

## **"THE AGE OF VIRTUOSOS" AS A SPECIAL DAY OF EUROPEAN PIANISM**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The long-term period of birth and the formation of pianism as playing new instrument and the separation of piano and performance practice as a self-sufficient means of musical expression have led to the actualization of the need for the specification of pianism through the development of its own "language", as well as a set of appropriate techniques of motor skills and sound. Therefore, the issue of mastering the instrument, which meant first and foremost the high aesthetic level of piano playing, was on the agenda. As a result, the ideal of "pure" pianism was born, that is, perfection, and professional skill. Thus, pianism grew "from below" from the level of its system, which in this monograph was called basic. All these circumstances contributed to the development of virtuosity, its absolutization and the emergence of its carrier – the virtuoso pianist, which makes it possible to characterize the period of formation of pianism by the expression "era of virtuosos".

Therefore, the aesthetic ideal of the "era of virtuosos" is the "piano" of the performance through the help of pianism; the main carrier of this ideal is the pianist, who is able to act with a high degree of skill within it, creating a specific, aesthetically perfect world of motor and sound plastic. However, along with this ideal and its carrier, the virtuoso pianist, another has emerged, connected with interpretative tasks and more broadly, with the understanding of piano performance in the context of its cognitive capabilities, capable of delivering the most widespread, even comprehensive content. The coexistence of diverse artistic preferences in a single historical plane makes it possible to understand the "virtuoso era" under the sign of "polyphonic" with the asynchronous actualization of its various tendencies. The "hero" of this era, if considered from the inside, still remained a virtuoso pianist, and only in the second half of the nineteenth century he conceded to an interpreting pianist.

## 1. A virtuoso and virtuosity as aesthetic standards of excellence in performing arts

The concepts of "virtuoso" and "virtuosity" are widely got covered in modern science. Researchers agree that these concepts are firmly stored in the sociocultural use of a vast historical time-space, and the phenomena identified in creative practice and the consumer environment. Since virtuosity is always associated with skill and – in axiological terms – with value as an "uninteresting" activity, O. Belobrova actually identifies it with the category of aesthetic, considering it as a "standard of perfection"<sup>1</sup>. The musicologist does not limit the sphere of virtuosity to the performance, extending it essentially to all kinds of art as its integral part. Because virtuosity thus becomes one of the attributes of artistic creativity, it acquires the value of universality, revealing its presence in various musical styles, both individual and national, and, ultimately, a crystalline imprint of the aesthetics of the "intramuscular sounding" era<sup>2</sup>.

Virtuosity and its virtuoso occupy the virtually stable position in the performing arts. N. Usenko has been a leader of their historical existence since the first half of the XVIII century, linking with the formation of modern-day musical art and its most important "leader" – instrumentalism. During this period, as the musicologist notes, there was a type of concert virtuoso, presented by various instrumentalists. Demonstrating their skills in front of the public, virtuosos invented all sorts of game techniques that contributed to the formation of the outside of musical art, its "body". The culmination of this process, according to N. Usenko, is the turn of the XVIII – XIX centuries<sup>3</sup>. The period highlighted by the author coincides with the emergence of the first virtuoso pianists, musicians who have mastered the new instrument both in terms of mechanics and motor skills, and in terms of sound formation, more broadly – a new instrumental sound image. N. Usenko focuses on the hierarchical indeterminacy of pianists among the total mass of

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<sup>1</sup> Белоброва О. Принцип виртуозности как фактор музыкального стилеобразования // Київ. музикознавство : зб. ст. / Нац. муз. акад. України ім. П. І. Чайковського, Київ. держ. вище муз. уч-ще ім. Р. М. Глієра. Київ, 2003. Вип. 9. С. 38–47.

<sup>2</sup> Белоброва О. Принцип виртуозности как фактор музыкального стилеобразования // Київ. музикознавство : зб. ст. / Нац. муз. акад. України ім. П. І. Чайковського, Київ. держ. вище муз. уч-ще ім. Р. М. Глієра. Київ, 2003. Вип. 9. С. 45–46.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

concert instrumentalists and their quantitative small number, naming M. Clementi, J.L. Dusik, J.B. Kramer, J. Jelinek, J. Welfel, D. Steibelt<sup>4</sup>. However, for three decades, as the author writes, "the distribution of forces" among the touring artists has changed radically: the definition of "virtuoso" was now associated with pianists, "whose competitors could only be violinists"<sup>5</sup>.

Therefore, based on the obtained scientific information, in the XVIII and XIX centuries, the virtuoso was a concert instrumentalist who demonstrated to the public "his own person" and not rather than the author of the music<sup>6</sup>. Firmly settled in his busy sociocultural niche, the virtuoso was invariably in high demand in the audience. N. Usenko points out that in the romantic era, the most outstanding pianists, beginning with L. Beethoven and G. von Bülow, recognized the right of the virtuosos to subordinate the author's musical text to their own tasks. This state of affairs allows her to consider the whole of the nineteenth century as the "age of virtuosos"<sup>7</sup>. Let's clarify that the term "virtuoso" in this historical period means, as can be seen from the above information, "virtuoso pianist", in contrast to its use in relation to all specialties of instrumentalists in the Baroque era.

