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Liszt's Concert Etudes "The Wuthering of the Forest"

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Abstract: The Hungarian composer and pianist Franz Liszt is not only a great Romantic master, but also one of the most outstanding representatives of the pre-romantic period. The Hungarian composer and pianist Franz Liszt is not only a great master of Romanticism, but also one of the most outstanding representatives of the pre-romantic period. His piano compositions are broad in scope and numerous in number, each of which is characterized by its grandiose conception and variety of forms, and by the skillful fusion of difficult playing techniques and unique musical personality, which gives each piece a distinctive and vivid artistic image. In particular, his series of Concert Etudes is a treasure of virtuosity, not only in terms of virtuosity, but also in terms of musical expression. This article focuses on one of Liszt's Two Concert Etudes - The Wuthering of the Forest, which has been frequently performed on major concert stages and vividly demonstrates Liszt's deep desire for the beauty of nature and passion for life. Based on this, this paper will elaborate on the musicality and artistry of this work from the introduction and background of the work, repertoire characteristics, analysis of the work and performance, appreciation of the performance version, and comparison of the score versions from different publishers, in order to show the unique artistic charm of this work in all aspects.

Keywords: Liszt; Concert Etude; The Wailing of the Forest.

1. The Composer and the Period Background of the Work

Franz Liszt was born on 22 October 1811 in Retin, Hungary, and was an outstanding pianist, conductor and composer in Europe at that time. He was born at a time when the stars of Romantic music were shining brightly, such as Mendelssohn, Chopin, Schumann and other music giants were born at the beginning of the 19th century, and they led the trend of the development of the music language and music form at that time. Liszt showed excessive musical talent at a young age, and when he was only nine years old, he had already mounted the stage of piano solo, showing his musical talent to the world. As an outstanding representative of Romantic music, Liszt developed his piano technique to an unrivalled degree, greatly enriching the expressive power of the piano and creating orchestral effects on the piano. The diversity of styles, the novelty and uniqueness of his playing methods, and the difficulty of his playing techniques are all manifestations of his outstanding musical achievements. For example, the Paganini Etudes and the Twelve Superb Etudes are not only extremely difficult, but also a litmus test of the player's level, to which countless performers have devoted their efforts and pursued their perfect interpretation throughout their lives. In addition, Liszt also pioneered the method of memorising music for the piano and developed a virtuosic style of playing for concerts in the 19th century. He is known as the "King of the Piano" because of his outstanding contribution to the field of piano, which is not only a recognition of his musical talent, but also a recognition of his great contribution to the development of the piano art.

As the opening piece of Liszt's Two Concert Etudes, Wuthering in the Woods (also known as Whispering in the Woods), written in the key of D-flat major with a lively Allegro tempo, is a piano work that skilfully blends lyrical poeticism, difficult virtuosity and symphonic grandeur. Like a hymn to nature, the work conveys a deep love of nature with its bright and optimistic tone. In Liszt's concerts, "Wuthering in the Forest" is often performed as a highlight, demonstrating his outstanding compositional talent and unique musical aesthetics. Composed in 1861 and published in 1863, it marks the middle of Liszt's creative career. He gave it to his pupil Bruckner as a concert piece. Although Liszt was facing challenges in his career and life, as well as great mental stress, he still harboured a love of life and composed this bright and optimistic piece of music that celebrates the beauty of nature.

Wuthering in the Forest" has won the hearts of the audience with its lifelike artistry and sweet, seductive melody. The accompaniment is a clever simulation of the sounds of nature, sometimes gentle as a breeze, sometimes exciting as a forest whistling, perfectly integrating the elements of nature into the music, bringing a feast for the listeners' souls and stimulating the infinite desire to immerse themselves in the good times and enjoy the pleasures of the mood.

2. Characteristics of "The Wuthering of the Forest

One of the most distinctive features of this concert exercise is that it belongs to the title music, which is an aspect of Liszt's personalised piano works. As a form of music used by Romantic composers to enrich the musical picture, deeply reveal the connotation of the work, and narrate the musical story, title music makes clear the musician's purpose of creation and the idea of the work itself through the additional title text. This form of music does not merely add a title to a musical work, but aims to guide the performer or listener to make associations with the music based on the meaning of the title, so as to understand the work more deeply.

