

A Pedagogical Analysis of Darius Mihaud's Piano Duet Suite Scaramouche

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Abstract. With the development of piano education, higher music colleges and universities are exploring scientific teaching methods, and the teaching mode of piano duet has entered the public's view as an effective way to cultivate students' musical perception. In today's research, the performance analysis of piano duet has been involved, but the pedagogical analysis of the repertoire has not been explored in depth. Therefore, the study of analyzing repertoire with pedagogical analysis as the main body is very beneficial to the development of piano education. The purpose of this paper is to clarify the current situation of piano duet teaching, analyze it through hardware and software, and elaborate the important value of piano duet teaching. Taking French composer Mihaud's Piano Duet Suite *Scaramouche* as an example, we start from the ontological analysis of the music, and study its compositional structure and the three major features of neoclassicism. On this basis, visual full score exercises, aural level and phrase exercises, and exercises of musical imagination are discussed in detail for pedagogical analysis. This paper follows the logic from macroscopic to microscopic to form a systematic teaching method of piano duet, with a view to providing reference and insight for the current research on the teaching of piano duet by applying analysis in piano education.

Keywords: Piano Duet; Ontological analysis; Pedagogical Analysis; Scaramouche.

1. Introduction

Duo piano playing is a collaborative art, in which two players work together to interpret the overall structure and musical meaning of a musical work. For example, James Friskin and Irwin Freundlich's book, *Music for Piano: A Handbook of Concert and Teaching Material from 1580 to 1952*, has the first account of original musical works written for four hands and two pianos.[1] Further, the study on piano ensemble mainly evaluates and analyzes the contemporary compositions for piano duet.[2, 3] Thus, in the field of piano pedagogy, the piano duo has made its way to the concert halls of the world, and has become the equal of the solo piano and concerto.

In a large number of literature searches, it is found that many studies focus on the interpretation of the performance of the work, and less on the analysis of the teaching of the work. This paper will focus on the pedagogical analysis of piano duets to reach the educational significance of piano duets. Performance analysis is different from pedagogical analysis, which often emphasizes the details of the work, specific harmony, rhythm, melody, etc.. Its purpose is to accurately describe the requirements of stage performance. But pedagogical analysis, on the other hand, is about practice. This paper focuses on how to practice the work and cultivate students' comprehensive musical ability. It employs Mihaud's Piano Duet Suite *Scaramouche* as case study, elucidating how to teach two-piano works as an educator and how to practice the work in terms of visual perception, auditory perception as well as the students' music imagination and creativity. It's fair to say that piano duets are valuable both for performing and teaching. Exploring and promoting two-piano music holds special importance in China's piano education today.

The reasons for selecting Mihaud's Piano Duet Suite *Scaramouche* are:

1) The important position and special style of the work. French modern piano works occupy a very important position in the history of Western music. *Scaramouche* is a signature work of Mihaud, a contemporary French pianist of the 20th century, in which the composer utilizes certain modern musical expression techniques to integrate technology and music. This work has both a strong Latin American exoticism and the French composer's unique refined and elegant style, realizing a perfect

dialogue between the two pianos, and fully embodying Mihaud's out-of-this-world musical image and its rich and profound ideological content. The study of the style and teaching method of this work is conducive to the grasp of other similar styles.

2) Less research on the performance of the work. In the few two-piano competitions in our country, the repertoire is concentrated in the classical and romantic period, and the modern piano works are interpreted less, especially some French composers, which are presented less on the stage. In fact, in the 20th century, piano duo works are more colorful, rich in change, which is more meaningful to teach. For example, Mihaud's Piano Duet Suite *Scaramouche* has an important position, and the special style of the work should be more widely studied, which further expands the subject matter of the piano works, so the piece is used as a case study of two-piano teaching, which is also of great educational significance for the development of piano duet teaching.