However, the conceptual difference in the use of the word "virtuoso" in different centuries is not limited to transferring its meaning to pianists, since cultural and historical development created specific conditions for the virtuoso's activity, which gave him new requirements and, accordingly, corrected the concept of virtuosity. Considering this phenomenon from such an angle of view, H. Muradyan distinguishes his baroque understanding, as mostly connected with *inventio* – ingenuity in the art of improvisation and composition of the organist; manifestation of taste in the design of melisms, the beauty of sound (at certain speed and motor performance) in the game on the harpsichord of the "gallant" century the quality of the piano background and the ability to move fingers on the keyboard of a new instrument at the turn of the XVIII – XIX centuries. It is essentially about the variability not only of "cult"

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<sup>4</sup> Белоброва О. Принцип виртуозности как фактор музыкального стилеобразования // Київ. музикознавство : зб. ст. / Нац. муз. акад. України ім. П. І. Чайковського, Київ. держ. вище муз. уч-ще ім. Р. М. Глієра. Київ, 2003. Вип. 9. С. 45–46.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

instruments in different historical periods, but also of the ideals of virtuosity<sup>8</sup>. Like N. Usenko, H. Muradian focuses on the perception of outstanding artists of romantic piano art by the public: "Of course, today it is unusual to consider Chopin, Brahms or Liszt not composers but virtuoso pianists, however, the historical logic is inexorable in modern times<sup>9</sup>. However, the cited author does not regard the whole romantic era as the realm of virtuosos with the dominant ideal of virtuosity – "pure" pianism. The new direction of history, which divided the XIX century into two major stages in the development of musical culture – the maturation and crystallization of romanticism in the first half of the century and its later stage in the second – contributed to the stabilization of the new ideal of pianism. The focus on virtuosity gives way to the era of interpretation of the masterpiece recorded by the music spread by the publications is coming. Its inviolability "engenders another "cult" – an inspired pronunciation, expression, i.e. intonation<sup>10</sup>. Accordingly, the concept of virtuosity was rethought: "It was no longer aware of the speed and textural complexity, but of the objectivity and subjectivity of the masterpiece"<sup>11</sup>. In other words, the ideal of "finger fluidity" is replaced by the ideal of interpretation, and the virtuoso pianist – the pianist-interpreter. It would be wrong to claim that a virtuoso pianist completely disappears from the concert stage at this time. It must be about the dominance of one ideal of piano performance over another. The antinomy of the virtuoso artist and interpreter, "virtuosity as a conscious demonstration of technique and virtuosity as a means necessary for the realization of deep meaningful tasks"<sup>12</sup> extends to H. Muradian throughout the history of performing arts. In his piano branch, the musicologist establishes a parabolic movement in which one ideal, the other acquires the role of an aesthetic dominant. In particular, the periods of return of the cult of virtuosity coinciding with the borders, respectively, of the XIX – XX and XX – XXI centuries are distinguished<sup>13</sup>. It is quite obvious that the characteristics of different

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<sup>8</sup> Мурадян Г. В. Виртуозность как феномен в истории фортепианной культуры : автореф. дис. ... канд. искусствоведения : спец. 17.00.02 / Ростов. гос. консерватория им. С. В. Рахманинова. Ростов н/Д, 2014. С. 8–10.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. С. 14.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. С. 18–19.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. С.18–21.

ideals of pianism should not be absolutized. Like any other generalization, in the case of their "application" to specific phenomena, "material resistance" develops. However, reduced to a particular system, they show the heterogeneity of the aesthetic landmarks of pianism within one historical epoch, in this romantic context, which in turn motivates the legitimacy of the separation of two epochalities in it, one of which is marked by the dominance of ideals of "clear" pianism, and the other – by "interpretive" pianism. We conditionally define the first as "the era of virtuosos" by analogy with the name "era of interpretation of the masterpiece", also conditional, assigned to the pianism of the second half of the XIX century by H. Muradian<sup>14</sup>. Its beginning should be referred to the 1780s, and completion – to the 1840s. Accordingly, the creative practice of "father of pianism" – M. Clementi and F. Chopin's innovations serve as the basis for establishing such a framework. In other words, it covers about the last decades of the XVIII century and the first half of the XIX century.

## **2. Chronological boundaries of the "era of virtuosos"**

As follows from scientific sources [1; 2; 6; 7; 8; 9; 14; 16-20], there were four interrelated processes at that time: the perfection of the instrument, the self-determination of the piano performance, the search for pianistic means of play – from adaptation to the specific sound, and the evolution of the subject of a new kind of instrumental and performing activity – a pianist, endowed with a special type talent, such as virtuoso artist. Thus, the piano set of techniques of motor skills, "fundamental formulas", a special kind of texture, and the phenomenon of a specific piano sound have formed, which together provided the creation of "language" of this creativity, its rhetoric and poetics, developing a solid structure, such as pianism.

We shall consider the raised issues in more detail. The first is the periodization of the "era of virtuosos" and its chronological boundaries. A. Moffa refers to it the time of the historical existence of the first – London – pianist school, which activities cover 1777 and the first two decades of the XIX century. The limits set by the author of the London School's activities are motivated, on the one hand, by the sonatas of

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<sup>14</sup> Мурадян Г. В. Virtuозность как феномен в истории фортепианной культуры : автореф. дис. ... канд. искусствоведения : спец. 17.00.02 / Ростов. гос. консерватория им. С. В. Рахманинова. Ростов н/Д, 2014. С. 18.

