The Value Of The Uzbek Piano School In The Development Of The World Piano Music Performing Culture

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Introduction

School, as a multilevel system of experience transfer, always includes an educational process that continues and creates new pedagogical traditions. The musical performing school is a phenomenon that belongs to the highest achievements of artistic culture and testifies to the level of development of professional music education, its «top level». However, in the current practice of scientific research, attention paid to studying the experience of pedagogy of musical performing arts is not enough. As a result, such a unique phenomenon as the Uzbek piano school, which gives the country and the world brilliant pedagogical results, turns out to be aloof from the pedagogy of special music education and general pedagogy [1].

Music performance pedagogy is training and education aimed at developing competencies in the field of musical performance. National music education is based on a solid theoretical base, available research, providing a scientific and pedagogical foundation for setting and solving problems. The pedagogical activity of musicians-performers is carried out in the conditions of musical educational institutions of culture and art: the Conservatory, the Institute of Arts and Culture, music lyceums and colleges.

Materials

In the 30s of the twentieth century, the question of training qualified musicians and professionals in the field of music arose especially acutely. So, in 1936, the Tashkent Conservatory was organized, the first higher musical educational institution in Central Asia. Representatives from Moscow and Leningrad had a huge influence on the development and formation of not only the Uzbek piano school, but also the musical art of Uzbekistan as a whole. Among them, for example, are Avraham Moiseevich Litvinov and Lia Borisovna Schwartz.

A special place in the performing and pedagogical art of Uzbekistan belongs to Rudolf Kerer, a graduate of the Tashkent Conservatory, who was the...
first to win the First Prize in 1961 at the All-Union Competition of Music Performers in Moscow. The 38-year-old musician, whose participation in the prestigious competition required a special permission (the age limit for the contestants was limited, according to the rules, to 32 years), has become the focus of the world's attention with his sensational success. «In just a few days, Rudolf Kehrer became very popular. His first concerts in Moscow were sold out, in an atmosphere of joyful success. Kehrer's speeches were broadcast on radio and television. The press responded very sympathetically to his debuts. He became the subject of heated discussions among both professionals and amateurs, who managed to rank him among the largest soviet pianists...» [2, p. 6].

Looking back at the path traversed by the piano art, it is worth noting that it has risen over the years of independence to a qualitatively new professional level [3, p.5]. In the pedagogical field of piano performance, the Honored Worker of Arts of Uzbekistan and Karakalpakstan, Professor of the Department of Special Piano of the State Conservatory of Uzbekistan Ofelia Yusupova fruitfully works. Positive life activity allowed Ofelia Yunusovna to constantly grow and improve in her work, to subsequently take an important role in public life and to constantly generate and implement new ideas and projects [4, p.30]. As a graduate of the ten-year school named after V.A.Uspensky at the Tashkent State Conservatory (now the RSMAL named after V.A.Uspensky) in the class of the special piano of Professor Avraam Moiseevich Litvinov, and then of the Tashkent Conservatory in the class of associate professor Natalia Borisovna Retsker, Ofelia Yunusovna actively participated in various concerts, performing with great success in Uzbekistan and abroad. She is the first Uzbek pianist who promoted the piano art of our country on the prestigious concert stages of the world.

The geography of Ophelia Yusupova's touring performances is very extensive. And everywhere she was met with a warm welcome and words of
gratitude for her skill. The pianist pays a lot of creative attention to the music of Uzbek composers. And this is natural, because Uzbek composers entrust her with the premieres of their piano opuses, as a rule, with a dedication to their first performer. Along with the Uzbek piano repertoire, Western European and Russian music of both past and present times occupies an important place in Ofelia Yunusovna's concert programs. More than fifty specialists (bachelors, masters, trainee assistants) graduated from her class, many of whom are known far beyond the borders of the republic, among them are winners of republican and international competitions. Having inherited the best traditions of advanced piano schools, possessing a wonderful teacher's gift, Ofelia Yunusovna subtly understands the soul of her pupil and skillfully transfers her knowledge. The main goal of her pedagogy is to cultivate a highly cultured performer, who can carefully and accurately feel the author's idea and, thanks to constructive calculation and intellectual-artistic analysis, penetrate into the essence of the poetic concept of the performed works [5, p.45-46].

In 1973, Ofelia Yunusovna was appointed head of the department of special piano, where she managed to create a creative atmosphere, rallying teachers into a friendly union of like-minded people. But the talent of the pianist was manifested not only in this: in 1987 the collective unanimously elected her the rector of the conservatory. A decade of leading this music university was an important stage not only in the life of Yusupova, but also in the history of the first higher musical institution in Central Asia. Being a flexible diplomat by nature, she made important decisions competently and in a businesslike manner, and her performance was surprising. There is no coincidence that the leadership of The Almaty Conservatory approved her as its Honorary Professor, and the International California Academy of Science, Education, Art – as its Full Member.

