

## THE COMPARATIVE INTERPRETOLOGY AS A COGNITIVE DISCOURSE OF MODERN PIANO PRACTICE

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### ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to the problems of the comparative interpretology in the aspect of the systematic presentation of the results of scientific cognition by the performer of his/her professional activity. The method of the comparative analysis is widely represented in the modern process of scientific understanding and constitutes the prospect of studying the theoretical problems of interpretology. The structure of the comparative analysis reflects the hierarchy of musical performance as the art of interpretation: from a composer's text and a musical composition as an object of performing interpretation to performing text and performing dramaturgy, on the basis of which the idea of a performing style is born. This hierarchy proves that for the performer the comparative analysis is a method, direction and mechanism for researching artefacts of piano art. As a consequence, the comparative method of analysing performing dramaturgy is not only the result of the interaction of several approaches, but also the final stage of the performing analysis of a musical composition. The developed method of the comparative analysis from the point of view of the performer as a subject of scientific activity is aimed at a stage-by-stage comprehension and scientific description of the fundamental differences in the performing dramaturgy of the same composition in different performing versions of outstanding pianists. Comparing them from the point of view of the artistic result (artefact) makes it possible for the musician to come closer to uncovering the secrets of the composer's creativity and to develop his/her own performing interpretation of the selected composition.

**Key words:** comparative analysis, interpretology, performing dramaturgy, performing text, performing style.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the modern conditions of the "scientific boom" around performing creativity, the attraction of musicians-performers to comprehend and deeply understand *musical performance as an art of interpretation* is becoming in great demand. Interpretology becomes one of the possible definitions of the science of performance, which has historically developed in the domestic musicology of the second half of the 20th century. The urgency of the problem of forming performing thinking to some extent is based on the comparative analysis as a model of the cognitive process. The proposed problem is stipulated by the growing need of performers for the potential of the comparative analysis, which is manifested in various areas of professional activity of the pianist. For example, when studying a piece of music in a special piano class for the development of auditory and analytical thinking of a young musician, when in the process of interpreting the composition there is a task: to find your own approach to its interpretation, while remaining within the stylistic standard of classical-romantic or modern style, and comparing "own" and "other".

### 2. CONCEPTUAL BASIS

The material for the scientific analysis was the most significant of the existing author's concepts devoted to the theory of interpretation: Y. Vakhryanov (1994), E. Gurenko (1982), N. Korykhalova (1979), E. Lieberman (1988), O. Markova (2002), V. Medushevsky (1994), V. Moskalenko (2013), I. Polusmyak (1989), T. Cherednichenko (1989), and L. Shapovalova (2017).

It is known that the term "interpretation" as an aesthetic category in musicological literature occurs and begins to be used from the middle of the 19th century. This definition was used in art criticism and art history along with the term "performance" in connection with the separation of the functions of the composer and the performer. Thus, according to N. Korykhalova (1979), "the content of the creative activity of a musician-performer is *the interpretation of a musical composition*" [Korykhalova, 1979]. The author considers this definition in two meanings: in the broad sense as "perception" of the work of art, and in the narrow sense – "performing interpretation". The process of performing interpretation is aimed at studying and revealing the author's idea in a musical composition; in the course of work, the performer deepens and clarifies his/her initial idea of it. *The performing variant* as a result of the performing interpretation can have many options, due to the following factors:

- ✓ the individuality of the performer (the worldview, intellectuality, emotional experience, belonging to a certain artistic type, psychophysiological personality traits, professional giftedness and skill);

✓ the objective conditions associated with historical variability, the evolution of musical styles, the improvement of instruments, a change in playing technique, a restructuring of intonation thinking.

The author formulates the main task of the performer, which consists in "revealing and communicating to the listener the artistic image which lies in the basis of the interpreted composition, in conveying the main idea of the composition, which is objectively embedded in it, in the desire to identify those features of it that may be consonant with the listeners, contemporary to the given performer" [Korykhalova, p. 172]. One of the main issues considered in the work by N. Korykhalova is the definition of the way of being of a musical composition – its *ontology*.

The monograph by T. Cherednichenko [1989], which reflects the main directions and trends in the development of Western European musical aesthetics in the context of artistic culture, is interesting for our research. The concept of a "*musical composition*" has certain criteria: theoretical nature (connection with the theory of composition), philosophical content, fixation in musical notation, polyphony, belonging to a certain author, completeness of the form as an integrated whole, structural individualization, ideal identity with itself ("a virtual stay in time"). The special value of a musical composition is concluded in its listed features.

