



GENRE OF PIANO ETUDE MAIN STAGES OF EVOLUTION

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Abstract

This article is about the history and emergence of the genre of instrumental etude and the main stages in the development of this genre. The article is based on the best examples of composers who worked effectively in this genre. The article is intended for students and teachers of secondary specialized education and students of higher educational institutions in this direction.

Keywords: etude, creativity, exercises, image, repertoire, texture, composer, rhythm, tempo, style, formula, form, virtuoso, miniature, technique, intonation, instruction, concert, trend, aesthetics, scale

Introduction

At such a time, successful work on training a specialist in the field of culture and art, in particular music, is impossible without continuous improvement of his activities, aimed primarily at improving the quality of education. At the same time, the instrumental training of student musicians plays an important role in the process of high-quality training of a specialist. Technical skill becomes an important factor in the process of preparing a teacher-musician. Questions of technique and virtuosity have always interested musicians, causing a lot of controversy, judgments about the ways of developing technical and virtuoso perfection. The problem of technical skill is already devoted to the earliest methodological works of teachers-practitioners.

The main part: Etude as a cultural phenomenon is widely represented in various spheres of human activity. In artistic creativity, its existence is associated with the specifics of working with the material that is used at the birth of a work of art. The definition of the concept of etude includes not only its consideration as a preparatory stage for the creation of a significant work of art, but also a broader understanding of it as experience, sketches, critical research, characterized by the aesthetic harmony of the presentation of the material and the clarity of thought. Etudes in musical creativity are characterized by the above facets and meanings. The definition of the genre is connected with the distinction between the concepts of «etude» and «exercise». Both in painting and in music, the etude genre has ancient roots, since since the time of J.S.Bach and D.Scarlatti, works have been created whose purpose was to develop in the student certain technical skills of playing the instrument. At first they did not have a single name, for example, in J.S.Bach they were designated as inventions (“inventions”), in D.Scarlatti – sonatas, in the commentary to which the composer called them “exercises”.



Thus, the first stage in the history of the formation of the etude can be described as the stage of the birth of the genre: in the period of its emergence, there is still no clear idea of the final stage of its development, and the first samples of the musical and pedagogical repertoire (inventions, sonatas – excercises, etc.) are considered as predecessors future etudes.

By the beginning of the 19th century, etude had formed as an independent genre, and its basic compositional principles had been established. These plays were aimed at the development of a certain type of technique, performed an applied function and did not imply the implementation of artistic tasks. Quite often, etudes were reduced to simple exercises and differed from them only in the completeness of form and variety of texture. Originally originating as an instructive genre based on simple textural technical formulas designed to develop the pianist's skills in mastering various types of techniques, the etude genre has transformed into a concerto-artistic work.

In the first half of the 19th century, types of etudes crystallized – instructive, characteristic and concert-artistic (according to the terminology of I.Terentyeva). The division into instructive and concert-artistic etudes subsequently became conditional in many respects. In the development of the genre, there is a tendency to complicate the musical language. Among the instructive ones, one can single out etudes for different types of technique (small, large, etc.), rhythmic etudes. They mainly practiced techniques for performing textured technical formulas from among the most common in the piano literature of that time, as well as various methods of sound production. Many of the composers who wrote etudes were famous virtuosos, shone with the highest technique, the degree of mastery of which determined the degree of their creative viability. Special achievements in the etude genre belong to the London piano school and its prominent representatives – M.Clementi, I.B.Cramer, the Vienna school of pianism – I.N.Hummel and K.Czerny. In the historical evolution of the French piano tradition, a large role is also assigned to composers who wrote etudes: L.Adam, A.Lemoine, S.Geller. The form and structure of the etude underwent minor changes in their work, remaining in line with the baroque tradition: tripartiteness, the predominance of a single technical idea (etude for a certain type of technique), the simplicity of the harmonic language. In the collections of etudes by M. Clementi «Gradus ad Parnassus» (1817, 1819, 1826), intended for the versatile development of the pianist, genre diversity attracts. Along with etudes, they include sonatas, rondos, scherzos, capriccios, plays (Andante and Adagio), as well as fugues and canons. Most of the pieces (54 out of 100) are combined into suites, which include preludes or introductions, an extended polyphonic composition, a sonata Allegro and a finale, often also written in sonata form. Clementi's connections with the traditions of the French clavier tradition are traced.

Along with Clementi's etudes, one of the first collections of etudes was «The Large Practical Piano School» (1815) by I.B.Cramer. In style, his opuses are close to Clementi's etudes, but musically more diverse. Compared to Clementi, Cramer uses the technique of quick contraction and stretching of the hand, changing the position of the hand during the game more often.

Another type of etude is presented in the extensive etude legacy of K.Czerny (1791-1857). Czerny's etudes help the performer master the most common, basic types of classical piano texture. They set various tasks for the expressive voicing of textural formulas, assuming a certain auditory attention in the method of learning them. Czerny's etudes cover all stages of piano training – from the simplest etudes-formulas for five fingers (op.139), called by Czerny «100



exercises for the piano», to detailed etudes, such as op.365, in which texture predominates, anticipating, or which directly influenced the texture characteristic of Liszt's etudes («Mazeppa») and Chopin (op. 10 No. 2). Etudes by K.Czerny were very popular. Many luminaries of the romantic era grew up on them, such as F.Chopin, R.Schumann, F.Mendelssohn, F.Liszt. The latter was his student, who absorbed in its entirety the «school» of his teacher and raised it to unprecedented heights.