Speaking about the continuity of the pedagogical principles of Ofelia Yusupova and their development, the name of the Honored Artist of Uzbekistan,
laureate of international competitions, vice-rector of the State Conservatory of Uzbekistan for research and innovation, professor of the special piano department Sayyora Gafurova should be mentioned. As a public figure, proactive propagandist of musical art, she performs large solo concerts with great success [6, p.13]. Among the significant teachers of the conservatory, the professors of the department of special piano Marat Gumarov and Nargiz Polatkhanoova also stand out.

The contribution of pianist teachers of the RSMAL named after V. Uspensky, who is celebrating his 80th birthday this year, is invaluable. There are T. Popovich, L. Florentyeva, G. Ardashirova, E. Movsesyants and E. Gelbukh, L. Mukhitdinova, G. Umarova, A. Kim and many others. Honored teacher of Uzbekistan Tamara Popovich trained pianists who competently represent the Uzbek piano school abroad. Almost all of her students are laureates of republican and international competitions. They successfully tour, teach in music schools of Uzbekistan and other countries, and bring up a new generation of talented performers. There are professors of the State Conservatory of Uzbekistan Elmira Mirkassymova and Adiba Sharipova, professor of the Munich Conservatory Anna Malikova, winner of the highest award – the Grand Prix at the international competition «National Power» (London, 1994) Evgeny Mursky, laureate of the V. Spivakov International Charitable Foundation (2008) Tamilla Salimdzhanova, Ulugbek Palvanov, recognized as the brightest performer in Germany in 2009, as well as laureates of republican and international competitions Barno Khaknazarova, Behzod Abdullaev, Fazlitdin Khusanov, Behzod Abduraimov and many others [7]. The name of the unsurpassed Alexei Sultanov is at the top of the pedestal of Popovich's most significant students. In 1989, having won the prestigious Van Cliburn Competition in the USA, he received many concert invitations, accepted an offer to host 400 concerts in two years. Sultanov was called «the brightest representative of a special volcanic class of pianists», «the most colorful,
dazzlingly gifted pianist, interpreter of tremendous temperament and elemental strength».

Among the representatives of the world-famous Uzbek piano school is Eldar Nebolsin – the Grand Prix of the International Competition in Spain, the winner of the S. Richter’s First International Piano Competition (2005), about whom the outstanding Russian conductor, member of the jury, Yuri Temirkanov said after the competition: «He is a wonderful musician of the highest class and a very virtuoso pianist». Eldar performs on world-famous stages with the best orchestras in the world: the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Deutsche Symphony Orchestra of Berlin, the Vienna Chamber Orchestra, the Orchestra of Paris, the Spanish Radio and Television Orchestra, the Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra Russian Academic Symphony Orchestra of the St. D. Shostakovich and the Academic Symphony Orchestra of the Moscow Philharmonic together with such outstanding conductors as Riccardo Chailly, Yuri Temirkanov, Leonard Slatkin, Charles Dutoit, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Yakov Kreutzberg, Vasily Petrenko, Nikolai Alekseev, Vladimir Spivakov, Lawrence Foster, Mstislav Rostropovich, Bernhard Klee and other famous musicians.

Our compatriot Stanislav Ioudenitch (fig.1) is widely known in the modern musical world as the winner of the First Prize and the Gold Medal at the XI Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, where, in addition to the highest award (Gold Medal), he was awarded a three-year international concert engagement, as well as a contract for the recording of a solo competition program with the recording company «Harmonia Mundi». Subsequently, Ioudenitch won top honors in many pianist competitions, including those of Ferruccio Busoni, William Capella and Maria Callas. His concerts take place in the largest halls in Europe, Asia, America and Africa. The pianist is accompanied by such groups as the Washington National Symphony Orchestra,
the Russian National Philharmonic Orchestra, the Irish National Symphony Orchestra, the Istanbul Philharmonic, Cape Town and Munich.

In 2002 Stanislav Ioudenitch was invited to the International Piano Academy in Italy, becoming the youngest professor since its inception. Now he is professor at the Oberlin Conservatory, artistic director and professor at the International Center for Music at Par University (USA). Vice-president of the International Piano Academy Lake Como (Italy) Ioudenitch is one of the most respected professors, and young pianists from different countries dream of learning from him.