In the framework of the title music, "The Wuthering of the Forest" intuitively presents the forest-related situation to people by the title alone, and provides a clear guideline for the composition and interpretation of the work. The opening section of the piece extends softly like a whisper, yet unobtrusively reveals an impending momentum, foreshadowing the approaching storm. At the same time, the work is also filled with a strong sense of romanticism and

humanism, so that the audience can, like the creator and the performer, "hear" the ethereal sound of the forest, "see" the coming storm, in the movement and static intertwined with the sublime transformation, immersed in the infinite charm of the art of piano music. In the midst of the subtle transformation of movement and stillness, I was immersed in the infinite charm of the piano art.

In addition, in the classical period, the composers' emphasis on melody reached an unprecedented height, while the singing and lyricism of melody were further emphasised after entering the romantic period. Therefore, in "The Wuthering of the Forest", another distinctive feature is then reflected in the use of melody. This piece has a single melody running through the whole piece, and the melodic line remains consistent and coherent from the initial presentation of the theme melody until the end. Liszt used this technique skilfully in his composition, integrating a single melody into the whole piece, forming a distinctive development and a powerful artistic influence.



Fig 1. Integrate a single melody into the entire work

3. Analysis of the work and performance techniques of "The Whistling of the Forest".

3.1. Structure

Wuthering in the Forest" is a single three-part musical work with reproduction.

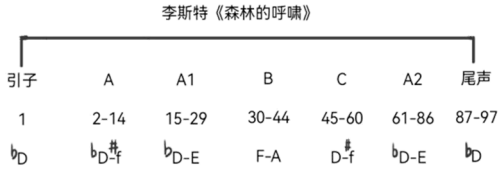


Fig 2. Wuthering in the Forest" is a single three-part musical work with reproduction

The first bar is the introductory part of the piece, in the key of BD major, starting from a weak beginning, with a diatonic sextuplet pattern as the musical background to the main theme, and a little bit of the third diatonic in the middle of the piece creates strange harmonies throughout the work, which figuratively depicts the quietness of the forest as well as the vitality of all the forest creatures. The composer's skilful use of the pp notation and the addition of the left pedal makes the tone softer and then gradually intensifies it, bringing the piece into the theme.



Fig 3. The first bar

The second to fourteenth bars are the A section of the piece, which adopts the form of combining square and complementary musical structures, the tonality transitions from bD major to #f minor, and bars 6-9 are a reproduction of the imitation of bars 2-5.The musical theme of the A section is single and prominent, with the nature of presentational music, and although the melody of this theme is relatively short, it occurs many times, leaving a deep impression on people. The music gradually rises and then falls with the melodic changes of the theme, and finally ends with a weak and slightly slower semi-termination of the A section, leading to the A1 section, which (15-29 bars) consists of a total of 15 bars, and the tonality is shifted from bD major to E major, and the musical material is derived from the A section and continues to be developed, which constitutes a new musical idea through the skilful combination of the old and new elements, making the portrayal of the musical image more concrete, more impressive, and more effective. Through the clever combination of old and new elements, it constitutes a new musical idea, making the portrayal of the musical image more specific, accurate and vivid. The theme melody of this section is in the form of rapid sextuplets shuttling between the various voices, and the overall expression of the music is relatively stable, with fewer tonal changes, and the use of harmony and weaving is relatively simple, presenting the audience with a quiet, soft musical picture.



Fig 4. The second to fourteenth bars are the A section

The B section (30-44 bars) consists of 15 bars, with the key shifted from F major to A major. In this section, the composer incorporates new material into the combination and arrangement based on the original material of the A and A1 sections, which makes the musical image more lively and vivid, forming a musical idea that seems old but is new. [[[]Zhu Jiaxin. Analysing the Musical Characteristics of

Liszt's Concert Etudes--Taking "The Wuthering of the Forest" as an Example[J]. Theatre House,2023,(04):61-63.]]]The 29th-30th bars are played at pp volume, and the melody returns to the lower register; the 37th-44th bars are then shifted to the key of A major, which forms a stronger contrast with the melody in the key of F major, and it adds a lot of unstable factors to the music, and it also brings more space for the performance to develop. Compared with the calmness of the A and A1 sections, the B section seems more lively and vivid, and with the gradual increase of the melody and the mood of the piece, the musical work ushers in the first climax.