Op. 2 № 2 M. Clementi, which became “a declaration and at the same time a reference point for the formation of the school; on the second, the crystallization in the 1820s of a single sound ideal of the piano, as a result of which the “instrument of the English model became obsolete”<sup>15</sup>. Therefore, the aesthetic ideal of the pianism itself is somehow related to the technical and acoustic properties of the piano of a particular design.

O. Aleksieiev does not periodize pianism as an interesting phenomenon, but identifies the end of the XVIII – first half of the XIX century, referring to the work by representatives of London and Viennese pianist schools, considering separately the achievements of L. Beethoven, the piano art of F. Schubert, K.M. Weber, F. Mendelssohn, calling them as “Advanced creative trends <...>”. He further characterizes R. Schumann's piano legacy, the art of virtuosos of the 1830–1840's, F. Chopin, and completes this part of his work with the F. Liszt pianism<sup>16</sup>. It is easy to make sure that the distribution of material in O. Aleksieiev's book in general does not contradict the chronological limits of the “era of virtuosos” presented by us. Considering the appeal of “pure” pianism as a certain stage of creativity or its obligatory element – is obvious for all, except, perhaps, for F. Schubert, who were named as composers, the legitimacy of their pianism as “era of virtuosos”. It is very telling that N. Kashkadamova begins her book on piano music of the XIX century precisely from the art of virtuosos, which is true both chronologically and historically<sup>17</sup>.

I. Boreiko offers another principle of periodization of the piano and performing arts. The researcher proceeds from the common linguistic and epoch-style criteria and considers on this basis the algorithm of the historical movement of pianism. The chronological boundaries of this periodization coincide with the XVII – the verge of the XIX and XX centuries, thus encompassing almost the entire musical culture of the classic-romantic era. The first, the Clavier period, coincides with the Baroque era, but its inclusion in the process of formation of the piano

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<sup>15</sup> Мофа А. В. Английские фортепиано и некоторые стилевые черты лондонской фортепианной школы // От барокко к романтизму. Музыкальные эпохи и стили: эстетика, поэтика, исполнительская интерпретация / отв. ред. С. В. Грохотов. М., 2010. С. 149–156.

<sup>16</sup> Алексеев А. Д. История фортепианного искусства. Ч. 1 : учеб. для муз. вузов. М. : Музыка, 1967. 286 с.

<sup>17</sup> Кашкадамова Н. Історія фортеп'янного мистецтва. ХІХ сторіччя : підручник. Тернопіль : АСТОН, 2006. 608 с. : нот.

and performing arts, albeit on the rights of its prehistory, is justified, according to the author, by the repertoire of the works by J.S. Bach, G.F. Handel, F. Couperin, J.F. Rameau, and D. Scarlatti in contemporary concert and academic practice. Style features of Baroque clavier music – polyphonic composition, "unity of affect", "terraced" dynamics; its subject is a universal musician. But most importantly, in the Clavier period, the "tendency towards instrumental neutrality" prevails<sup>18</sup>.

The transition from clavier to piano dates, according to the periodization of I. Boreiko, to the 1760s and 1780s, partly coinciding with the "Age of Enlightenment" and such artistic phenomena as sentimentalism and Viennese classical school. Homophonic and harmonic thinking, clear delineation of texture plans were predominant; the subject of the performance is not completely separated; universalism remains in pedagogy; the design of the piano is not stable; harmonious figures are laid out in a close arrangement; the right pedal is used as an additional means of expression.

Referring to the authority of G. Abert, I. Boreiko exposes the boundaries of the third period: 1782–1812. However, the Russian researcher tends towards a more generalized chronology: the junction of the XVIII – XIX centuries. The most typical is "the figure of the performer-composer, whose creativity is dominated by the performance component" (the author calls M. Clementi and J.L. Dusik)<sup>19</sup>. Pedagogy of this period focuses on the formation of technical skills, in connection with which the genre of instructional etude develops, the manual technique predominate, the texture acquires a characteristic of concert<sup>20</sup>.

The period of the romantic piano, according to I. Boreiko, covers "almost all the XIX century and is characterized by a powerful flourishing of piano performance"<sup>21</sup>. Since the researcher does not distinguish the internal milestones of the piano-performing process in the era of Romanticism, a summary picture of the state of pianism

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<sup>18</sup> Борейко И. М. Методика преподавания дисциплины «История фортепианного исполнительства» у студентов-пианистов средних специальных учебных заведений : автореф. дис. ... канд. пед. наук : спец. 13.00.02 «Теория и методика обучения и воспитания (музыка; уровень проф. образования)». Екатеринбург, 2010. С. 12.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. С. 12–13.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. С. 12.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. С. 13.

emerges, resulting in such characteristic features of romantic performance as "through" his subject – a touring virtuoso, – with a pianist, namely with the figure that A. Aleksieiev finds only in the 1830–1840ss, and H. Muradian – in the second half of the XIX century. I. Boreiko completes the periodization by the XIX and XX centuries. Equally significant, according to the researcher, is the emergence of recording devices. Thus, by the criteria of differences of historical periods, I. Boreyko chooses the general purpose orientation of the great musical era, the type of instrument and its perception, the subject of music and performance. With all the cognition of this approach, he does not answer two questions: whether the chronological limits of stabilization of the New European sound system and piano performance coincide, or whether the process of movement of this kind of art from within, represented in its entirety, is synchronized. Considering them, we shall try to outline the contours of the phases of pianism in the "era of virtuosos".