The most important distinguishing feature of Ioudenitch's piano pedagogy is sound mastery, meaningfulness of musical speech and the ability to embody sound-creating meaning; thanks to the exquisite mastery of sound production, his students are distinguished. «Music», said Bruno Walter, is a «conductor of individuality similarly», he drew an analogy, «as metal is a conductor of heat» [8, p. 71]. Playing the instrument requires from the performer a meaningful attitude to the content of the music, a complex fusion of rational and emotional principles, skill, where the ability to feel and convey the desired sound is valued more than the widespread ability to play loudly and quickly. An important
distinguishing feature of Ioudenitch's pedagogy is the desire to guide the student to work independently. As Alfred Corto pointed out, «to awaken behind the frozen notes of the text, you need to breathe your own life into these notes» [9, p.5]. Ioudenitch’s attitude towards students, outwardly restrained, is distinguished by human warmth, which serves as the basis for a special atmosphere of sincerity and joint creativity of the student and teacher.

This year, in connection with the 80th anniversary of the RSMAL named after V. Uspensky, Stanislav Ioudenitch developed a unique project with the participation of students of his class called WORLD CONCERTO TOUR, which includes complex concert programs. The concerts were held in the Great Hall of the State Conservatory of Uzbekistan together with the National Symphony Orchestra of Uzbekistan, which was a truly unforgettable event. A gala concert in the program «Children to Children» was held with no less success, at which pianists from Uzbekistan, Australia, Canada, China, Japan and Macau demonstrated the highest level of skill, the entire depth of penetration into the imaginative world of musical works of many great composers. The works of J.S.Bach, F. Schubert, F. Chopin, F. List, M. Balakirev, S. Prokofiev were performed – true pearls from the treasury of world piano music. They were brilliantly performed by Vlad Kosminov (Uzbekistan), Iskandar Mamadaliev (Uzbekistan), Athena Deng (Canada), Rio Xiang (Australia), Sihao Qin (China), Qi Qi (China), Tianju Liao (China), Antoinette Cheng (Macau), Kyoshiro Hirama (Japan).

All the concert programs impressed the audience with the virtuosity and perfection of the young pianists' playing. So, for example, Sergei Rachmaninoff's delightful Second Concerto performed by Sihao Qin (China) sounded flawlessly, in the best traditions of American spectacular performance. As one of the youngest performers in Ioudenitch's group of students, he graduated from the Central Conservatory of High Music School in Beijing, where he studied under Zhiwei Zhang and Kifang Li. Since 2017, the pianist
continued his studies at the Academy of Music for Young Performers in Kansas City, where he is currently studying with Stanislav Ioudenitch and William Grant Set. Despite his age, he has already entered several piano competitions and received awards, including First Prize at the Fourth Open Piano Competition in Shenzhen and Second Prize at the Los Angeles International Young Music Competition. Noting the excellent quality of sound science in Rachmaninoff's Second Concerto, the performance still cannot be called the standard of Rachmaninov's soulful singing. However, the audience, rewarded with the energetic power of the third movement of the concert, raged with delight. The grateful soloist was no less delighted with playing music together with the orchestra and bowed to the orchestra almost more often than to the audience. You believe him in everything he offers and his interpretation is honest, coming from within.

Rio Xiang (Australia) surprised the audience with the originality of the interpretation. The pianist was born in 1999 in Sydney and began playing the piano at the age of 8 and is currently studying with Stanislav Ioudenitch at the Music Conservatory, Oberlin. He also studied composition with Australian conductor and educator Richard Gill. In 2013, he won 1st place in the Hailong International Piano Competition at the 10th Shanghai International Music Festival, and in 2014 won five first prizes (including «Open Age», «Senior», «Young», «15 Years» and «Improvisation») at the 18th International Asia Piano Competition in Hong Kong. In 2018, Rio Xiang was awarded 1st place at the Arthur Dunn Piano Competition in the USA and 1st place at the 2018 Australian National Youth Classic Music Competition. He has also participated in the International Piano Masterclass in Xiamen, China, the Aspen Music Summer Festival in the USA, the Lake Como International Art Summer School in Italy, and the Piano Masterclasses in Cincinnati, USA. His performance of Rachmaninoff's Third Concerto was convincing and delicate, with interludes between dreams and passions of the twentieth century, with manifestations of
romantic sensuality. The pianist tried to convey the emotional side, the expressiveness of the music. The stage presence and absolute immersion in the work to such an extent that the orchestra and conductor had to submit to the artist and accept his terms was striking in his playing. The pianist in his performance confidently declared himself as an outstanding interpreter of Rachmaninoff’s music.

A strong impression was made by the speech of our compatriot Iskandar Mamadaliev (fig.2), in whose interpretation the Rhapsody on the theme of Paganini by Sergei Rachmaninoff sounded. Mamadaliev began studying piano at the age of five and gave his first concert with the Uzbekistan Symphony Orchestra when he was only seven years old. In 2014 Iskandar began to study with Stanislav Ioudenitch. At the age of 14, he won over ten international piano competitions. Rhapsody is a popular work which is difficult to amaze with an unusual interpretation. Mamadaliev’s performance impresses by its high simplicity, elegant sound, inner composure, noble sentimentality in lyrical variations and ascetic drama of interpretation in general.