The fundamental work by E. Gurenko [1982] is devoted to the study of the aesthetic problems of the performing arts. According to the researcher, "artistic interpretation" is a comprehensive concept that includes the performing process aimed at building a performing concept. One of the objectives of the study is to substantiate the artistic and interpretative nature of performance as a subsystem of art, to comprehend its essence in the structure of artistic and creative activity. At the same time, the author gives the performing art a secondary, relatively independent role, defining the interpreter as a mediator between the creator of artistic values and the perceiving subject.

In the study by I. Polusmyak (1989), a schematization of the types of interpretation in musicology has been proposed. The author interprets the term "interpretation" as "a logized reflection of reality in various forms of linguistic fixation" [Polusmyak, p. 4]. One of the objectives of the research is to clarify the capabilities of the method of *scientific interpretation* in musicology. Scientific interpretation is divided into types: 1/ *the theoretical one*, concretizing the provisions of the interpreted theory up to the level of the original one; 2/ *the analytical one*, continuing the theoretical one on the level of analysis of a work of art with the aim of introducing a certain interpretative theory into musicology.

In the work by E. Lieberman (1988), the performing interpretation of the author's text is studied. The author divides a piece of music into three text levels (three zones of interpretation): the performing level of the text related to the emotional zone of interpretation, the compositional and performing level of the text (mixed emotional and intellectual zone of interpretation), and the compositional level of the text (intellectual zone of interpretation). This classification is made according to the mental activity of the performer in the process of working on the composition.

The article by V. Medushevsky (1994) is of interest, the author interprets the category of "interpretation" in the ontological sense – as "a consequence and side of a truly *personal understanding*" of music" [Medushevsky, p. 2]. The term "interpretation", "interpreter" in the usual translation from Greek means "the one who explains". However, the researcher focuses on one more etymological meaning – "mediator", "messenger". The main task of the interpreter is to comprehend the invisible inner law, idea, according to which the semantic hierarchy of a musical composition is built.

In the concept of Y. Vakhranov, it is the spiritual side of performance, represented by the creative process, that is an organized whole, and "determines the interpretation and enters into its poetics as an internal, spiritual totality of its elements" [Vakhranov, p. 6].

In our time, the textbook on musical interpretation by V. Moskalenko [2013], who became one of the founders of the Kyiv School of Interpretology, has become widely known. The author explores the main categories of musicology: classifies the types of musical interpretation, examines the definitions and concepts of a "musical composition" (the composer's intention and idea), "musical thinking" (in conjunction with the intonational sound nature), "author's text", "musical genre", and "individual musical style".

Comparing the main provisions of these works, we can identify a paradigm shift in the theory of musical interpretation. Owing to the accumulated experience, it is possible to build a conceptual model of performing analysis, which would reflect the current level of system-structural approach to the study of the specifics of performing arts. This model is built as a multilevel system of relations, revealing the systemic nature of the

performing process. Based on the method of the comparative analysis, dichotomies are built that reveal the differences between the cognitive vector of the author and the performer:

- ✓ "composer's text – performing text";
- ✓ "musical dramaturgy – performing dramaturgy";
- ✓ "composer's concept – performing concept";
- ✓ "composer's style – performing style".

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The method of the comparative analysis is widely represented in the modern process of scientific understanding, but in music science it has not yet been the subject of special interest. Its definition is found in the monograph by V. Sheiko and Y. Bogutsky (2005): "the process of establishing similarities or differences between objects and phenomena of reality, as well as finding the common inherent in two or more objects" [Sheiko, Bogutsky, p. 64].

The developed method of the comparative analysis of performing interpretology is aimed at step-by-step understanding and scientific description of the fundamental differences of performing dramaturgy of the same composition in different performing versions of outstanding pianists (Timofeyeva, 2009). Their comparison in terms of artistic result (artefact as a concert-stage existence of the composition, which is recorded in the public musical awareness) allows the musician to approach the disclosure of the secrets of the compositional creativity and develop an appropriate performing interpretation of the selected composition.

The comparison of performing interpretations can be used at different stages of the study of a musical composition: both at the acquaintance with the composition and at the final stage of work – in the final formation of the performing concept, the construction of performing dramaturgy.

