

# **Methodology of Artistic Identification on the Path of the Comprehension of Composer's Works in A Piano Class**

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The article is devoted to the reflection on the problem of the “immersion” in the artistic world of a composer’s creative work in a piano class in the beginning of the 21st century. The wealth and diversity of the music material for piano players determine the new quality of understanding music and set high goals and objectives for a performing musician and a music teacher, the achievement of which becomes a factor of considerable professional and spiritual growth. In the authors’ opinion, the involvement in the never-ending process of immersion in the musical world of images, meanings and moods, inherent in music, requires of a modern music teacher the ability to create a pedagogical environment that would contribute to performance-related, musical and aesthetic, spiritual and moral development of an artist’s personality. This, in turn, is inextricably associated with the training of universally educated musicians, possessing a high humanitarian culture, emotional responsiveness and comprehensive knowledge. In this regard, it seems to be efficient to apply in the pedagogical process the combination of musical-aesthetic and psycho-pedagogical approaches proposed in the article – conceptual, syncretic and comparative-contrastive. Another efficient approach is based on using in a piano class the methodology of artistic identification of a musical composition (“immersion technique”), developed on the basis of L. Ionin’s theory “Identification and dramatization” (Ionin, 1998), which involves stage-by-stage assimilation of external and internal aspects of a comprehended phenomenon as a unity of form and content.

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## INTRODUCTION

Each age offers a new perspective on the art of past epochs by revealing in it the features that are in sync with the times, as well as those timeless and eternal values that make it possible to find an emotional response and grant intellectual indulgence through the ages. This leaves a wide field for research activity of each music teacher, and provides to each musician, who only enters the path of knowledge, infinite opportunities for personal development, continuous improvement and self-development, which is the key to success in any chosen field of activity. J.-J. Rousseau was one of the first to offer his understanding of education, in which a personality would be able to manifest itself in the best possible way; "his ideas turned out to be one of the greatest peaks of human thought and served as a source of the renewal of the theory and practice of education" (Dzhurinskiy, 1998, p. 163).

The research of the modern process of the comprehension of piano music identified the following pedagogical problems:

- fragmentary nature of students' concepts of musical styles, which is a consequence of the low cultural level;
- limited repertoire that includes a set of well-known compositions;
- orientation to established stereotypes in the process of creating a performer's interpretation;
- weakness of fantasy and imagination, insufficiently developed capacity for associative thinking;
- prevalence of craft, purely technical tasks over artistic ones;
- lack of the culture of melodious piano touch, flexible and adaptive playing, "wide breath" in dynamic waves, the capacity for rapid switching between moods, possessing a rich sound palette;
- insufficiently developed ability to embrace sound layers and create sound volume;
- inability to connect different parts of a composition into the integral whole within the framework of the form proposed by the composer;
- limited polyphonic thinking, not allowing to trace various interweaving melodic lines, their interaction, mutual influence, role in the development of the musical ideas of a composition;
- rhythmic instability, lack of understanding of the forming role of rhythm;
- primitive pedalization, not allowing to create a proper "sound space".

The above problems determined the need to use the following methodological directions in work with piano compositions:

- development of a conceptual approach to the study of composers' works, understanding creativity as a sociocultural phenomenon, as a philosophical and aesthetic paradigm, as an art movement and style, as a world view and creative method;
- using a syncretic, systemic approach to musical aesthetics in the context of a broad panorama of artistic phenomena and events of a historical epoch, in conjunction with other art forms, in identifying the specific features of the creative method of composers who created an original author's world;
- introduction of an analytical-comparative approach to the musical-pedagogical process, which determines the consideration of each artistic phenomenon in dynamics and development, in identifying the traits of continuity and renewal in the change of various artistic styles, in considering the relationship between traditions

and innovations in the development of the creative method of composers, in the manifestation of the variability of this method.

Thus, “the articulation of the problem of optimizing the process of training a musician makes it possible to comprehend the empirically established canons of teaching, reveal additional opportunities for the organization of training a future specialist for professional activities in a new environment” (Anufriev, 2013).

## **METHODOLOGY**

There The developed methodology was based on the ideas proposed by the scientists, who addressed the problem of the comprehension and interpretation of a musical or literary text: M. Bakhtin, V. Prihod'ko, V. Thomson and others. The twelve proposed methods of artistic identification of compositions are applied in an integrated manner throughout the process of working on a composition. The methodology is a flexible “structure”; the sequence of the application of methods is variable and depends on the age of a student, the degree of his/her development, his/her reaction to the studied composition.

