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Formation of romantic instrumental performance and violin art of Niccolo Paganini

Становлення романтичного інструментального виконавства і концертно-віртуозна творчість Н. Паганіні

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Abstract

The article analyzes the features of formation of instrumental performance of the romantic period and the main factors of this process revealed on the example of Niccolo Paganini's violin work. The methodological basis of the article is a comprehensive review based on historical-theoretical and music-performing approaches to the research of the stated problems. The main methods of work are historical-comparative, structural-functional and theoretical generalization.

The main principles of performance and repertoire of the Italian violinist are determined. The influence of the Italian maestro on the performing arts of prominent representatives of musical romanticism – H. Berlioz, K. Lipinsky, F. Liszt, F. Chopin, R. Schumann and others – is defined.

Keywords: instrumental art, romanticism, concert-virtuoso culture, violin creativity of N. Paganini, performing technology.

Анотація

У статті проаналізовано особливості формування інструментального виконавства періоду романтизму та основні чинники цього процесу, виявлені на прикладі скрипкової творчості Нікколо Паганіні. Методологічною основою статті є комплексний огляд на основі історико-теоретичного та музично-виконавського підходів до дослідження викладених проблем. Основними методами роботи є історико-порівняльний, структурно-функціональний та теоретичне узагальнення. Визначено основні принципи виконання та репертуару італійського скрипаля. Визначено вплив італійського маестро на виконавське мистецтво видатних представників музичного романтизму – Г. Берліоза, К. Ліпінського, Ф. Ліста, Ф. Шопена, Р. Шумана та інших.

Ключові слова: інструментальне мистецтво, романтизм, концертно-віртуозна культура, скрипкова творчість Н. Паганіні, виконавська техніка.

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Introduction

At the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century, European musical art underwent a change of artistic views and thinking due to the stylistic situation of the transition from classicism to romanticism. This was largely due to the rapid development of instrumentation at this time: the establishment of a group of violins, the spread and improvement of piano and wind instruments, which opened up new great opportunities for technical and color solutions in instrumental compositions. All this had a cardinal effect on the practice of performance, which in the 18th century had the character of mostly home or court music, and from the beginning of the 19th century began to relentlessly go to the «glorious» stage.

During the 18th century, the life of the concern was subordinated and depended on various institutions (retirement funds, churches, music centers of aristocrats, private theaters, etc.), which organized and financed concert-theater or festival events. They were often attended by court musicians, which was an indicator of a high professional level. Of course, the customers chose the performers and repertoire by themselves. By the beginning of the 19th century, the situation was gradually changing due to the spread of charitable public concerts organized by patrons or amateur societies, holders of aristocratic salons, and others. The fertile ground for the development of concert activities and performances of young performers was the audience's fascination with virtuoso art, its thirst for technical innovations and performance effects.

The stylistic dualism of musical art, due to the active entry of romanticism into the cultural and artistic space of the day, also contributed to the spread of concert activity of touring virtuosos, with its conditional division into chamber and concert. The concept of «romanticism» was formed from the epithet «romantic», which indicated some features of literary works written in Romance languages. These were usually poems and novels about knights, as well as so-called «romances». At the end of the 18th century the term acquires a broader interpretation, not only as a definition of adventure, entertainment, but also as ancient, original folk, distant, fantastic-mystical, amazing, frightening, as well as spiritual, sublime. The embodiment of new images required the use of appropriate means of expression, which prompted the performers to constantly search for them. In music, this was reflected in the rapid development of timbre and

technical qualities of the instrument, as well as the formation of new forms and genres. Complicating the artistic and technical side of musical compositions, increasing the volume of concert repertoire, expanding the possibilities of music publishing in the early 20th century contributed to the emergence of performing arts to the forefront, along with composition.

The result of these processes since the end of the 18th century in European musical culture was the formation of a new type of performer. Until now, the universalism of musical creativity existed in the art of music, when every musician, who usually possessed several instruments, was also a composer. In particular, the German flutist J. Quantz, an influential musical authority of the middle of the 18th century and a teacher of the Prussian King Frederick William II, points to this in his autobiography. In particular, he mentions that he learned to play not only the violin, oboe, trumpet and piano, but also «did not neglect» the study of cornet, trombone, hunting horn, bassoon, German bass viola, viola da gamba and other instruments, «on which must be able to play a good city musician».

