

**CONCERTO №2 FOR PIANO AND SYMPHONIC ORCHESTRA BY V. POLYAKOV.****THE FORM ANALYSIS AND THE COMMENTS OF THE PERFORMER***Aliona VARDANEAN**Academia de Muzică, Teatru și Arte Plastice*

Articolul dat este dedicat creației lui V.Poleacov, reprezentant al școlii componistice naționale din a doua jumătate a secolului al XX-lea și, în special, al genului de concert instrumental. În centrul atenției este Concertul nr.2 pentru pian și orchestră, care s-a evidențiat prin adresarea la folclorul moldovenesc și cel ucrainean.

Totodată se remarcă că Concertul nr.2 pentru pian și orchestră de V.Poleacov continuă tradițiile marelui concert clasic-romantic pentru solist și orchestră simfonică în componență dublă.

Autorul prezintă istoria compunerii concertului. De asemenea, în articol sunt reflectate minuțios comentarii de interpretare și particularitățile formei, indicându-se varietatea tratării. În articolul dat este caracterizată tendința spre improvizare, spre fluiditatea formei, este descris limbajul muzical folosit în opusul analizat, menționându-se că această creație a lui V.Poleacov aparține unor realizări importante ale genului.

The creation of the Second Piano Concerto by V.Polyakov (1955) refers to the first decade after the Second World War, which was characterized by the dynamical symphonic music genres development, and by the increased activity of Moldavian composers in the field of instrumental Concerto. Before the appearance of this composition, only three instrumental concertos have been created in Moldova: Concertos for the violin and orchestra by S.Neaga in 1944 and D.Gershfeld in 1951, and the Concerto for the Piano by D.Fedov in 1952. (The First Concerto by V.Polyakov is not included into this list due to two reasons: firstly, it was created in 1948, when the composer lived outside Moldova, in Riga, Latvia, and secondly, it is not available for investigation, because the score had been lost. Therefore, this concerto is not actually related to the development of the Moldavian music and is not included into this particular Work [1].

It should be noted, that V.Polyakov was one of the first Moldavian composers, who actively used the resources of the concerto genre. His Piano Concerto, alongside with the Violin and Violoncello Concertos, became a significant model not only for the evolution of V.Polyakov's style, but also for the development of the concerto genre in Moldova.

By the time of its composition, V.Polyakov had already had experience in creating the instrumental concertos: a little earlier than the Second Piano concerto appeared, the composer's creative portfolio was enriched by the Concertino for the Orchestra with the Solo Oboe in 1952, and the Violin Concerto in 1953. Later, in 1960, the Violoncello Concerto was successfully finished. Approximately at that time, in the late 50-s – early 60-s, other Moldavian composers quite often refer to the Concerto genre. Thus, in V.Aksenov's monograph “Moldavian symphony. Historical evolution of genres variety” [2], there are mentioned in this connection, The Concerto for the Violin and Orchestra by A. Mulear (1955), and the Concerto for the Violin and Orchestra (1956), as well as the Concerto for the Violin and Piano (1957) by S. Lobell.

G. Gershfeld created the Concerto for the Violin and the Piano in 1960.

All these compositions refer to the solo concertos genre, but the dominating of the solo instrument natural timbre, chosen by the composers, is revealed in them differently. The peculiarity of the emotional – genre content is defined by focusing on the performance technique, on exposing the maximum color possibilities of the instrument, on combining both collective and individual principles. It's also defined by basing on the improvisation principle, which highlights the connections with the essential ideas of the folk music making.

All those features are also intrinsic to the Second Piano Concerto by Vareriy Polyakov. During all his life, Polyakov's style was being formed in a tight connection with Moldavian and Ukrainian folklore; this is why this Concerto is an interesting genre pattern in the composer's creative work. Being an excellent expert in folklore music, the composer deeply and subtly felt its national specificity, and perfectly revealed the peculiarities of the folk melodies in his own creations.

At the same time, the Second Piano Concerto by V. Polyakov, continues on the academic traditions of the big classical-romantic concerto for the soloist and symphonic orchestra of pair cast. The classical tempo proportion of the sonata – symphonic cycle parts, which highlights the bright contrasts of the theme, is inherent in the Concerto.

<u>The tonal and tempo cycle scheme:</u>		
I Part	II Part	III Part
Allegro moderato	Lento cantabile	Allegro giocoso

The principle of concerting plays an important role in the co-relation of the soloist and the orchestra, and it is variously implemented in each of its parts. The composer differently defines the role of the Piano in the Concerto: in the second part it opposes the orchestra as the solo instrument, while in the first and the third parts it is included into the common performance as a competent member.

