

Analysis of Franz Liszt's Piano Adaptation "Réminiscences de Don Juan"

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Key words: Franz Liszt, "Réminiscences de Don Juan", music form, technique, emotion.

Abstract: "Réminiscences de Don Juan" is one of the ten most difficult piano music in the world ,this work is adapted from the opera "Don Giovanni" by Hungarian pianist Franz Liszt. The technique is very difficult, the scale is also very grand .Based on the original work's rich expression he made the work grand momentum. The original opera "Don Giovanni" by Mozart last 2.5 hours long, but Liszt put it into a smart piece , and didn't delete even a note in the adaptation process .So the technique and rhythm are all very difficult. This article will show the composing background of "Réminiscences de Don Juan" , compare the original "Don Giovanni"and analysis the music form, emotion and technique of "Réminiscences de Don Juan", helping piano players to understand the work and to perform it well.

The Background of Franz Liszt's Adaptation "Réminiscences de Don Juan"

Background of Franz Liszt

Franz Liszt (1811 - 1886) was born in Hungary, in the early nineteenth century, he is the most famous and most influential musician in Europe. He is also a famous pianist, conductor, music educator, composer and music critic. His works is not only a large number , but also rich in types of music .

Liszt showed his musical talent when he was six years old, and he went to the public stage for the first time when he was nine years old and played a difficult Concerto in E major. From 1821 to 1823, Liszt lived in the United States and laid a solid foundation for his future. He followed two very famous musicians .One is Austrian pianist and composer Karl Cherni, the other one is Italian composer Antonio sari. Antonio sari once said, "I like that boy, a lively ,with rich emotion and extraordinary talent in performance. A year later, I started teaching him to the public, and I had never seen such a passionate, talented, diligent student."

Composing Background

In the early nineteenth century, Liszt is the most famous and most influential musician in Europe. He is also a famous pianist, conductor, music educator, composer and music critic. His works is not only a large number , but also rich in types of music .In the historical records of "Don Giovanni", Don Juan is a bad and lecherous man, he began to lured to a young girl, in order to own the girl, he murdered the girl's father , even this evil brought many inspirations to a lot of artists. For example, a poet named Byron, the great poet of Britain, wrote a long novel, this novel is called "Don Juan", he is protagonist in the novel, through portray this main character, Byron showed the different living situation of people from different countries in 19th Century. Given strong criticism and satire to the reactionaries and holy allies in Europe.

$$\overbrace{\text{Int}_{67}(\text{I}_9+\text{Re}_4+\text{I}'_{21}+\text{II}_{16}+\text{Re}_8+\text{II}'_{10})+\text{Re}_{10}+\text{A}_{48}+\text{Re}_1+\text{B}_{33}+\text{Var. I}(\text{A}'_{58}+\text{Re}_{19}+\text{B}'_{32})+\text{Var. II}(\text{A}''_{37}+\text{B}''_{57})+}^{\boxed{\text{A}} \text{ 353}} \text{AGAdaf} \quad \text{A} \quad \text{GbAbG}$$

$$\overbrace{\text{C}_{90}+\text{C}'_{86}+\text{Re}_6+\text{C}''_{32}+\text{Re}_{48}+\text{Coda}_{28}}^{\boxed{\text{B}} \text{ 290}}$$

^bB

Section A: it has six periods and a overture. The overture is grave with a series of 4/4, 3/4, 2/4 mixed time, including a strong overture style . In the overture in part A also appeared some fast tremolo, chromatic scales, arpeggio ,octaves and chord progressions. The momentum is very magnificent, like a storm. Finally, with the grand sound, it gradually calmed down. And then there was the charming duet [A+B]. Part A is andantino, 2 / 4time , A major; Part B is allegro in A major. The two parts of the melody material used Mozart's opera "Don Giovanni". And then there are two big variations (A '+B' variations; I, A '' +B 'variation II). Liszt added a lot of decorations and a lot of new music materials. Transitions appear very frequently in part B, the effect of harmony and the effect of sound become sharp, as if greeting the arrival of a new theme. Then the next part has three periods and a coda. There is a progressive relationship between the three periods. The music materials in the main part of "Réminiscences de Don Juan" is selected from the original opera, then was later known as champagne song. "Réminiscences de Don Juan" begin with presto ,show a positive attitude. The next two periods push the music to climax. In the end ,chord progression ,scales and sequence bring the intense coda out. There are both connections and oppositions between section A and B.