The highest achievement and a mandatory component of the universal musician's performance practice was the ability to improvise: even the usual accompaniment to digital bass was also a form of improvisation. Improvisation skills were included, along with the study of composition and music theory, as a part of the musician's training. Because the performance and creation of music was in an organic unity and was inseparable from each other, it gave a specific character to both the process of training and music thinking in general. Improvisation skills helped to capture the work more quickly and holistically, to play more freely and effortlessly. The improviser, who could instantly create any complex composition, approached the performance process differently, because he was not just a mediator between the author and the listener, but also a «generator» of musical ideas. Such a musician was valued above all and acted as a composer of the highest type. This property of musical performance of the 18th century became an important factor in the development of virtuoso art of the next day.

One of the first and brightest representatives of the new type of virtuoso performers was Niccolò Paganini (1782-1840). Whose work played a crucial role in introducing new concert-virtuoso forms of music making and rethinking the

established classical stereotypes of the game (not only violin, but also piano and orchestra), contributing to the separation of performing arts into an independent industry. Having revolutionized the violin, the Genoese violinist became a reformer and founder of the virtuoso-romantic trend in the performing arts of 19th century Europe. Thus, the interest in the formation of performance specifics, as well as the development and formation of concert-virtuoso traditions in the works of the outstanding violinist-virtuoso N. Paganini, thanks to which instrumental performance has become a leading component of European music culture, is natural.

Theoretical Framework or Literature Review

The development of Romanticism is a landmark phenomenon in art. Various aspects of the problem of style and creativity of outstanding personalities of this era were considered by such researchers as M. Chernyavskaya (Chernyavskaya, 2015), A. Dmitrieva (Dmitrieva, 1980), S. Khudozhnikova (Khudozhnikova, 2014). More than two hundred years of life and work of Niccolò Paganini have been covered in numerous works by various authors. The list of the main editions of the 19 – first half of the 20th centuries is given in the monograph of I. Yampolsky. A thorough analysis of the «pagans» of the second half of the 20th century is carried out in the work of T. Berford. These researchers emphasize that throughout the main issues of most works remains the mystery of the figure and the fantastic technology of the game N. Paganini. Separate sections in music dictionaries, reference books and encyclopedias in domestic and Russian-language sources on the history of music and performance styles, development of technology and specifics of playing the violin are devoted to the art of the great violinist. In particular, these are the fundamental works of L. Auer (Auer, 1965), E. Dukov (Dukov, 2003), L. Ginzburg (Ginzburg, 1990), S. Keene (Keene, 2012), L. Raaben (Raaben, 1967), I. Yampolsky (Yampolsky, 1961) etc.

The peak of research interest in the figure of N. Paganini in Soviet musicology came in the 60's and 80's of the 20th century, when the main body of literature about the life and work of the great violinist was created. Along with biographical essays, the authors of these publications (Grigoriev, 1987; Raaben, 1967; Yampolsky, 1961) pay attention to the performing skills of N. Paganini, the techniques that he first introduced in the academic violin art,

innovations and features of his performing activity.

To overcome the brand of legends and the haze of mysticism around the name of N. Paganini, where it is almost impossible to «distinguish reality from fiction», sought I. Yampolsky. This author highlighted the life and career of N. Paganini, based on original documents, letters and statements of contemporaries. In the book «*Niccolò Paganini. Life and art*», consisting of two independent parts – the biography of the artist and the characteristics of his performing and compositional work, the researcher tried to give a realistic assessment of the performance and art of the violinist. In the context of this article, the second part of the monograph is of considerable interest, which analyzes the virtuoso's compositional work and violin techniques and technical means that he used in his works.

Recognizing the uniqueness of the technology of N. Paganini's play as the basis for the further development of performing arts (even in the 20th century), V. Grigoriev (Grigoriev, 1987) tried to reveal its «secrets» in his work. From the standpoint of musicology of the second half of the 20th century, this researcher analyzed the principles and features of N. Paganini's violin technique, thanks to which he achieved super virtuoso mastery of the instrument.