The periodization of pianism in the way of its formation is complicated by two circumstances. The first of these is the stressful nature of the activities of representatives of different schools, each of which contributed to the specialization of piano performance and, as a result, culture. Such synchronization in time of different technological ideas and sound representations complicates the establishment of internal boundaries of the historical process in this field and contributes to the impression of a more panoramic picture, the dynamism of which is caused more by the set of constantly emerging new "nominal" phenomena than by a purposeful single-line movement. The second circumstance is related to the coexistence of at least two main "heroes" of the piano-performance act: according to O. Aleksieiev, composer-virtuoso and virtuoso-composer. In the first case, we are talking about musicians who place the same value on both varieties of musical creativity – composition art and performance – and enrich each other; the second is about the performers who create the repertoire for their performances<sup>22</sup>.

One should also remember that together with M. Clementi and J.N. Gummel, J. Field and D. Steibelt, piano art also included works by L. Beethoven. An exemplary characteristic of the time limits outlined above is contained in M. Chernyavskaya's textbook and its title:

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<sup>22</sup> Алексеев А. Д. История фортепианного искусства. Ч. 1 : учеб. для муз. вузов. М. : Музыка, 1967. С. 8–9.



“Beethoven’s Era”<sup>23</sup>. The scientific literature sometimes expresses doubts about the "piano" of the composer's thinking of the last Viennese classic. Here is what B. Jaworski wrote about this: "Beethoven's string-quartet thinking, and he" instrumented "it for orchestra, singing, or piano." <...> “In Beethoven's piano sonatas, the composition is based not on the nature of the piano, but on the presentation of the four-voice vocabulary, each of which is similar to a string quartet”<sup>24</sup>.

Beethoven's understanding of "piano" was shared by representatives of late romanticism – F. Liszt, J. Brahms, S. Frank, who proposed their own decision. However, they showed their aural perception of the instrument and individual approaches to it even when the foundations of pianism, its poetics and the "linguistic" thesaurus had already developed, and the piano and performing arts no longer required a definition of their essence, instruments and artistic and aesthetic boundaries. Another matter is L. Beethoven, included historically and chronologically in the process of the formation of this art. Therefore, if the foresight of the master in terms of going beyond the "pure" pianism is beyond doubt, then his involvement in the formation of this phenomenon needs comment.

As a creative genius of colossal scale, L. Beethoven seemed to be compressed in his pianism, which derives not only from his concert practice, but also from the texts of his piano works, the way that the art of playing the piano and related spiritual and aesthetic beginning passed through the entire XIX century and preceding it for decades. L. Beethoven's piano and creative heritage proved to be a huge potential energy, the kinetic unfolding of which made the history of pianism of a certain time from the "virtuoso era" to the discoveries of F. Liszt, J. Brahms and S. Frank. If, from the very first opus of the piano sonatas, L. Beethoven declares his conception of the piano as an instrument capable of bringing to the audience all the power of his intellect and courage of spirit and, therefore, understands his resources – and opens them! – as a means of creating an adequate content of this kind of sound image, in other genres, it performs a rapid ascent from the tasks of pianism itself to compositional and "human studies". For example, in

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<sup>23</sup> Чернявська М. С. Піанізм бетховенської доби. Становлення фортепіанної фактури : навч. посіб. до курсу «Історія фортепіан. виконав. мистецтва» для студентів вищ. спец. навч. закл. III–IV рівнів акредитації. Харків : Смуґаста тип., 2015. 208 с.

<sup>24</sup> Наследие Б. Л. Яворского : к 120-летию со дня рождения : сб. ст. М. : Гос. центр. музей муз. культуры им. М. И. Глинки, 1997. С. 59.

piano concerts he quickly departed from the fascination of contemporary authors with the theme of the figurative plan, the demonstration of mastery of the pianist formulas of motor skills to their symphonization, which was a refusal to improvise with a cadence soloist. N. Kashkadamov notes an analogous metamorphosis of L. Beethoven's instrumental style in the genre of variations: "If at first the main principle in variations was the use of varieties of figurative technique, then in the last cycle of the composer, there were 33 Variations on Diabelli's Waltz, op. 120 – the development of all elements of the theme, its melody, harmony and rhythm"<sup>25</sup>.

Numerous variations of the young KM Weber, who created them for his own concert performances as a virtuoso artist, were marked by simultaneous composer and performing intentions. A. Aleksieiev considers the performance style of German early romance the phenomenon of the transition "from the piano letter of the period of classicism to the texture of Leaf pianism". Specifying this thesis, the scientist notes the various game techniques used by K.M. Weber: in addition to homo and arpeggio passages – chords, octaves, double notes, jumps; "pearl nature" – next to "the expected accuracy and bravura of a great concert plan"; the actual piano effects are combined with orchestral sound. N. Kashkadamova unambiguously classifies pianist Weber as a virtuoso, noting therefore his very large, nimble, keyboard-adapted hand, and brilliant technique – both manual and chord, impeccability in performing double notes, unusual ease in performance jumps. In the genre of variations, K.M. Weber moved, like L. Beethoven, from the fascination with the virtuoso interpretation of the genre, "where the method of variation was prompted by a nimble movement of the hand on the keyboard" to the understanding of variance as "meaningful and imaginative transformations of themes". Also, in parallel with his senior contemporary, the German early romantic turned to genre variation, turning the cycle of variations into suites, and each of them into a miniature. However, K.M. Weber has never given up the opportunity to shine with skill, efficiency of presentation of musical material, artistic manner of expression on the instrument. Even in the high genre of sonata, K.M. Weber does not refuse the opportunity to demonstrate his virtuoso features.

