examination of the repertoire or a must-have repertoire in a concert, Rachmaninoff's 24 preludes have been loved by every piano player and will be played well. The effect is to work hard as a goal. For such a treasure of piano art, only by thoroughly understanding the background at that time, understanding the music style, and thoroughly analyzing the music language from the details, can

we better interpret the works.

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