

An Exploration of the Writing Technique and Singing Analysis of Sergei Rachmaninoff's Song for Training Tone

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Abstract

Sergei Rachmaninoff was a classic music composer, pianist and conductor in 20th century. Vocal Exercise, one of the eighty-three romantic pieces written in 1912 and commissioned in 1915, is included in the Op. 34 art song collection, which is his medium work. The work was written for Nezhdanova, a famous Russian lyric soprano singer, in the style of late Russian Romanticism. The core is line and counterpoint, the only art song written in counterpoint texture of Sergei Rachmaninoff.

Keywords

Sergei Rachmaninoff; Vocal exercises; Late romanticism; Contrapuntal texture.

1. Introduction

Vocal Exercise not only contains complex singing skills, but also contains highly artistic comprehension. Compared with the general art songs, vocalization without words is more demanding. It is necessary to analyze and study the artistic technique and structure of the work as carefully as possible, which is of great significance for the singer to fully understand and interpret the artistic connotation and charm of the work.

2. The Technique of Sergei Rachmaninoff's "Vocal Exercises in Concert"

Sergei Rachmaninoff graduated from the famous Moscow Music Academy (now the Chaykovsky), and his works are deeply influenced by Tchaikovsky, with a deep foundation of folk music and rich melodies. He is good at the epic style of music. In the early 1900s, several new styles emerged, such as Neoclassicism, New Romanticism, Expressionism and others, whose guidelines were very different from those of traditional romanticism. On the one hand, the Sergei Rachmaninoff represents the age of Romanticism, and on the other hand, there are many modern elements close to those of the 20th century composers, the writing style he has always followed has been known to the world, and many general features even run through the author's lifetime creation. The so-called alien elements are magically fused together in the work of Sergei Rachmaninoff, such as Romanticism, rich modes in the system of major and minor keys, and other modern styles (such as jazz elements and Dmitri Shostakovich invasion themes in Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini).

The overall structure of the Sergei Rachmaninoff is a two-part form with representation, which is illustrated as follows:

Table 1. Musical structure diagram

Musical structure	A		B	
	a	a'	b	a'
Subsection	7	11	13	9
Backbone tonality	#c	#g	#c	#c

Figure 1 is the subject of the piece. Through the analysis, we can find that material X in the form of auxiliary sound and material y in the form of continuous progression are the most important basis for the melody. In fact, this theme is composed of the core material x, Y repeatedly, winding and splicing. Material Z, characterized by chord decomposition, appears about 2/3 of the total length of the subject (near the golden ratio point) and acts to raise the pitch range and push the music to the top. The composer uses x and Y as the basis of the theme melody, which are the common features of the “Minor interval”, to make the music form continuous. The material Z, close to the golden ratio point, allows the development of music to be varied in unity. Of course, this core material splicing is not random, but has a logical direction. For the first two thirds of the length of the theme, the dominant note # g in # C minor, starting with the middle note E in # C minor, moves down to the dominant note # g in # C minor, which is also the core material Y, around which the core materials x and y change. The material Z pushes the music to a higher point after the dominant note # g in # C minor and solves the main note # C in # C minor, thus completing the construction of the theme sentence melody.



Figure 1. Subject of the piece

It should also be noted that in Sergei Rachmaninoff's vocal works, the piano voice is an integral part of the unity of the work, and even occupies the same important position as the human voice. As the only polyphonic work in Sergei Rachmaninoff's vocal works, its piano parts are exquisitely written and meticulously integrated with the vocal parts. From the examples, we can find that the right-hand part is characterized by the continuity of the column chord, and the pitch of the melodic position is based on the core materials x and y. The left-handed bass is mainly in the descending scale of # c natural minor, which forms a counterpoint to the piano's right hand voice and the singing voice in texture, and its pitch structure is based on the core material y and forms the internal echo relation with the backbone sound of the singing part. In fact, the ingenious arrangement of theme sentences composed of three core materials, x, y and Z, which include the singing part and the piano part, is “Amplified” into the whole work. Figure 2 is the first part of the second phase of the melody, it is not difficult to see that the melody structure is strictly based on the core material X, Y Foundation. As the second phase of the presentation, material Z is not used here.