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<sup>25</sup> Кашкадамова Н. Мистецтво виконання музики на клавішно-струнних інструментах (клавикорд, клавесин, фортеп'яно). XIV–XVIII ст. : навч. посіб. 2-ге вид., випр. і допов. Київ : Освіта України, 2009. С. 354.

It is easy to see that K.M. Weber, unlike L. Beethoven, does not distinguish between concert and variety and serious forms of composition, invariably combining in all genres the commitment to "pure" pianism and a pronounced characteristic as a manifestation of creative imagination. Such a fusion of the performing and composing gift hides the properties of K. Weber's pianism: "<...> the extraordinary emotional brightness of the performance, its "magnetic force" which undoubtedly subdued the listeners". N. Kashkadamova considers this a manifestation of an early-romantic performing style, "which painted brilliant virtuosity with 'superhuman pathos' and gave it exaltation and fantasy"<sup>26</sup>.

Continuing the line of division between piano art by K.M. Weber and L. Beethoven, we note two more points. According to M. Cherniavska, the latter organizes the texture with the help of thematic development<sup>27</sup>. He thinks primarily of the categories of composition, subordinating them to the components of "pure" pianism. Metaphorically speaking, when L. Beethoven creates his artistic concepts, his virtuoso pianist "dies". He is not always concerned about the convenience of the performer, the fitness created for playing the piano. Hence, obviously, the pathos of the "accusation" of Beethoven's opuses in "unpopularity", expressed by B. Yavorsky<sup>28</sup>. K.M. Weber always maintains a syncretis of his hypostasis, never neglecting a virtuoso, "purely" pianistic beginning, though involving in the aesthetically-playful action the characteristics, that is, does not go beyond the immanently pianistic, but colors it with figuratively-theatrical poetic semantic overtones. L. Beethoven is hence closely in the usual means of piano music: proven textural techniques and pianistic formulas, the most aural aura; on the contrary, K.M. Weber fully trusts the established practice, not joining the opposition to it, but continuing the development of ideas contained in it, that is – with all innovations – never losing "piano" thinking.

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<sup>26</sup> Кашкадамова Н. Історія фортеп'янного мистецтва. ХІХ сторіччя : підручник. Тернопіль : АСТОН, 2006. С. 100.

<sup>27</sup> Чернявська М. С. Піанізм бетховенської доби. Становлення фортепіанної фактури : навч. посіб. до курсу «Історія фортепіан. виконав. мистецтва» для студентів вищ. спец. навч. закл. ІІІ–ІV рівнів акредитації. Харків : Смугаста тип., 2015. С. 104.

<sup>28</sup> Наследие Б. Л. Яворского : к 120-летию со дня рождения : сб. ст. М. : Гос. центр. музей муз. культуры им. М. И. Глинки, 1997. 155 с.

The comparative table contained in the above-mentioned book by M. Cherniavska and drawn on the basis of some observations of S. Feinberg gives a clear idea of the isolation of L. Beethoven's piano style from that developed by virtuoso pianists. The type of texture of L. Beethoven's piano music by M. Cherniavska, after S. Feinberg, is called "orchestral and ensemble", which clearly resonates with the content of B. Yavorskyi's observations above. It is characterized by the tendency to overcome the limitations of "piano", the disclosure of the musical idea by means of juxtaposition of themes, the variety of colors, dialogue, the cohesiveness of different registers, the complexity of the pedal, the understanding of the role of the pedal as a means solely used to extend the fingers while extending the fingers clarity in the presentation of thematic material, the possibility of re-commissioning the ensemble without drastic changes in the texture. The type of texture inherent in pianism and piano works by virtuoso pianists is referred to by the named authors as "fortepiano". It is characterized by disclosure of typical properties of the instrument, convey the musical idea with the texture, uniformity of colors, monologue, avoid sharp change of registers, use of the middle of the keyboard, excess technical techniques, use of the pedal outside the finding of the finger on the keyboard, creation of harmonious colors and hidden voices formed by the texture, the inability to transfer the musical text to the conditions of the ensemble without a radical change of the texture.