The Concerto is distinguished by the integrity of the whole concept due to the usage of the leading principle of the intonation-thematic combination in the sonata – symphonic cycle. It is the intonation affinity of the thematic material that contributes to the creation of a vividly expressed proceeding of the musical developing. The connections between the parts are confirmed by the presence of several intonation formulas, which provide the continuous development character, even on the background of the image spheres contrast, so characteristic for the Concerto genre.

The bright contrasts and the interaction of the diametrically opposed spirits can be noticed already in the first part, which is composed in the sonata Allegro form. The comparison of two characters: merry, bright, playful, and sometimes even sarcastic on one hand, and melodious, ballade – narrative on the other, is traditionally incarnated (implemented) in the correlation of the main and the secondary parts.

This is facilitated by the difference in the spheres of metro rhythm and tonality. In the main part the brightest rhythmical accent is created by a sharp syncope in the fourth beat. This active element is anticipated and variantly mellowed in the prelude, in the dialog between the Orchestra and the Soloist. The theme of the main part, as contrary to the prelude, is at first entrusted by the composer to the soloist (n.5, Tempo I). It sounds here in the two-octave unison presentation, accompanied by the Orchestra. It's genre – dancing character is underlined by the sharp tutti chords on the weak time beats.

The folk beginning is highlighted, first of all, in the tonal theme basis, where the “white-key” C-major is complicated with increased II and IV scales, typical for Moldavian tones. It also includes passages with an increased second, adding an oriental character to the theme. Along with the usage of such techniques of expanding the tonality, the harmonic arsenal is also enriched. Thus, the altered chord (minor introducing Kvintsekschord of the double dominant) plays an important role in the harmonization. The tonality variability plays a significant role as well. For example, the folk tonality coloring is underlined by the alternation of the second increased scale and fourth natural scale – which is a very common technique for the tonal-intonation sphere of Moldavian folklore.

During the following melodic development, the theme is even more intensively enriched by the increased second passages, underlining its folk-characteristic coloring. The active rhythmic introduces the following additional details, based on acute syncopation. All these thematic peculiarities are anticipated by the composer already in the prelude, where the main intonation and rhythmic distinctions of the future main part's theme are included.

The second entry of the main part's theme is performed in abridgement (8 times instead of 16), and, being performed by the Orchestra part, it changes its tonality coloring. Even though the main part's theme has a bright specificity, it does not dominate in the first part. The lyrical-narrative secondary part is equally important, being performed firstly in the Orchestra (n.12, Meno Mosso), and then – in the Piano part (n.14). The way of performing the secondary part differs from the main part performing, and the composer recommends here a sharp, tenacious staccato and finger legato. Taking into the consideration the active Allegro moderato tempo, the theme of the main part should be performed staccato, close to the keyboard, slightly springing fingers, like V.H.Razumovskaya used to say, “strewing, sprinkling” [3]. At the beginning of the slur it's recommended to take a short, rhythmic pedal in the middle and the beginning of the time.

The secondary part Piano texture demands an absolutely different performance of legato by the soloist, while the pianist cannot restrict himself only by controlling the fingers and the palm. For clearly drawing to the first place the melodic line in the high chord voice, it is necessary to use all the upper waist, including the

torso movements. The performer shouldn't press the keys too much, neither should he let them go earlier than necessary; the sound should drift uninterruptedly, continuously. For additional coupling of the chords it's better to take a late pedal for each quarter, and this will give a chance to underline the plastic flexible, expressive and melodious tune, pouring generously and freely.

The secondary part is anticipated by the connective one, formed on the base of the main part, where dominate the tone collations: G-dur and Es-dur (n.11). In the predict, after sforzando, the volume of the sound achieved on the domination chord and the fanfare Orchestra tones, wekens gradually, and the sequence performance with the bright major coloring alternation (G-dur, Es-dur, H-dur), brings the performers back to the dominant base with the following dynamic recession and the relief of tonal tension.

The lyrical expression of the following secondary part is revealed in the initial very reserved intonation, where every single sound is underlined with the composer's "tenuto" direction (*nota bene*). The ostinato quarters evolve in a very expressive, ascending circle passage, anticipated by the refined, mild second and tertian intonations. It brings new intonation features into the theme. Besides, in the following evolution of the theme, new melodic elements appear which interrelate with the intervallic passages from the main part's theme.

