

*T. Shevchenko*

**TO A QUESTION OF PERFORMING INTERPRETATION  
PIANO MUSIC OF N. METNER**

*The article describes the features of the execution of piano music by the example of the interpretation of Medtner's "Sonata-memories" brilliant pianists of the twentieth century, Gilels and Richter. The author on the basis of performing scores remarks revealed romantic and emotional type of performance Gilels and angular-plastic, low-key version of the game Richter.*

*Keywords: Russian Piano Sonata, Piano Style Medtner Sonata recollection performing score remarks.*

The fate of the Russian piano sonata at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, including the sonata of N. Medtner, is one of the less developed themes to date. From various theoretical and historical researches in which the range of problems of this genre is affected in one way or another, we can only point out two works in which the Russian piano sonata is viewed in the historical perspective. These are the dissertational works of E. Sorokina ("Some Problems of Development of the Piano Sonata in Russia", 1976) and Y. Moskalets ("Russian Piano Sonata of the Turn of the XIX-XX Centuries in the Atmosphere of Artistic Search of the Epoch", 2004).

If in the first work one section is devoted to the studied genre, then in the second a chronological framework and a perspective of history of the Russian piano sonata of the specified period extends.

The unprecedented flowering in the early twentieth century in the works of S. Rachmaninov, A. Scriabin, and N. Medtner of the Russian piano sonata, for various reasons unclaimed in the previous period, deserves, in our opinion, a more careful consideration of this genre by modern music science. As Y. Moskalets rightly points out, "Similar changes in the fate of the genre brought from the European musical tradition make it possible to understand more deeply the nature of the evolutionary processes taking place in Russian culture and reflected in the sphere of musical creativity, not only pumping out the piano sonata for one of the first plans in the general picture of musical genres, but also contributed to the penetration of sonata thinking in other spheres of artistic creativity "[2, p. 3].

All this determines the relevance of our research, the general orientation of which is connected with new approaches in the study of the Russian piano sonata by the example of

the performance of N. Medtner sonata. In addition, the relevance of the work consists in the fact that the identification of the peculiarities of the performance approaches of a number of pianists to such a significant work by Medtner as "Sonata-reminiscenza" makes it possible to develop an important field of contemporary musicology - performing musicology.

The scale of the creative activity of the pianist, composer and teacher N. Medtner has not been sufficiently defined and studied. Despite the constant attention to his music by outstanding pianists (S. Rachmaninov, A. Ziloti, G. Neuhaus, M. Yudin, S. Richter, E. Mogilevsky, Yu. Ponizovkin, L. Vlasenko, D. Ogdon, P. de Grot, T. Judd and many others), some major works (including piano sonatas) remain little known and rarely performed. The specific character of the Medtner style, written by I. Zetel, A. Shatskes, G. Neuhaus and others, makes it necessary to seek new approaches towards its implementation, which are based on the method of analyzing A. Sokol's remarks.

Analysis of the imaginative content of "Sonata-reminiscenza" we allow:

- firstly, to reveal in author's instructions the factors that help to delve more deeply into the style of the composer;
- secondly, on the example of analyzing the phraseological, articulatory, dynamic, tempo, metro-rhythmic and figurative remarks of the sonata, to reveal the interaction of the composer's design and performing means of expressiveness;
- and, thirdly, to determine the features of its interpretation in the performance of E. Gilels and S. Richter.

In our work, for the first time, was proposed an executive view on the content of the Medtner Sonata, based on a comparison of the graphic analysis of the music text and its sound reproduction. In addition, we are analyzing some features of the performance of a number of concert pianists of one of the most popular piano sonatas by N. Medtner - "Sonata-reminiscenza".

Medtner is one of those composers who cared about the accuracy of understanding his creative ideas, which entailed quite detailed and extensive author's explanations regarding the performing aspects.

In the creative legacy of N. Medtner the piano sonata is represented by 14 samples. As an object of analysis for this article, we chose "Sonata-reminiscenza", which, according to the composer himself, Medtner loved more than his other sonatas. The Sonata-reminiscenza

(op. 38) and The Tragic Sonata (op. 39) were included in two cycles of the composer's piano compositions, which he called "Forgotten Motives".

The music of the analyzed sonata is devoid of external glamor or virtuosity, and the creative thought of H. Neuhaus directs the performers to search in the musical text for a lyrical and contemplative mood and images embodying immersion in the past. According to him, "Sonata-reminiscenza" is indeed not only a story, but also a memory of something long past ... The cycle "Forgotten motives" again aggressively returns to the past ... his music is filled with a feeling of reverence and love for a truly beautiful, glorious past "[3, p. 33].

