Analysis of Musical Understanding and Performance of Chopin’s Scherzo No. 2 in B-flat Minor

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Abstract
This article analyzes Chopin's Scherzo Op. 31 No. 2, which is the most well-known among Chopin's four Scherzos. It has become a classic piece due to its exceptional performance techniques and the combination of playing skills prevalent at that time. This paper analyzes the three parts of the piece, namely the presentation part, the middle part, and the recapitulation part. With its musical connotations and performance practices as the entry point of the analysis, one can experience the artistic characteristics of Chopin's compositions. This experience is related to one's own practice and involves engaging in artistic and technical discussions. The Second Scherzo in B-flat minor is characterized by a 3-beat, fast, and lively tempo. Although there are many repetitive passages in the middle, there are also some variations that place high demands on the player's technical skills and musical understanding. This includes contrasting the passages with each other and following the emotional tone of the piece.

Keywords
Chopin's Scherzo, musical understanding, playing skills

1. Music Understanding
Chopin's Scherzo Op. 31 No. 2 in b-flat minor was formed in Chopin's full-fledged creative period, there is a certain degree of fantasy and drama, but also no lack of lyrical, singing beautiful passages, breaking through some of the norms of the classical sonatas, and greatly developed the harmonic genre of expression of ideas and content. That is to say, this harmonic fully reflects Chopin's mentality in this period, and it is also the strongest voice that dares to fight against unfair destiny (Xie Fang, 2021). The strong patriotic feeling that runs through Chopin's compositions, often using various variations of the melody, is in line with the characteristics of Polish national music.

In the first phrase, the weak triplet pattern in the bass register expresses the wavering heart, and the loud octave chords create a thick and resolute momentum to form a kind of sharp, soft and questioning thematic form, followed by the emergence of a light and beautiful singing melody, which deepens the contrast of the music's image: the development section appears as a complex and independent thematic passage, and the main and secondary sections at the two ends are formed by the same dominant major and minor modes. The contrast between the main theme and the sub-theme is sharpened by the imagery of longing, surprise, and longing; the first theme is added and altered with renewed vigor to deepen the dramatic conflict, and powerful and passionate emotion fills the recapitulation until the end.

Chopin distilled the originally light, absurd, and humorous Scherzo from the suite into a single-movement solo work with a huge compositional structure. Through his own careful and delicate design, he gave the harmonic a
more three-dimensional musical image as well as a deeper cultural and intellectual connotation. Chopin has merely borrowed the name and form of the harmonic but has completely remodeled its interior, truly taking the genre to new and unprecedented heights (Zhou Xixi, 2021).

2. Analysis of Performance Technique

When playing the piano works of the Romantic school, one of the biggest differences from the classical period is that the Romantic works can moderately express emotions freely, which makes the rhythm can be moderately loose and tight. The most crucial point to master the elastic rhythm is to grasp the "degree", and no good effect can be obtained if it is too much or too little (Guo Chengchen, 2019). According to one's own playing experience and understanding of it, the following is an analysis of some playing techniques for each of the three parts.

2.1 Exposition

This work uses the sonata form of double Exposition, "double Exposition" refers to the first movement of the classical concerto in order to reflect the principle of the concerto, the Exposition of the repetition of the section into the second Exposition. The first Exposition is played by the orchestra, with the main theme and sub-themes always remaining in the dominant key; the second Exposition is played by solo instruments, with the sub-themes shifting to the dominant key. First of all, the musical term Exposition is the acute plate, which sets the tempo of the piece at the beginning of the track. The emotional color of the beginning of the piece (1-48) is questionable. The soft voice should not only be light but also be heard. We can play it out loud with solid power at the beginning, using the power of the upper arm, paying attention to coherence, and the triplets should be even, and controlling the strength of the fingers on this basis, in order to seek the effect of sotto voce (Cao Yuyang, 2021). The first beat of the second bar, played and released, the rest should be in place, ready to give the chords of the sixth bar very dryly, to contrast and contrast with the lightness of the previous one, to be worthy of note is the fifth bar, although marked with the intensity symbol ff, but the chords after that are the real focus, to pave the way for the subsequent movements. By bar 49, the music begins to change rapidly, from 53 to 64 in a question-and-answer fashion, with the right hand's eighth notes light and languid, and the left hand's quarter notes strong and fingered, although repetitive, the mood is not static, and the movement moves into D-flat major, where, after a magnificent right hand chromatic upward and downward progression, the left-hand takes up the chord in three consecutive chord progressions, especially the chordal basses, which are resolved constantly, making the atmosphere still unsettled. The atmosphere of the piece remains unsettled. The last two measures are a slowing down and a weakening, which leads to the second theme.

The second theme of the first part is continuous. Beginning in the 65th measure, the right hand is a monophonic melody, the left hand is the accompaniment of eighth notes, and the left hand quickly runs to break down the arpeggio seems to require light and even sound, to be dexterous shallow key touch, gentle wrist power to play a kind of hazy feeling; the right hand's beautiful melody of the same tone repeated treatment can better express Chopin's delicate and sensitive heart. In the process of practicing, pay attention to the evenness of the left hand and the consistency of the right hand. When the fingers stick to the keys, you have to deal with the clarity, and then you have to deal with the consistency between the hand and the brain, that is, the mind has to think of dealing with the transfer of the finger power at all times. This part of the pedal every bar pedal once, flexible use of the left wrist. 71 to 75 bars of the right hand of the descending b notes, the little thumb in the process of playing should make a contrast, the overall trend to have a gradual strengthening, the little thumb to touch the keys should be slow, under the key to deep, the right-hand melody as a whole does not sound harsh, the feelings of the water like slowly flowing, although the back of the front of the repetition, in the processing of feelings, should be layer upon layer. Although the latter is a repetition of the earlier, the music should be handled with layers of emotion, and the music should become more and more exciting, a kind of uninhibited feeling. Finally, it ends with a short and powerful coda.

