

A Brief Analysis of Prokofiev's Three Later Piano Sonatas

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Abstract. Sergey Sergeyevich Prokofiev (April 23, 1891 - March 5, 1953) was a famous conductor, composer and pianist of the former Soviet Union. His works cover a wide range of genres and forms in the direction of music and art, totaling more than 100 works. Among them, Sonata is the theme that Prokofiev loved to create all his life. The sixth, seventh and eighth Piano Sonatas created in his later period have great momentum. They are also called "Sonata of War", and are his most representative works. From the background of Prokofiev's times, this paper analyses and summarizes the structure of the three piano sonatas, the characteristics of their later creation and the grasp of their styles.

Keywords: Prokofiev; Piano Sonatas No. 6, 7 and 8; Form Analysis; Creative Style.

1. Creative Background

At the beginning of the twentieth century, two world wars and economic crises broke out in turn, which not only promoted the rapid development of science and technology, the emergence of a large number of literary and artistic works, but also caused people to become restless and social contradictions began to deepen. The music mood expressed by composers in this period is no longer a peaceful and peaceful scene of life, but full of sad and painful melancholy emotions. From then on, the style of music is different, schools are diverse, genres are diverse, and entered the era of flowers blooming and flowers contending.

After the 1930s, the Soviet government adjusted its cultural policy and began to pay attention to the cultivation of patriotism and the social function of culture and art, i.e. the "socialist realism" route. Following this route, musicians created many excellent music works. At this time, in a foreign country, Prokofiev felt deeply that he lost the source of artistic creation when he left his motherland, and finally decided to return to the Soviet Union. After 1939, Prokofiev began to compose Piano Sonatas No. 6, No. 7 and No. 8 during his summer vacation. Because of the outbreak of World War II, Hitler's army trampled ruthlessly on Soviet territory. Prokofiev's patriotic revolutionary mood was prompted by the war, which strengthened his determination to compose these three "Sonatas of War".

2. Analysis of Curve Form

2.1 Piano Sonata No.6

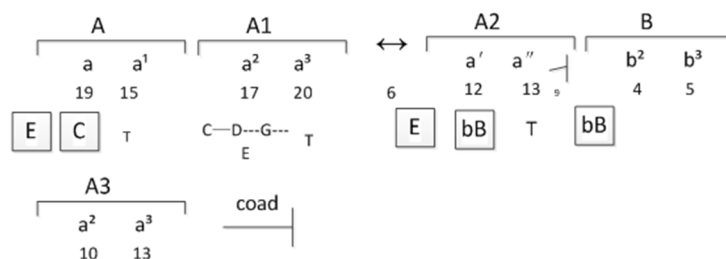
The creation of this work was completed in the spring of 1940, when Richter first performed the work in public in November of that year. This Sonata is a complex and diverse performance skills and techniques, sometimes brutal and fearless, with a whirlwind-like devil temperament, and sometimes music emotional expression delicate, rich in traditional Russian tunes. The whole song consists of four movements:

The first movement, Allegro Moderato's Allegro Moderato's Allegro Moderato, Sonata Form

The presentation part is the structure of the main link and the secondary link. The middle part can be regarded as a single trilogy with an interpolation. The reproduction part is a change reproduction, a tonal regression and a complete termination. The theme of the main part adopts March music, which is composed of two or three discordant tones. The sharp harmony constitutes a mechanical rhythm, leaving the audience a rough, violent and inhumane scene of enemy invasion. The subtitle theme, the melody of natural mode, has no colors or harmony, and a melancholy, eccentric and spiritual state, demonstrates the depression of Prokofiev's Lyric music. This is the case. The two themes melt into each other and dissipate in the complex development department. The music of the development

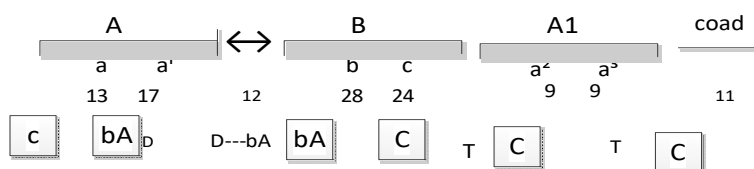
department uses scraping and percussion playing methods to show the characteristics of viciousness and violence. The theme of the main part appears in the reappearance department in the form of change, while the anger appears again at the end, and the horrible violence encompasses the whole movement.