A Sonata- reminiscenza was written in the period of the expected departure from Russia (in Bugry) by Metner. It is probable that the sadness and tender poetry of this music corresponded to the mood in which the composer was alone, far from the city.

Thanks to the memoirs of A. Troyanovskaya, we know about the first performance by the author of this work in a cozy home environment: "Our complete solitude in the forest, the winter behind the dark windows of his room and the richness of the piano sonority under his hands - all this produced a completely magical impression on us" [5 , from. 136].

The concentration of thoughts and feelings in the music of the Sonata entailed the desire of the author to reflect his wishes and recommendations for the performers as accurately as possible in the music text. "A special place of intellectualism was determined by a peculiar manner of writing, when the thought is so concentrated and tense that it does not allow" indifferent "sounds. In the objectivity of the utterance, its rigor, N. Metner saw genuine vitality of art "[1, p. 79].

The editorial side of the works of Medtner is extraordinarily detailed and convenient for the artist to form his interpretation. G. Neuhaus writes with admiration that "I will hardly call another composer who could with such amazing accuracy and subtlety fix in the music text all that he wants to express with his music and wants from the performer" [3, p. 262]. The combination of an outstanding composer and performer in one person finds refraction in the special editorial accuracy of the works of Medtner - a few of the composers of the highest rank recorded intentions with such striking, often scrupulous accuracy. It was all the more important for the composer that "the unpopularity of his writings, N. Medtner increasingly inclined to explain the complex manner of writing, which deprives the product of the necessary accessibility. And for perception, and - in no less measure - for learning and performing "[1, p. 49].

In the study "Performing Remarks, the image of the world and the musical style" A. Sokol speaks about the need to study the remarks "in the aspect of the musical style and within the content of the artistic image of the world of the composer. In this aspect, the remark is undoubtedly representative of the expressive-speech style of the composer's music - on the one hand, and the settings for its performance interpretation - on the other, because they contain significant signs of intonational and artistic images "[4, p. 36].

Consistently arranging all the author's performance notes, we get a table (see Appendix 1), from which it becomes obvious that the circle of remarks is quite diverse and peculiar. In the imagery of the remarks, in their greatest possible degree of accuracy to the author's design, Medtner saw a kind of searchlight that illuminates the singer's search path. The composer did not fear their unfamiliarity - it was more important to find the most accurate, and even the only (from his point of view) of verbal characteristics. From the list obtained, you can select several groups of terms that will give the performer a picture of the mood of Sonata-reminiscentia.

Most actively used N. Medtner the term *espressivo*, which is used both independently and in combination with other terms, which indicates a variety of figurative and poetic shades of expressive play:

- "at ease" (*Sempre espressivo e disinvolto* - the beginning of the sonata, the first 16 bars),
- "meditating contemplatively" (*Espressivo meditamento* - vols 61 - 83),
- "very singing" (*Molto cantabile ed espressivo* - tv 114 - 118),
- "emphasizing" (*Espressivo marcato* - tt 133 - 137), which indicates the articulatory manner of speaking in the left-hand part and requires the performer to intensively attack the sound;
- "calmly" (*Tranquillo ed espressivo* - vt 198 - 214); note that the use of this remark warns the performer against the drag of expression and excessive saturation of sound;
- "a little fun" (*Poco giocoso, ma semper espressivo* - vol. 301 - 308); Remark points to the nature of the game, preserving its expressiveness even in the dismembered game with staccato under the league. Despite the isolation of each sound, they are combined by the expressiveness of the structure (motive);

- "coherent" (Sempre espressivo e legato - tt 340 - 357); these phrases are located in the upper voice of the right-hand part, and this note assumes a coherent and rich sound, similar to the extraction of sounds on a stringed instrument (violin).

The Cantabile remarks and the familiar term Semplice (simply), as well as the Cantando, which is closely followed by the Risoluto (strongly), are applied quite actively in the sonata's musical notation, which refers not so much to a change in the general image content as to the Change within the already existing framework, associated with the manner of articulation.

As a complement to the mood of expressive singing on the piano, which is associated with a vocalized story about emotional experiences, the term Meditamento is perceived, which brings the moment of switching to contemplation into this expression of feelings.