2.2 Intermedius

The first theme begins with sudden quiet chords, which can be fully pedaled to achieve a full acoustic effect. The austere melody then switches to the tune of a folk pastoral flute, and the music remains in a peaceful mood. Unlike the first part, this separate passage is quieter, with a slow lyrical tempo reflecting Chopin's inner freedom. It is a polyphonic passage, and the practicing process should be done by listening carefully to the melodic lines of each
The second theme is as clear, transparent, and coherent as a round dance. The outer voices should play melodically, freely, and romantically, and the eighth notes and triplets in the middle voices should be even and clear, with the left hand holding the C-#D-E horizontal progression, matching the right hand's melodic continuity until the end of the passage when it gradually slows down. Be a little more subdued in measure 301, and don't muddle each note. The weight should be controlled, and the rhythm should be spread out and even.

The third theme is a continuation of the first two themes, and the mood is upbeat until the enthusiastic end. The theme is a fast, right-hand florid section that rushes up and down like a clear stream, and the gradual increase in momentum from p to f shows the music's passionate exuberance. The music at the beginning of bar 334 has a dance-like feel, with crescendos and diminuendos. The sound should be played very lightly and softly, giving a feeling of dexterity and haziness, like light, definitely not blinding, but soft. In the left hand diatonic rhythm of measure 352, pay attention to the fact that the heavy beat is falling on the second note. The whole section should be practiced slowly to solve the rapid succession of finger crossing and finger turning during the practice. The last 358-365 is the peak of the emotion, and it should be played with the grandeur of a single breath. The whole section is magnificent, the sudden change of key makes the conflict happen again, and the inner turmoil, the rapid changes, and the contrasts of emotions require very delicate and rigorous playing. Measures (366-582) are a repetition of the first theme, but the emotion is more intense and free, especially the first intensity sign is strong, and the music in front of it is still very different from the emotion, the sound should be played richly, but not hard. At the beginning of the 468th bar, the feelings are more intense, the right hand across the more even and powerful, and the left-hand chords should be accurate, and decisive. In the process of practicing, the palm of the hand is required to be open, "all the independent and flexible methods of touching the keys with the fingers are to swing the fingers with the meta method joints as the axes", so the palm joints are required to be opened positively to drive the fingers to run fast, the arm is relaxed, the fingers fall naturally to reduce the area of touching the keys (Jenny Wang, 2018). This music pushes Chopin's love for his country and his expectation of light to the extreme. The chords at the beginning of bar 545 should be neat and powerful, the triplets should be continuous, the arpeggios in both hands should be even and short, the pedal is once a bar and should be changed in time, and the crescendo at the end is gradual and slow, and it should be played to create the feeling of fading away.

2.3 Recapitulation

Recapitulation (584-800) is basically the same as the presentation, but there is a stronger conflict of feelings, (692-708) bars, the right-hand discordant chords, show a nervous and uneasy mood, but in bar 708, the music begins to brighten up, and begins to move towards brilliance, playing octave chords should pay attention to the wrist and fingers to support, the wrist can be a little higher than the plane, the palm of the hand to relax, but the fingers should be strong, and stand firm. But the fingers should be strong, and stand firm. 748-755 bars to play the feeling of gradually strong and fast, again to mention the keystroke state of the pinky, because the whole song played to the finger is very tired, especially the pinky itself is weak, which will rely on the strength of the waist, drive the arm, to the fingertips, so you need to use the body's strength, rather than shoulder tension, to remind themselves to send the notes. 756-762 bars to the melody of the right hand, the melody is beginning to brighten up, and begins to move towards glory, the wrist can be slightly above the plane, the palm of the hand to relax, but the wrist and fingers to support. 762 bars of the right-hand melody to a cascade of feeling, the arm should be put down, the first note of each sentence to stand firm, the beat should be stable, the chords of the left hand should still be very firm, the whole tune has been from the presentation of the Department of Fantasy tunes to the end of the deep love for the motherland, the infinite yearning for freedom, especially in the last few chords, playing must be neat, both hands decisively down the key, the decorative notes of the chords to be practiced more! The last few chords of the piece are the most important chords of the piece, because the span of the piece is quite big, so you have to be quick. The last few chords of the piece are the key to pushing the whole piece to the highest point, so the rhythm should not be loose, the rest should be in place, and the last note should be lifted up when playing, giving people a positive feeling.

3. Conclusion

Through the analysis of the composition and performance of Scherzo No. 2 in B-flat minor, it can be seen that
Chopin did not deliberately emphasize the humor and wit, but through the expansion of the musical structure, the use of innovative techniques, etc., so that the work presents a richer musical expression, and also for the development of later generations of harmonicas to play a far-reaching influence. Most of Chopin's life has flowed outside of his homeland, and this piece is everywhere showing his love for the Polish people and his attachment to this land, his earnest expectation of freedom and liberation, and his passionate love for the motherland, which have all become the main line of the work. By analyzing and emotionally grasping the work, it helps us to learn and express the work better, and highlights the unique value and significance of the work. Chopin's music, which has become the most precious cultural heritage of mankind, forever stirs and shakes people's hearts.

References


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