Second movement Allegretto Allegretto Allegretto Allegretto Allegretto Allegretto Allegretto
Allegretto Allegretto Allegretto Allegretto Allegretto Allegretto Allegretto Allegretto All



The above example is the material of two different emotions on the theme of Variant A. Elegant semi-dance music, starting with light jumping tones, with distinctive harmony color, the temperament of banter, continuous Quartet rhythm, rigid and unnatural, reflects people's pursuit of happiness in misery.

The third movement, Tempo di Valzer lentissimo Adagio, single Trilogy



The Lyric melody is novel and unfolds slowly with a trace of melancholy. The harmony is bright, full, imaginative and dramatic. It seems that the war has been forgotten and the dawn of hope is rising in the heart.

Fourth Movement, Vivace Allegro, Rondo Sonata Form

Several themes show a lively, playful and humorous atmosphere, using Tokata-style material, the music constantly changes the image. But in the final reproduction department, a dramatic turning point suddenly appeared. The theme of joy was destroyed by the continuous percussion of the bass. The harmony became sharper and sharper. The music of the first movement reappeared, accompanied by rapid sliding, and the neurotic dramatic features once again entered the music, reminding people of the cruelty of war. This movement transcended many emotions and had a strong sense. Realism.

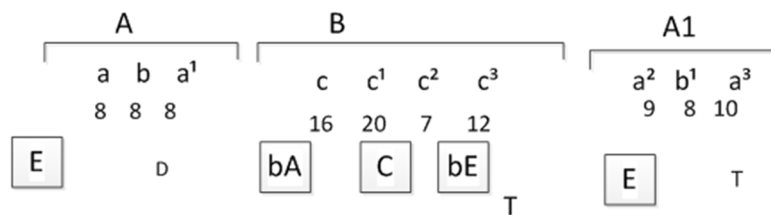
2.2 Piano Sonata No. 7

The theme of this work was also formed in 1939, but it was completed in 1942. Similar to Sonata No. 6, it is shrouded in darkness and uncertainty, showing the cruel scene after the outbreak of war, praising the courage and fearlessness of the Soviet people in their struggle against fascism and always believing that the Soviet Union will win. On January 18, 1943, C. Richtel performed the Sonata for the first time in Moscow. In March of the same year, Sonata No. 7 won the second prize of Stalin Prize. The whole song is divided into three movements:

The first movement, Allegro inquieto Allegro Allegro, restless, sonata form

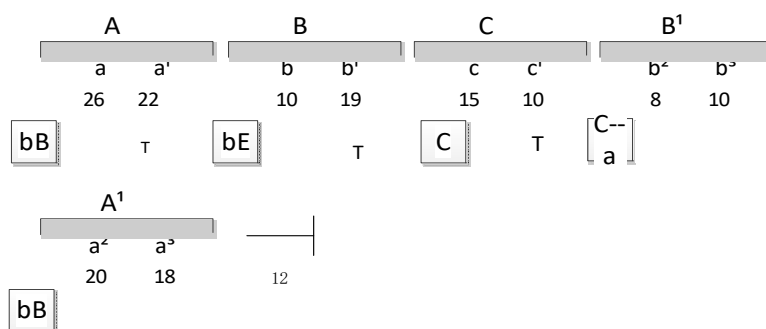
The theme of the main part bursts out like a tornado with a series of monotones. This melodic type is frightening, followed by discordant chords, strong and mechanical continuous beating in the high and low voice areas, showing the cruelty of the enemy and the ruthlessness of the war. After that, the music gradually subsides, and the subtopic theme of melodic beauty and Lyric slowly plays out. With the continuous development of music, it goes back and forth. The wild and violent atmosphere before that heralds the coming of a new war.

The second movement, *Andante Caloroso Andante*, is enthusiastic, intense, trilogy.



The middle part is a new material with four variations. At the beginning, the theme is filled with warm Lyric melody, clear tone and distinct harmony color. Prokofiev shows his young romantic atmosphere in this movement; the subtopic theme appears in a low voice with a concise image, then the complex tone type enters and makes it constantly deformed, the mood becomes more anxious and uneasy, and finally the lyric theme resounds again. This is the most quiet and peaceful movement in the Sonata and the embodiment of people's pursuit of happy life.