Figure 2. Presentation part two

Figure 3 is the melody of the first stage of the second part of the composition, which is still based on the core materials x and Y as the “Unfolding” part of the reappearance of the two-part form, but the composer uses material z in two key places: the first time on the fourth beat of the fourth bar of the passage, which is the golden ratio point of the passage, and the second time on the fourth beat of the seventh bar, and through the continuation of the eighth bar, the music to the paragraph is also the climax of the whole song. This is both the golden ratio point of the passage and the golden ratio point of the whole song.



Figure 3. Expand Part

As the reappearance of the second part of the single two-part form, the singing part is still based on the core materials x and Y, and the theme “Exact” reappearance appears in the right hand part of the piano part (see Figure 4), this also shows that the composer is the piano voice as an integral part of this work.



Figure 4. Reproducing Part

3. An analysis of the singing of Sergei Rachmaninoff's song for training

The Vocal Exercise was made for Nezhdanova. Nezhdanova's singing technique is perfect for her brilliant voice, wide range, smooth and delicate coloratura. Her performance is simple, deep and sincere. She was not only one of the most famous representatives of the Russian vocal school, but also a famous concert singer who established the tradition of coloratura soprano singing in Russian and western European classical operas. Sergei Rachmaninoff created this piece especially for Nezhdanova, which is another way of saying that this piece contains superb singing skills and rich artistry. The theme of this work is the statement of the Muses, a development that makes the melodic lines of the work like continuous waves, graceful and delicate, connecting marks run through the whole work, both lyrical cantabile and wordless melancholy. This kind of theme muses the statement one development technique has put forward the very high request to the work singing. It requires the breath of singing to have good control ability, the breath flow to be even, the resonance position to be high, the tone color of the voice to be pure, transparent, soft, sound skills to be skilled, expressive. That's why we're acting

Therefore when we are performing, we should have a deep understanding and grasp of the techniques of singing and the lyric coherence of singing on the basis of the development of the theme music, tries to use the song sound the perfect performance music melody shape the change and the tonality, the harmony color to the work bestows the influence. In the absence of lyrics, beautiful sound reproduction of the original works with pure sound art to infect the hearts of the audience, which can truly reflect the art of the song without words vocal skills and artistic value status. From the score also can be seen that the composer of this work is carefully considered design, which can be seen in detail the superb singing skills of this work, singing melodic lyricism.

First, the emoticon term above the beginning of the piece calls for "Slow, very cantabile." (Lentamente. Molto cantabile), so the composer has already set the tone of the whole piece at the beginning of the music-slow, lyrical, cantabile. Then we should first of all follow the requirements of the work when singing, the whole work can not be too fast, the voice can not be too strong, too big, too intense, otherwise it will deviate from the style of the work; secondly, we should be soft timbre, lyricism, emotion deep, the voice can not be too floating, otherwise it can not express the connotation hidden in the work. The use of numerous ligatures, large and small, throughout the piece shows that the composer requires a very coherent composition, legato, we should pay attention to the consistency of breath in singing, breathing stability; in the phrase must not be random breath, to keep breath (pull back) to give adequate support to the voice, in order to ensure that the song can be achieved when the work melodic lines should be smooth and lyrical. Secondly, in almost every phrase of the whole piece, there are signs from crescendo to decrescendo. These signs express the composer's innermost feelings and deep feelings, which can not be expressed directly. When we sing, we should pay attention to the sound from crescendo to decrescendo, we should be very careful to transition, not trace; sound should be controlled very cultured, can not ignore the strong and weak, destroy the melodic beauty of the work and the artistic charm of the emotion of the work. The interval relation of this work is basically a progression of two or three degrees into a stage, we should pay attention to this interval relation when we sing, because the "Descending small second degree progression" in this interval relation has some semantic meaning, it is a symbol of sadness, sigh and crying. When we sing, we must pay attention to the use of head cavity resonance. When we need to express such emotions as sadness, weeping, hesitation and wandering, the voice should concentrate on the head cavity. The transition between sounds should be very careful. We should use sincere emotion, soft and pure timbre to express the music style of the works with the characteristics of strong Russian music. As we have analyzed above, Sergei Rachmaninoff is

