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## Artistic Aspects Of The Performing Interpretation Of Piano Ensemble Music By The Ligeti György

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## ***Introduction***

Ligety's piano ensemble music is a diverse sound world that reflects the composer's perception of both external reality and the expression of his inner world. This kind of peculiarity of the composer's creative process determines the multifaceted stylistic features of his music. In one of his interviews Ligety said: "In almost all of my works one can find the so-called 'danger zone'...I like to push objects to the limit of their possibilities" [1, p. 53]. In accordance with this creative principle, the composer defined a new aesthetic category - "deeply frozen expressionism", the essence of which is "a furious, annoying sound quality that may seem disorderly, gesticulating, random and completely uncontrollable" [1, p. 15]. An unnecessarily stressful characteristic of sound, according to Ligeti, "can no longer be perceived as an expression and becomes its own statue" [1, p. 20].

The composer used a wide range of expressive means in his piano ensembles that corresponded to the meaning and subordinated them to his artistic conception. Piano ensembles, like works for other instruments, concentrate the characteristics of his creative thinking. They were a creative laboratory, a platform for experimentation and discovery. The ideological and artistic conquests of contemporary piano ensemble music, with its genre dynamism, and the renewal of many aspects of social life, have contributed to the piano's social and spiritual prestige.

Ligety's piano ensemble music proves the piano's sound nature, its sound world, its meaning and technical possibilities in a bright, convincing and multifaceted way. It expands the space of the modern musical world, reflects the dynamics of contemporary musical art, and boldly opens the way to the future of 21st century artistic culture.

The works for piano clearly reflect the composer's intense spiritual life. Understanding their figurative world requires a certain immersion in the aesthetics of Ligeti's work and an understanding of the specifics of his world view. An essential factor in Ligeti's creativity is its playful beginnings and travels to virtual worlds. The

whole appears as a "stream of consciousness" born of the composer's creative fantasy, with countless codes and symbols, and in the boundless cosmic world of which the individual wanders through a vast, constantly renewed space.

In order to understand Ligety's musical style, including the piano style, it is very important that the composer himself treats his own style, which defined it as "Ligety style". The term "Ligeti-style" is first encountered in an interview that the composer gave to Peter Varnai in 1978 [1]. The essence of this style as an individual style of creativity and lifestyle of the artist lies in a spatially multidimensional perception of the world, where everything new is reflected as the old is actualised within the framework of contemporary reality.

"Ligety Style" is projected on the entire work of the composer, who has undergone a number of stylistic modulations while retaining his unique personality. The components of "Ligety Style" are all kinds of polyethylene elements, including polymetry, polycrythmy, polymellody, polydynamics. All of this can be found in piano ensembles, which should be discussed in more detail. In particular, works for piano in four hands created by the composer in the early period. These pieces are extremely concise miniatures of a programme nature, as their titles indicate. The artistic content of the piano ensemble miniatures reflects the composer's impression of genre paintings of folk life. It is expressed with Ligety's characteristic sense of musical sounds, ingeniously organised into original combinations.

### *Materials and methods*

The **March** is very revealing and interesting in this respect. This miniature was written by a nineteen-year-old composer in 1942 and is a concise play. According to Ligety's aesthetics, the March can be called a micro miniature by analogy with such concepts as micro polyphony and microchromatic, which are the key coordinates of the composer's work. Despite its miniature scale, this play requires special attention in its work.

When addressing the executive interpretation of the March, it is important to identify its genesis. The Ligety March is in line with the tradition of four-handed ensemble pieces for piano created by Beethoven and continued by Schubert. E. Sorokina, a Russian researcher in the history of the piano duo, notes that the March is an important event for the Russian piano duo. 45 Beethoven "essentially discovered a new (and very promising) area of duet art" [2, p. 51]. It should be noted that Beethoven and Schubert, who lived in the era of the Napoleonic military campaigns, paid great attention to the march genre. This commitment to the march was continued by representatives of the Strauss family, suffice it to mention the incendiary "March of Radetzky" by I. Strauss-son, the Imperial March of I. Strauss-son and many other plays of this genre.

In terms of continuity, the Ligety Walk is closest to the F. Schubert Walk, which the Austrian romantic has around twenty. They were created in different years and combined in small cycles. Schubert's marches differed from Beethoven's by their more pronounced orchestral piano texture, Austrian national colouring, light and rather mobile dance movement, sometimes of humorous nature. Schubert's influence on the Ligeti March is reflected in the colourful use of changes in G major and minor sounds, the abundance of development moments, motivational crumbling and variant intonation.

