

Genre of Étude in the Piano Art: Genesis, Main Tendencies of Evolution

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ABSTRACT: The paper is devoted to the consideration of the piano étude genre in its origins and subsequent evolution. The features of the phenomenon of “étude” in art as a whole have been revealed, the varieties of études in music have been classified with regard to specific instrumental styles – piano, violin, and the like. The specific features of the piano étude, which has gone the way of evolution from technical exercises to a full-fledged piece of art with conceptual content, have been highlighted. The historiography of the étude genre in piano music has been provided; stylistic emphases in the étude technique of various schools and individual composers have been determined. The close link between the étude genre and performance has been pointed out; the importance of the étude collections of the outstanding masters of the past and the present – from D. Scarlatti and C. Czerny to the masters of the Contemporary history – has been emphasized. Particular attention has been paid to the étude technique, which, while maintaining continuity, was modified depending on the author's and performing styles. The author reveals the characteristic features of the development of the étude genre in the piano music of the 20th century, which is distinguished by a flexible balance of tradition and innovation.

Key words: étude, étude in music, piano étude, evolution of the piano étude, the relationship between artistic and technical principles in piano études by different authors.

I. INTRODUCTION

The relevance of the research topic is due to a number of reasons. Among them, firstly, the demand for the genre of étude in the piano art; secondly, the variety of stylistic manifestations of this genre, which covers the range from technical exercises to detailed concerto opuses with conceptual content. Thirdly, the relevance of this paper is associated with the insufficient number of works where the problem of the étude genre in the piano art would be covered at the systemic and complex level.

The piano étude is a special artistic and technical phenomenon. The process of its emergence was closely related to the development of performing within the baroque *musicapoetika* – a poetic music represented by a virtuoso musician. Professional specialization required the creation of appropriate techniques and schools of play, which would have a double meaning and would be considered both “exercises” (D. Scarlatti called his sonatas exercises) and as artistic miniatures. Tracing the history of the piano (more broadly – piano score) étude, one can notice its close connection with the development of the piano culture itself, which was gradually freed from applied accompanying functions and reached the level of virtuoso soloing. The essence of the piano études is revealed through the textured-harmonious formulas on which they are based. In technical études, as a rule, some of them develop, and in artistic études, there is a whole complex of similar formulas, including not only typical, but also individual author's ones. Therefore, the study of piano études in their origins and evolution is an important task of modern piano theory and methodology, which is reflected in this paper. The purpose of the paper is to reveal the specifics of the piano étude genre, taking into account the stable and mobile genre features. The concept of “étude” has a fairly wide range of meanings. Etymologically, this word comes from Fr. *Étude*, *étude*, literally – “work”, “exercise”, “study”. As for the étude in its musical sense, it means “an instrument theatrical piece, usually of a small volume, based on the frequent use of some complex technique of performance and intended to improve the performer's technique” [13]. If we turn to dictionaries and other explanatory publications, we can find a fairly large number of applications of the concept of “étude” in various fields of human activity. As the researchers, in particular, I. Portnaya note, there are known “mathematical études, études on algorithmization, chess études; scientific and popular scientific works are created in the genre

of “études”: études of the Universe, theological études, ... medical études, literary études, ... poetic études, ... photo études, architectural études, ... theatrical études.” [6] It is important to note that, according to the researcher, in modern society, where all kinds of psychological trainings are gaining wide popularity, this genre “finds its life as a part of role-playing games in the training scenario, in fact is a kind of theatrical étude” (ibid.). The musical étude has the greatest commonality with the étude in painting, where it is, as a rule, a part of a larger work and it is the equivalent of a study, a sketch. In another sense, a pictorial étude acts as an autonomous genre, performed mainly from nature (landscape painting, still life, portrait, etc.). In this (last) sense, one can also understand an étude in music, which is created to work out a certain technique of playing in its connection with the artistic prototype.