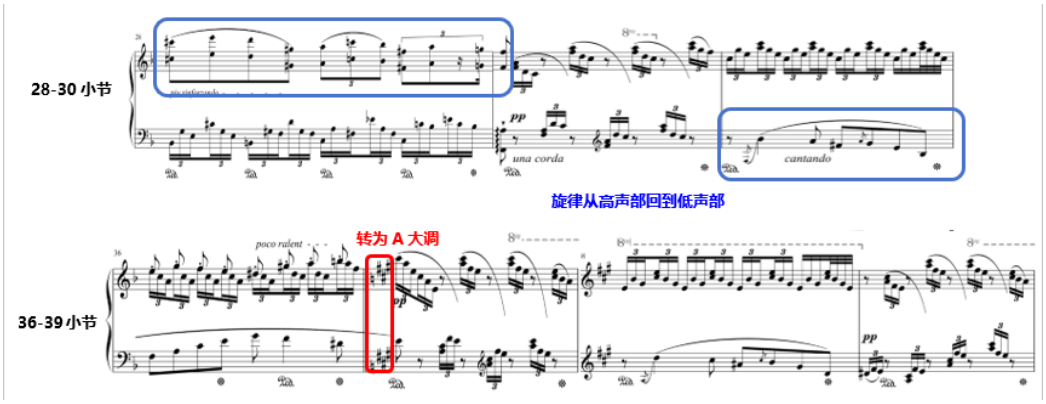


Fig 5. The B section (30-44 bars) consists of 15 bars

The C section (bars 45-60) consists of 16 bars, with the tonality shifting from D major to #f minor, driving the musical progression with chromaticism. Especially in bars 53-54, the contrast between the downward movement of the left hand octave and the upward movement of the right hand broken chords pushes the mood of the music to its peak. The subsequent A2 section of 26 bars switches the key to E major again. The A2 section not only reproduces the melody of the A1 section, but also adds a supplementary section in which the left hand's rapid long-distance leaps are mirrored by the right hand's main theme, creating a strong musical impetus that pushes the piece to a second climax.



Fig 6. The C section (bars 45-60) consists of 16 bars

The closing section of the piece consists of 11 bars, with the melody of the theme repeated once as it is, echoing the first and the last, and the music slowly comes to a close with the gentle flow of the arpeggio in BD major, bringing the piece to a perfect conclusion.



Fig 7. The closing section of the piece consists of 11 bars

3.2. Harmonic Weave

Liszt's works often appear in a large number of arpeggios, third doubles and various big jump patterns, these weaves are always cleverly interwoven with the melody, forming a close accompaniment weave, always serving the melody and echoing each other. [[[[Fresh Ying. The Composition and Performance of Liszt's Concert Etude "The Whistling of the Forest" [D]. Supervised by Xiao Xun. Sichuan Normal University,2017.

The piece just started with the left hand melodic weave, the right hand sextuplet accompaniment pattern as a supplement, urgent and tight arpeggio as high mountain water like gurgling, this characteristic arpeggio accompaniment not only appeared in the left hand melody, but also through the right hand part of the performance, and continued throughout the piece, giving the music a more dynamic and energetic quality, so that the listener immersed in the melody sketched out a beautiful scene to feel that kind of smooth and pleasant mood. The music has a more dynamic and energetic quality, allowing the listener to immerse themselves in the beautiful scene outlined by the melody and feel the joyful mood.



Fig 8. large number of arpeggios, third doubles and various big jump patterns

3.3. Thematic material

The thematic material of the piece is a clever blend of two diametrically opposed short motifs: motive a, with its downward meandering tone, conveys an emotional tone of melancholy and sadness; while motive b, as a reverse presentation of motive a, reveals an optimistic and upward emotional colour. Although these two motifs are in stark contrast to each other in terms of musical mood, together they form the core of the musical material of the piece, which not only greatly enriches the contrasting layers within the work, but also strengthens the overall sense of unity of the piece. From the beginnings of these motives, Liszt gradually develops them into themes by changing the tonality, range and intensity, as well as the size of individual intervals, the direction of change, and other technical means, and constantly derives new musical elements to be used throughout the piece. This creative process fully demonstrates the subtlety and depth of Liszt's motivic approach.