The thematic material of the secondary part is significantly evolving already in the exposition, which, probably, determined the author's decision not to use it in its primary mode in the development (n.19). The secondary part retains only one of its motives as the base for the derivative, intonationally and modally sharpened theme of the synthetic character, where almost the principle role is played by the main part's elements. It appears as a contra point on the background of the slow and measured Orchestra chords. (n.21). Another interesting technique, used by the Author for stylization, should also be noted. Before the performance of the main part's theme in its initial way, a distinctive accompaniment is set in the left hand of the pianist. It is executed in the texture like a dulcimer accompaniment and such folk associations underline the genre specificity of this theme.

The composer uses the approved methods of the scale development's effectiveness intensification. This is facilitated by the maximum saturation of the soloist's part with the ostinato motion and by the introduction of the linear organized modeling structures, with the usage of octave doubling. Performing the alternation of the position elements with octave leaps, included into the piano texture, the soloist should execute the "upsurge" and the "landing" on the first supporting finger on both left and right hands. It is necessary to control the wrist: it shouldn't rise during the pushing and upsurge, and there should be no abrupt, sharp pushes.

The continuous dynamic forced expansion reaches its peak in the predict (n.27). Repeated triplet figuration, mediant upsurge – passages of the Orchestra and the active introduction of the extreme piano registers additionally concentrate the tension up to the appearance of the main part in the Orchestra (*tutti*, *ff*), which symbolizes the beginning of the reprise part.

The secondary part in the reprise is performed by the solo instrument, appearing later in the orchestra as well. The delicate, flitting, arpeggio passages of the pianist bring additional nuances in the lyrical image sphere, giving refinement and lightness to the secondary part. To relive the sound, the pianist should put his hand on the chord position and play arpeggio as though from the inside of this position. This technique allows him to make the artistic image more refined, and to intensify the richness of the given episode's content. Special attention should be payed to the easiness and flexibility of the wrist, of its movements, that allow the sound to flow from one tone to another. Only the "confluence" (merging) of the keypad with the hand makes it possible to avoid unnecessary noisy sounds, which appear when the finger meets the key.

Interpreting the secondary part as the leading poetic symbol of the whole first Concerto part, V.Polyakov bases the initial section of piano cadence on it. Introduced before the coda, it confirms the inexhaustible power of lyrics, successfully interpreted in the thematic of the vocal-instrumental type. This time the secondary part is presented as the combination of melodic-cantilena and free-improvisation origins (n.41). The influence of vocal cantilena can also be noted in the main part's cadence, transferred from the genre-dancing to the lyrical-romantic sphere.

The texture and register development in the cadence is interpreted in diversity and dynamics. The accumulation of energy in the piano part begins with modest, "aquarel" soundings; by means of the ascending scale of register coverage it brings the piano to a grand culmination, which can compete with the Orchestra *tutti* (e.g. №16) in the power of expression and the volume of the "sound quantity". For a successful performance of this voluminous enough cadence, the pianist should clearly arrange its dramaturgy and define the progressive motion of its development. Large fluctuations of the sounding (from *pp* to *FF*) require master skills in the

sound producing and pedaling techniques. Concerning the pedaling technique, it may be recommended to practice the prolongation of the pedaling along with the increasing of the sound volume, up to a whole time.

In a short, optimistic coda, the composer uses bright, dynamic techniques in the soloist's part: swift ascending octave passages, powerful accordics, which competes with the Orchestra in the strength of sounding. The performance of octaves in a high tempo is much facilitated by merging the octave passages into groups, which can be easily covered with one single movement. Such merge, using the general rotatory movement technique and the change in wrist position from high to low, gives the opportunity to free the hand, to avoid constraint and restriction. The enrichment of the piano part with masterly (virtuosic) execution elements shows the author's attraction to the piano traditions of F.Liszt and S.Rachmaninov. However, using the piano texture techniques, which already became universal in the sphere of piano art and execution, V.Polyakov manifests his own individuality as well.