Speaking about the shape of the Walk, it should be noted that Ligety's traditional three-part form in this play is rethought by Ligety; it is flexible and original in its interpretation. It is known that the changes that have taken place in the musical thinking of 20th century composers have led to new principles of form formation. The value of a semantic unit acquires motive, interval and separate sound on a micro-thematic level, and the value of a separate sound or harmony as an independent compositional category and a self-sufficient element of musical form increases. All of this is to a certain extent also present on the Ligety March.

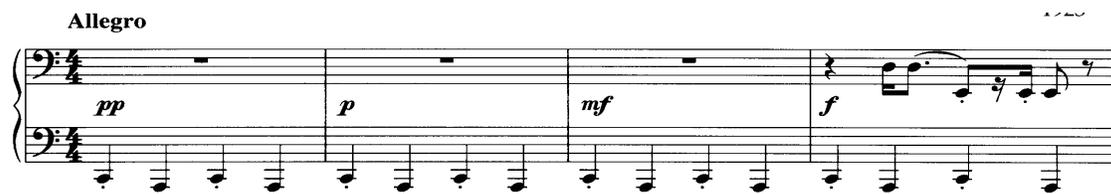
The performing interpretation assumes immersion in the figurative world of a musical work. In this respect, Ligety's works provide performers with interesting artistic material. One of the main tasks in the performer's interpretation of this play is to reflect on the composer's inherent irony and artistic embodiment of satirical or even grotesque character. Created during World War II, the Walk, with its definitely palpable humour, as if sharpens the traditional foundations of a military parade. The ironic shade of the play is remarkable and is incompatible with the usual idea of a heroic march, creating an atmosphere of brilliant military parades and grand celebrations.

In creating the imaginative concept of the Walk, ensembles can benefit from an address to the novel "The Marches of the Brave Soldier Schweik during the World War", a collection of short stories "The Brave Soldier Schweik and Other Amazing Stories" by Ia. Gasheka. Suffice it to quote lines from the satirical story "The Brave Soldier Schweik in the Air Force": "The Brave Soldier Schweik flooded over the giant sea expanses at an altitude of one thousand metres: Greneville is marching towards Pravna frana on a spatzir...How wonderful it will be when you and I both fall on the field of battle for the sovereign...". [3, p. 80]. Although these lines were published by Gashek in 1912, even before the start of World War I, they remained relevant during World War II. In this connection, the literary critic R. Kuznetsova noted: "While working on the image of Schweik, Gashek saw a historical perspective of the events depicted" [4, p. 213]. In his humorous and satirical stories about Schweik, the Czech writer brilliantly reflected the absurdity of the Austro-Hungarian military, the mushtra, the illusion of order and the iron discipline of the military system in its scholastic form, where soldiers are creatures like robots who unconditionally follow the orders of officers.

In terms of various figurative and semantic analogies with their semantic multitasking, a variety of humorous and satirical marches can be taken into account, including the Black Sea March from Ruslan and Lyudmila Glinka's opera, the March

from Rimsky-Korsakov's opera *The Golden Cockerel*, Prokofiev's *March* from the opera *The Love of Three Oranges* and others.

Just as in Beethoven's *March* from the *Athens Ruins*, the *Ligety Walk* recreated the effect of an approaching and departing procession. This idea comes to life in the first tact of the play. The march begins with a party that sets the pace *for* Allegro. In the initial four cycles, *one* should pay attention to the dynamic scale: *pp* in the first cycle, *p* in the second, *mf* in the third and *f* in the fourth:



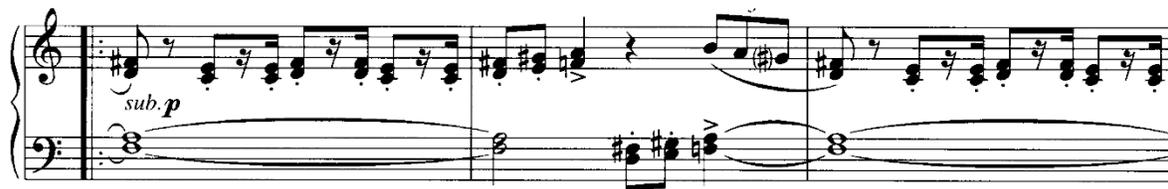
*Pic.1. D. Ligety - March (tact 1-4).*

The main task of *the* party is to imitate an approaching drum procession. The repetitive low-fat downward movement in the left-hand party *secondo* imitates the sound of a war drum beating back the uniform pace of a step. The rhythm here is similar to that of the metronome, only the dynamics of the sound change, but the rhythm and its uniformity are maintained throughout the play, with the exception of the culmination section from 22 to 26.