based on the core materials of X and y in creating the melody of this piece. Material = Material X's melodic form of "Descending small second progress" and "Centripetal melody" has not only structural significance but also special symbolic significance in the work. "The descending small second degree carries on" has some kind of semantic meaning, is the sad, the sigh and the weeping symbol. The repeated return movement of the central sound in "Centripetal Melody" shows a hesitant and wandering state of mind. The musical language of these two melodic forms has a sentimental and sad mood.



Figure 5. Two melody forms

It is worth mentioning that these two typical melodic trends are Tchaikovsky music and Rimski Music in the characteristics of melodic progress. Tchaikovsky is a famous master of tragic composition, his mind is occupied by the tragic psychological factors of the Russian nation, his music is mostly sad, in this point, Sergei Rachmaninoff and Tchaikovsky in the same vein. It can be argued that the Sergei Rachmaninoff has inherited some elements of traditional Russian music, particularly the Tchaikovsky style. When we are singing, we can have a full understanding and grasp of the singing of the theme formed by this melodic material on the basis of this analysis, and also through the performance of a very good form of melody with the kind of sad, sad mood.

In paragraph a, the first sentence is the theme melody, which must not be disturbed at the beginning of the song. The voice should be clear, the point of resonance should be concentrated, and the voice should be high, when the sound comes out, it is presented to the audience with a pure, loose timbre, which leads the audience to a kind of artistic conception which is both lyrical and inexpressible. The strength of the voice should be light, so as to achieve the strength of P on the spectrum. What we should pay attention to is that we should never sing to ourselves in order to express melancholy feelings. This will not only make the voice "Nest" in the body, but also make the voice "Dull" and not produce timbre, it can also destroy the musicality of the work. At the end of Section 6, paragraph a, we can follow the expression on the score, *ad lib*, and sing a little longer on the spur of the moment; but remember that this is not the end of the piece, it is only a small pause after the first appearance of the theme of the work, so as to give the audience a distinct impression of the theme. Therefore, it should not be prolonged too long, and should be paid special attention to when singing. In Paragraph B, we first notice the emoticon term *Poco piu animato* (a little more active), which is clearly a little more positive in its mood than the first passage, the timbre of the song should be a little bit clearer, the emotion should be a little bit more exciting, the intensity should be increased to MF's intensity, but in general none of these changes should be very big, because this piece of music from the overall structure of the work, "Cheng", which belongs to Qi, Cheng, Zhuan and He, serves as a link between the preceding and the following. If the change is too great, the audience will find it sudden and difficult to accept. When singing this piece of music, we should not only show the change of the music, but also pay attention to the details: in 13-17 bars, the color and strength of the sound have changed obviously because of the change of the harmonic color, then we should clearly show this change in singing, adjust the tone color and mood a little bit more clear, can not be