1. The method of philosophical and aesthetic identification of a composition. This method is aimed at the identification of the fundamental idea of a composition, its conceptual core, determining the nature and relationships of artistic images. The main goal is the appropriateness of the interpretation, not allowing the distortion of the author's main idea, ensuring the focus of creative search, coinciding with the backbone line of the author's intent.

2. The method of poetic identification. This method is aimed at the recreation of psychological and poetic atmosphere of a composition. It involves searching for images in literature and poetry that are identical to the poetic field of a studied musical composition, a comparative analysis of poetic and musical images, identification of their specific features and similarities. The method is aimed at enhancing the cultural horizon of a music student, the development of associative thinking, fantasy, imagination.

3. The method of intonational identification, revealing of intonational fields that determine the imaginative content of a composition, the search for “leit-intonations”, “leit-themes” and “leit-spheres”, symbolizing the author's artistic conception. The method focuses on the purposeful study of an author's text, identification of the specifics of its language, penetration into its system of “keys-symbols” that define the uniqueness of the original author's world.

4. The method of expressive identification (V. Thomson), making it possible to identify spheres of tension, relaxation, reflection, and action, which is an important aspect of building an interpretation model corresponding to the author's aesthetics and poetics.

5. The method of genre and stylistic identification (A. Shcherbakova) aimed at the identification of genre and stylistic features of the idiom of each romantic composer and its forming principles, the reflection on the new interpretation of a form as a “stream of consciousness”, governed by the logic of romantic narrative, which is remote from the classical logic.

6. The method of “identification”, aimed at the maximum penetration into the author's semiosphere, i.e. the world of meanings inherent in a composition. It assumes the knowledge of a certain historical epoch, the time, when the composition was created, and the related circumstances.

7. The method of “outsidedness” (Bakhtin, 1996) aimed at forming the ability to look at a musical composition from the outside, regarding it as an integral structure, identify personal attitude reflecting one's own individuality, lend personal meanings to the author's semiosphere, enter into the process of co-creative dialogical communication with a composition. The method promotes independence, the

interest in the creative search for original solutions, transition from empathy, characteristic for the method of “identification”, to the co-creative transformation of a composition.

8. The method of plot modeling, aimed at revealing a hidden program, typical for a large amount of compositions of romantic composers, and the specifics of romantic narrative. The method also promotes the development of fantasy and imagination, helps a music student to conceive oneself as a co-author, taking active part in the recreation of a musical composition.

9. The method of rhythmic identification, making it possible to trace the forming role of rhythm in romantic compositions, rhythmic “leit-figures”, their transformations, transfigurations, symbolizing the transformations in the lives of heroes of a musical composition.

10. The method of “texture identification” (Prihod'ko, 1997) of a composition, aimed at identifying the role of the texture in the creation of the psychological and poetic “climate” of musical compositions. The method helps to reveal the interaction of a performing musician and the romantic texture, which opens for an attentive performer the path to the comprehension of a composition, and a performer, having mastered all the information contained in the texture, recreates the musical text in the reality of its sound.

11. The method of creating pianistic comfort, aimed at mastering the pianism of a romantic composer as a comprehensive task, which includes semantic, technical and sound aspects. The main feature of the method of creating pianistic comfort is the submission of technical tasks to artistic ones, the search for pianistic solutions that correspond to the musical world of composers and the specifics of their music.

12. The method of creating a sound space, aimed at the study of all characteristics of the shaping of sound layers, work with the specifics of sound articulation, serious and thoughtful analysis of the role of vertical and horizontal structures in creating sound canvasses of compositions, detailed examination of the role of pedalization in this process.

Thus, the twelve methods of artistic identification of a musical composition are, in essence, twelve steps that help to penetrate far beyond the usual framework of studying music in piano classes. They can help a young musician to open a new analytical perspective in his work, a new aspect of the cognized world, provide an opportunity to get additional guidelines in the implementation of the contact with the great creations of the past.