Thus, the analysis of performing remarks indicates a special significance in the sonata of cantilena, which requires the artist to deeper carcass and attentive attitude to the embodiment of various facets of chant. Among the unusual Medtner terms belongs to the "play carcass". Frequent mention in the notes emphasizes its importance; with the "playful carcass" Medtner connected the way to the achievement of piano "singing". In the minds of the Medtner students, it was clearly associated with the game with flat fingers and their closest possible closeness to the keyboard. In combination with plasticity ("a lot of play carcass and plastics") here opened up the richest possibilities of sound nuances and gradations.

Also, we will pay attention to the switching of the imaginative world of the sonata from images of ease, fun, dance (Danzando) to elements of insinuations and gloomy sensation (Tenebroso), characteristic for romantics.

Attention is drawn to the joint effect of two remarks (Svegliando - "waking up" and All'improvvisa - "unexpectedly"), which means "unexpected awakening" and should change the inner mood of the artist instantly.

The reminiscence of Concentrando ("concentrated"), appearing four times in the sonata's music text, emphasizes the inner concentration of the protagonist, immersed in meditation-memories.

So, the analysis of the author's remarks "Sonatas-memoirs" allows us to distinguish in her such dramaturgy the shifts of moods as:

- concentration;

- expressive singing;
- Passion;
- meditation.

When studying the verbal remarks of "Sonata- reminiscenza" by N. Medtner, a direct connection between them and the semantics of the analyzed music was revealed. Careful specification of the composer's artistic intentions requires the artist to read carefully these verbal authorial instructions.

As the researcher of Medtner I. Zetel wrote, "Sonata- reminiscenza" play more often than other sonatas of Medtner. And this is understandable - it is all, starting with the topic of entry, singing. It seemed to accumulate the composer's desire for the song - the fundamental principle of music" [1, p. 142]. Little known Medtner notes in the fields of the brochure F. Busoni "Entwurf einer neuen Asthetik des Tonkunst" reads: "The more inspired the work, the more accurately it is recorded. The more inspired the performance, the closer it is to the recorded author. Pushkin about inspiration!"

Neglect to the author's advice, Medtner considered harmful, but in the performers, he saw not copyists, but artists who individually refracted the author's desires. Long-standing debate about the attitude towards author's instructions, and ultimately - the measure of the artist's creative independence, is given to solve only specific artistic practice. And here it is extremely important to find objective criteria for evaluating the performer's individuality, which is the second task of this article, which is to clarify the specific interpretation of Sonata-Memoirs by the greatest pianists of the twentieth century - E. Gilels and S. Richter

The main method that allows us, in our opinion, to reveal the main points of differences in the interpretation of the sonata is the "Performance score of the remarks", which is a four-line score in which one writes out (see Appendix 2):

- over the top ruler - the size, pace, nature of the movement and its changes;
- under the upper ruler - the designation of the nature of intonation (ie signs of musical images);
- over the second line - articulatory leagues and articulations (verbal or graphic) in the party of the right hand;
- under the second ruler - the phrasing leagues in the party of the right hand;
- over the third line - articulatory leagues and articulations (verbal or graphic) in the party of the left hand;

- under the third ruler - the phrasing leagues in the party of the left hand;
- Over the lower ruler, the levels of stable dynamics and procedural dynamic shades are recorded;
- under the lower ruler - additional ways and methods of performance (pedal, glissando, etc.).

Comparing the text, supplied by the author of the sonata with detailed remarks, with the performing interpretations of the famous Soviet pianists E. Gilels and S. Richter, we have created a comparative table, which we offer to your attention (see Appendix 3). As follows from the fragment of the comparative comparison of the author's and the performer's interpretation, it is obvious that the author's conception is preserved in the interpretation of both pianists.

Let us first outline the main features of N. Medtner's performing manner, noted both by the composer's contemporaries, and evident when listening to the audio recordings of his own compositions. In some statements about the musician's game, there are references not only to the pointed acuteness, but also to the rigidity, even the angularity of the rhythm. But at the same time, N. Medtner's remark about the melodrama is frequent: he liked to sing the melodic canvas, like many episodes developing thematic grains.