like paragraph a, control very light, very soft, otherwise it will be inconsistent with the music mood of this paragraph. In bar 19 there is also an emoticon of the Ritenuto (sudden slowness), and the music moves from a continuous upward movement of light and hope to a downward movement, implying that the glimmering of hope and light is impossible, thus returning to a deep melancholy and wandering (which is directly related to the attitude of the Sergei Rachmaninoff to life). Well, here we gradually adjust the tone color to a soft tone color state, so as to meet the work to express the emotion. In paragraph C, the change in mood, intensity, and timbre of the music is greater and more pronounced than in paragraphs A and B. This piece of music from the whole structure of the work, belongs to the beginning, succession, and in the "Turn.". It is worth noting that "Turn" is the most changing part of the music, as a result of the theme of the change and development of music, so that we sing in the mood, music, the treatment of the past and paragraphs A, B have obvious differences. The first thing you can see is that this paragraph is made up of multiple emoji terms Poco piumosso (a little faster), un Poco ritenuto (a little slower), and a tempo (recovery rate). Obviously, this indicates that the composer's inner mood has obvious fluctuation in this passage, therefore, the mood fluctuation in singing should be more excited. But we should pay attention to, must grasp the whole work emotion premise, grasps this paragraph emotion limit not to be excited excessively. Secondly, the frequency of the dynamics of the music (mf-cresc-f-p-mf-cresc-f-ff-dim-p) makes the music have a new change in the singing color requirement. This piece of music in singing to become more broad and brilliant timbre, through the change of timbre rendering music changes. In this part of the song, the voice can not like the beginning of singing softly. There should be a good combination of open voice, the chest sound resonance and head sound resonance, so that the color of the voice more metal feeling. From the detailed analysis of paragraph C, we can see that in this piece of music, 23-27 bars is 20-23 bar theme deformation above the second die forward, the composer then through this die forward works music in 28 bars to the climax, then slowly move towards silence and introduce a reappearance section. So when we sing, as the music gradually develops, the mood of singing will gradually change from internalization to more exterior and more exciting, and the tone color of singing will gradually turn to bright and open, and sing the brilliant tone color in 28 bars, then slowly restore calm, soft timbre. All of this should be beautiful and colorful, must not let the voice and emotions out of control, singing voice can not be too bright, sharp, must be in the understanding of the entire work on the basis of the characteristics of the treatment, play. It can be seen that this kind of theme music of the statement of the development of the means of composition on the treatment of singing had a tremendous impact. In paragraph a, the theme melody appears in the piano part, the voice is the counterpoint part of the polyphony, where the composer uses a dense four-part writing technique to make the music extremely delicate. So when singing this melody, we should properly handle the relationship between the voice and the piano theme voice, so that the two can be harmonious together. We should be in the piano has the expression playing the main melody, with the lyric, the soft timbre exquisite singing, profoundly expresses the composer to the future life one kind of pursue and the melancholy, the wandering mood. Although the work appears in this paragraph the highest note of the song HIGHC, but because this is not the climax of the whole song, so we sing this note, we must be prepared to sing the small word group a note, take a deep breath, the use of high-position head sound resonance mellow singing, not only to reach the high sound effect, but also to reach the effect of tenderness, sound intensity can not be too strong. Here, too, the High C can be "Stood"(slowly) a little according to the Emoticon Ritenuto, giving full expression to the composer's intent. Then in the piano has the expression to play the main melody, uses the lyric, the gentle timbre exquisite singing, profoundly expresses the composer to the future life one kind of pursue and the melancholy, the wandering mood.

4. Conclusion

From the above analysis, we can see that Sergei Rachmaninoff, which not only contains complicated singing skills, but also has a high degree of artistry, and has the dual attributes of an art song and a vocal etude, it is not only an excellent concert performance, but also an effective training material in the advanced stage of vocal music teaching. From the point of view of vocal music training value, concert vocalization is not only as artistic as art songs, and it has more explicit vocal training value than art songs (for example, in a concert vocal exercise, there can be many kinds of skills, which can not only practice vocal vocalization and breath coherence, but also practice vocal flexibility and various techniques such as staccato, staccato, skip, etc.) , many teachers use it as a technique to prepare students for an opera performance. From the point of view of artistic value, vocalization in concert not only includes all kinds of vocal techniques in vocalization, but also emphasizes the singer's understanding of the works and his mastery and exertion of the techniques. By studying the Sergei Rachmaninoff, we can not only enhance our training in vocal music skills and artistic accomplishment, also good singing and interpretation of this work plays a very good role in the guidance of further study of the sound can play a good role in promoting.

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