## **RESULTS**

Addressing the works of composers of different epochs and styles makes it possible to solve a whole range of psycho-pedagogical tasks that currently exist in piano performing classes. The reference to music of different styles as an integral component of the artistic and aesthetic education of a modern performing musician is regarded as a way to preserve the best traditions of the Russian performance school and reflect on the possibilities of their co-creative transformation in the new socio-cultural reality of our time. “Musical and aesthetic education is the shaping and development of value relation of a person to the phenomena of the surrounding world on the basis of the comprehension of the values of music, its beauty and content, bearing universal values: ideological, ethical, aesthetic” (Kolomiets, 2001).

The study of the modern process of the comprehension of instrumental music in a piano class identified the pedagogical problems, which determined the need to create a special modern methodology of working on piano compositions. “If we analyze the trends of the development of the system of professional musical education, it can be assumed that in future music teachers will not be like their

modern colleagues in terms of their target orientations and ways of professional activity" (Anufrieva, 2012).

Therefore, the authors proposed a methodology of artistic identification of a musical composition ("immersion technique"), based on the theory of L. Ionin "Identification and dramatization", which involves gradual assimilation of a musical composition, just as an actor, getting into a character, tries to find the hero's manner of walking, characteristic features of his speech, gestures and facial expressions. In the authors' opinion, the unity of emotionality and intelligence, ensured by the methodology of artistic identification, can be a powerful incentive for the engagement of each young performer into the bright creative process of the personal comprehension of the studied music.

The technique of "immersion" opens for future professional musicians a wide perspective of artistic phenomena and events of historical epochs, stirs their interest in identifying relationships of music with other forms of art, teaches them to analyze, compare, generalize. "The aesthetics of one form of art is the same as the aesthetics of another form; only material is different" (Schumann, 1975). In other words, this technique leads students to using the analytical-comparative method, which makes it possible to treat each artistic phenomenon in its dynamics and development.

Thus, tradition and innovation are understood by young musicians as an integral unity, determining the specifics of the continuity and renewal of artistic styles. By studying the aesthetics and poetics of romanticism in their dynamics and development, using the "associative-arch analogies" (Shcherbakova, 2001) to compare the traits of romanticism, classicism and baroque, future professional musicians learn to think broadly, to perceive the variability and instability of the musical world, its versatility and infinity. According to T.N. Voronova, "musical thinking emerges on the basis of the perception of sound successions, when the content of a musical composition is understood" (Theory and Methodology of Teaching Piano, 2001, p. 113).

However, such a broad view of musical art does not rule out a close look at the unique characteristics of each author's world. On the contrary, it contributes to the "sharpening" of artistic vision, striving to identify the personal characteristics of each artistic method, the aspects of a musical genius which overwhelm listeners in the works of the great masters. While noting L. van Beethoven's commitment to the classical tradition, S. Feynberg admits that he simultaneously tends to "give new expressiveness and new artistic content to the old techniques of pianism" (Feynberg, 2003, p. 61).

Thus, the study and analysis of the problems emerging in piano classes result in the following conclusions:

1. Working on the interpretative assimilation of compositions will be effective only in case if the compositions are regarded within the framework of a certain philosophical and aesthetic concept, in the context of artistic events of a particular historical epoch.

2. The tasks emerging in the course of training in musical performing classes should be solved by the teacher not only from the standpoint of high professional competence, but also from a culturological point of view, when every musical composition is regarded in manifold relationships with other artistic phenomena. The comparison and collation of creative methods, used by representatives of various forms of arts, contributes to the enhancement of the integrated, synergistic impact of art on students, enrichment and systematization of their knowledge.

3. Working on the interpretative assimilation of piano compositions should be accompanied by studying musicians' achievements in different fields. This holistic comprehension of the artistic legacy offers optimal opportunities for the

intensification of the hermeneutical focus of training, the development of the aesthetic consciousness of music students.

4. The identification of musical-aesthetic and psycho-pedagogical approaches to the comprehension of the composers' works on the bases of performing classes makes it possible to provide a theoretical justification and formulate the basic methodological principles of the faithful reproduction of musicians' ideas and comprehensive understanding of the stylistic features of author's language.

5. The results (the authors' teaching activity in piano classes) confirmed the effectiveness of the proposed methodology for the expansion of the sphere of musical and general aesthetic interests and needs of young musicians, development of their creative abilities.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

The huge amount of emotional and intellectual work aimed at the comprehension of the musical world of images, meanings and moods, inherent in music, requires of a modern music teacher the ability to create a pedagogical environment that would contribute to performance-related, musical and aesthetic, spiritual and moral development of a personality. This, in turn, is inextricably associated with the training of universally educated musicians, possessing a high humanitarian culture, emotional responsiveness and comprehensive knowledge.