2. The Current Status of the Piano Duet Pedagogy

In November 1997, "97 National Youth Double Piano Competition" was held in Shenzhen, China's piano duet performance form appeared on the stage for the first time, and set off a boom in piano duet performance and teaching. Scholars began to pay attention to this special form of piano performance, and gradually realized the special significance of piano duet teaching in piano education. However, in terms of the current situation of piano duet teaching, there are still serious problems in hardware facilities and software, and the development of piano duet teaching has a long way to go.

2.1. Infrastructure needs to be improved

At present, many higher music colleges and universities offer courses related to piano duet, but their hardware equipment cannot keep up with the construction of the courses. Numerous colleges and universities do not have separate piano duet classrooms, and even if they do, the number of rooms does not match the number of students, and they are only for teachers' lessons and cannot provide students with independent practice.

2.2. Teachers have yet to be supplemented

China's piano duet teaching, trained in the system of two-piano performance of professional teachers is relatively lack of. Comparing with Russian piano teaching, their piano duet course occupies an extremely important position, has its own complete teaching system, especially has a high level of teachers, excellent and experienced professors are engaged in specialized double piano performance teaching.[4]

2.3. Lack of proprietary materials for teaching piano duets

Piano duo teaching materials are relatively lacking, some scholars have studied the Russian piano teaching, they have rich and systematic teaching materials and syllabus, the teaching content covers from the Baroque period to the contemporary more than three hundred years of excellent works; there is a scientific and reasonable mechanism for teaching, performance practice; they also have step-by-step, hierarchical student training program, there are students in the University of the undergraduate study, the main direction is to Chamber Music and Duo Piano Performance.[4]

The teaching materials in China only remains in the Selected Works for Two Pianos in China published in 2006, which contains the teaching materials for two pianos created by Chinese people with Chinese cultural temperament; and Piano - Double Piano Volume written by Mr. Fang from Shanghai Conservatory of Music in 2012, which selects some foreign piano duo works, and arranges them carefully according to the characteristics of the music education majors in institutions of higher learning with the addition of the writing background.[5]

Overall, the objective realities of insufficient hardware equipment, lack of teachers, and lack of proprietary teaching materials have hindered the further development of piano duet education. But it must be stressed that, piano duet as a form of music with rich expressive power in many international

and domestic piano competitions and performances has occupied an important position, China's higher music colleges and universities of piano teaching is faced with the urgent requirements of continuous development and reform, piano duet piano chamber music ensemble is very adaptable to this new situation of piano teaching. Some scholars expect that these colleges should gradually set piano duet teaching into the teaching curriculum, owing to the introduction of this innovative teaching for the enrichment of the piano teaching means to open up a new channel.[6]

3. The Pedagogical value of piano duet

3.1. Piano Duets Break Sonic Boundaries and Broaden more Possibilities for Piano Education

The piano duet illustrated in this paper is based on the performance form of two pianos. First of all, compared with the piano solo, it can break the boundaries of the range, the treatment of the work is richer and more complex, and it possesses more layers in the sense of hearing. The artistic expression of the two pianos, whether in polyphony or in ensemble, is richer and wider than that of the solo, bringing more room for conceptualization and allowing for more possibilities of musical expression.[7] Secondly, compared with the piano concerto, the piano duet emphasizes more on fusion, and due to the particularity of the performance form, it has a reciprocal partnership. Piano concerto, on the other hand, is a form in which the piano is the main instrument and the orchestra collaborates, and there is a primary and secondary relationship. Piano duo has a stronger integration. When practicing piano duet repertoire, the exchange of musical phrases through two people playing can also represent the image of music more intuitively. Therefore, the repertoire of piano duet is often characterized by anthropomorphism, which is of great value in cultivating musical perception and imagination, and the richness of piano teaching is obvious.

