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Study of vocal suite "The poet's love" by R. Schumann and its influence on the piano accompaniment by later composers

Zhou Junxiang

Postgraduate student,
Hoseo University,
31066, 12, Hoseodae-gil, Dongnam-gu, South Korea;
e-mail: 578543769@qq.com

Abstract

The article reveals an actual problem of the influence by R. Schumann's music on the musical accompaniment in the work of later composers. Within the framework of the study, an analysis of R. Schumann's vocal suite influence on the works by other composers is carried out. In the article the author presents the results of musical works review in which the influence of R. Schumann is manifested. Literature. The research methodology is based on a systematic approach and includes the methods of the general scientific group (analysis, synthesis, comparison, generalization), as well as a number of special methods: cultural-historical, typological-systemic and comparative methods. As a research result, the following conclusions have been made: the influence by R. Schumann's vocal suite «The Poet's Love» on the piano accompaniment in the work of later composers is revealed in the accompaniment stylistics, in intonation, as well as in similar lyricism of the general composition in analyzed musical works («Songs of the Wandering Apprentice», the vocal cycle by G. Mahler; the cycle «Notes for Voice accompanied by Piano», an «Angel» by R. Wagner; the four ballads by J. Brahms).

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Keywords

Robert Schumann, accompaniment, vocal suite «The Poet's Love», late romanticism.

Introduction

The research relevance lies in the fact that the musical creativity of the Romantic musical era influenced the entire subsequent discourse of musical art both in Western Europe and in the rest of the world.

Musical romanticism as a movement was formed at the beginning of the 19th century and developed in close connection with various trends in literature, painting and theater. The initial stage of musical romanticism is represented by the works of F. Schubert, E. T. A. Hoffmann, C. M. Weber, J. Rossini; the next stage (1830-1850s) – the work of F. Chopin, R. Schumann, F. Mendelssohn, H. Berlioz, F. Liszt, R. Wagner, J. Verdi [Maltseva, 2020, p. 159].

The romantic worldview is characterized by a sharp conflict between reality and dream. Reality is low and unspiritual, it is permeated with the spirit of philistinism, philistinism and is worthy only of negation. A dream is something beautiful, perfect, but unattainable and incomprehensible to the mind [Tkach, 2023, p. 14].

Romanticism contrasted the prose of life with the beautiful kingdom of the spirit, the «life of the heart». Romantics believed that feelings constitute a deeper layer of the soul than reason. It is no accident that music was declared an ideal form of art, which, due to its specificity, most fully expresses the movements of the soul. Historians of music remark, that it was music in the era of romanticism that took a leading place in the art system [Makarov, 2022, p. 250].

As the main problem of romantic music in the late period of romanticism (until the end of the 19th century), the problem of personality is put forward, and in a new light – in its conflict with the surrounding world. A romantic hero is always lonely. The theme of loneliness is perhaps the most popular in all romantic art. Very often it is associated with the idea of a creative personality: a person is lonely when he is an outstanding, gifted person [Bakhtizina, 2014, p. 71].

An artist, a poet, a musician are favorite characters in the works by the romantics: for example, «The Love of a Poet» by R. Schumann, «Symphonie fantastique» by H. Berlioz with its subtitle «An Episode from the Life of an Artist», F. Liszt's symphonic poem «Tasso». The deep interest in the human personality inherent in romantic music was expressed in the predominance of a personal tone in it. The disclosure of personal drama often acquired a shade of autobiographical among the romantics, which brought a special sincerity to the music. For example, many of Schumann's piano works are associated with the story of his love for Clara Wieck [Locarne, 2022, p. 59]. Attention to feelings leads to a change of genres - lyrics, in which images of love prevail, acquire a dominant position.

The theme of "lyrical confession" is very often intertwined with the theme of nature. Resonating with a person's state of mind, it is usually colored by a sense of disharmony. Closely connected with the images of nature is the development of genre and lyrical-epic symphonism (one of the first works is F. Schubert's «great» symphony) [Lu Do, 2016, p. 51].

An interest in folk art is highly characteristic of musical romanticism. Like the romantic poets, who enriched and renewed the literary language through folklore, the musicians widely turned to national folklore - folk songs, ballads, epics. According to some researchers, under the influence of folklore, the content of European music has been vividly transformed [Tkach, 2023, p. 19].

The most important moment in the aesthetics of musical romanticism was «the idea of the synthesis of the arts» [Tkach, 2023, p. 22], which found its most vivid expression in the musical work by R. Schumann. An example is the vocal suite «The Poet's Love» and the influence of Schumann's style on the later work of other Romantic composers.

Literature review

The historiography of the topic is quite extensive and includes the works of many Chinese and foreign authors. In particular, the historical and cultural influence of Romanticism on musical development in Western Europe, and especially in Austria, has been analyzed by such authors as D.I. Bakhtizina, E.V. Litvikh, I.V. Makarov, A.A. Maltseva, N.V. Tkach, et al.