The methodological basis of the proposed method is the interaction of several scientific approaches:

- ✓ *comparative*, which is "the process of establishing the similarities or differences of objects and phenomena of reality, as well as finding the common, inherent in two or more objects";
- ✓ *systemic*, which studies the phenomena and processes in the unity of the subject, functional and historical planes;
- ✓ *genre*, on the basis of which the musical composition is considered in the system of musical genres and types of intoning (genre nature);
- ✓ *semiotic*, which acts through the decipherment of meanings and senses in music (through a system of musical signs and symbols) in a certain historical context;
- ✓ *interpretative*, which allows to identify the specifics of phenomena and artefacts of performing arts and focuses on the originality of the principles of performing thinking (in particular, performing "text", "concept", "dramaturgy", "style", etc.);
- ✓ *stylistic*, which differentiates the creative activity of the composer and the musician-performer in the aspect of personality, based around the artistic awareness and the system of principles of musical thinking.

The method of the comparative analysis of performing interpretology involves four stages of studying a musical composition, which are related to each other.

*The first stage* of acquaintance with a musical composition puts before the performer the following tasks:

- ✓ the formation of performing attitudes to the interpretation of the composer's text, which are aimed at creating the original artistic image of the play;
- ✓ the enrichment of the intellectual and musical outlook of the student as a result of studying specialized literature.

Acquaintance with a musical composition occurs when listening to a concert performance, audio or video recording, reading notes from a sheet of paper (fragmentary playing), or the teacher's demonstration on the instrument. At this stage, the visual-auditory, intellectual and emotional functions of the body are included: the performer forms certain principles for the interpretation of the composer's text.

*The second stage* of studying a musical composition is directly related to the performing analysis and is based on understanding the intonation-dramaturgical structure of the musical composition.

The performing analysis of the text of a musical composition is based, first of all, on a careful study of textural components – melodic-intonation, metro-rhythmic, tonal, form-building, and textural-timbre ones. Each textured layer requires a separate study.

At the initial stage, the performer determines the stylistic characteristics and genre-compositional basis of the composition: studying the features of the composer's style, determining the compositional structure and genre nature of the composition, identifying the type of dramaturgy, establishing structural relationships between parts and sections of the composition, finding culmination zones, studying dynamic and agogic organizations. Then there is a consistent thematic analysis:

- ✓ the type of theme is determined: its textural presentation, genre nature (instrumental, vocal, orchestral thinking);
- ✓ the intonation-dramaturgical connections, which are characterized by a certain motive-intonation structure and metro-rhythmic formulas, the presence of tonal-harmonic development, semantics of textured layers, are revealed;
- ✓ the figurative content of the theme is revealed.

At the next stage, the performer explores the transformation of thematism in the developing sections of the composition. Inner thematic connections (identity, difference, contrast, thematic synthesis), which determine the figurative and semantic characteristics of performing dramaturgy, are analysed.

The final stage of intonation-dramaturgical analysis of the author's text is the identification of figurative-semantic lines of dramaturgy: the definition of culminations, the drawing of genre-stylistic parallels.

Thus, for the performer, intonational dramaturgy is the basic grounds for the search for interpretation of a musical composition, a plurality of performing versions rises on its objective basis.

*The third stage.* Understanding the dramaturgy of a musical composition through the prism of the creative personality of the interpreter – it involves the analysis of the actual performing text of the musical composition. Based on the impressions from the emotional auditory perception of the performing version and the results of the intonation-dramaturgical analysis of the author's text, the student-performer analyses the performing text of the musical composition.

First, we should return to the first stage of analysis – to listening to audio or video records in order to compare settings based on emotional perceptions and the results of intonation-dramaturgical analysis. Then the detailed analysis of the performing means of expression follows in accordance with the following criteria:

- ✓ the nature of sound production (sound quality, articulation, timbre-register colours, pedalling);
- ✓ the intoning (the degree of intensity of intervals, the features of voice-leading, distribution of intonation-semantic and temporary load within motives, phrases and in large musical constructions, re-intoning of thematism);
- ✓ the phrasing (striving for integrity, combining phrases into large thematic blocks or isolating thematic elements);
- ✓ the texture organization (texture differentiation, detection of any texture layer, texture layering);
- ✓ the tempo-rhythmic organization (the desire for a unifying tempo-rhythmic core, free performance using rubato);
- ✓ the dynamic organization (the use of contrast, wave dynamics, level of dynamic range, dynamic balance in textured layers);