3.2. Piano Duet Teaching Fosters Collaborative Skills and Stimulates Students' Interest in Music Learning

In the related study, it was stated that duet is a form of chamber music ensemble. The teaching of piano duet can not only enable students to learn piano playing skills, but also improve their ability to collaborate with other musicians [8]. From the perspective of the long-term goal of music education, in the process of developing musical ability, we should strengthen the cultivation of students' comprehensive quality. Therefore, scholars especially emphasize the training of cooperation ability, coordination ability, balance ability, polyphonic thinking ability, harmonic listening and analysis ability, sound coordination and tone control, etc., as the two pianos are an effective form of developing the above abilities.[9] Therefore, the teaching of piano duet starts from training students' ensemble ability, so that students can actively participate in learning, which can achieve the purpose of exercising students' creative thinking and overall coordination ability. At the same time, some scholars believe that the piano duet performance form can be used as a "seasoning" for the boring single piano lesson, guiding students with the same or similar degree to carry out the pair training, which enables the students to generate a strong interest in piano training in the mutual cooperative learning.[10]

4. Ontological analysis of the music of Scaramouche

4.1. The Structure of Scaramouche

The piano duet suite *Scaramouche* is the imprint of Mihaud's life and musical and cultural output in Rio de Janeiro, where the unrestrained dances and passionate customs of Brazil are deep-rooted in his mind. The following section analyzes the compositional structure of the three movements, presented in tabular form.

Table 1. First movement *Vif*

Form	Ternary Form								
Structure	A(1-31)			B(32-72)				A ₁	
Period	a	connect	a ₁	b	c	d	e	a	Coda
Bar	1-8	9-16	17-31	32-39	40-47	48-57	58-72	73-85	86-92
Tonality	C	C-G	G-C	F	^b E- ^b A	C	G- ^b E	C	C

Table 2. Second movement *Modere*

Form	Ternary Form						
Structure	A(93-118)		B(119-134)			A ₁	
Period	a	b	c	d	connect	a ₁ +b ₁	Coda
Bar	93-108	109-118	119-130	131-134	135-141	142-148	149-159
Tonality	^b B- ^b G- ^b B	^b B	F	^b B	^b B	^b B	^b B- ^b G- ^b B

Table 3. Third movement *Mouv't de Samba*

Form	Ternary Form										
Structure	A (162-184)					B(185-215)				A ₁	
Period	intro	a	con- nect	a ₁	b	c	con- nect	d	con- nect	a	Coda
Bar	160- 161	162- 175	176- 177	178- 184	185- 198	199- 213	214- 216	217- 232	233- 251	252- 265	266- 275
Tonality	F	^F - ^b B- F	F	F	C	A	A	A	F	^F - ^b B- F	F

It is clear from the table that Mihaud was influenced by Neo-classicism, and did not avoid the traditional structure of the composition, but flexibly utilized the classical form to innovate on the basis of tradition. Compared to the strict Ternary Form, Mihaud's compositions are more characterized by randomization, such as reproducing passages with diverse variations, rather than pursuing a sense of musical structure and balance, focusing on the emotional expression of the music instead of confining it to regular, specific structural constraints.

4.2. Neo-classicism characteristic of *Scaramouche*

Based on one scholar's generalization of Mihaud's compositional style, combined with the suite *Scaramouche*, there are three elements in Mihaud's musical style - 'traditional', 'modern' and 'exotic' - which are very clearly expressed, and it can be said that the musical style of the suite *Scaramouche* is a 'compatibility' of these three elements.[11] This compatibility reflects the stylistic characteristics of neoclassicism.

First, tradition. The 'Six', led by Mihaud, opposed Debussy's impressionistic music, and inherited and developed French traditional music. In *Scaramouche*, there is a clear structure, melodic prominence and rhythmic distinctions, which is a distinctive traditional style.

Secondly, modernity: Mihaud boldly tries to use a lot of modern compositional techniques, and *Scaramouche* is full of fresh modern flavor, such as poly-tonality, compound chords (such as non-triadic superimposed chords, surtone chords, etc.), and relatively free structural design, and so on.