### **3. A "brilliant style" as the specificity of "pure" pianism**

It is quite obvious that the revealed properties of the "piano" texture determine the specificity of "pure" pianism as a performance and instrument of embodiment of the composer's plan, and ultimately, with some adjustment, the immanent structure of the piano and performing arts, its poetics. An intermediate position in the table compiled by M. Cherniavska could refer to K.M. Weber. The "piano" of his texture is undoubted, and his created piano opus will lose a lot when plaid using other instruments. However, the fusion of pianism with the creativity of composer intentions, the characteristic of thinking (let's not forget that K.M. Weber succeeded equally in conductor and opera arts), extramarital impulses that nourish his creative consciousness, stimulate the search for individual intonational-thematic-thematic. Continuing the metaphor proposed above, K.M. Weber does not "die" either as a composer in favor of "pure" pianism or as a virtuoso in composer's intentions. This is

how the musical style is born, in which pianistic and composer reflections form an indivisible, syncretic unity. According to the musical role of the first half of the XIX century, highlighted by O. Aleksiev<sup>29</sup>, K.M. Weber can be classified as a virtuoso composer.

Unlike K.M. Weber, F. Mendelssohn is the least associated with virtuoso piano performance. In cultural and historical memory, his successes in organ and conductor practice have been preserved to a greater extent. A characteristic name the composer gave to one of his works – "Serious Variations", op. 54, which is impossible not to recognize the polemical meaning directed against the virtuoso interpretation of the genre. Still, it would be too careless to dissuade F. Mendelssohn from his general admiration for demonstrating his brilliant mastery of the art of pianism. Significantly, considering his piano legacy under the auspices of "advanced creative tendencies", O. Aleksiev identifies a quantitatively significant group of works of German romance, written in a fashionable "brilliant style". The scientist attributes to her two piano concerts, "Brilliant Capriccio", "Serenade" and Allegro giocoso, "Rondo Capriccio", a series of etudes<sup>30</sup>... We shall also mention youthful double concerts with orchestra – for two pianos and for violin and piano, as well as Fantasy, op. 28 and some songs without words. The heir to the London school, the musical "grandson" of M. Clementi, whose pianistic achievements young F. Mendelssohn received "from the hands" of the student maestro Ludwig Berger. by him the piano works on the "mirror" of a certain era – not only in terms of their belonging to romanticism, but also in terms of the mode of consciousness of the "virtuoso era". As with K.M. Weber, the purely aesthetic task of perfect playing the instrument dissolves without rest in poetic and compositional intentions, but is part of the semantic complex of the work, acts as a factor of spiritual-meaningful level. The real school of pianism is a song without the words of F. Mendelssohn, which shows his composer's ingenuity side by side with a specific pianistic expression – both intonational-sound, textural, and motor. In masterly passages and sections of F. Mendelssohn's compositions, N. Kashkadamova sees in particular heritable connections with K.M. Weber, and calls "Serious

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<sup>29</sup> Алексеев А. Д. История фортепианного искусства. Ч. 1 : учеб. для муз. вузов. М. : Музыка, 1967. 286 с.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. С. 66.

Variations" an "encyclopedia of textured techniques"<sup>31</sup>. The last example is illustrative of the fact that its creator thinks in terms of equally compositional and textural-variational development, and pianistic and textured-piano texture, while continuing the line of concert variations of the "era of virtuosos" in the transformed form of poetic. The decades of F. Mendelssohn's creative maturity, when his most innovative works for the piano were being created, coincided with those of the London and Viennese schools, as well as with Paris, which declared itself later. The concert practice of F. Kalkbrenner and A. Hertz, S. Talberg and I. Mosheles consolidated the authority of virtuoso composers and the urgency of social ordering for their performances, which convinces the value and self-sufficiency of pianism as a special way of self-disclosing personality in comparison with composition, in turn, it testifies to a deep rooting in the musical culture of a new kind of art, born by the "era of virtuosos". The multi-vector process of becoming pianism as a "nominal", specifying basis of piano performance provokes the question of the existence of a single aesthetic ideal of this phenomenon in the considered historical time. Responding thereto, one should keep in mind the multilevel of the aesthetic ideal, just as artistic style is represented in scientific knowledge. It is necessary to distinguish between the aesthetic ideal of the personal-authorial, of a certain pianistic school and of an epochal one. In accordance with the philosophical categories, they can be defined by the concepts of singular, special, and general. Thus, a hierarchical system of subordination is formed, in which each higher degree "removes" the most frequently repeated features of the previous ones, abstracting from the obvious differences. Thus, the London School was famous for its multi-tone sound of the piano, and M. Clementi wanted to see it a worthy rival of the polychrome orchestra, and his student – J. Field sought a quality, which is usually metaphorically defined by the concept of "illusory". J.N. Gummel was famous for its strikingly transparent "pearl" of passages<sup>32</sup>, and virtuosos of the Paris school became famous for "octave kings"<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> Кашкадамова Н. Історія фортеп'янного мистецтва. ХІХ сторіччя : підручник. Тернопіль : АСТОН, 2006. С. 128–129.

<sup>32</sup> Алексеев А. Д. История фортепианного искусства. Ч. 1 : учеб. для муз. вузов. М. : Музыка, 1967. С. 17.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. С. 92.

K.M. Weber's aesthetic ideal of pianism is seen in the addition of "pure" pianism properties of characteristics; F. Mendelssohn's – in its transformation into one of the composer's (linguistic) expressive means. But over everything, the search for a characteristic piano in all things prevailed – technology, motor skills, vocabulary, adaptive actions, adjustment of the executive apparatus, carcasses, pianistic formulas, sound palette, etc. Without exaggeration, it can be argued that it was an exploration of ways to communicate with the instrument, its unique acoustic and technical potential and the definition of the limits of "piano". Thus, the aesthetic ideal of the "era of virtuosos" consists in the absolutization of "piano" and pianism as such as its achievement and demonstration, gaining spiritual pleasure from the awareness of the infinite possibilities of the creator.