The Technique and Emotion of "Réminiscences de Don Juan"

Piano Technique

Liszt was once called "the king of the piano". At that time his performance skills are incomparable, and his musical talent is incomparable too. Paganini who is a superb violinist is known as the violin devil, Liszt also successfully transferred the devil violin technique to his works of piano music, The difficulty of playing technique has reached an unimaginable level . At the same time Liszt will also learned some fresh figures in the violin playing, such as beating, staccato, glissando and so on(Table 1).His works greatly expanded the playing of piano technique. Liszt covered almost all the piano playing technique in "Réminiscences de Don Juan", his piano playing technique is one of the most difficult techniques. All the piano playing technique in "Réminiscences de Don Juan" 1: minor third chromatic scale in the right hand; 2: octave scale; 3: octave chromatic scale; 4: chromatic scale; 5: minor third ;6: large-span arpeggio in right hand ;7: reverse chromatic scale; 8: polyphony ;9: staccato octave and so on . Among them, melody with octave and third is the most difficult of all techniques.



Large-Span Arpeggio In Right Hand

The most important technique at this part is the large-span arpeggio and pedal. Practice slowly with one hand when practice the large-span arpeggio . Fingers drive the arm, loud and clear. The left hand chords and pedal show at the same time ,put the energy of upper arm deeply to make a distinct and vigorous (Figure 1), such a large-span arpeggio is not the same like ordinary arpeggio, this kind of large-span arpeggio increase notes and the of the structure to expand the work, to make the music has more expressive with strong energy.



The Technique of Playing Octave

When you practice the fortissimo octave in left hand place your finger in place. Just move your arm to do the transformation, then you need to fixed position with the fingers, every touch like the statue's persuasion. Finally left hand play smart staccato, step, scale and chromatic scale, the continuous octave as heavy footsteps gradually accelerated. Then push the whole song into the climax.



Trill

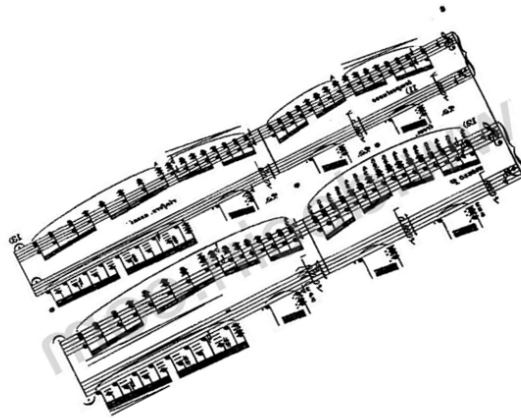
In the back paragraph of this piece, trill become the key point, the melody from the climax to low ebb, while playing chord slowly with both hands increase the intensity and then a sudden strong and dual tone when playing trill, we must control our finger, play even and clear but not too abrupt, so the player need a super solid basic.



The Using of Pedal

The most valuable part of this piece is the using of the pedal. Liszt broke away from convention, created half pedal and 1/4 pedal. The using of pedal is not only as the increase of sound effect, in this overture in the left hand, the pedal assisted while playing the two octaves.





Emotion

Music is actually a very special way of language expression, which can express the corresponding emotion that the language can not express. Make music and language perfect combination of the two, and then use the form of vocal music to perform can reach the purpose of artistic creation. The piano art is a combination of playing technique and vocal music art, beautiful music and language expression combine together. Put the original vocal music into piano expression. The transformation of vocal art into the expression of piano music, there are many problems in the transformation of artistic images, it also has impassable chasm. Franz Liszt's adaptation "Réminiscences de Don Juan" is one of the leading works. In this piece Liszt interspersed a lot of variations, it goes with the representative melody, Put the temptation, violence, supernatural and other elements together. Franz Liszt adapted it from a complicated story to a extremely difficult piano sonata.

Conclusion

Liszt is a romantic composer, pianist. His performance is always full of enthusiasm, and difficult technique. He composed different styles of works which also have a very great scale . His adaptations have been frequently used in a lot of international professional competitions or concerts. "Réminiscences de Don Juan" is his best transcriptions. "Réminiscences de Don Juan" is full of passion, like Liszt itself is full of poetic. Liszt 's fusion of piano music and opera makes his piano music not only with the magnificent structure of the opera, but also has a strong romantic feelings. In his adaptation and creation, Liszt not only formed his own characteristics, but also inherited the essence of many other composer's outstanding works. His courage to innovate is of great significance to the development of contemporary society and the future of piano music.

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