Interesting in an attempt to explain the technology of the game, introduced by the great Genoese, is the essay of N.B. Yefremenko «*On the secret of Paganini. A short guide to the accelerated mastery of the technique of playing the violin*». This author sought to reveal the principles of violin technique by N. Paganini, based on a psychophysiological approach. The development contains a theoretical section on acoustics, physiology and psychology, necessary for the performer to play stringed instruments, as well as a methodological justification of the techniques on which the performance of N. Paganini was based. In the third edition, more carefully than in the previous ones, a number of elements of the proposed technique are highlighted, which fully justify themselves when studying the technique of playing the violin and viola. The author of the essay believes that this method can be used in teaching to play other stringed instruments, including cello and double bass, taking into account their vertical position. The work of L. Raaben «*Life of remarkable violinists: Biographical etudes*» reveals questions about some of the techniques and methods of playing the great violinist. This

author identifies 2 groups of tasks that need to be studied in connection with the unexplained aspects of the technique of N. Paganini's play: «1) for the first time he introduced into performing and compositional practice such techniques as double flageolets, pizzicato and tremolo of the left hand, etc 2) methods that allowed the artist ... to maintain their technique at the highest level without constant long-term training».

Much interest of musicologists is given to certain aspects of the work of N. Paganini. Different angles of his cycle «24 caprices for the solo violin» in different periods were the subject of study. In this regard, we should mention the collection of works by N. Paganini, published in Kiev in 2019. The editor and compiler of the work N. Sivachenko (Sivachenko, 2019) set a goal to collect little-known violin compositions by N. Paganini, including sonatas on one string «Napoleon» and «Maria Louise», «Polonaise with variations», Variations on the theme «Pria ch'io l'impegno» J. Weigl, Variations on the theme «Non piu mesta accanto al fuoco» by G. Rossini, «Perpetuela» from «Sonata a movimento perpetuo» and others. The musical text is preceded by a detailed historical reference with information about the works and the characteristics of the technical tasks set by N. Paganini in these compositions. It should be noted that this publication is one of the few appeals of Ukrainian authors to the work of a genius virtuoso.

The authors of this article do not consider N. Paganini's biographies of artistic or semi-artistic plan (ex, A. Vinogradov, A. Palmin, M. Tibaldi-Chiesa, etc.), because to use them in scientific work is not entirely correct. However, it is interesting to note the unusual vectors of the reception of personality and creativity of N. Paganini in the literature of the early 21st century. First of all, this is S. Keane's popular book «Paganini Syndrome and Other True Stories of Genius Recorded in Our Genetic Code», devoted to an important and interesting section of biology – genetics. And for the writer L. Kepler (Kepler, 2010), the mystery of the figure and the mystery of the biography of N. Paganini were the reason for the creation of the detective novel «Paganini's Contract». Of course, these are not the only examples of extraordinary perceptions of modern researchers and writers of the personality and actions of the great virtuoso.

Methodology

The methodological basis of the article is a comprehensive review based on historical-theoretical and music-performing approaches to the research of the stated problems. The main methods of work are historical-comparative, structural-functional and theoretical generalization.

Results and Discussion

Acquaintance with the creative path of N. Paganini proves that throughout his life he gradually and steadily freed the violin art from the conservative approach of his predecessors and the usual at that time instrumental limitations. According to the authors of most of the works, the impetus for this was the artistic meetings that took place during the years 1794-1795 and had a fateful impact on both the later life of the violinist and the nature of his work. Some of the authors, based on the autobiography of N. Paganini, emphasize that the most significant factor for his professional growth in this period was the acquaintance with the art of A.F. Duranovsky (1770-1834). Indeed, in the early 1830s N. Paganini confessed to F. J. Fetis in Paris that many «secrets» of his technique (including left hand pizzicato as an accompaniment to a melody played by a bow) borrowed from a Polish virtuoso. But most researchers in the absence of an exact date of Duranovsky's visit to Genoa, question these facts.