Fig 9. The thematic material of the piece is a clever blend of two diametrically opposed short motifs

3.4. Keystroke Handling

Different tones have different ways of touching the keys. When playing the double tones of the right hand's hexadecimal rhythmic pattern, the wrist should be driven by the small arm, and attention should be paid to the neatness of the double tones, so that the fingers can stick to the keys as much as possible, and the fingertips should be used to shorten the distance between the fingers and the keys, so as to make the sound delicate and soft, and to emphasise the singing of the melodic line. At the same time, the left-hand melody should float clearly above the background sound played by the right hand to ensure the harmony and unity of tone, so that the expression of the phrase is complete and smooth, and the phrasing is clear. When the left hand plays an ornament, in order to avoid the head of the note being too prominent, it should touch the key naturally and easily in a "passing" manner. In the face of the transition from monotone to octave, the player should strictly follow the fingering indicated in the score, and under the drive of the big arm, fully display the full sound of the octave. When the range expands to five octaves, in order to achieve the desired acoustic effect and add fullness to the music, the player can open both arms, and under the traction of the big arm, the whole body's strength will be condensed in the fingertips, and released precisely, but at the same time, it is also necessary to ensure that the coherence of the phrases will not be affected. At the end of the piece, the player needs to adjust his mindset, abandon the previous tension and anxiety, and adopt the same delicate touch as in section A to interpret the melody as softly and delicately as possible, bringing the piece to a perfect conclusion and leaving the audience with unlimited space for reverie.



Fig 10. Different tones have different ways of touching the keys

3.5. Pedal Use

In Liszt's Wuthering in the Woods, the use of pedals is marked differently in different versions, which gives the performer the freedom to shape his or her own desired musical effect according to the notation or personal experience. Clever use of the sustaining pedal at the beginning can make a monophonic melody more coherent and fluid, while the composer's deliberately labelled soft pedal brings a hazier mood to the music. Entering measure 45, the addition of the pedal enriches the overall acoustics of the music, making it sound fuller and denser to the ear. Between bars 71-77, the flexible alternation of pedals can accurately convey the resolute emotions contained in the music. When the piece reaches bars 79-82, the diatonic intervals of the left hand and the dense sixteenth notes of the right hand intertwine with each other, and at this time the pedals are used in strict accordance with the instructions of the score, which can not only avoid acoustic disorder, but also greatly enhance the infectious force and expressive power of the music. In bars 83-85, attention should be paid to the switching of pedals to ensure that the continuity of the sound is not affected, and to maintain the smoothness and harmony of the music as a whole. In conclusion, the clever use of pedal technique in the performance of "Wuthering in the Forest" is crucial to the realisation of the artistic expression of the work, and the performers should pay full attention to it and control it finely.



Fig 11. The use of pedals is marked differently in different versions

4. Appreciation of the performance version of "Wuthering in the Forest

As a frequent guest in concerts, the piece "Wuthering in the Forest" has been frequently interpreted by many pianists such as Arau, Boret, Hamelin, etc. This article focuses on Arau's version of the piece, and analyses its artistic charm in depth.

From the recording, we can clearly feel the rigorous grasp of the structure of the work and its neat presentation. In terms of acoustics, his performance is both full-bodied and mellow, and the whole process of playing is majestic, as if the piano is transformed into a huge orchestra, which is consistent with the characteristics of Liszt's piano music.

Arau's playing style is unique, both imposing and rigorous and enthusiastic. With his delicate key-touching skills and virtuosic playing, he delivers every note of the piece, fully demonstrating his profound skills as a piano virtuoso. Although his playing lacked a little in musical fluidity, his handling of the left hand melodic voice was extremely fine and delicate, and the breathing between phrases was skilfully combined with the movement and shape of the music, making the music full of lines and tension.