II. EVOLUTION OF THE PIANO ÉTUDE GENRE

Instrumental étude, in particular piano score, became relevant around the beginning of the 18th century, when a whole galaxy of outstanding personalities—composers and performers, most often composers-performers in one person, who were also mentors of young people in their profession—appeared. It was then that two groups of works appeared, the first of which was specially didactic for its intended purpose, but it was artistic pieces based on a certain type of technique (samples are Bach's small preludes and inventions). The samples of the second group were special instructional works, in which the artistic side was auxiliary, secondary in nature and certain technical features and difficulties came to the fore.

These are, in particular: playing scales in various combinations; execution of metrical rhythmic figures of a certain pattern (syncopation, triplets, etc.); movement along the chromatic scale with the correct selection of fingering solutions; performing jumps of different ranges; technique of playing in parallel octaves, thirds, sixths; performing rotational movement techniques—tremolo, trills, martellato; repetitive sound rehearsals; decoding and execution of agreements, and the like.

On the example of the études of both these groups, one can judge the peculiarities of the piano score play technique, which has evolved along with the étude genre. So, J.S. Bach, as you know, first brought the first fingers of both hands of the pianist to the fingerboard, began to actively use the fifth fingers. These innovations became the norm later for the technique of piano playing and especially for their mastering. J.S. Bach wrote “15 two-voice and 15 three-voice inventions”. In a more general and already directly artistic manifestation, the “étude” innovations of J.S. Bach were embodied in his piano score suites, in particular in the duplicates of their parts [14; 11].

Bach's technical innovations are clearly presented in his collection of two- and three-voice inventions (which he called symphonies). Concerning their appointment, the Maestro himself wrote in the preface to this collection, offering these recommendations, “in which clavier lovers, and especially those who strive for learning, are offered a clear way of how to learn to play in two voices, but also in the future correctly and it is beautiful to use three obligate voices, while not only getting acquainted with good inventions, but also developing them decently; and mainly to achieve a singing manner of playing and, at the same time, to get the strongest inclination to creativity” [1].

The sonatas by D. Scarlatti should also be considered as complex samples of études for the clavier. In fact, these were miniature plays, in which the artistic side was mainly subordinated to the technical one. The author himself called such works exercises (*It. esercizio, exercise*), meaning their significance for educational purposes, moreover, not only technical, but also artistic ones (D. Scarlatti has about 500 such works in total). Developing the genre of artistic and technical études, D. Scarlatti simultaneously solved the problems of a new playing technique – the piano score one, in particular, these are rehearsals in the form of a quick repetition of the same sound while positionally staying on a certain key with alternating fingering changes; the use of a glissando presented as an ascending (less often – descending) sliding on the fingerboard with the back of the hand with fixed points of the beginning and end of the passage; the crossing of the pianist's hands in those cases when the inertia of the melodic movement of the texture voices requires it; *acciaccatura* (*It. Acciaccatura* – literally “dent”, short grace notes, which are performed simultaneously with the chord). The introduction of innovations by D. Scarlatti became typical in the technique of positional playing of 19th century pianists, as evidenced by the corresponding musical literature, for example, the piano works of J. Haydn and J.N. Hummel. The occurrence of the genre name “étude” has historically been associated with the differentiation of the concepts of “étude” and “exercise”. Noting this fact, I. Portnaya [5] refers to the work of N. Terentyeva [9] devoted to foreign instructive études and exercises for the first half of the 19th century for the piano, which contains a classification of varieties of this genre with division into three groups of pieces: 1) instructive; 2) typical; 3) concert and artistic ones.

It should be noted that the traditional division of piano études into instructive and artistic ones is rather arbitrary. As practice shows, instructive samples of études for various types of technique, in which textured-harmonious formulas characteristic of the piano writing of that time were worked out, were largely modified in the second half of the 19th century. So, composers-pianists – “virtuosos who create” [4], firstly, combined well-

known playing techniques, and secondly, they introduced their original ones, which needed additional learning. Reminiscences of baroque genres – perpetuum mobile, toccata, fantasies, which historically preceded the étude genre itself in both its forms – technical and artistic ones, also become relevant in the works of the piano masters of the romantic era.

