

# S. Maykapar's Piano Pedagogics

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**Abstract**—The article examines the multifaceted piano heritage of S. Maykapar. His compositions register instructive and artistic value, and addressed to children and youth. Special attention is paid to the analysis of the cycles “First Steps”, “20 Preludes for Pedal” and “Songs on the Technique of Double Notes”. The conclusion is that the music of the composer and his progressive scientific and methodical ideas did not lose their significance today.

**Keywords**—pedagogue; scientist, piano; “Anthology of Maykapar's works”; pedaling; Leschetizky; repertoire

## I. INTRODUCTION

S. Maykapar - one of those past Russian artists who made great contributions to the children and youth piano repertoire. As an experienced teacher, artist, scientist, professor of the St. Petersburg-Leningrad Conservatory, he has left a noticeable trace in the culture of Russian piano. Maykapar's plume belongs to a large number of works, possessing undoubted artistic merit and are extremely useful in terms of guidance. Unfortunately, as times goes by, many works of Maykapar, as well as a number of works of the other Russian composers of the past (A. Gretchaninov, A. Goedicke, S. Bortkevich and others), had lost their former popularity. Among Maykapar's opuses, some are still included in the repertoire of teaching today, others have become the common property of history. Meanwhile, value of the composer's children's music does not leave doubts.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century interest in the musical heritage of the past has amplified. In line with this trend, “Anthology of Maykapar's works” was published. There have been republished many of his children's instructional pieces, ensemble compositions, as well as a number of concert works, which addressed to young people - Sonata in C Minor, Op. 19 [10], Sonata for young people, Ballade [3]. The fundamental works of the musician were also included in the “Anthology” - “The musical hearing. Its value, nature, characteristics and method of correct development” [7] and “Musical performance and pedagogy. From the unpublished works” [6]. Complex study of the composer's music and its scientific and methodological heritage can promote a deeper understanding of the formational process of the Russian piano school during the first half of the twentieth century.

## II. “ANTHOLOGY OF MAYKAPAR'S WORKS”

Let us turn to some of the works, which came in the “Anthology of Maykapar's works”. Inclusion in the repertoire of Maykapar's collection “First Steps. Children's Collection of Small Pieces for Piano 4 Hands” [2] can bring a considerable benefit of the students. This collection continues the tradition at home, a family of music-making, so widespread in prerevolutionary Russia since Glinka, Dargomyzhsky, Tchaikovsky and others. For example, in the middle of XIX century, Dargomyzhsky wrote “Slavonic Tarantella for piano 4 hands to play with those who are not able to play.” Widespread have had four-link arrangements of such popular opuses as “Children's Album” and “The Seasons” by Tchaikovsky in the amateur musical environment. Stravinsky made a whole series of four light hand pieces (“Three Easy Pieces Four Hands”, “Five Easy Pieces Four Hands”, “Five Fingers”, “Eight Very Easy Pieces”) in the early twentieth century. The number of examples could multiply.

Being an advocate of ensemble music as an essential factor of the child's primordial familiarizing to the instrument, Maykapar offers a number of protozoan and ensemble pieces with highly attractive of musically relations. “First Steps” are capable emotionally to uncover pupil and inculcate in his interest in studies. Here pupil's group is elementary - stated clearly and simply, and pedagogue's group - is more complicated, enriched, it can also be filled with a more senior pupil. Numbers of cycle were written predominantly in C major, work on them supposed mandatory transposition in all tonality. Able of pupil can also by means of teacher to vary the text due to the addition of melismas configuration and opevany. Similar creative approach to employment develops the auditory representations of pupil and his musical thinking. Unfortunately, the collection of piano pieces “First Steps” was extremely rarely used today in the pedagogical practice, and for a long time its individual numbers have not been included in numerous teaching aids and chrestomathy for beginners.

## III. COLLECTION OF “20 PRELUDES FOR PEDAL”

Among the inclusions in the “Anthology”, compositions of great interest to pedagogues-pianists also represented a collection of “20 Preludes for Pedal. Course of practice and

theory study of the basic techniques of piano pedagogy" [8]. Preludes for pedal were created by the composer in 1937 in the response to urgent practice requirements of piano training. In those years, special works on training techniques of pedaling did not exist yet, and the mastery of pedal has been one of the weakest, the links of the educational process developed little.

In Maykapar's time children proceeded to the mastery of pedaling late enough, all the attention was paid to the first period of the child's hand-position and the development of his motility bolt. Being a pedagogue-innovator, Maykapar sought to overcome these entrenched erroneous, mechanistic principles of training. Early training of the pedaling arts, for which fought Maykapar, is in full accordance with the modern methodical plants. "Pedal - vital moisture of piano, his breath, and his soul" - says professor N. Golubovska in the book named "The Art of pedaling" [1, p.7].