The third movement, Precipitato's swift, arched monotriloogy



A, B and C can all become independent segments, but they are interacted with each other, so there is no strong sense of independence in putting the three segments together. It reproduces B and A segments, because the whole piece is centered on C segments and A and B segments are developed around each other, which belongs to a single trilogy of variants. In order to show the audience a magnificent picture of the army, the whole song always uses 7/8 beats of this dynamic Tokata, stringent rhythm, mechanical impact, sharp discord, which implies the fearless and indomitable spirit of the Soviet people in order to seize the war.

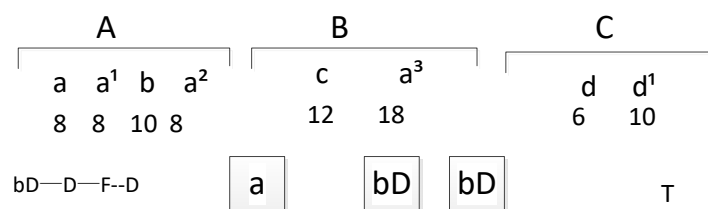
2.3 Piano Sonata No. 8

It was completed in early September 1944 and performed successfully in the Hall of Conservatory of Music on December 30. This is one of the most comprehensive works of Prokofiev's piano skills. It has many similarities with the first two sonatas. They are deeper in connotation, more dramatic, more stimulating in sound effect and more expressionist. But this work is longer in length, and its tender Lyric quality and symphonic sound are more attractive. The whole song is divided into three movements:

The first movement, Andante dolce's gentle andante, sonata form

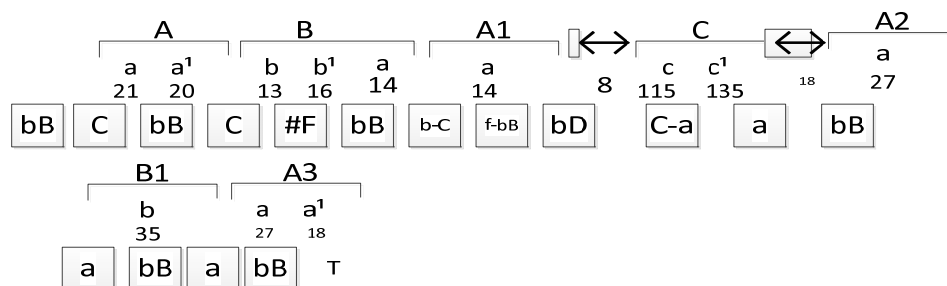
Unlike the sixth and seventh sonatas, which are manic and nervous at the beginning, the theme of the main part is composed of big trilogy, the melody is smooth and smooth. After a period of tranquility, the sixteenth note appears in the transitional sentence. This transitional material increases the tension of the music until the emergence of the subtopic theme and the subtopic with nine degrees. Sound sounds in the bass area. This theme is an innovation in Prokofiev's music. It originates from a kind of worship for Scriabin. The first theme of Reproduction Department reappears again. The change of right-hand melody color effectively changes the mood of music, but it is not the main theme of development. The author uses the second theme instead of solemnity, heaviness and tranquility. The power and impact of Force push the music to a climax, which follows the author's previous creative techniques and bursts out powerful energy at the end.

The second movement, Andante Sognando's dreamy andante, single Trilogy



This is a comparatively traditional Lyric dance rhythm sketch of 3/4 beats, the content is similar to the lyric movement in the sixth and seventh sonatas.

The third movement, Vivace Allegro, Rondo Form



The theme uses the Tokata-style writing technique, passing by the triple-tone rapid running, rich color changes, strong and sharp persistent sound, repeating the same rhythm constantly, like the heavy footsteps of a brave army, which is full of a strong force, determination and the spirit of the enemy to fight to the end. Under the background of a series of continuous tones, the subtopic theme appears as a painful crying tone. The scene of the war became clearer and clearer, then farther and farther, gradually blurred until it disappeared; the theme of the reproduction Department reappeared again, and the melody became faster and smoother, which, like the seventh sonata, implied that people were about to step out of the war and full of good expectations for life.

3. Summary

Prokofiev not only inherits and develops the sonata structure of Vienna classical music school, but also combines with modern composing techniques. He integrates the discordant harmony effect, the tokata rhythm and the key-touching method, which shows his distinctive melody, individual harmony language and rich and colorful tonality. Especially his exploration of piano playing skills, from the speed, time, strength and position of finger touching keys to the strength transmitted by wrists and arms as support points, all of these require effective and systematic training to meet the technical requirements of the works. The three creative lines of lyricism, tokata and banter are independent and interdependent, thus forming a unique musical style.

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