The piano performing “boom” characteristic of the virtuoso brilliant style, which was cultivated in Europe at the turn of the 18th–19th centuries, has contributed to the formation of national étude piano schools, among which the London (M. Clementi, J. Kramer), Viennese (J. Hummel, C. Czerny), and then French (A. Bertini, H. Lemoine, C. Saint-Saëns, C. Debussy). S. Hryhorenko [2] also refers F. Kalkbrenner and A. Hertz – German musicians who lived and worked in France, where they created collections of piano studies, which are still used in educational practice – to the French school. Then the admiration for the étude technique quickly spread to other countries and schools, in particular, Sweden (G. Behrens), Denmark (L. Schitte), Germany (K. Kunz, C. Gurlitt).

However, C. Czerny, whose work is a whole encyclopedia of piano étude samples, has made a significant contribution to the development of the piano étude genre. He wrote more than 1,000 études divided into thematic collections of various functional purposes, including: *100 Petite Études, Op. 139*; *40 Uebungstucke-fur Anfanger, Op. 481*; *Erster Lehrmeister, Op. 399*. Further, the composer differentiates in even more detail the technical tasks of his études, some of which he created on the basis of texture-harmonic formulas presented in the piano works of L. van Beethoven. These are, in particular, études of increased complexity, presented in collections (*School of Staccato and Legato, Op. 335*, *40 Daily Études, Op. 337*, *School of Ornaments, Agreements, Grace-notes, Mordents, and Trills, Op. 335*, *School of Virtuosity, Op. 365*, *School for the First Hand, Op. 399*, *Daily Finger Exercises, Op. 802*, *The Highest Degree of Virtuosity, Op. 834*, *School of Finger Beating, Op. 299, Op. 740*).

The culmination of the formation of the genre of piano étude are the works of F. Chopin and F. Liszt. In the history of piano art, these epoch-making patterns have been reflected in great detail. In particular, the difference in the approaches of both masters to the most étude genre is noted. If F. Chopin, whose work was deliberately limited to works for piano, continued the line of improving the technique of playing the pianist at a new high artistic level (his études are based on a certain kind of technique), F. Liszt, as an apologist of program music, expands the semantic field of the genre of étude, and with it the technical means of embodying the author's idea (different types of techniques presented in the same work). Most of his études have program names. F. Liszt wrote several cycles of études of the highest level of pianistic skill. These are: a cycle of 12 études (1826, 1938 (2nd ed.), 3rd ed. – *Transcendental Études (Études D'execution Transcendante, 1852)*; *Great Études by Paganini*, including *No. 3, Campanella (La Campanella)*; and *No. 5, Hunting (La Chasse, edition of 1851)*; *Three Concert Études (1848)*.

As already mentioned, the division of études by F. Chopin and F. Liszt into technical and artistic is quite conditional and even outdated. It would be better to talk about the relationship between programmability (F. Liszt) and non-programmability (F. Chopin) in the genre of piano étude, which ultimately determines both the artistic and technological parameters of each of their études. Moreover, one should take into account the factor of the genre, which is realized primarily through the texture and determines the features of the content of the étude as a concert work.

For F. Chopin as a “multi-genre composer” [10], the piano étude was a virtuoso concert piece in which a certain type of technique could be demonstrated, which ultimately had a genetic connection to a specific musical genre—toccata, nocturne, tarantella, fantasy, impromptu, and so on. Sometimes, the contrast of genres penetrates into the same étude work, which causes the composer to use a three-part construction with a contrasting middle, as well as a dynamic reprise, which is for Chopin's études the most significant in terms of form. In total, F. Chopin wrote 27 études, two cycles of 12 études of which are marked as *Op. 10* and *Op. 25*. To this are added three more sketches, which are not included in the opus collections. To this should be added three more études that were not included in the opus collections. The central task of his études F. Chopin considered the improvement of piano technique of performers who were already quite familiar with its basics, in particular, with the études of M. Clementi, whom the Polish composer considered to be one of the founders of the piano étude genre in its didactic purpose.