Third, exoticism. Because of his passion for Latin American and North American folk music and culture, Mihaud incorporates many exotic elements into his music. Especially in the third movement of *Scaramouche*, the passionate Brazilian dance, accompanied by the characteristic dotted and syncopated rhythms, overflows with exotic flavors.

Mihaud's mastery of composition is that of an architect, skillfully blending Neo-classical architecture, designing traditional, modern, and exotic musical buildings with ease and comfort, making *Scaramouche* one of the masterpieces of Neo-classicism.

5. The Pedagogical Analysis of *Scaramouche*

Given the placement of pianos for two-piano performance on stage, external conditions play an important role before the practice. The classroom for lessons and training should be as large as possible, with special attention paid to the positioning of the pianos in a face-to-face manner. This practice enables the players to adapt in advance to the characteristics of stage performances, where partners are far away and cannot see each other's hand movements. With a reasonable practice environment in place, the following section will analyze the teaching of the work for *Scaramouche*.

5.1. General spectrum reading with a holistic pattern

The ability to read music is one of the highly significant skills in piano training. Distinguished from solo piano, piano duet emphasizes more on the study of the staff. Reading the full score helps the performer to grasp the overall structure of the musical work. A scholar has directly pointed that whether or not the performance reflects the thinking of the music and the philosophical connotation of the work is directly related to the practice of reading the score.[12]

In general, the works of piano duo are extremely complex, and the voices follow the principle of strict organization, with the performer acting as one of the parts. Therefore, without exploring the structural characteristics of the whole, the relationship between the voices cannot be further processed, and the requirements for performance cannot be met. In addition, considering the score as a whole helps to grasp the special significance of the relationship between the two voices, and there is no way to notice the composer's intention if only one of them is considered. Therefore, by studying the general score together as partners and viewing it with a holistic mindset, it is possible to gain a comprehensive understanding of the overall significance of the musical work and the general style of the vocal structure, and to lay a solid foundation for a good performance of the work.

5.2. Hierarchical control of music with a focus on mutual listening

5.2.1 Vertical: macroscopic voice level

When practicing with two pianos, it is important to focus on the vertical relationship of the musical staff. By practicing vertically from the beginning, you can avoid the fragmentation that occurs when you practice alone and then together, so it is important to cultivate cooperation between partners at the beginning of the exercise. Then, the musical materials between the scores of the repertoire should be discussed. piano duet serve as a mutual communication, which can be broken down into conversations and simultaneous speech.

Conversations. Conversation is a face-to-face verbal conversation between two or more people. The author compares the form of taking turns in developing musical phrases in musical material to a conversation, which can be further categorized into correspondences and contrasts, depending on the content of the conversation. First, correspondence. This can be visualized as two people talking in perfect accord. In this piece such as the opening section of the second movement, it is a dialog between two pianos in harmony (see Fig. 1). The voices of both pianos use dotted notes and are in the same harmonic interval. When practicing, it is necessary to listen to each other's musical colors and volume levels to achieve as much unity and consistency as possible.

Fig. 1 Scaramouche bar. 93-104 [13]

Second, the contrasting relationships. The content of each other's conversations clashes, and the voices contradict each other. Taking the opening section of the B of the second movement as an example, the difference in the weave of the two voices can be clearly seen in the score (see Fig. 2). This is specifically seen in the syncopation rhythm and column chord of the first piano, and the semiquaver runs of the second piano. The dialogue between the two between the gaps takes on a distinctly different musical color and image. In addition to the tacit understanding between partners, the practice should reflect a sense of contrast and layering.



Fig. 2 *Scaramouche* bar. 118-125 [13]

Simultaneous speech. The author refers to denser and synchronized musical material as simultaneous speech, which is divided into unison and competing relationships based on the harmonic relationship of the music as well as auditory concordance or lack thereof. The first one is performing in unison, which means two pianos say the same words. It is well known that when two people or a group of people say the same thing, the momentum is far greater than the power of the individual, so the practice of unison is a test of majestic power. In the first movement, the third and sixth bars are a powerful unison (see Fig. 3). The two pianos mobilize the mood of the music through rapid sixteenth note runs. The most important aspect of practicing in unison is simultaneity, that is, achieving a very neat effect at the same time, which can be difficult to imagine. The partners need to be in constant contact and practice to reach a tacit understanding of the same tempo. In addition to neatness, it is also necessary to play with a sense of momentum, to bring out the intensity of the march.