The theoretical and methodological positions of the study of R. Schumann's influence on other composers are considered in the works by such authors as V. Locarne, Yang Sunshuo, Zhuo Xucheng, et al. Such researchers as Lu Do and A.S. Zhirikov pay attention to the study of the vocal suite «The Poet's Love» by R. Schumann.

However, an insufficiently studied point is the influence of the vocal suite on the works of later composers.

Results

Undoubtedly, «The Poet's Love» is R. Schumann's most famous vocal cycle. He was born in the «year of songs», 1840, and is considered by researchers as one of «the happiest in the composer» [Lu Do, 2016, p. 47]. After many years of exhausting struggle, he finally reunited with Clara Wieck, who was the only great love of R. Schumann. The daughter of a famous Leipzig piano teacher, a celebrated pianist who gave her first recital at the age of 11, she withstood her father's stubborn opposition, which ended in a 13-month legal battle. Having become a wife, hostess, mother of 8 children, Clara remained a concert pianist and inspirer by R. Schumann's work.

In 1840, R. Schumann revealed himself as a vocal composer - before that he was not interested in vocal genres. That year, the composer wrote 131 songs for voice and piano, 10 for several voices and 6 for male choir a cappella - almost half of everything he created for singing.

Schumann dedicated The Love of a Poet to Wilhelmina Schröder-Devrient, an outstanding German singer and actress of the first half of the 19th century, who became famous for her performance of the title role in Beethoven's *Fidelio*, and later sang at the premieres by R. Wagner's «*Rienzi* and *Der fliegende Holländer*». In Dresden, where Schumann moved in 1844, she entered his circle of friends.

Song № 1, «In the Radiance of Warm May Days», which depicts the awakening of the soul, spring languor, ends with an unsolvable question. Various shades of love feeling are conveyed in № 5, «In the Flowers of Snow-White Lilies» — reverence, tenderness, excitement; in № 6, «Over the Rhine Bright Expanse», there is prayerful concentration, choral austerity (the beloved reminds the poet of the face of the Madonna in the Gothic Cologne Cathedral). A dramatic turning point comes in № 7, «I'm Not Angry».

The choice of a light major key to embody an extremely restrained feeling of grief, only complicated by chromaticism and dissonances, is surprising; as well as a long build-up and a powerful culmination in the upper register, rare for this cycle, complete the development.

In № 9, «The Violin Enchants with Melody», it strikes with its contrast: the everyday picture of the wedding, created by a simple waltz rhythm, and the aching, confused feeling that possesses the hero. The № 13, «In a Dream I Cried Bitterly» is the culmination of tragedy, a song without a single bright light.

The measured rhythm of the funeral march, the recitative on one note, acquire a special power in the third stanza, which opens with a solo piano part: the last dream, seemingly happy, in contrast to the two preceding ones (the beloved died, the beloved forgot the hero, the beloved returned to him), causes

the most violent flow of tears upon awakening. A similar style is used in «Songs of the Wandering Apprentice», the vocal cycle by G. Mahler.

In № 16, «Evil, Evil Songs», there is an extended finale in the rhythm of an energetic harsh march with an unexpected lyrical culmination in an extremely slow tempo with a melodic turn of phrase from № 1. The long piano conclusion, borrowed from № 12, «I meet in the garden in the morning», sounds enlightened and conciliatory.

In «The Poet's Love» the most characteristic features by R. Schumann's vocal style are concentrated: exceptional attention to the poetic word, the desire to convey the melody of the verse, the subtlety of psychological experiences, striking with unprecedented complexity and contradiction, the deepest immersion in them, leading to almost complete ignorance of the outside world.

It was these expressive means that were reflected in the works of later composers of the romantic movement:

- «Songs of the Wandering Apprentice», the vocal cycle by G. Mahler;
- continuously developing free form, almost without repetitions and pictorial details (the cycle «Notes for Voice accompanied by Piano», an «Angel» by R. Wagner);
- the sophistication of harmony (the four ballads by J. Brahms).

Schumann's vocal line is always melodic and permeated with intonations that have settled in folk song and romance everyday art. But on the whole, the expressiveness of Schumann's vocal melodies is rooted not so much in the songs, in the melodic melodiousness (although it is certainly always present), but in the lively human speech rich in timbres and intonations. Hence the declamatory flexibility of Schumann's melody, its ability to sensitively pick up and note subtle emotional shifts and mood fluctuations.

As researchers notes, R. Schumann strove to «penetrate into the soul of his poem, and it was essential for him to convey not only the general mood, but to reveal the meaning of each word [Zhirikov, 2015, p. 27]. Naturally, this led to the strengthening of recitative and declamatory elements. Nevertheless, R. Schumann's melody rarely approaches the recitative structure proper. Schumann's vocal declamation, merging with the word, always remains melodious and song-plastic.

It is interesting that in R. Schumann's vocal suite, the piano part increases to a value equal to the voice, and in some cases the emphasis shifts to the piano part, and by means of instrumental sound, Schumann conveys what words cannot express. In songs such as «And Roses, and Lilies» or «Oh, If the Flowers Guessed», the voice seems to be inseparable from the piano. The vocal line rests on the piano line, flows out of it, moves in parallel, making up a cohesive, single sound fabric.