Another significant event for Niccolo was his acquaintance and communication with the Marquis G. di Negro, who took care of the development of the violinist. It is indicated that in 1797 in the music library di Negro Paganini found the manuscripts of the violin virtuoso P. A. Locatelli (1695–1764). Compositions from Locatelli's «The Art of New Modulation» and «The Art of the Violin» were the most complex of Paganini's studies. V. Grigoriev (Grigoriev, 1987) suggested that they became the prototype for the famous Paganian whims, which the violinist began to create after reading the manuscripts of Locatelli.

Paganini's independent performance began at the age of thirteen in Genoa. According to researchers, Niccolo owed his popularity to the variations on the theme of «Carmagnola» favorite song of the Genoese of that time. Soon the violinist played several concerts in Parma with tremendous success and toured the cities of Northern Italy (Pisa, Livorno, Bologna, Milan).

Among the authors of works that could be performed in these concerts, in addition to their own variations, the names of J. B. Viotti, R. Kreutzer, I. Plaiel, P. Rode, possibly J. Tartini.

In connection with the programs of the young virtuoso, it should be noted that in the concert practice of that time, the combination of composer and performer in one person was still typical, but the interest in performing skills has grown significantly. From now, the characteristic figure was not a composer-improviser, but a composer-virtuoso, even a virtuoso rather than a composer, which testified to the success of N. Paganini. And along with virtuosos-composers, who performed mostly their own compositions, musicians of another type – virtuosos-interpreters – began to perform more and more often. Their emergence was associated with the process of branching into specialization, which was observed in all areas of music culture. The growing separation of compositional, performing, and pedagogical specializations by the middle of 19th century led to the separation of these functions and the recognition of the performing arts as independent. An indisputable confirmation of this is the repertoire of N. Paganini of the Parisian period, which, along with his own, included works by other authors. Thus, T. Burford convincingly proves that «Paganini was known for the concert № 1 Rode and the concert № 24 Viotti». And the analysis of a unique document from the collection of R. De Barbieri with recordings of the initial bars of concerts of French violinists, made by Paganini himself, gave the musicologist reason to conclude that his programs also included violin concertos by Viotti (№ 17, № 18, № 22), Kreutzer (№ 9, № 10, № 15), Rode (№ 2, № 3).

An important role in this process was played by the spread of the «brilliant style» of the game, which was in vogue in the early 19th century. As a result, the audience wanted piano or violin virtuosos to have an extremely high technical level, mastery of special techniques and effects, and perfect playing skills. However, the technical «armament» of the performers of the beginning of the century was largely based on the principles of classical technology, which were based on clarity, clarity, harmony of execution, careful detailing of elements, the use of mostly linear melody movement and more.

Given the latest approach to the technique of the game, used by N. Paganini, from an early period, to overcome the established traditions was destined for him. V. Grigoriev's (1987) remarks

concerning N. Paganini's Capriccio, that they «made a revolution in violin language, violin expressiveness», that «the young composer reached a new meaning here, melting many general forms of movement – passages, figures, strokes and other techniques – in artistic musical meanings», can be attributed to all his work.

Later, Lambert Massart, who was present at the maestro's concerts in Paris, tried to find out the peculiarities of N. Paganini's violin technique. A well-known French violinist, a student of R. Kreutzer, a friend of F. Liszt, realized that Paganini's performance was based on unprecedented speed of movement, spread position of the hand and fingers on the instrument, which allowed great stretching, timbre and color richness and symphonic sonority and texture. Massart found that Paganini found «a new principle of movement, when the large parts of the left hand – shoulder and forearm, as well as the thumb, anticipate the movements of the hand and fingers on the fingerboard, prepare for them the field of action, which provides amazing elasticity and accuracy of transitions and jumps». This setting and movements of the left hand, as well as a kind of bow in the cantilena completely contradicted the classical principles of sound production. But under other conditions it was impossible to reproduce the most complex, at the limit of human capabilities, the techniques used by N. Paganini, rapid passages up with a trill of left-handed pizzicato, double flagellates, saltando – bow throws on a string, interspersed with pizzicato left hand, tremolo left hand, bar ricochet, etc. After all, in such a «schedule» the classical principles of the game with a clearly defined positional technique and linear melody were simply unacceptable.