In this regard, an interesting parable that combines the early period of the "era of virtuosos" with its conditionally later stage. In the creative practice of M. Clementi, the principal figure of the London School, the "founding father" of the pianistic cultural tradition, "piano" is still closely connected with the heritage of the keyboardists, on the one hand, the classic acoustic perception of the keyboard instrument in the paint orchestra. From Clementi, the vectors branch that lead to the development of the piano sound palette, in particular, by J. Field, and the chamberliness (saloon), elegance, finesse, and consonant with the clavier works by J. Haydn and V.A. Mozart. Another vector, by contrast, aims at rethinking classicist orchestration to sound density, power, symphonic scale in L. Beethoven. They are all brought together into a single node in F. Liszt, which thus opens the "era of virtuosos" and finds itself after 1847 on its other side. This allows us to offer conditional periodization of the "era of virtuoso", beginning with its prehistory and ending with exhaustion – while maintaining virtuosity as a stable component of the performing arts and its carrier: pianism. Its birth was preceded by a lengthy phase of understanding the prospects for instrumentalism in connection with the advent of the hammer fortepiano. As follows from the treatises of the middle and second half of the XVIII century – C.P.E. Bach, J. Relshhtab, D.G. Türk and others, analyzed by P. Zaslavska, theorists and educators-clavierists paid considerable attention to the differences in the mechanics and sound of old and new keyboard instruments, as well as contact with the latter. They were concerned about the issues of landing on the piano, the position of the hands and fingers on the keyboard, the ratio of the

elbow and the brush, the movement of the fingers, fingering – that is, adjusting the pianistic apparatus to achieve a musical sound piano background, because, as the author said, the aesthetic ideal of the music of the time as sources of “pleasure for hearing”. Accordingly, the piano performer – however, as with his key predecessors and contemporaries – required the clarity of the play, that is, the completeness and expressiveness of each sound; an elaborated arrangement which characterized the baroque-classic era of the connection between music and rhetoric; a sense of musical form that consisted of the phrases of phrase, period, larger compositional units and the whole. A register of expressive means was also made: features and possibilities of dynamics, peculiarities of strokes, fortepiano touch<sup>34</sup>.

As we can see, at the dawn of the birth of practical play of the piano and the thought of it, slowly emerged those components of communication with the instrument, which would later form a multi-level system of pianism. It is no less remarkable that the declared or implied, middle and second half of the XVIII century, keyboardists of the performer – to provide aesthetic satisfaction with the means of skill and grace, i.e. through auditory receptors – corresponds with the understanding of pianism in the following to bring the audience the impulse to contemplate the beauty. It is significant that the breakthrough in piano playing by M. Clementi and his associates in the transitional period of centuries has remained strong links with the recent past. A. Moffa observes that Londoners use active melismatics along with its reduction, terraced dynamics – with its flexibility, and abstract forms of movement – with their considerable expansion and enrichment. As a result of their activities, "the whole arsenal of diverse piano technique" has developed<sup>35</sup>. Simultaneously with the formation of pianism as an aesthetic-play structure, that is, as special value, its imaginative potential was considered in the interaction with this process. According to the named researcher, the piano technique itself became of great significance for M. Clementi and was a carrier of artistic and aesthetic content.

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<sup>34</sup> Заславская П. И. Немецкая клавирная педагогика и теория исполнительства середины и второй половины XVIII века : автореф. дис. ... канд. искусствоведения : спец. 17.00.02 «Муз. искусство». Владивосток, 2009. 27 с.

<sup>35</sup> Мофа А. В. Лондонская фортепианная школа конца XVIII – начала XIX веков : автореф. дис. ... канд. искусствоведения : спец. 17.00.02 «Муз. искусство». М., 2013. С. 16.



All this indicates that at the turn of the XVIII and XIX centuries the basic categories and phenomena of pianism were laid, suggesting that L. Beethoven organically perceived the attitudes of the London School with all the independence of his pianistic, and more broadly, fortepiano thinking.

The second period of this era, as we think, dates back to the 1810–1820ss, that is, the time of early romanticism, the emergence of romantic composers who take on the achievements of "pure" pianism and adapt them to their own creative tasks. K.M. Weber, never losing his taste for virtuosity as such, reveals in it such emotional and imaginative possibilities as admiration for movement, immersion in the cycle of events, boiling of life, carnival fuss. Movement in its "transcendental" forms is included in the arsenal of composer's means of expression. F. Schubert becomes closer the image of the "singing" piano, created, including, by J. Field. It is significant that the Londoners' miniatures in Russia were called "romances"; in the Austrian romance the piano "singing" linked to the song nature of intonation-instrumental vocabulary. In the 1820s, young F. Mendelssohn often combined modern movement with the baroque-classicist formulas of movement, etc. In our view, the influence of pianism on the emergence of romantic style in composer creativity means its stabilization as a system that has proven to be independent, and at the same time open to the enrichment of two varieties of musical art – composition and performance, on a parity basis. The possibility of such a view is supported by the observation given above regarding the establishment in the 1820s of a single ideal of "piano" sound.