The recording of the sonata performed by Emil Gilels, who "opened" Medtner to music lovers, dates back to 1968. According to our performing score, we reveal the romantic-emotional accent of this artist, which is evident from a large number of buildups and downswings of sonority, including within one or two measures, and also to a sufficiently large extent micro-accelerations and micro-decelerations in the performance of the E. Gilels. A well-known Soviet pianist regretted that pianists are very poorly acquainted with the work of this composer and rarely perform his works. As the interpreter of his works, Gilels notes the "Russian soul" in the nature of the subject, including "Sonata- reminiscenza". Well aware of the rich vocal creativity of N. Medtner, it can be assumed that in the performance of his sonatas Gilels embodied the lyrical beginning, coming from the song creativity. And the words of I. Zetel testify to this: "Following the author's advice does not lead Gilels to static; the tone of his statement is romantically agitated, sometimes stern, but behind this severity is constantly felt hot, trembling, expressive intonation of speech "[1, p. 335-336].

Svyatoslav Richter for the first time played this sonata in January and May 1947, respectively - in the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory and in the Leningrad

Philharmonic, and also in December 1981 in the State Museum of Fine Arts. Pushkin. On the sonata Richter notices (in the television movie about the concert "December Evenings", on which the "Sonata- reminiscenza" was performed), that "the mood in it is like in Borisov-Musatov's paintings". We note the peculiar manner of this sonata performance by Richter: on the one hand, angular-plastic restrained and, on the other hand, free; in the sound recording there is a palpable and at the same time open presentation of the meternic images.

The statements of contemporaries who heard the game of Medtner himself, which resonate with our perception of the sound recordings of his performance, are interesting. In some statements about the game Medtner, there are references not only to the pointed acuity, but also to the rigidity, even the angularity of the rhythm. But at the same time, remarks about melody are frequent in N. Medtner: he loved to sing the melodic canvas, like many episodes developing thematic grains.

The juicy sound, the melodically delicate nuance of each passage, marked many of N. Medtner's recordings. G. Neuhaus saw the features of the metronic handwriting and in the graphic plasticity of the game, devoid of impressionistic fogs. Especially expressive to the performance of Medtner gave the possession of the art of living utterance, always internally justified and truthful. Each intonation was told to the end. The game Medtner evoked a reciprocal current of listening sympathy with a huge inner strength, philosophical significance and sublimity.

The "Performance score of remarks" proposed in this study "visibly" reflects the performance tasks aimed at phrasing, with which the composer's dynamic, articulatory, tempo-rhythmic, pedal directions are related. The pianist's understanding of the phrase logic of a particular musical text, in which coherence and separation are similar to human speech with its living breathing, helps to trace the development and interrelationship of various musical images.

One of the conclusions of the study is that in searching for the necessary means of expressiveness for the style of Medtner, the pianist's attention should be directed to studying the pianistic principles of the composer. Theoretical provisions and author's advice will help to determine the choice of the necessary methods of musical pronunciation and techniques for each image recorded in the music text.

Thus, as a result of the study, it is suggested that in the course of working on the interpretation of Medtner's pianistic sonatas, they approach from different aspects to their



artistic conception. One approach is to create your own idea of the imaginative content of the essay based on the author's program idea and verbal remarks in the notation text. Another option - based on an in-depth analysis of all the components of the music text, correctly "read" it to reproduce in the sound in all its figurative and emotional originality.

The huge interest in N. Medtner's piano sonata by many well-known pianists emphasizes the potential that Metner's works contain. He forces to direct the attention of modern musicians to the possibility of expanding their repertoire preferences by including N. Medtner's piano sonatas in the programs.

Today, the performer, striving for new repertoire discoveries, can reveal the figurative content of Medtner's piano sonatas on the basis of an analytical comparison of the expressive means of the composer's text with the range of means that make up musical and performing poetics.

The further development of the theoretical direction of N. Medtner's piano legacy will contribute to the creative and practical success of solving this comparative task.

#### ***REFERENCES:***

1. Zetel I. N. K. Medtner is a pianist. Creativity, performance, pedagogy / I. Zetel. - M.: Music, 1981. - 231 p.
2. Moskalets Yu. V. Russian piano sonata of the turn of the XIX-XX centuries in the atmosphere of artistic search of the era / Yu.V. Moskalets. - Author's abstract. dis. ... cand. art. - M., 2004. - 26 p.
3. Neuhaus G. Contemporary of Scriabin and Rachmaninov / G.G. Neuhaus // N.K. Medtner. Memories. Articles. Materials. - M.: Sov. composer, 1981. - P. 31-35.
4. Sokol A. Executive Remarks, the image of the world and the musical style / A.V. Falcon. - Odessa: Sailor, 2007. - 276 with.
5. Troyanovskaya A. Life of N.K. Medtner in the Bugry / A.I. Troyanovskaya // N.K. Medtner. Memories. Articles. Materials. - M.: Sov. composer, 1981. - P. 134-141.