In the beginning of the 21st century such training continues to be based on the implementation of the concept of developmental teaching in the musical-pedagogical practice. The main principle of this concept is focusing on the "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1987), purposeful advance, overcoming difficulties, constant projection into the future (Vygotsky, 1987). The concept of developmental teaching is closely linked to the teaching principles of the romantic epoch, which introduced the doctrine of developmental education. For example, A. Diesterweg believed that the main objective of education is "not so much the subject itself, but rather the power acquired by a student through its assimilation" (Theory and Methodology of Teaching Piano, 2001, p. 8). The subject of education is in this case the piano compositions of different epochs and styles, and the "power" acquired by a student consists in those musical-aesthetic and spiritual and moral values, forming the basis of great musical creations, which become the foundation of the inner world of a young musician.

An indispensable prerequisite of the successful assimilation of composers' works in performing classes is the achievement of an emotional response, an experience, which becomes a "personal knowledge" (M. Mamardashvili), encouraging a student's interest in knowledge. That is why Ya.I. Mil'shteyn argued that "it is in the experience, in the emotional perception and recreation of a work of art, where all the processes of learning intertwine" (Mil'shteyn, 1983, p. 233). Bright emotionality of compositions, deep sensuality offers ample opportunities for the development of a student's emotional responsiveness to music, empathy, as a first step on the path of the immersion into the artistic and imaginative system of art. The reason for this is that "an instrument for a person who uses it for composing music acts both as cause and effect, it is not so much a servant, but rather a companion. The whole life with its impressions, all the spiritual vibrations are mediated by touching the keys, which has a vital and spiritual essence for a musician" (Okrainets, 1994).

It is particularly important, because entering the world of music is, first and foremost, the process of the "education of senses" (J.-J. Rousseau), the development of the need and readiness for an emotional contact, for the dialogical communication between a composer and an interpreter, for the emergence of a "sensual-spiritual connection" (Kagan, 1996). The penetration into the artistic and imaginative world of a composer is largely determined by the ability to identify with it, because "it

needn't and even must not be taken from the outside. It should be taken from within, by experiencing it, living through it, immersing oneself into its flow" (Shor, 2003).

The most important task of a music teacher, who introduces a student in the spiritual space of piano music, is to ensure the most favorable environment for the creation of a high "emotional degree" in the educational process by finding techniques and methods, musical-aesthetic and psycho-pedagogical approaches that most fully meet this goal.

An important part of the process of the comprehension of music is the use of "stylistic approach". L. Gakkel, reflecting on the problem of style and stylistic performance, states that "stylistic playing is always expressive playing. The reason is that style is not a sum of techniques; style is a substantive phenomenon, determined by the author's artistic world and recreating the author's images and ideas. To understand the style means to get in sync with the thoughts and emotions of the author and his composition, to come closer to the understanding of the spirit of his music. A performer who "got in sync" with the style, will see the essence of the form: a certain combination of tools, a certain texture by themselves are able to instill correct assumptions on what the author "wanted to say", what imaginative and emotional meaning attached to a certain musical material (Gakkel, 1995, pp. 76-77).

A.I. Nikolaeva, formulating the basic principles of stylistic approach, aimed at "the recreation of the most characteristic traits of a composer's style" (Nikolaeva, 2003, p. 239), derives a number of principles, among which the most important are:

- formation of the value relation to the studied style, an insight into the essence a piece of music, its idea, plot, imaginative structure, ability to creatively recreate the author's world;
- ability to comprehend the unity of meaning and text, objective foundations of style and its individual interpretation in performance;
- determination of all performing means by the specifics of a composer's style;
- taking into account the historical factor, including not only the knowledge of performing traditions, but also the creative attitude to them, the capacity for personal and axiological rethinking them in the process of the assimilation of a piece of music.