Bringing pianism to a state of "solid structure", "ready" quality, determines its development in 1830-1840ss. The coexistence of performers who cultivate "pearl" and "octave" play leads to their synthesis in a single space of performance and composer text – a tendency that is clearly evident in the creative practice of the young F. Liszt. This is the way to the future, to the crystallization of the Liszt reform efforts already beyond the "virtuoso era". On the contrary, the innovative transformations in pianism that belong to F. Chopin – with all their prospects up to the conquest of the French Impressionists – can more likely be regarded as a complete implementation of the ideas of the "virtuoso era" and an incredible expansion of their capabilities – as in the plan of "pure" pianism, and in terms of artistic and aesthetic potential. From these perspective, F. Chopin culminates in a process that began with the virtuosos of London – and Vienna – schools, after which

pianism came to a new stage in its development related to the activities of F. Liszt and his students – G. Bylov, K. Tausig, E. d'Alber and others. The consolidation of the virtuoso era noted by O. Aleksieiev in the piano-performing practice of the pianist-interpreter's role of play can also be confirmed by the end of the XIX century<sup>36</sup>.

Thus, having developed over about sixty years, "pure" pianism held its ground, taking on various forms throughout its formation and evolution. In the most general terms, there are the intra-pianistic (immanent), which carries the meaningful "radiation" of the piano and performing arts, and the extra-pianistic (general and extra-musical). The first of them are based on the preference for perfection and harmony, which index the image of beauty, and the clarity and equality of the game in motor skills (mostly manual) is juxtaposed with the "illusory" sound, which is achieved with the help of textural and pedal means. In the long run, it becomes fascinated with octave technology while maintaining the main condition – the purity and clear articulation of the performing "language". The second form of manifestation of the aesthetic ideal of pianism in the "era of virtuosos", while maintaining its "purity", is aimed at attracting pianistic means to a wider range of spiritual-meaningful and stylistic phenomena. Piano movement and cantilen ("singing") are conceived as a symbolic expression of the two main figurative-semantic spheres of the romantic worldview: play and lyrics, which act on different facets of personal expression. Thus, the "piano", which underlies the aesthetic ideal of "pure" pianism, turns out, on the one hand, the sound emblem of romanticism, on the other – the conductor of common linguistic (species) ideas of a certain historical time.

## CONCLUSIONS

Separation of piano art from other varieties of this kind of musical creativity, on the one hand, and composition, on the other, was during differentiation in the artistic consciousness and practical activity of new and old keyboard instruments, which led to the development of another performing instrument, exploration of technical and expressive possibilities of the piano and its improvement, formation of a special sound image, techniques and game formulas. In other words, the named

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<sup>36</sup> Алексеев А. Д. История фортепианного искусства. Ч. 1 : учеб. для муз. вузов. М. : Музыка, 1967. С. 92.

process was marked by the formation of a "solid nucleus" of piano performance, namely, pianism. The solution to this problem was objectively the work of virtuoso musicians who run the concert stage for about sixty years. Despite the heterogeneity of the ways of mastering the piano and comprehending its associated activities, as well as the understanding of the "face" of pianism, a generalizing principle that makes it possible to speak of the "virtuoso era", the aesthetic ideal of "pure" pianism prevails in these years in achieving a higher degree of piano playing. Thus, a "brilliant style", which, in all its unity, took various forms in a particular school or in personal creative practice. For several decades, "brilliant style" has evolved, confronting the romantic at various stages of its formation, penetrating into it and absorbing it, while maintaining its "physiognomic" features. This makes it possible to periodize the "virtuoso era" from prehistory, transitional decades on the verge of the XVIII and XIX centuries, before crystallization and subsequent destabilization until the middle of the XIX century.

The virtuoso ideal of pianism was influenced by the interaction of three processes in the musical culture of that time: the search for ways to achieve the quality of "piano" – from adaptive technologies to sound, perfection of the instrument itself, the formation of the piano-performing profession, and art as a special, autonomous aesthetic and cultural activities. The emerging specialization was personified primarily by the figure of a virtuoso pianist. The combination of these processes determined the emergence of the cult of "pure" pianism, whose domination period in performance practice – from the late XVIII century until the 1830s-1840s – created the "era of virtuosos". In parallel with its leading trends, partly collided with them L. Beethoven, a courageous genius who made a powerful breakthrough in the future, developed his pianistic practice, supplying the creative imagination of such giants as F. List and J. Brahms, as well as musicians. Thus, along with the ideal of "pure" pianism, another appeared – an interpretive one that began to dominate in the second half of the XIX century. The presence of the two named ideals of pianism led to the establishment of criteria for their differences concerning, including the type, means and purpose of communication, the pianistic role, the type of personal expression. The rapid emergence of pianism as a new kind of instrumentalism led to a certain algorithm of this process, allowing to create its periodization. The first period coincided with the years of vivid activity of

representatives of the London School, led by M. Clementi, the second – with the creativity of the early romantics, and the third – with the achievement of "pure" crystalline pianism, including F. Chopin's one.

## SUMMARY

The article considers the pianism of the virtuoso era as a carrier of the aesthetic and performing component of piano activity. It is proven that the theoretical aspects of the study of pianism are associated with the understanding of virtuosity as a factor in pianistic mastery.

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