Paganini's performing career and popularity peaked during the Paris period of his life. The artistic culture of Paris in the 1830s, then the center of European musical art, was associated with the work of almost all the outstanding virtuoso instrumentalists of the first half of the 19th century. It was in Paris that the level of talent and skill and the future career of each artist were determined. But Paganini was already «armed» with many years of experience of the concertmaster and made an exact calculation: the fame of the unsurpassed virtuoso was ahead of him, and the capital was instantly conquered. For performances he was given the main hall of Paris – the Grand Opera, and on the first evening (March 9, 1831) was attended by the entire artistic elite: O. de Balzac, C. Bériot, W. Hugo, E. Delacroix, F. Liszt, M. Malibran,

F. Mendelssohn, A. Musset, D. Auber, G. Rossini with his old teacher F. Paer, Georges Sand and others. Psychologically, the program was chosen correctly, where along with his First Violin *Concerto accompanied by an orchestra* sounded «Military» sonata on string «G», and ended the evening solo work – «Introduction and Variations» on «Nel core pui non mi sento» from the opera «The Beautiful Millwife» by G. Paisiello. Construction of a concert, alternating both large-scale compositions with orchestra and solo works, covering the entire range of instruments, including the extreme height of flagellates, and demonstrating the timbre and capabilities of the extreme lower string, given the huge palette of images where unbridled romantic impulses contrast with the most intimate lyrics, was designed for the effect and close attention of the public. All this in itself favorably emphasized the strongest aspects of performance and stunned the audience.

Thus, being an outstanding violinist, N. Paganini became one of the first «directors» of concert shows, skillfully using psychological techniques, distributing semantic accents, directing the perception of listeners in the necessary movement. His personal stage charm, spectacularity and mystery of his art were also aimed at achieving this goal. The organic unity of his skill and ability to «present» / sell his art created the emotional tone that met the artistic requirements of romantic performance.

In the 30s and 40s of the 19th century, a period of extraordinary popularity of virtuoso art, works based on the themes of popular arias or ensembles from opera performances were especially successful in instrumental music. Thus, the repertoire of the concertgoers necessarily included various instrumental fantasies, paraphrases, transcriptions into opera or other popular melodies. Another part of the concert repertoire was formed under the influence of the desire to demonstrate speed and various technical effects, which for most virtuosos was the key to true success. This brought to life works of a technical nature, which were realized in the genre of so-called «concert etude».

Based on a certain developed construction, such compositions (transcriptions, variations, etudes) were created quickly, without much effort, the main thing was to choose a «successful» theme and give it a skillful instrumental «cut». This «artisanal» approach has led to a whole array of plays of an openly low artistic level. This repertoire is intended for performance in salons

and defined the general negative attitude to virtuoso culture.

N. Paganini was one of the first to create compositions of this kind. This is clearly evidenced by the works collected in the above collection under the direction of N. Sivachenko (2019): «Polonaise with variations» («Polacca con variazioni», 1810), Variations on the theme «Pria ch'io l'impegno» from the opera «The Love of a Sailor» and Weigl (1818), Variations on the theme «Non piu mesta accanto al fuoco» from the opera «Cinderella» by G. Rossini (1817-1818), «Maestosa Suonata sentimentale» on the theme «Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser» by J. Haydn (1828), «Perpetuela» from «Sonata a movimento perpetuo» (1832, as a sample of etude movement). These include the well-known Paganinian Variations «Witches» on the theme of the ballet «The Wedding of Benevento» by F. Suessmayr (1813), Variations on a theme from the opera «Moses» by G. Rossini (1819), «Three arias with variations» on themes from operas W.A. Mozart (1824), «Moto Perpetuo» («Perpetuum mobile», 1835), *variational cycles* on the themes of the national anthems of Austria (1828) and England (G.F. Handel's theme «God Save the King», 1829) etc.

