

Artistic Synthesis of the “Russian” and “German” in the Chamber-Vocal Works N. Medtner

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Abstract—The article considers specific features of the artistic synthesis of the "Russian" and "German" in the chamber-vocal works. Medtner. The specific writing style of the composer is analyzed, formed on the basis of active use of creative techniques for composers in Germany of the late XVIII – first half XIX centuries and the legacy of Russian composers of the XIX century, and also gives a review of the work of N. Medtner with vocalists' interpretation of his own compositions.

Keywords—Russian; German; artistic interpretation; the author's style

I. INTRODUCTION

Historical and cultural ties of Russia and Germany have a long history. This phenomenon is associated not only with political and economic UPS and downs (expansion of the Teutonic order in the XIII century in the Baltic States, which led to the war with the Novgorod Republic, the beginning of the resettlement during the reign of Vasily III German artisans who were active continuation of the Romanovs, etc.), but also with general cultural processes of the state and the company's Charter¹. All this led in the early twentieth century to the formation of a unique socio-cultural environment of the Germans, assimilated in Russian traditions. One of the brightest representatives of such a medium is N. K. Medtner [1].

Analyzing vocal and technical aspects of the music of Medtner, it is necessary to consider that the formation of his composing style was influenced by both the composers of the Russian school and foreign (especially German). As the author of the vocal works of Medtner develops the tradition of the German romantics: Schubert, Schumann, Brahms and especially Hugo Wolf. With the latest, Nikolai Karlovich brings characteristic of the Wolf is the maximum correspondence between poetic speech intonation and melodic pattern, not just between the literary content of the text and display it in music.

Along with this, Medtner actively uses the achievements of Russian vocal lyricism, successfully synthesizing declamatory Dargomyzhsky and Mussorgsky and Glinka cantilenas. Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff. Moreover, the composer himself always pointed to the "Russianness" of his work, stating that "...I domes of Russian churches more spires of Gothic cathedrals" [2].

II. THE UNITY OF THE RUSSIAN AND GERMAN IN THE MUSICAL LANGUAGE OF THE COMPOSER

Organic fusion of two cultural traditions (Russian and German) was the fundamental factor in the formation of individual vocal composition writing and the emergence in connection with this vocal and technical difficulties. These include the following: a large number of interval jumps (as a consequence tessitura inconvenience), a broad range (especially in large vocal works), the presence of deployed musical phrases sung in one breath, and metrorhythmic agogic difficulties.

According to N. P. Koshits, "...in the performance of his (i.e. the Medtner – V.K., O.G.) songs I felt tessitura barrier. It intervallic extremely difficult and requires a singer of skill and dexterity. Therefore, in order to achieve the highest artistic unity I had penetrated the meaning of the song. This greatly facilitated the performance of his wonderful song" [3]. N. P. Kosice is referring to the song "Arion", with great success full of love and author January 17, 1930 in New York's Carnegie Hall.

In May 1950, there was a meeting of Medtner with the famous German singer Elizabeth Schwarzkopf. It was assumed their joint concert, subsequently not held. However, in October of the same year was recorded several songs with the composer (10 songs on poems of Goethe and "Muse", "rose", "Only roses wither" on poems by Pushkin and "the Waltz" on verses by A. Fet). Already after the composer's death in 1951, Schwarzkopf recalled: "Medtner paid special attention to clarity and definition pronunciation, of the salience of phrasing, artistic expression, additional difficulties arose in the performance of songs in Russian language" [4].

Nikolai Karlovich carefully and meticulously treated to performances of his own vocal works, including in German. In most cases, they were his concert chamber programme. The vocalists conveyed a strict and merciless nature. In particular, Oda Slobodskaya, a Russian singer-immigrant, in his memoirs on joint work with Medtner noted that "...to understand the songs of Medtner is not easy: they require from the singer's technical skills, and most importantly – a subtle poetic perception. One of the more impressive songs, of course, is the "Dreamer" in which he uses bright ... dramatic and declamatory style. Sometimes he seems to want

to be in the singer's voice appeared rustic timbre coloration, such as in "Singer" [5].

Dissatisfied with the performance of "Sonata-Vocalise" and "Suite-Vocalise", the composer decided to write a methodological review in regards to the performers. According to the memoirs of Medtner's wife, Anna Mikhailovna, "...nick refused to go to one evening, where one great canadian had "di sa belle voix dionner cher,y quellques unes de ses oevres". This is the most beautiful lady turned nevertheless to take it from us, listen - and not only songs, but also "Sonata-Vocalise"... nick recognized her singing is terrible and inconsistent with the idea... especially the "Sonata-Vocalise" [5].

We present the author's commentary on the performance of the "Sonata-Vocalise" and "Suite-Vocalise": "All compositions are performed on vowels. Predominant, of course, must be a vowel. It stained predominantly more noticeable sounds, more prolonged or loud notes. This vowel may sometimes be used in its phonetic definition. Notes, less noticeable (faster, weak, sliding) should be more closed vowels. For these notes the most convenient and vowel, as well as "E".