Musical development in the *Walk* is replete with all sorts of effects, sudden insertions of fanfare motifs imitating the sound of bagpipes, pipes, cornets and serpents. The effects of surprise can be seen in sudden accents, in the break of a phrase in 21 strokes, in sudden changes of dynamics, in sudden tonal shifts. The dynamic development of the musical theme of the *March* prevails over the principles of expositonality.

The play's graphically transparent texture is combined with colourful palatine and harmonic colours. Unusual intonation turns, a comparison of G Major and C Minor, accentuated by accents, create a kind of fantastic image mirage, which

suddenly appeared and disappeared just as suddenly. The ephemeral nature of the image is palpable in the dotted tertiums of the party *primo*:



Pic. 2. D. Ligety - March (bars 11-13).

The indication of *subito p* is alarming and suggests a limit on concentration. "Playing in an ensemble," emphasises T. Samojlovic, "requires partners to ensure that their performing intentions are the same, that the phrasing is fully agreed upon and that the overall performance plan is thought through and implemented in detail" [5, p. 22]. On the Ligety Walk, every detail is important - whether it is a fanfare intonation or a harmonic paint in G minor, while the unique piano texture requires performers to have ensemble skills, filigree pianism and a high artistic taste.

Particular attention should be paid to the culmination of the play in tact 22-26. There is a change of texture. The melodic dubbing, covering the unison set out in the four octaves and in the nuance of *ff*, brings a bright and unexpected contrast to the musical development:

Pic. 3. D. Ligety - March (bars 22-24).

The increase in dynamic tension is amplified by persistent repetitions of upward motives set out by trios, sharp accents that become more and more persistent in 24 to 25 strokes, and a faster pulsating rhythm leads to incredible tension in the form of an increased sextaccord. The rapid acceleration of the rhythm is kind of stopped by this brightly sounding chord, after which a sharp drop in tension occurs.

The development phase after the climax is interesting, in which Ligety uses through traffic to create the effect of a rapidly moving march:



Pic. 4. D. Ligety - March (bars 29-32).

This technique emphasizes the humorous nature of the image, making it fabulously fantastic, like the effect in the play "In the Cave of the Mountain King" from E. Grieg's suite "Per Gynt". The rapid pace, the general rapid movement, the clear *staccato* create an image in which the genre features of the march are combined with quirky dance elements.

The Three Wedding Dances Cycle was written by Ligety in 1950. It is a miniature dance suite that recreates colorful sketches of Hungarian folk life. It is one example of Ligeti's constructive logic, knowing how to achieve a precise balance of all elements, revealing the unity of diversity within a concise form of artistic expression. The cycle leaves an unforgettable impression with its vital energy, festive mood and optimism of the full-blooded perception of life.

**Three wedding dances** are performed in an exquisite orchestral manner, conveying solo and group play on Hungarian folk instruments: bagpipes, cymbals, horns, flutes, longitudinal flutes of furujas with piano sound. Sensitivity to national colour is manifested in the means of expression that recreate features of Hungarian character in music. This cycle is an example of the laconicism and precision of thinking so appreciated by Ligety. In comparing the parts of the cycle, the composer

uses the contrast of two main types of Hungarian music - *sempre giusto and porlando*. By turning to the typical means of Hungarian folk music and refracting them through his creative individuality, Ligeti gives it a new contemporary meaning.

The first miniature "The Cart stands in front of the gate" introduces the festive atmosphere of the wedding ritual. As the theme material for the play, the composer used the simplest type of Hungarian folk - an archaic pentatonic soundtrack with low-fat turns, with prevailing downward movement. The composer enriches the descending tertian intonations with ornaments in the form of forks that betray improvisational melodies. "Pentatonics with its characteristic structure (the repetition of the first half of the melody in a quintet below), the reception of the melody first in a high, then in a low register, some intonation, rhythm and ornamental features - all this quite clearly draws on a map of Eurasia the path of Turkic tribes from east to west in the era of the resettlement of peoples". [6, p. 5]. With its simplest melodic structure, the harmony nature of music is very complex and based on the interaction of the harmony of folk music - Ionian, Lydian, Dorian.