In his études, F. Chopin actually creates a new kind of piano étude – a concert piece of virtuoso type where through the technical side we can follow a certain figurative content. F. Chopin's études do not contain a literary program as such; the only étude among them – *No. 12 Op. 10, c-moll* was fixed in an easy state of mind of F. Liszt under the name *Revolutionary*. But hidden programs identified at the genre and stylistic level researchers find in other études. Thus, in one of the Internet digests [12], the following characteristics of the technique and content of F. Chopin's études are given: No. 1—flexibility and stretching of the right hand with the smooth movement of the melody (“waterfall”); No. 2 – improvement of the technique of the right hand, the displacement of the fingers (“chromatic étude for three hands”); No. 3 – performance of an expressive cantilena

melody in combination with a moving ornamental accompaniment (“sadness”); No. 4 – improvement of the technique of both hands, velocity, uniform development and independence of fingers (“flow”), etc.

The traditions of Chopin's and Liszt's études, as well as the synthetic forms of their embodiment, have been continued in the piano literature of the Contemporary history. The interpretation of this genre in the piano heritage of S. Rachmaninoff and C. Debussy should be singled out here. S. Rachmaninoff wrote two opuses of études, which he marked as études-paintings: *Op. 33* (8 études, 1911) and *Op. 39* (9 études, 1917). These works, according to K. Miroshnichenko [5], combine “étudeness” and “picturesqueness”. In this case, the latter has, in addition to external intonation, a hidden figurative and psychological meaning, which allows us to characterize the Rachmaninoff's type of piano étude as a program-fantasy one. Each of the études was conceived by the composer in a certain figurative embodiment, which allows giving them program characteristics, such as: *No. 1, Op. 33, f-moll* – a scene of a mass march based on a strict measured melody, which is accompanied by lamentations, then gloomy bells; *No. 2 C-dur* of the same Opus is a sound landscape under a rain curtain, against the background of which song phrases sound, turning into unanswered questions. The examples from the études of *Op. 39* include: *No. 2 a-moll*, entitled *Sea and Seagulls* and it is an echo of the *Island of the Dead* poem – “like a dead calm over a sea of sorrow”, where the figurative statement is permeated with intonations of *Dies irae*; *No. 4 h-moll* is a kind of lyrical scherzo inspired by images of the path with imitations of the sound of a bell [8]. The connection of S. Rachmaninoff's études-paintings with Chopin's piano style, which is evident in the étude *No. 8, Op. 33, g-moll*, where the final episode in the reprise is an almost accurate quote from the final phrase of F. Chopin's *First Ballad g-moll*.

Works in this genre by C. Debussy became an important stylistic stage in the development of the piano étude. It is characteristic that C. Debussy thought for a long time about which of the authors of the past to dedicate his *12 Études* – to F. Couperin or to F. Chopin, but finally settled on the candidacy of the latter. In terms of genre and style, this meant a symbiosis of artistic imagery with technical tasks aimed at its expression. As noted in the work of I. Portnaya [7], the cycle of études was built by the composer either on the principle of contrast (like F. Couperin) or on the textural principle (as in F. Chopin); at the same time, in contrast to the études of F. Chopin, C. Debussy does not adhere to textural unity in each individual étude [7]. Textured programs (3) of C. Debussy's études, which are sometimes called “marine”, are based on a combination of different composition and construction of components, which suggests their hidden program content.