The second part (*Lento cantabile*) is more laconic in comparison to the first one. The composition structure, chosen by the author, is a compound 3-part form, which firstly includes a dynamic reprise, and later, during the reiteration, becomes closer to the original variant. The form is interpreted by the author with creativity and very specifically. The lyrical profoundness of the melos makes an enormous impression from the first times of the initial section. Slow orchestra prelude-prologue introduces the theme of the first part in a simple two-part form of the initial section. This is the first thematic element, which is close to a lullaby in its character. During its evolution the author pays a lot of attention to the disclosure of the specifics and the genre peculiarities of the folk-improvisation style. The bright, meditative lyrics dominates here, filled with different nuances of inner anxiety and realized in the graceful, refined ornamented second theme of the first section in the high piano register. Duplicated in two octaves, it is performed on the background of long, stretched, and pure timbre tonalities of the Orchestra accords (n.45). Both thematic elements are further performed in the texture-varied way, completing the first section's form to become a doubled two-parted section.

In the second theme's interpretation, the soloist faces the necessity to create and perform, in the first place, a colour variety. Undoubtedly, he also should master the artistic articulation and natural musical observation of the phrasing. The intonation performance of this section is defined by the relations with the vocal performances, which really gives an opportunity to highlight the ascending circle passages and second mellowing. The expressivity is achieved here by a thorough, delicate allocation in time of music correlations and dynamic scales. It is well known, that the bigger the interval is, the more time is available, and therefore, it needs more inner tension to "mellow". It's necessary to achieve a clearer sound in the performing of the right hand's part in the general musical concept. This will add more lightness and delicacy to it. The trills on *p*, if possible, are better not to be played by the adjacent fingers, which activate the same parts of the neuromuscular apparatus. They should better be played with the second and fourth fingers, allowing the hand to make slight oscillating movements.

The transparency of the texture, exceptional brightness of colors, characterizing the orchestra and the piano palette, enrich the overall colouring with refined sophistication and warmth, typical for the tune sounding, which combines the features of folk improvisation and dreamy melancholy. The solo oboe's timbre, leading the orchestra theme, highlights its folk nature and intonation relations with the first part's main theme (n.47). However, later on the theme changes radically, creating an overflow of lyrical emotions. In its turn, this is facilitated by the change of the modal intonation using the characteristic techniques, borrowed sometimes from the Phrygian tonalities, or from the tonalities with the increased seconds, another time from major-minor keys. All this reflects the variability, characteristic for Moldavian folk tonalities, on a higher level of complexity.

The middle section of the second part, being an episode, is marked by the intensification of the improvisation origin, especially in the Piano part. The composer directs the musical development to the expansion of the overall dynamics. He shows flexibility in the coupling of lyrical-meditative and bright determined impulses as well. The dynamics and special vivid texture of the culmination is achieved by consolidation of the piano texture, by including the thematic structures, duplicated in the octave, the expansion of the piano sounding diapason, and sharp fluctuations of the tempo – from *lento cantabile* to *Pochissimo piu mosso* (n.48) and up to *Allegro scherzando* (n.49).

The technical features in the texturally similar fragments with a clear tempo *accelerando* are, nevertheless, different in their characters and soundings. They require different means of sound production, and are united only by the common belonging to a powerful finger technique. They help to achieve the necessary character in the *Allegro scherzando* episode, where high dynamics and bright enrichment of the colouring are required.

The brilliance of the octave passages and the clear, resonant distinctness of figure structures perfectly correlate with its musical content.

A short passage (Andantino passionate, c.54) brings the audience back to the initial mood of the meditative lyrics. To strengthen the effect of a complete melting away and to create a transparent sounding palette with the last and most quiet “drops” of the piano tones – G, E, B, it is recommended to use *una corda* with the *portamento* dashed (stroked) technique.

In the second part of the Concerto, a significant intonation affinity of the theme is obviously felt, giving a possibility to bring together two main image spheres – the lyrical in the first and last sections and the epic-dramatic in the middle one. Constantly appearing second mellowings and the expressive ascending circle passages serve as the general intonation elements here.

The third part of Concerto №2 by V.Polyakov (*Allegro giocoso*), is composed in the form of a rondo (*ABA<sub>1</sub>CA*), where the second episode (*C*) is very much increased and evolves into a development. The dramatic basis of the final is strongly influenced by the folk intonations used by the author, both melodic and rhythmical. Using them as means of demonstrating the national-style allusions, the composer includes a vividly emotional thematic material with a highly pronounced dance colouring. Quoting also plays an important role in the author’s reconsideration of the episode (*B*) theme. It’s prototype became the folk song “Bate vîntul” (*The wind blows*). The color, timbre potential of the symphonic orchestra and the solo piano are used and shown at their maximum.