According to the structure and thematic development, all these opuses are «produced» according to a certain «author's cliché». In this regard, researchers emphasize the decisive role of the genre in the work of N. Paganini, who dictated the «strict stylistic norms» and was an «immanent property» of his works. Limited to genre requirements, Paganini's composition has not evolved for several decades. This is confirmed by the structure of his works of different periods, in connection with which T. Burford notes: «Variations “Witch” for violin and orchestra (Le Streghe, M.S. 19, 1813) is stylistically much closer to the so-called “Venice Carnival” for violin and an orchestra written a decade and a half later (O mamma, mamma ca[ra], MS59: 1829) than a violin concerto created in the same 1810s № 1 (Es-dur; Primo Concerto, MS 21: 1815 -1816), the monumental style of which, in turn, will be identical to the style of the concerto № 3 (E major; Terzo Concerco, MS50: 1826), which appeared much later». This approach probably led to the attitude of the next generation of artists to the work of N. Paganini as a «relic» of the past, which at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries affected the loss of public interest and devaluation of the great Genoese.

Another specific facet of romantic performing arts was the manifestation of a certain «dress code» of virtuosos. The basis for it were the guidelines of the romantic ideal of the artist, according to which the romantic artist did not perceive a balanced, «intellectual» performance. The artist was to be a leader, to draw the general public to the «sacred flame» of art, to lead people to his magical world. The goal of the performers was to impress, stun the audience, bring it out of balance, show strong and impressive feelings. A characteristic phenomenon was the rejection of the restriction of artistic individuality and the desire for free expression of feelings. Because of this, the romantic style of the game was distinguished by emphasized expressiveness and expressiveness. The overlap of feelings, the extreme emotional tension was often expressed both in the idyllic and sublime, and in the demonic nature of creativity.

All these qualities were vividly accumulated in the art of N. Paganini. Moreover, the violinist deliberately and relentlessly worked to create such image. The myth of the fantastic, the unsurpassedness of his play, its magical influence on others, the mystical, inexplicable facts of the biography were consistently created and maintained by Paganini himself throughout his life. For almost two centuries, none of the researchers has been able to unravel this tangle and distinguish fiction from truth.

The art of the violinist had a huge impact on the formation of composition and performance of the next generation of romantics. First of all, it was F. Chopin (1810-1849), who heard the Grand Maestro in Warsaw in 1829, and later in Paris – F. Liszt (1811-1886) and G. Berlioz (1803-1869). Under the influence of the play of the great Genoese there was a rethinking of the figurative content of music in R. Schumann (1809-1856).

The violin traditions introduced by the great Genoese were directly developed in the works of K. Lypynsky (1790-1861). Even in the Italian period of N. Paganini's life, they organized both personal competitions and joint concerts. N. Paganini's influence on the Polish violinist's performance could be seen in the large-scale concert «presentation» characteristic of K. Lypynsky's performance style, his extraordinary «symphonic» interpretation of the violin, which did not correspond to the «lyrical» direction of European salon culture of the first decades of the 19th century. K. Lypynsky was ahead of his fellow virtuosos in depth and breadth of thinking, including in his repertoire

not only his own works, which was typical for the performance of that time, but also other authors. This approach (concert style and repertoire policy) corresponded to the romantic style of performance of the second quarter of the 19th century.

Conclusions

In the first decades of the 19th century, changes in aesthetic views and artistic content of art, associated with the establishment of the romantic style in art, affected the rethinking and renewal of musical language and imagery of works, expressive, technical, colorful means of performance and more. This manifested itself in the expansion and complication of the means of artistic expression, in the invention and development of new elements of musical expression, especially virtuoso technique, color and performance techniques, in the latest approaches to stage realization, and so on.

Features of the «romantic» expression and the new concert «presentation» were vividly presented by the art of N. Paganini. The Italian violinist perfectly understood the instrumental specifics of the violin, deeply penetrated into the essence of the performance process, understood the musical needs and tastes of his time. Based on his extraordinary intuition and accurate calculation of his influence on the public, Paganini was also one of the first «PR managers» in European concert culture, who built new market relations in this area.

Paganini's art largely determined the development of European romanticism, in particular the work of prominent artists G. Berlioz, K. Lypynsky, F. Liszt, G. Meyerbeer, G. Rossini, F. Chopin, R. Schumann, and others. Despite the huge array and diversity of the existing literature on N. Paganini, with each new study, new facets of the figure and work of the genius violinist are revealed and new prospects for their further study appear.

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