The transition from one vowel to another should be gradual, that is retouched (as opposed to verbal recitation). This gradual gradation creates a greater number of vowels that are available in any alphabet.

All vowels, except "A" and one's that are seasoned and sliding notes, are finished, the finished performance should not be heard in their phonetic clarity, especially of the vowel "U"; it is permissible and even recommended only in the preparatory work of establishing the play. The execution of the same must vary swirly ease and ease, which, unfortunately, is lacking in vocalized singing and so much of any shepherd.

League denote the fused sentence, in which the breathing should not change, but if this is unavoidable, it should not be noticeable to the ear. Commas indicate a break, that is the suspension of breathing without reopening it. Dash on the repeated notes represent the aspiration, the pressure within one breath" [6].

Medtner, wishing to introduce the English student E. Isles with your songs, translated into English, was asked to "find words" [5]. Nikolai Karlovich was convinced that the only way a musician, not knowing the Russian language, can understand the essence of his vocal works. Trying to translate songs into English, Isles has received from the wife of the composer is accurate to the smallest details transfer with indication of the syllables which should have the appropriate accents and sounds. As a result, the student "tried to convey the sense of poetic language" [5] The Medtner is clearly insufficient were presented a situation in which learned words in an unknown language to the contractor. Only a thorough work of E. Isles on the text could lead to the required results, and only in this case the author could be sure that the contractor clearly not only every word but every syllable in his musical expression. In addition, giving such a task, Nikolay Karlovich saw its purpose in E. Isles had

chosen his words in their own language as with a more accurate poetic line.

Modern singers are increasingly turning to the creative heritage of N. Medtner. Suffice it to mention the recording of his songs Arkhipova ("the Dreamer", "rose", "I outlived their desires", etc.), D Hvorostovsky, who performed in November 2008 in the Grand hall of the Moscow Conservatory Department consisting of vocal lyricism of the composer, and also carries out the recording ("Winter evening", "Sitting and brooding one", "Echoes", "Whisper, timid breathing", "Cart life", etc.). And now concert singers celebrate the complexity of interpretation generously music: for example, E. Obraztsova notes that "...Medtner is a very difficult place, which I technically was not just to learn" [7].

III. ALLOY RATIONAL AND IRRATIONAL IN THE VOCAL WORKS OF MEDTNER

For his song lyrics N. Medtner was selected only German and Russian poetic texts of the highest standard — the poems of Goethe, Heine, Nietzsche, Lermontov, Tyutchev, Fet and, of course, Pushkin [8]. On his poetry he created the song 31 (total including 106). Among them, his "Muse" poem stands out, which the poet himself called his favorite.

The idea to put music to these poems came from the composer: Marietta Shahinyan. Fascinated by the poet Vladyslav Khodasevich, Shahinyan was fascinated by Rachmaninoff's first poem, after reading "the Muse" with the same intonation with which read Khodasevich, and reproduced his explanation. Rachmaninoff immediately into this poetic masterpiece and wrote the song, dedicating it Shahinyan (R. E). When Rachmaninov's opus was published, Shahinyan introduced me to him and Medtner, in turn, shared with him the interpretation that gave the poem Khodasevich. Created by Medtner opens the song cycle "Seven poems by A. Pushkin" op. 29. The composer dedicated it to the Marietta Sergeyevna. Characteristically, after a short time, Medtner made a translation of this opus on the German language.

Shahinian praised the music of Medtner. According to her, Medtner understood Pushkin's text "deeper and wider" than Rachmaninoff, "once pushed back in time: from the first notes of a shepherd's flute in the frets (they drop glass-clear, "loudly") to his praises under the fingers of the goddess of art. And all the time, when in a wood body flute live Pushkin alliteration, "empty", "simple", "finger", is a widely and popular, drowning them, she gracefully floating above them, "and" — "clear well".

Much later, however, the writer preferred the Rachmaninoff version, when Nina Dorliak sang it on the anniversary Shaginyan, who discovered "all of the musical beauty of this thing" [9].

Not only the vocal-technical problems of performance of chamber vocal music of Medtner is the cause of their unpopularity. All pianists, one way or another are facing in their work with the vocal works of the composer, well known for extreme technical difficulty of the piano part, as a rule, far exceeding in complexity the solo [10]. From a

historical point of view here there is a tendency to a gradual increase in the importance and complexity of the accompaniment in the vocal music of Russian and foreign (primarily German) composers. It is natural to assume that the origins of this must be sought in pianistic skill Medtner, who was a standout performer. Reflecting on this, one of the closest friends of Nikolai Karlovich Lawrence Arthur Collingwood writes: "Why are they so rarely (i.e. songs Medtner – V.K., O.G.)? I'm afraid that the true cause must be sought in the fact that although these things are extremely thankful for vocal performance, accompaniment in them, no doubt, difficult and requires a lot of preparatory work even from a first-class pianist" [5]. Somewhat different angle on this problem looks O. Slobodskaya, the singer, worked directly with Medtner and together with it recorded a number of his vocal compositions. By studying the songs of the composer, she came to the conclusion that the comps they "seem so complete and self-sufficing that the vocal line, although beautiful and full of expression, though applied on top of the accompaniment, as if having come to mind after composing the vocal parts" [5]. These words must be treated critically, because it is not possible to assume that Nikolay Karlovich wrote the piano part out of the General concept of the song (i.e. did not take into account any literary basis, no vocal component) and was not a supporter of Stravinsky, who believed that the basis of musical creativity is the will, directed to an abstract. However, the word Slobodskoy can be interpreted as the transmission of sensations at first acquaintance with one or another vocal composition Medtner.