The score of the Final includes a lot of virtues and advantages. We should definitely take into consideration the virtuose, masterly interplating of the piano and orchestra functions, which lead not to a contest, an opposition and counteraction of these two musical protagonists, but to a mutual enrichment, their “merging” in one single sound flow. The tendency for the improvisation, defining the main principle of development, “fluidity” of the form, is clearly and vividly expressed here. From figuratively mathematical point of view, the main themes of the third part – the refrain (main part) *A*, presented by three elements (*a* (n.59), *b* (n.60), *c* (n.61), as a sort of a small dancing divertissement, and the theme of the episode *B* (n.63), do not contrast among themselves but fundamentally complement each other serving as basis for the dialogue between the soloist and the orchestra. The piano “adds” its specific timbre colouring to the orchestra palette, without trying to single out from the partner’s performance. This is executed in a very skillful and tactful way.

At the same time, the Final plays a closing role in the whole cycle’s scale, implementing the goal of its intonation-thematic unity by coupling its extreme parts. Thus, the swiftness of the refrain (element *a*) movement and its clearly expressed dancing character, performed by the Orchestra (n.59), make it possible to reveal its genre and intonation relations with the theme of the first chapter’s main part. This slightly awkward masculine dance is introduced by the syncope theme in the lower register, performed in the “super major” Lydian tonality in its colouring.

The main theme is introduced after a short four-act prelude, where the inviting fanfare cues of the wind instruments, accompanied by the short emotional piano passages, adjust the pitch to the joyous, cheerful and excited mood. For an excellent execution of the ascending *arpeggio*, the pianist should set the position of his left arm in advance, and master the precise movements from the starting point to leap to the main goal. The psychological adjustment to the wide, flying fluctuations, rather helps the accuracy of performance, than the constrained, close to the keypad movements.

The theme of episode *B* (n.63) discloses the lyrical facets of the composition image sphere, however here is obviously felt the activation of not cantilena, but more of folk-dancing features. It’s general mood is presented in the piano part. Just due to the piano part, the theme, performed by the orchestra, becomes more “voluminous” and textured. At this point, in the piano performance such qualities as dexterity, rapidity of the fingers mobility and clearness of the articulation are very important.

Further, in the episode *C* (n.70), the author develops significantly all the thematic composition, underlining the difference of facture performance techniques both in the soloist’s and the orchestra’s parts. The thematically significant layer occupies the principle position in the score; it helps to introduce the main features of the main themes- “characters”. The chord figurations play the background role in the accompany part, tinting the significance of particular certain fragments. The contrasting features are introduced in the Finale of the Concerto by appearance of such ready elements as the return of the ascending theme of the secondary part in the first chapter, (n.74), or the stretto imitation of element *a* in the main part (n.78).

The character of the lyrical thematics is defined by the song melodic pattern, which evolves on the background of the accompaniment. The instrumental phrasing of this vocal in its nature sphere is close to the song breathing, and that is the reason why the syntactical phrase and periods boundaries are so strictly defined here. In the abundance of the joyful and cheerful emotions of the Finale, a special role is assigned to the performance of the episode *B* theme, where it sounds as a victorious cry. It is firstly performed by the Orchestra on the background of the soloist's triple passages (n.81), filled with enormous energy, and later it appears in the strong, fundamental chord texture of the Piano (n.83). The performance techniques for producing the chords in both hands parts should be differentiated. The left hand, moving freely, draws tenaciously the chords from the keypad, producing a special, particularly bright sound. The right hand is pushed down under the pressure of its own weight, and the fingers almost "attract" the keys. Such technique gives the pianist a possibility to enrich the sounding with more depth, juiciness, melodiousness and, at the same time, solemnity.

In the *A* reprise (n.87) the dynamization of development, as well as the aspiration of the overall sound movement, are even more intensified, achieving a special emotional tension. The main reprise and code theme core becomes the material of element *a* of the main part.

The festive Finale atmosphere, its active, optimistic and life-asserting character are introduced using a genre-dancing thematics, coupled associatively with different layers of Moldavian national folklore. Its mastery performance helps to create a trustworthy, frankly emotional image.

Besides, the flexibility and inexhaustibility of such tendencies correlation as basing on the tradition and inclination to experiment are presented here. The significance and importance of the national roots, being the basic idea of Moldavian music, including the instrumental Concerto, make a strong foundation. Along with being open to innovations, this foundation proves to be the testament to the national culture since the times of Sh. Neaga.

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