*The fourth stage* is the analysis of performing dramaturgy, which represents a certain system of structural levels:

- ✓ the features of performing thinking (holistic "vision" of the performer of the form: thinking in large thematic blocks (the desire for thematic unity) or the identification of individual thematic elements in order to increase their significance in dramaturgy);

- ✓ the emotional and figurative interpretation depends on the stylistic and typological features of the performer;
- ✓ the identification of image-semantic centres in dramaturgy, the distribution of culminations (according to the author's text or rethinking of the content), the use of pauses as a form-building element of the texture (inside and between the sections of the form);
- ✓ the features of performing breathing (the desire for the scale of performance – the use of through, continuous breathing; the enlargement of individual sections of the form by expanding the time limits – the use of more frequent caesuras between phrases);
- ✓ the performance direction is determined by the peculiarities of pianism (properties of technique in general), the belonging to the performing school, nationality, psychophysiological features (as a result, emotional, intellectual or rational interpretation prevails).
- ✓ conducting a piece of music on notes without the instrument, which contributes to the development of a single rhythmic pulsation, holistic coverage and horizontal thinking<sup>1</sup>;

In the final stage of work on a musical composition, for a comprehensive coverage of performing dramaturgy, the following methods are possible:

- ✓ playing a piece of music entirely, followed by a detailed analysis of the failed fragments. This helps to develop the logic of transitions between parts, to identify the performing image. Trial playing must be combined with constant careful processing of the details;
- ✓ the student's work on notes without the instrument, using the internal hearing;
- ✓ singing a piece of music in the mind while walking in the rhythm of the performed play;
- ✓ the comparison of individual fragments of the play in order to develop a single tempo-rhythmic pulsation;
- ✓ counting aloud by beats, while the performer uses a long unifying breath. This method allows combining individual fragments of the play as a whole, to produce continuous movement.

Thus, the creation of performing dramaturgy becomes possible if the student can become a "director", to achieve intellectual-logical and emotional-image balance in the performance of a musical composition. On the basis of the described model of the analysis of performing dramaturgy there arises *a method of comparative interpretology*, which contains the tasks: analytical modelling of the composer's text and determination of levels of similarity and difference of selected performing concepts.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The comparative analysis is a system of structural levels, combined according to the following criteria:

1. the adequacy of performance, i.e. the maximum proximity of performing dramaturgy to the performance by the composer or to the composer's style;
2. the creative rethinking, which means that the performer creates his/her own original concept, different from the style of the composer. In this case, the performing personality is so pronounced that it is on the same level with the composer. Such interpretations include moments of artistic discovery;
3. the belonging of the performer to a particular school (continuity of national traditions, culture), which affects the manner of sound production, features of sound intoning, original interpretation of tradition in the disclosure of the content of the music performed.

The comparative analysis of performing interpretology (on the example of the same composition) allows one to reach the highest level of expression of the personal *I* of the musician. Due to the comparative analysis, the process of understanding the genre and style features of a musical composition is structured in the musician's mind, finding a systemic character. In the process of interpretation, performing dramaturgy serves as a foundation for the performing style. In other words, the comparative analysis of the performing interpretology of the same piece of music, reproduced by different interpreters, helps to understand the differences between their performing concepts (more broadly – the styles of performing thinking).

<sup>1</sup> The conductor's method allows the student-performer to organize temporary and tempo-rhythmic relations between sections of the musical composition, to feel live performing breath, to fill and comprehend pauses, to feel muscular freedom during performance, to hear by inner hearing the orchestra nature of its sound (to give timbre colouring to thematism).

Thus, the comparative interpretology has cognitive and practical significance for the performer, because it:

- ✓ Develops auditory attention, observation, the ability to compare, summarize, distinguish between the means of expression;
- ✓ Stimulates the emotional side of perception;
- ✓ Promotes the development of analytical and intellectual activities of the performer (in-depth study of the musical text, the history of writing the composition, biography of the composer, performing practice).
- ✓ Offers a systematic approach in the process of reproducing performing dramaturgy.

Thus, the comparative interpretology not only illustrates the problems of performing practice, but also suggests ways to solve them.

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