An important feature of composer-performing thinking Medtner is that almost all his performances as an accompanist were devoted to their own compositions, along with other outstanding Russian composers-pianists who were included in their programmes works by other authors. Medtner in this regard was the exception, and then, of course, not that he did not own purely pianistic skills, music theory knowledge, ability to grasp the meaning of music and to translate into sound". Another thing: promoting his vocal works, Nikolay Karlovich, probably, have not considered the important factor – the music is such difficult to understand even trained, professional musician, not to mention simple music [11].

Tatiana Makushina is a singer and close friend of the composer wrote: "...the accompaniment Medtner was a revelation to me. I had to collect all forces, in order to delve deeper into the composer's idea and to my interpretation of merged with his. These songs were, in fact, duets for voice and piano. As he played! How thin was his nuances as rich and diverse sound" [5]. Makushina also notes the particular lifestyle Nikolai Karlovich on stage: "Starting the program, we never looked at each other. Deep concentration Medtner, some isolation immediately electrified me" [5]. As we can see, in this stage, the situation has been concertmaster of the non-traditional, what characterizes it as a subtle musical psychologist, who knew how just before the performance to set up the singer, to help him find the necessary condition and mood. This, of course, is another distinctive and positive aspect of Medtner as a vocal ensemble.

In the memoirs of O. Slobodskaya contains the story of the other side of the work to Medtner on the performance of his vocal works during the rehearsal process. According to the singer, the main requirement of the composer were the imagery of performance and expressive poetic text.

Interesting is the appeal to the articles in various magazines and Newspapers where critics appreciate the songs of Medtner, especially the role of the piano part. Relevant in this regard is a review on the concert Medtner and Makushino held on 16 February 1928 in London, where the critic of the newspaper "The Daily Telegraph" writes: "the Accompaniment is not the word to define the piano part, played by the pianist in any of a variety of the songs sung last night. These songs are true duets, if you will, of the Sonata. For their properly you must have technique of the highest order" [5]. It is impossible not to pay attention to what the songs are called "sonatas". Despite the fact that with music-theoretical point of view, such a claim cannot withstand scrutiny, however, this masks quite definite impressions of the reviewer. First, the songs of Nikolai Karlovich carry no less serious element than the Sonata. Secondly, the development of musical material in the vocal compositions often has the features of Sonata allegro, as, for example, in "Arion" (see First section). Thirdly, in vocal performance, most of the songs the composer used instrumental beginning, there is intonational movement, which from the traditional point of view cannot be called *raspevny*, is a complex intonational moves, combined with a varied rhythmic pattern, "instrumental" approach to the choice of tessitura – all those factors that ultimately form the basis of the vocal - technical inconveniences.

Choosing soloists for copyright concertos, Medtner performed a thorough analysis of their previous concerts and went on stage only with those of them who, according to his ideas, to fully understand and apply all copyright requirements [12].

A known case connected with the performance of "Nine Goethe songs" op.6. in German. Nikolai Karlovich expected the performance of O. bremsen on the second of November, 1904, in the Small hall of the Russian Noble Assembly. However, this vocal cycle on the specified date is not sound (he was filled with almost three years later), as the singing soloist did not satisfy the composer. The reason for this failure is probably the fact that the singer was not able to properly interpret the creative idea of the composer. The analysis of the musical material of this cycle reveals a number of characteristic features: restraint melodic vocals and a wide range of colorful and varied means of expression (in particular, harmonic and melodic) in the piano part. In particular, in "Song from "Claudins" and "Erwin and Elmira", recitative-declamatory phrases in the vocal lines that do not go through to the final from low tessitura, combined with oratorical pathetic cries piano accompaniment. Such artistic material requires the highest skill of the accompanist and a deep understanding of the vocalist, and for this last you must have not only great vocal skills but also artistic talent. Obviously, O. Bremzen, according to composer and accompanist, was unable to solve similar artistic task.

There was great importance deemed from Nikolay Karlovich to the preparation of concert programs. It was not only about what works will be executed and in what order, but also to the technical possibilities of the voice, of the vocal "easy" features of the perception by listeners of a work, the acoustic features of the hall, musical tastes of the public present, the order of the keys and other factors. It is characteristic that most programs composer-performer was with the mandatory inclusion of songs written in German poetic texts, thus emphasizing their historical and cultural bonds with Germany. In our day the works. Medtner is becoming increasingly popular – especially in Russia and Germany. Created international Russian-German ensembles and interpreting the artistic heritage of the wizard. All this points to deep fundamental commitment to Medtner various historical and cultural traditions, both German and Russian.

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