C. Debussy divided his 12 études into two notebooks: six études in each. The first of them included études on a certain type of technique, which is reflected in their names: No. 1 – (five fingers, “after Monsieur Czerny”); No. 2 – (thirds); No. 3 – (fourths); No. 4 – (sixths); No. 5 – (octaves); No. 6 – (eight fingers). The études of this notebook are written at a fairly fast pace, which is how they differ from the slower études of the second notebook, where the main task of the composer was to hone the technique of sound, in particular sonorous effects [7]. The second notebook consists of the following numbers: No. 7 – 9 (chromatic degrees); No. 8 – (ornaments); No. 9 – repeated notes; No. 10 – (opposing sonorities); No. 11 – (composite arpeggio); No. 12 – (chords). C. Debussy's études belong to the highest level of piano skill; only some of them can be used in the educational repertoire, for example, No. 1 from the first notebook. And others require detailed development of fingering in complex textured constructions, without which the full performance of these works is impossible. It is noteworthy that C. Debussy himself in the afterword to the Durand's edition of his études specifically points to this point, leaving the choice of fingering to our highly professional virtuoso pianists.

The genre of étude for piano in a special way, taking into account traditions and national specifics, was reproduced in Ukrainian music. Here it will be expedient to briefly describe the études of V. Kosenko – a composer who was one of the first in Ukraine to represent neoclassicism in its reproduction due to national-linguistic specifics. He wrote a suite-collection of études in the form of ancient dances (1928-29), which includes 11 numbers, 4 of which (allemande, courante, sarabande, gigue) are required for the baroque model of the dance suite, and the rest (both gavottes, bourrée, rigaudon, passacaglia) are additional ones. The cycle is crowned by two contrasting numbers passacaglia and gigue, which summarize the multifaceted system of images reproduced by the composer, illustrate their deep meaning—intense thinking (passacaglia) and play motility (gigue). In terms of pianism, Kosenko's études demonstrate rather typical pianistic forms “corrected” to national origins (for example, the use of a double organ point on tonic and dominant in a number of plays, in particular in the developmental section of the final Gigue from Ukrainian folk ensembles such as “Triple music”). Certain difficulties arise before the pianist and in the reproduction of polyphony, which in Kosenko's études covers sub-voice, imitation, and contrast varieties.

III. CONCLUSIONS

The genre of piano étude has a long history, dating back to the Baroque era, when the first artistic and instructive works began to appear, intended for “études” of musicians (for example, sonatas-miniatures by D. Scarlatti, which the author himself called exercises). In the Baroque era, the piano score étude was thought of as a didactic material, in which, however, there was always an artistic idea (samples – two-voice “inventions” and

three-voice “symphonies” by J.S. Bach). The heyday of the piano étude genre dates back to the era between Classicism and Romanticism, when étude opuses by M. Clementi, C. Czerny, and other pianist composers began to appear in large numbers. Further metamorphoses of the étude genre are connected with its fundamentally new interpretation by F. Chopin and F. Liszt. Due to their work, the piano étude became a conceptual work of art and took its rightful place in the system of concert genres, along with the piano concerto and solo sonata.

The traditional division of piano score études into two groups – instructive and artistic – is quite conditional, because the basis of each textural-harmonic pianistic formula, which develops in the étude of the first group, is the artistic genesis. In the music of the Contemporary history, piano études have retained their artistic and didactic purpose, but they have been significantly modified in terms of texture and intonation. An example of this is the cycle of 12 études by C. Debussy, the content of which is revealed not only through the author's designation of the technical task, but also through hidden programs. Similar tendencies are presented in études-paintings by S. Rachmaninoff based on the comparison of contrasting musical images and the corresponding play formulas.

Traditions of the piano score étude are reproduced on the national soil by Ukrainian masters, as exemplified by *Études as Ancient Dances* by V. Kosenko, in which the model of the baroque dance suite is significantly updated due to the peculiarities of Ukrainian melody, folk melodic origins, and typical features of folk instrumental ensembles, reproduced through the piano texture. Thus, the piano étude is a stable-mobile genre, which combines artistic and instructive tasks, thereby contributing to its relevance in world pianism, individual national schools and the work of pianist composers.

Prospects for further research of the topic stated in this paper are the possibility of using its provisions and conclusions when considering specific samples of études from different national piano schools, where the traditions of the étude genre find their intonation-style modified interpretation.

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