In terms of key touch and playing style, Arau's right hand roundly plays a sweet and soft hexameter pattern, which is both moderate and delicate; while the left hand pays special attention to the coherence of the theme melody and the expression of musical emotion, sounding gentle and poetic. In the octave continuo and long-distance jumps, he was able to accurately grasp the rhythm of the phrases, making the right hand's melody sound both full and powerful.

Arau's emotional expression even breathed life and infectious energy into the whole piece. Especially in the climax of the piece, he depicted a magnificent picture of nature for the listener with magnificent momentum and full sound effects, which made the listener feel as if he was in the middle of the forest, and deeply felt the mystery and magnificence of nature.

5. Comparison of "The Whistling of the Forest" Score Versions

Currently on the market, the music score of "The Wuthering of the Forest" exists in many different publishers' versions, which show certain differences in notation, pedal markings, and so on. In this paper, the Peters edition (Peters edition) and the Budapest edition (Budapest edition) are chosen as examples to compare the scores published by different publishers.

In terms of notation, two different notations of triplets and sextets are used in the two editions. Specifically, the Budapest edition has a simple and clear notation for triplets and sextuplets, with no additional lines and the numbers directly underneath the notes, while the Peters edition opts for a more complex notation, with the numbers above the notes by adding additional lines. There is also a difference in the position of the flexo pedal notation, with the Budapest edition labelling it below the score, whereas the Peters edition chooses to place it above the score.

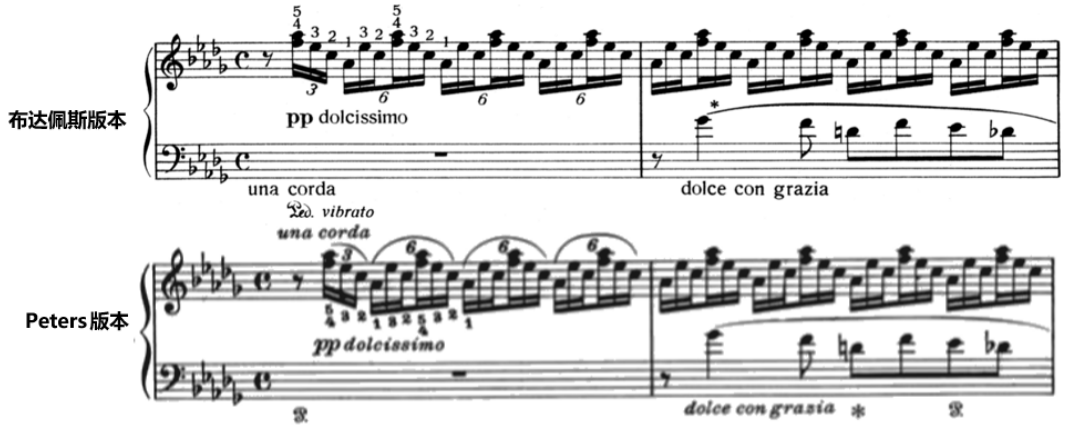


Fig 12. The Peters edition and the Budapest edition have different notation methods

In terms of pedal use, the pedal notation on the Peters version appears to be more detailed, with clearer and more frequent instructions for pedal changes. This allows the music to be played in a way that avoids muddy sound effects, resulting in a clearer, purer sound.



Fig 13. There are also some differences in the use of the pedals between the two versions

As for the ornamentation, the Budapest edition uses arpeggio notation, while the Peters edition uses leaning notation. To a certain extent, these two different notation methods provide the performers with different space for expression, which makes the same work present a variety of musical styles.



Fig 14. As for the ornamentation, the Budapest edition uses arpeggio notation, while the Peters edition uses leaning notation

6. Summary.

This paper comprehensively reveals the unique artistic value and fascinating charm of "Wuthering in the Forest" through a multi-dimensional discussion of this piano work, including its introduction and period background, repertoire characteristics, analysis of the work and performance, appreciation of the performance version and comparison of the score version. Wuthering in the Forest is a piano work full of artistic charm and expressive power. Through a detailed and in-depth analysis and study of the work, we are able to understand Liszt's concept of music creation and the characteristics of the performance technique, which provides valuable references and inspirations for the performers. In addition, this work also opens a window to the beauty of nature and music, allowing us to experience endless pleasure and spiritual satisfaction in the process of appreciation and performance.

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