Thus, "when addressing the problem of the development of musical and stylistic competence in students, combined with aesthetic and axiological development of a personality, it is necessary to realize that music as a special form of art embodies the meanings and values of many generations" (Davydova, 2013). In the course of the assimilation of a musical works within the framework of the stylistic approach, a teacher solves a whole set of musical and aesthetic tasks associated with the development of general and musical abilities of a student, including the stimulation of associative thinking, development of memory, expanding a student's thesaurus.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The development of art in the 20th century gave an idea of the multiplicity of simultaneously existing multidirectional streams, which provide a polyphonic picture of the world, while "the common ground of the stylistic pluralism of our epoch became the dominant in the art point of view on the world from inside the human consciousness, psychologically profound, representing the world in an objective polyphony of consciousnesses and in the subjective stream of consciousness" (Berger, 1997). The involvement in the never-ending process of immersion in the musical world of composers' works, its wealth and diversity, currently determines the new quality of understanding music, as it sets high goals and objectives for a performing musician and a music teacher, the achievement of which becomes a factor of considerable professional and spiritual growth.

An indispensable prerequisite of the successful assimilation of piano compositions in performing classes is the achievement of an emotional response to the comprehended music. The penetration into the artistic and imaginative world of a composer is largely determined by the ability to identify with it, because “it shouldn’t and even must not be taken from the outside. It should be taken from within, by experiencing it, living through it, immersing oneself into its flow” (Shor, 2003).

Thus, in the process of the comprehension of piano compositions a music teacher determines a wide range of problems:

- fostering aesthetic and axiological relationship of a student to the studied material;

- development of the capacity for the maximal penetration into the world of musical meanings, requiring not only the serious and thoughtful assimilation of a musical text, its intonational specifics, the author’s language, but also considerable cultural foundation, understanding the historical “context” of a composition;

- searching for a fundamental idea of a composition, its conceptual core in each particular case, striving to identify the nature and relationship of artistic images in order to create appropriate interpretation, not allowing any distortion of the author's idea;

- promoting the ability to penetrate into the psychological and poetic atmosphere of a composition, the search for “associative archs-bridges” in the field of allied arts: literature and poetry, continuous activation of thinking, fantasy, imagination, as well as the development of:

- the ability to identify the logic of the dynamic development of a composition, reveal the moments of highest tension, feel and comprehend its architectonic and build an interpretation model, in which the moments of upsurge, action, relaxation, reflection are accurately incorporated in an integral artistic image;

- the ability to identify a hidden program of a composition, give a personal meaning to the life of artistic images, becoming, like an actor in a play, a “co-author” of a composition, striving to think up, fill up and convey to a listener the secrets that always stay behind the lines of notes;

- the skills of the comprehension of genre and stylistic features of the musical world, revealing the lyrical basis of the narrative, the “stream of consciousness”, which requires of a performing musician to be free in the expression of feelings, to master a specific improvisational performance style;

- the ability to feel the “heartbeat” of a composition, its specific features, its internal nerve that defines a character;

- like an artist, to reveal the role of the background (middle or third ground), against which the dramaturgy of a composition unfolds, as well as the ability to hear and convey the interaction of sound layers that determines the coloring of a composition. This requires not only a developed sound thinking, but also mastering the pedalization skills;

- a certain level of technical skills, pianism, perceived as a set of artistic tasks, the solution of which leads to performance freedom, when a musician is not bound by any technological limitations and can embody in his interpretation all the creative ideas that he regards as necessary to create a coherent work of art.

Solving the specified range of problems requires the development and application of a set of musical and aesthetic and psycho-pedagogical approaches to the comprehension of piano compositions by a performer. In this regard, the following set of approaches seems to be effective:

- *conceptual* approach, orienting students toward the study of a music composition in the context of historical and cultural phenomena of the epoch, including philosophical and aesthetic views and ideals of the most prominent

representatives of the epoch, collectively forming an idea of the artistic paradigm of a certain epoch;

- *syncretic* approach, enabling transdisciplinary communication, making it possible to involve in the pedagogical process a wide chain of associations with other forms of art and thus contributing to the development of a holistic view of the basic worldview and artistic and aesthetic attitudes;

- *comparative and contrastive* approach that determines the consideration of each artistic phenomenon in dynamics and development, in identifying the traits of continuity and renewal in the change of different artistic styles that involves studying of each artistic phenomenon both in terms of the general development of musical culture and identifying the individual characteristics of the creative method of each composer, comparing and correlating creative methods of various representatives of one art movement.

Using the aforementioned combination of musical-aesthetic and psychopedagogical approaches, implementation of the proposed methodology of the identification of musical compositions in the process of comprehension of piano compositions of various styles seems to be promising and will contribute to the concentration of intellectual forces of young musicians, orient them toward the purposeful creative endeavour, stimulate their cognitive interest, independence, activity, foster aesthetic and axiological relation to the artistic world of composers.

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