In the songs «In the Radiance of Warm May Days» or «The Violin Enchants with Melody» the piano part conveys the main emotional content, in one case evoking a feeling of lyrical languor, in the other painting a picture of festive merriment, permeated, however, with hidden sorrowful intonations.

From this basic creative premise follows the exceptional significance of piano introductions and especially conclusions in songs. The introduction is made in the emotional atmosphere, into the general flavor of the song (there are not so many introductions in the cycle), while the conclusion complements, completes, and these moments often contain the psychological kernel of the entire song.

The first song of the cycle «In the Radiance of Warm May Days» is like a short introduction. It reveals the poet's spiritual life, the world of poetic visions, love dreams, and tormenting dreams. With exquisite subtlety of artistic techniques, R. Schumann conveys in a small sketch the fragility of the awakening feeling, its fusion with the gentle beauty of spring nature. A small piano introduction outlines the musical image of the song. The thematic material of the introduction forms the basis for further development.

The melody is born and formed within the piano texture. Its romantic specificity is determined by the combination of the melody of all the voices with the functional definiteness of the chords formed at the same time. Such melody leads to the stratification of the chord vertical, gives rise to a characteristic «multi-layered» texture.

The upper voice line, the most expressive in terms of intonation and rhythm, forms the melody proper. Its initial rotation with a «slow» retention stretching from the shortest last bar beat stands out in particular. It is followed by a «questioning» move up the sixth and a gradual descent as light as a sigh. From the variant development of this cell of the piano introduction, the vocal melody of the song is born.

Each of the works of later composers conveys a certain mood and a similar shade of lyrical feeling. For example, in «Songs of the Wandering Apprentice», the vocal cycle by G. Mahler, the dramatic movement is drawn to several pivotal songs, in which a gradually growing feeling or state is concentrated. In this work, the influence of the third song by R. Schumann's cycle «Both Roses and Lilies» is very noticeable, where there is an enthusiastic love call, prepared by the light lyrics of the preceding ones.

In the next song («I meet the gaze of thy eyes»), notes of sorrow are heard through the first confession, as in the four ballads by J. Brahms. And the passionate, but already saturated with bitterness outpourings («In the Flowers of Snow-White Lilies» by R. Schumann); echo the cycle «Notes for Voice accompanied by Piano», an «Angel» by R. Wagner. T

he song «I am not angry», absorbing precisely these moods, creates a psychological turning point, a border from which the movement goes to the condensation of sorrowful thoughts and emotions, to the tragic culmination in the song named «In a dream I cried bitterly».

There is a secondary turning point, but this time in the direction of the search for a way out and oblivion, which leads to detachment from life, earthly love – to the last song of the cycle («Evil, evil songs») and its enlightened fragile piano postlude. These motifs are very well heard in the cycle «Notes for Voice accompanied by Piano», in particular – an «Angel» by R. Wagner.

Conclusion

As a result of the study, the author comes to the following conclusions: the influence by R. Schumann's vocal suite «The Poet's Love» on the piano accompaniment in the works by later composers is revealed in the accompaniment stylistics, in intonation methods, as well as in the similar lyricism of the general musical works' composition: «Songs of the Wandering Apprentice», the vocal cycle by the Austrian composer G. Mahler; the cycle «Notes for Voice and Piano Accompaniment», «Angel» by R. Wagner; the piano part by J. Brahms in four ballads.

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Исследование вокальной сюиты Шумана «Любовь поэта» и ее влияния на фортепианное сопровождение более поздних композиторов

Джоу Цзюньсян

Аспирант,
Университет Хосэй,
31066, Южная Корея, Дон Намгу, Хосеодэ-гил, 12;
e-mail: 578543769@qq.com

Аннотация

В статье рассматривается актуальная проблематика, связанная с влиянием музыки Р. Шумана на музыкальное сопровождение в творчестве более поздних композиторов. В рамках исследования проводится сопоставительный описательный анализ вокальной сюиты Р. Шумана с произведениями других композиторов. В статье представлены результаты обзора музыкальных произведений, в которых проявляется влияние Р. Шумана. Творческое влияние композитора на более поздние произведения других авторов остается темой для многочисленных дискуссий в научной литературе. Методология исследования основана на системном подходе и включает в себя методы общенаучной группы (анализ, синтез, сопоставление, обобщение), а также ряд специальных методов: культурно-исторический, типологически-системный и сравнительный методы. По итогу проведенного исследования были получены следующие результаты: влияние вокальной сюиты Р. Шумана «Любовь поэта» на фортепианное сопровождение в творчестве более поздних композиторов выявляется в стилистике аккомпанемента, в способах интонирования, а также в схожей лиричности общей композиции музыкальных произведений («Песни странствующего подмастерья», вокальный цикл австрийского композитора Г. Малера; цикл «Ноты для голоса в сопровождении фортепиано», «Ангел» Р. Вагнера; фортепианное творчество И. Брамса из четырех баллад).

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Роберт Шуман, аккомпанемент, вокальная сюита «Любовь поэта», поздний романтизм.

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