"20 Preludes for Pedal" - unique composition in a well-known sense. The process of initial development of child's foot-operated principles has been developed with great thoroughness and completeness, at that simultaneously in two directions - methodical and practical. Preludes were stated by the principle of difficulties' increase. Each one of Maykapar's collection are accompanied by detailed methodical recommendation. They are stated quite briefly, clearly and accessibly, owing to they can be perceived not only a pedagogue, but also the same as student. Extremely valuable is that Maykapar used them at the initial stage of training not only by the right pedal, but also the left. Great attention is paid to musician auditory control and self-control of pianist. "Just as Fingerstyle techniques do not comprehend his fingers at all, but his head, just as pedaling does not depend on his feet, but his ear", - stressed V. Giesecking [12, p.99].

#### IV. MAYKAPAR'S SCHOOL-BOOK "SONGS ON THE TECHNIQUE OF DOUBLE NOTES"

It is also desirable to draw attention of the modern musical pedagogue schools and colleges to Maykapar's school-book named "Songs on the Technique of Double Notes" [9]. This labor includes three sections: "12 carpal Preludes without stretching on octave", "Three carpal Preludes for small hands" and "Octave intermezzo". Sections titles of this opus has already indicated himself, that Maykapar seriously think about the process of the child's gradual and orderly familiarizing to execution of double notes (including octaves).

Maikapar, as we know, is one of the representatives of School of Leshetizky - an outstanding pianist-pedagogue of the twentieth century, in which he was trained in Vienna. T. Leschetizky attached great importance to work on the exercises on all stages of formation of pianistic apparatus, including the start. In this connection, as Maykapar's careful development sphere of the technical work of the pianist allows to say about him as a convinced follower of the principles of his teacher.

Leschetizky constantly reminded his disciples about necessity of the development "carpal leaf springs", about the

so-called "guttaperchievovy brushes", and also about elegance of movement [11, p. 24]. Similar tasks also put Maykapar in front of those, who study his benefits for the development of double notes technique. In "carpal preludes for small hands", Maykapar pays great attention to the improvement of stroke as a leading legato techniques, as well as various dynamic and articulator, fingering variants. By Maykapar's conviction, the decisive factor in the successful implementation of double notes is the elasticity of pianist hands, as well as the expediency and economy of movements. Thus Maykapar insists that the work on technique was not mechanical, but creative and meaningful.

Maykapar developed a system of exercises (extremely laconically, that very valuable) allows avoiding any form of squeeze hands, which, as we know, exactly not infrequently provokes the execution of double notes and octaves. It is impossible not to recall in this connection with the basic provisions, formulated a recognized specialist in the treatment of occupational diseases of pianist A. Schmidt-Shklov's hands. Formulated its principles is desirable to take note of both the teacher and the pupil when working on Maykapar's "Songs on the Technique of Double Notes":

- the principle of support housing arms ... It protects hands from fatigue.
- the principle supports of "vault" are not in the bone, as is customary, and in the middle of the palm. This method of support provides more free and natural functioning fingers.
- the principle of "Sound Conduction", according to which sound as if flows through the entire hand ("Fizzles" from it).
- the principle of stretching: not "stretching fingers", but "stretching", "expansion of palm" [13, p. 8].

It should be emphasized exactly, that the last of these Maykapar's principles imparts largest value.

#### V. "LITTLE NOVELETTA"

Among the collections, which were published in the "Anthology", "Little Noveletta. Easy Pieces for Piano." attracts attention. Unlike Maykapar's "Spillikins" [4], which have been repeatedly republished and included in the collections of pianoforte and thus preserved in piano repertoire, most of the "Noveletta" were not practically fulfilled today. Meanwhile, there are very interesting little pieces - living, bright, shaped and witty. It is enough to refer to the software names of numbers: "Toccatina", "Svirel", "Fairy Tale", "Arietta", "Lullaby", "Italian Serenade", "Sad Mood", "Mermaid (etude)", and others. These pieces are romantic painted, in them Maykapar must be remarkable traditions of the Romantical composers in Russian and West European, such as R. Schumann, P. Tchaikovsky, E. Grieg and others. Maykapar's "Noveletta", as for instructional utility, there is no doubt in it.

## VI. CONCLUSION

“Anthology of Maykapar’s works” could not, of course, accommodate all the piano heritage of a remarkable musician. Beyond that remained whole series of original compositions. To those, for example, includes “Marionette Theater, for Piano”. Some of the Opus includes characteristic, intriguing numbers, such as “Prologue”, “Stepdaughter and Stepmother”, “On the War”, “Dance of Clowns”, “Catching butterflies”, “Song of the Troubadour”, “Procession of the Puppets”. Piano cycle “Marionette Theater” was used with great popularity in the middle of the last century in pedagogues and children, in connection with which the collection was repeatedly republished in Moscow and Leningrad. Today these compositions had been practically emerged from repertoire. The same fate has befallen to many other cycles of the composer – “Little Suite in Classical Style”, “Fleeting Thoughts”, “Pastoral Suite”, “Two Delicate Notes, for Piano”, “Lullabies Fairy Tales for Piano” and others.

It is time to thoroughly and comprehensively study the master’s heritage in its wholeness, to select something that can have an emotional response from modern children and to return this music to the repertoire of children’s music schools. Maykapar’s music could enrich both Russian piano practice and foreign piano practice, including Chinese. Imaginative, enthralling pieces of famous Russian composer’s can also be used in activities of art schools - in theater, pop, choreographic performances, children’s parties, skits and others.

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