The rhythmic motor foundations laid down in the etudes by K.Czerny were continued by rhythmic etudes, which entered musical practice in the second half of the 19th century. These included collections of sketches by K.H.Döring, E.Köhler, A.Erich and a number of others. Meanwhile, in the etude heritage of the 19th century, these opuses are rather an episodic phenomenon.

The etudes of many composers of the 19th century had a poetic-figurative basis. As a result, collections of «characteristic», «expressive» and «melodic» etudes appeared. Characteristic etudes have not become as popular and in demand as instructive and concert art studies, since they are not very effective for the formation of technical skills. It seems that the reason is not only this, but also the lack of genuine artistic value in them.

Among the characteristic studies, the studies of I.Moscheles (1794-1870) stand out: 24 studies op.70 (1826) and «Characteristic studies» op.95 (1836-1837). They can be called early examples of program-romantic etude, which had a certain influence on the development of the genre, including in the field of concert etude.

After some time, along with instructive, a new type of genre is created – a concert etude, which opens a new milestone in the development of the genre. Etude became a self-sufficient genre – one of the «favorites» in the piano work of all the same romantic composers – F.Chopin, R.Schumann, F.Liszt. Etude was one of those genres that provided an opportunity to fully realize the main aesthetic provisions of the era of romanticism, and among them, first of all, the idea of a perfect artist. Due to the fact that this genre did not have an established canon, it was open to experimentation and the free realization of the author's ideas. Many composers began to seriously deviate from the instructive function, which at this stage implied an orientation towards virtuosity and a certain type of technique that was maintained throughout the work. The latter feature was also reflected in the etudes, which included a complex figurative-semantic series, which translated them into the category of art. It was most vividly embodied in the etudes of F.Chopin.

Along with this, concert etudes appear, in which various types of techniques are combined. R.Schumann was one of the first composers who realized a new figurative and technical vision of the genre. His «Symphonic etudes» written in the form of variations became fertile ground for such experiments. But, despite the fact that the «Symphonic Etudes» is one big monolith, each variation here is like a separate study, aimed at a specific type of technique. It is also important to note the changes in shaping. Both F.Chopin and R.Schumann show a tendency to expand the scope of the work from miniature to medium form, which manifested itself in the etudes op.25 by F.Chopin and etudes after Paganini by R. Schumann. As for the Symphonic Etudes, they are an example of a full-fledged large-scale genre. In addition to the innovations in shaping, a new type of etudes appeared in the work of these composers, based on cantilena intonational-figurative material, which served as the basis for expanding ideas about the possibilities of the genre. Piano technique is poeticized due to the melodization of texture (F.Chopin). Etudes are saturated with



program content (F.Liszt, V.Alkan, C.Saint-Saens), the genre is symphonized, the form is enlarged, enriched with concert elements – Etude-sonata, Etude-concert, Etude-symphony (V.Alkan). In Alkan's etudes, the genre reached its apogee in terms of technical difficulty and scale of form. Alkan's influence on the subsequent development of the genre and piano performance is obvious. Starting from the second half of the 20th century and up to the present, Alkan's renaissance has taken place, his works are increasingly found in concert programs. With his creative work, C.Saint-Saens organically fit into the evolution of the genre, creating sketches throughout his life. Many etudes of C.Saint-Saens have analogies to some extent with the etudes of his contemporaries (Chopin, Liszt, Debussy), both in terms of titles and in terms of using the same texture elements in a similar context. In terms of shaping, the work of Saint-Saens is characterized by old-classical tendencies, which manifested themselves in the sketches he created in the form of prelude and fugue.

The etude genre goes through a special path in the work of Russian composers. The line of Liszt etudes was continued by A.G.Rubinstein, S.M.Lyapunov, F.Blumenfeld. After the movement of the form in the direction of ever greater expansion in the etudes of the composers of the Liszt-Rubinstein direction, the etudes of A.K.Lyadov, A.S.Arensky and A.N.Scriabin are piano miniatures in which the traditions of F. Chopin are clearly felt. At the junction of epochs, quite large-scale sketches appear, written on different types of technique, combining both baroque and romantic (Liszt and Chopin) features, up to the Etudes-paintings of S.V.Rachmaninoff, which ended a certain stage in the evolution of the genre.

In the future, in accordance with the general development trends, the genre undergoes changes due to the creation of a new musical language associated with the names of S.S.Prokofiev, I.Stravinsky, K.Debussy, B.Bartok, as well as O.Messiaen, Ch.Ives, D.Ligeti and others who experienced their influence.

Conclusion: Piano culture of recent decades, a new phenomenon is emerging – the cult of virtuosos on the concert stage. Concert programs are characterized by an appeal to a specific virtuoso repertoire. Brilliance, technical skill, striking effects of fluency, close to tricks, is the key to the wide popularity of artists' concerts among a huge audience. Franz Liszt's etudes occupy an increasingly significant place in the performing and pedagogical repertoire of pianists. Along with etudes by F.Chopin, S.Rachmaninov, A.Scriabin, they are increasingly heard on the concert stage, are included as mandatory in the programs of international competitions. Created in the 19th century, F.Liszt's etudes represent a new stage in the development of the piano etude genre, they represent a unique collection of pianistic techniques, the study of which is becoming a necessary step in the education of a modern performer.

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