The image displays a musical score for the piece 'Scaramouche', specifically bars 1 through 6. The score is arranged in two systems, labeled I and II. Each system consists of two staves (treble and bass clef). The tempo is marked 'Vif' and the dynamic is 'ff' (fortissimo). The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The time signature is common time (C). The score includes various performance instructions such as '8va' (octave up), 'Lea' (legato), and 'ped. ad libitum' (pedal ad libitum). Red boxes highlight specific technical passages in the right hand of both systems, showing intricate fingerings and articulation. The first system's right hand has a red box around bars 1-2 and another around bars 3-4. The second system's right hand has a red box around bars 1-2 and another around bars 3-4. The left hand parts are marked with 'Lea' and '8va'.

Fig. 3 Scaramouche bar. 1-6 [13]

Secondly, competitive relationship. More than unison, competitive relationships pursue a sense of musical dissonance. In other words, the musical material is in a competitive musical relationship when it belongs to a distantly related tonality and when the acoustic effect has a strong personal color. When two voices are not in harmony, but in opposition, they are in a competitive relationship. Refer to the acoustics of bars 12-13 in the first movement (see Fig. 4). At this point in the work, start by practicing with one voice alone, and then, after becoming proficient, try to listen to one's own voice in conjunction with the other's, so as to familiarize oneself as much as possible with the acoustics of the work. It is important that the two voices are independent of and interact with each other, and that they are not mutually exclusive.

Fig. 4 *Scaramouche* bar 10-15 [13]

In summary, the logical relationship between the first and second pianos is described from a communicative point of view, and only when the logic between them is clearly known can the development of the phrases within them be further explored.

5.2.2 Horizontal: microcosmic phrase development

Regarding horizontal expression, it does not mean that the two pianos are separated for individual practice, each minding its own business, but rather that they are practiced further and deeper, exploring the internal details of the phrasing direction, based on the previous vertical study. Some scholars have proposed , figuring out how to shape phrases is the most commonly discussed theme in the ensemble performances [14]. In the works for piano duet, the phrases are developed with the cooperation of the partner to form a complete meaning. The phrases in *Scaramouche* contain a lot of subtlety of expression. Therefore, a deep understanding of phrase development, coupled with close cooperation between the two partners, can really complete the work appropriately.

In the score, the dialogical relationship between the musical material produced by the voices is specifically expressed in the relationship between the phrases, thus requiring extra attention to phrase coordination in practice to achieve better interactive partnership. The following will be further elaborated in terms of transition exercises between phrases, tempo and intensity exercises for phrases, and mood exercises for phrases.

Firstly, the natural transition between the beginning and the end of a phrase. The previous section focused on the dialogical relationship between voices, which is serve as logic in music, applying to

phrases. How well the dialog of phrases is communicated and delivered depends on the neatness of the beginning and the end of the phrase. Piano duets usually do not have the same beginning, so it is important to pay attention to the beginning and ending of phrases in order to achieve a natural match. For example, in Fig. 2, the first piano starts with 119 bars, presenting a phrase in 2 bars, while the second piano, due to the difference in the weave, has a phrase that lasts 4 bars, thus creating different endings that add layers to the music.

Secondly, the tempo and intensity of the phrases. When there is a change of speed or a change of intensity, it is even more necessary to practice the phrases as a unit. It takes a long period of practice and negotiation for both parties to reach a tacit understanding and for the ensemble to perform with great accuracy. Otherwise, the music does not match each other and it will be confusing and disconnected.