The first play has an energetic and temperamental character. The composer positions it as the hallmark of the cycle in three octaves, proclaiming in nuance *f the* beginning of the wedding ritual. In the role *primo, the* sound should be brought closer to the timbres of the flutes and cymbals in the dazzlingly bright sound of the octaves in the upper register, and in the role *secondo it* should be associated with the piercing timbres of the mountains:

The image shows a musical score for two parts, Primo and Secondo, in 2/4 time with a key signature of one flat. The tempo is marked 'Allegro (♩=135)'. The Primo part has a melodic line with eighth notes and a fermata over the eighth measure. The Secondo part has a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes and a fermata over the eighth measure. Dynamics include 'ff' (fortissimo) and 'mf secco' (mezzo-forte secco). Performance instructions include 'poco rit.' (poco ritardando) and 'a tempo'.

Pic. 5. D. Ligety - Three Wedding Dances No. 1 (bars 1-6).

The initial four tacts should be performed brightly, solemnly and significantly, creating a sense of festivity. *Staccato should be performed with the weight of the hand leading to the sound of Re as a standing order.* In the fourth tact, the tempo must be slowed down and the sound of *Re* must be heard to complete this construction. In the fifth tact, you should resume the pace of *Allegro in accordance with the instruction a tempo* and emphasise the acutely rhythmic *accompaniment* in the party. The *mf secco* remake requires the performers to gather together and make a clear sound, as if whipping a horse carriage, approaching a cart. In *primo*, Ligeti conveys the alternation of soloists and a folk orchestra group, which must be recreated:

The image shows a musical score for piano, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system covers bars 1 through 9. The tempo is marked 'Allegro' with a quarter note equal to 135. The dynamics are marked 'f' (forte) and 'ff' (fortissimo). The tempo changes to 'poco rit.' (poco ritardando) at bar 8 and returns to 'a tempo' at bar 9. The notation includes staccato and portamento strokes, and a first ending bracket at the end of bar 9. The second system covers bars 7 through 9, showing the continuation of the piano part.

Pic. 6. D. Ligety - *Three Wedding Dances No. 1* (bars 1-9).

Special attention should be paid to the *staccato and portamento strokes* indicated in the note text. The performance of the triads in the ninth and tenth strokes should be assembled, compact and rich. In the future, the strength of the sound should be increased to *ff*. In the eleventh and twelfth tones, the tone of the instrument should be brought closer to the sound of the horn and trumpets, and the sound of the octave unison should be combined, emphasising each note.

In the first play, there are many fascinating finds of the composer - colourful parallels, octave doubles-unisones, sharp overlaps, unexpected palatable comparisons, to which performers should pay attention. Ligety brilliantly uses the register capabilities of the instrument in the play, comparing the characteristics of soloists and the orchestra group inherent in a folk orchestra. In the penultimate tact of the miniature, he gives the remark *tutta la forza*, demanding an orchestral sound. When working on this piece, special attention must be paid to articulation, clarity, synchronisation of movements and the unity of the dynamic plan.

*Andantino's* second play, *Come Hurry Up Here and It Will Be Fine*, is a contrast to the parts of the cycle surrounding it. It is sustained in gentle, pastoral

tones. The music in the miniature is poetic; images of nature organically tint at the lyrical mood of the play. The symbolism of the dance is clear and concrete - it introduces beautiful poetics and the beauty of lyrical feelings. The gentle and unpretentious melody of scorched, bagpipes humming create an image that is surprisingly harmonious, calm and contemplative.

Pure diatonics in a *primo* batch are subtly shaded by delicate chromatism in a *secondo* batch:

Pic .7. D. Ligety - Three Wedding Dances No 2 (bars 1-5).

The use of a flexible *legato* will allow you to create an impressive lyrical image, a bright dreamy mood and peace of mind. The execution must be plastic and inspiring, and every intonation must be synchronised in an ensemble of partners. When imitating the sound of a scorcher, the *performer* of a party must be aware of how important this folk instrument is to the Hungarians. In this regard, Hungarian music researcher B. Szabolcszy wrote: "In the 18th century chroniclers considered the oldest Hungarian instruments, based on their names (kurt and sip) horns and flute" [6, p. 20].