Pic. 2. Iskandar Mamadaliev in the process of performing the Rhapsody on the Theme of Paganini by Sergei Rachmaninoff.
Vlad Kosminov (Uzbekistan, fig.3) amazed with his interpretation of the Sergey Prokofiev’s Third Concerto. As the winner of the Lynn Concert Competition in 2013, he made his US debut in October of the same year under the baton of Maestro Guillermo Figueroa, performing D. Shostakovich's First Concerto for Piano and Orchestra. Prior to his US debut, he was a laureate of several International and Republican competitions, including the Shabyt International Piano Competition (Grand Prix, Astana, Kazakhstan, 2009) and the Rubinstein International Piano Competition (Second Prize, Paris, France, 2004). In 2015, Vlad was one of the winners of the George Gershwin International Competition in Brooklyn (New York). He is currently pursuing an MA at Park University in Kansas City under Stanislav Ioudenitch. The performance of Prokofiev's Third Concerto conquered the audience with an organic combination of creative maturity and artistic freedom, brilliant technique and emotionality, unthinkable virtuoso technique, impeccable sound, magnificent pedalization, crazy energy and drive. Audience listened to the pianist playing with bated breath. Moreover, it seemed that the musician had found his author. Prokofiev is close to Kosminov with almost all of his arsenal of expressive means: «the pressure of stubborn metric forms», «the simplicity and squareness of rhythm», «the obsession of persistent, rectangular musical images», «materiality» of texture, «the inertia of steadily growing clear figurations» [10, p. 134, 138, 550].

Pic. 3. Performance of the Sergei Prokofiev’s Third Concert by Vlad Kosminov.
Results

A bright end to the concert evenings was a large Gala concert within the framework of the «Children to Children» project with the participation of the students of Professor Ioudenitch (fig.4). The program of the evening included: Partita No. 2 BWV 826 c-moll by J.S.Bach and Campanella F. Liszt (Qi Qi), Sixth Hungarian Rhapsody by F. Liszt (Iskandar Mamadaliev), First movement of Piano Sonata D.958 C-Dur F. Schubert (Sihao Qin), Second Scherzo op. 31 b-mol by F. Chopin (Athena Deng), First ballad op.23 g-moll by F. Chopin (Antoinette Cheng), Variations on the theme of Paganini op.35 by J. Brahms (Rio Xiang), Sarcasms op.17 S. Prokofiev (Kyoshiro Hirama), The second ballad in h-moll by F. Liszt (Tianju Liao) and «Islamei» by M. Balakirev (Vlad Kosminov).

The performance of pianists attracted by the artistic subtlety of interpreting the works, especially Chopin, whose works were played in a captivating and graceful manner. Athena Deng and Antoinette Cheng have excellent technical resources: light, fast, crisp fingers; confident and accurate large technique; beautiful, soft ink, worked out and leveled, polished, virtuoso apparatus that allows performers to achieve the complete fulfillment of everything conceived by expedient and economical means. Iskandar Mamadaliev and Kyoshiro Hirama proved themselves to be first-class artists with talent, sensitivity and strong will, creative imagination and skill, taste, culture and stage experience. Rio Xiang's technique was soft, graceful and filigree, a combination of ease and highly regulated freedom. Qi Qi's performance was imbued with enchanting lightness, a sense of airiness of the sound space and a variety of timbre colors. Sihao Qin's playing attracted with grace, beautiful, colorful sound of the instrument, flexibility and rhythm activity. The pianist Tianju Liao's playing was distinguished by spirituality and poetry. Vlad Kosminov amazed the audience with the freedom and impartiality of his stage statements, the scale of his ideas, and the original character of his playing.
Pic. 4. Poster for the Gala concert of Stanislav Ioudenitch’s class students, dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the RSMAL named after Uspensky, within the framework of the “Children to Children” project.

Conclusion

The WORLD CONCERTO TOUR concert program has become a luxurious gift for fans of significant musical events, connoisseurs of professional and virtuoso instrumental performance. It was a kind of new meeting with the brilliant works of different eras and styles. Thus, we can conclude that the Uzbek piano school is a generator of creative methods and ideas, successfully developing by our pupils abroad, approving pedagogical principles in accordance with modern style trends and socio-cultural environment. When these performers come to Uzbekistan with various concert programs, we see
how their pedagogical principles are being modified, turning into qualitatively new sound phenomena. Pianists in their interpretations demonstrate a qualitatively new performing culture based on the Uzbek piano school and the one that was perceived in other regions of the world, which enriches both national and world performing culture as a whole.

References