Thirdly, the mood of the phrases. Differing speeds, strengths, and rhythms in the phrases contribute to the distinct emotional expressions between phrases. Typically, fast tempos and strong forces produce excited, euphoric emotions, while slow tempos and weak notation are more feminine. Of course, harmony also plays a significant role in the mood of the music, and it's essential to recognize this by listening when practicing. When the two sides play the same mood phrases, they need to be able to match the mood, such as the gentle musical mood in Fig. 1, and the strong emotion in Fig. 3, they need to cooperate with each other to reach a consistent and harmonious sound effect; when they encounter different musical moods, often in the relationship of contrast and competition, the two sides need to listen to each other more carefully to anticipate each other's musical direction in advance, so as to complement and influence each other. The two sides should listen to each other more carefully, anticipate each other's musical direction in advance, and complement and influence each other.

5.3. Visual Imagination with different images portrayed by music

Imagination is the ability to visualize images in mind. In music, through association and imagination, the emotional experience of music is depicted through imagery, which enables an immersive experience while playing, as well as more concentration when practicing the repertoire. It can be found that in modern times, most of the piano duet works are anthropomorphic depictions, which requires the cultivation and training of musical imagination. In traditional teaching, the teacher usually explains the key points and difficulties of the performance techniques in the piece, and helps the students to understand the excitement and thrill of the composer in the piece. Imaginative practice requires that each passage of a piece of music be designed with different musical situations and images, inspiring students to develop their imagination through the melodic feeling and harmonic analysis of the music.

In order to develop a sense of musical images, one should first have a deep understanding of the context in which the work was composed. While practicing *Scaramouche*, then, the teacher needs to introduce the context of the work. *Scaramouche* combines a warm ethnic atmosphere with the musical elements of Brazilian samba, and depicts the appearance of differently shaped people at Carnival, hence the name *Scaramouche*. In addition, it consists of three movements, an allegro movement of a harmonic nature, a middle movement with a duet, and an allegro movement characterized by Brazilian samba. Depending on the context of the work and the composition of the movement, it can be imagined as a program at a ball, a comical clown show, a sitcom of a close friend whom haven't seen in years and a scene of jubilation in which the whole audience is gathered in a circle.

With audio-visual association and imaginative association, the sense of movement continues uninterruptedly in the music, and the students experience the delicate and colorful steps of the Brazilian dance on the piano. The rhythmic nature of the piano duet is not only the rhythmic beauty of the melody, but also the rhythmic beauty of the harmony, and the richness and variability of the timbre adds a sense of color to the rhythm. All these can promote the imagination of the practitioner. When teaching, teachers could help students think of the different voices as conversations between people with different personalities. For example, in the second movement, which is very lyrical as a slow movement, think of it as meeting a like-minded companion in a sea of people, talking gently

with each other, and responding affectionately if they agree with each other's views. If there is some slight disagreement, express one's own opinion clearly, without heated arguments, but quiet listening and responding.

The expression of different musical moods is in accordance with the development and logical progression of the musical structure itself, only that one of the musical expressions is more melancholic, while the other is more exciting and expectant. In contrast to the traditional approach to piano teaching, the teaching of imagination develops the student's musical sensibility on a deeper level [15] and strengthens the student's initiative.

The above discussion begins with the visual and auditory senses, as well as imagination and spatial sense, and analyzes the teaching of the work based on the score examples.

6. Summary

In order to explore the piano teaching about the piano duet works of pedagogical analysis, this paper from the development and importance of the piano duet, and according to the ontological analysis of the works, from which summarizes and summarizes the teaching of visual, auditory and imagination of the three important training points. Piano duo is a form of piano performance with cooperative significance. To achieve a truly integrated performance, it requires not only a lot of practice between the partners, but also the skills of the teacher when teaching. Future research can further explore and enhance the teaching approach of piano duets, aiming to develop a structured and institution-based curriculum. Building upon the ongoing reforms in piano education, it envisions an innovative teaching pathway for piano duets and embodies the essential role of aesthetic educators in nurturing students' artistic sensibilities.

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