In line with Hungarian national music tradition, the melody then sounds in quintet below. In the octave low register unison in the *pp* part, it acquires a new psychological tone, accompanied by pedal sounds imitating the sound of bagpipes in the *primo* part:



Pic. 8. D. Ligety - Three Wedding Dances No 2 (bars 11-15).

In the fifteenth tact, the melody moves on to the *primo*, ending the miniature in light lyrical tones. While working on this piece, it is important to feel and convey the melodic and pleasant nature of the music, to reveal all the charm and beauty of the colour, and to show a high artistic taste.

The third part of the *Allegro Circle Dance* cycle is dynamic and colourful. The clear, bouncy rhythm and energetically persevering, confident action in the melodies of the dance are aimed at expressing a sense of joy, cheerful mood and general celebration. It is an incendiary dance that involves all those present at the wedding. The *melody of the dance* is set out in an octave unison party. Its cheerful, fervent character is accentuated by the chord accompaniment in the party *primo* on a weak fraction of the tact, as if patching up the melody. Clear and clear articulation, strong finger staccato and clear rhythmic organisation of the performance will convey the image of the wedding dance:

Allegro (♩=144)

Allegro (♩=144)

*Pic. 9. D. Ligety - Three Wedding Dances No. 3 (bars 1-5).*

From the sixth tact the melody turns into a *primo*, where it sounds differently, in the upper register in a nuance of *p*. At the sixth to ninth pitch the melody sounds like a twirl, and at the tenth to thirteenth pitch the orchestra's performance is transferred. It is important to perform the chords in a compact, clear and rhythmic manner.

Special attention should be paid to two-chart question-and-answer roll-calls of ensembles from the fourteenth to the seventeenth bars. Here it is necessary to show the timbre contrasts using the *non legato* technique. From the 22nd stroke, the dance melody is played in the nuance of *piu f* in an octave-unisoned version of the quintus below in relation to the main narrative. By doing so, Ligety wanted to emphasise its Hungarian national character, which the performers should feel and convey. The play concludes with three chords accentuated in the nuance of *ff meno mosso*, emphasising the cheerful tone of the music that affirms life and love. An important performing task in the Circle Dance is a vivid display of contrasting register colours, imitating the timbres of Hungarian folk instruments.

The integrity of the Three Wedding Dances cycle is achieved thanks to the bright contrast between the fast edge and moderate middle parts. It is important to convey the harmonious harmony of the composition of the cycle: the dynamics of movement in the outermost parts and the smooth melody of the plastic dance of the middle part. Working on this cycle helps ensemblists to develop an immediate reaction to changing dynamics and texture, and to be sensitive to the partner as an equal member of the ensemble, because music material in the cycle is constantly transferred from one partner to the other and both ensemblists are leaders in the full sense of the word.

Studying contemporary piano ensemble music is a creative, creative and continuously enriched by new knowledge, methods and approaches. "The complexity and often controversial nature of genre innovations determined the particular importance of the performing interpretation as one of the decisive factors in the functioning of musical creativity in the second half of the 20th century" [7, p. 100-101]. This factor is even more impressive in the 21st century due to "the unheard of earlier growth, significance and popularity of music for piano ensemble" [8, p. 11]. All of this makes it imperative to activate the scientific attention of pianists-performers to the study of ensemble art, which is the meaning of our joint work.

### ***Results***

The methodology of international scientific creation of leading specialists in the field of piano art opens wide prospects for new approaches to the solution of performing interpretation of ensemble music.

### ***Conclusion***

Summing up the results of 21st century pianists' study of Ligeti's early piano ensemble works, it is necessary to note their originality and unique originality, in which "Ligeti-style" has already been embossed. The deep organic continuity of the works examined with the traditions of Beethoven and Schubert allows us to draw a conclusion about the high artistic quality of music, about the perfection of Ligeti's

musical style and thinking, which should be defined as a new classic of the modern musical avant-garde.

***Practical recommendations:***

The methods developed in the article for interpreting Ligety's contemporary piano ensemble music are of practical importance in mastering contemporary ensemble art as one of the most complex and interesting forms of musical creativity. The following practical recommendations are offered:

1. active inclusion of Ligety's ensemble compositions in concert and performing practice;
2. enriching and expanding the horizons of pianists' modern musical creative thinking through ensemble music;
3. searching for new methods to study the nature of a piano ensemble, taking into account the results achieved.

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