

## **Mastering the piano compositions of N.K. Medtner as a necessary component of the professional training of a music teacher**

**Krasovskaya Elena Pavlovna**

*Candidate of Pedagogic Sciences, Full Professor*

*Moscow State Pedagogical University*

**Abstract.** The article discusses the issues of mastering of piano works of of N.K. Medtner by students of musical faculties of pedagogical higher educational institutions. It is shown that the quality of the executional development of students can be increased when using a cultural approach and integrated method of teaching in classroom in class. As part of the cultural approach, it is proposed to consider musical content in the context of the views of N.K. Medtner on the problem of traditions and innovation in history and culture, continuity in the musical art of spiritual and aesthetic experience of preceding eras, the need for philosophical reflection as a fundamental basis of the creative method in the work of the musician of the composer and the artist. The practical application of the proposed pedagogical approaches to the development of the composer's works is described.

**Keywords:** works of N.K. Medtner, philosophical and aesthetic views, piano class, students, cultural approach, comprehensive teaching method, pedagogical leadership, mastering piano style, students.

Nikolai Karlovich Medtner entered the history of world musical culture as a wonderful composer, a brilliant pianist, an artist-thinker and a teacher who left the richest heritage, which is the focus of his composer, performing and philosophical reflection. His creativity is facilitated by the classical traditions, heart-penetrated, truthfulness of the expression of feelings, refined sophistication, a combination of lyrical sentiment and romantic dreaminess with a tendency to the deepest reflections.

The largest part of N.K. Medtner's heritage is piano music, considered by researchers as the main means of translating the creative ideas of the composer. In this area he created three concertos for piano and orchestra, fourteen sonatas, forty fairy tales, three cycles of "Forgotten Motives" and a number of other miniatures. The variety of ideas inherent in Medtner's works, the sincerity of feelings and the depth of the composer's artistic and aesthetic revelations attract an increasing number of musicians, awakening the creative initiative of performers, teachers and students.

For modern students, the complexity of the performing mastery of the composer's works is due to unusual methods of presenting musical material, as well as insufficient awareness of Medtner's aesthetic views, his achievements in the field of content and means of artistic expression.

The relevance of the study is also determined by the lack of available literature, which considers pedagogical approaches to mastering the piano style of N.K. Medtner. In most of the works of domestic researchers, the analysis of the fabric of his opuses focuses on the technology of studying the means of musical expression [1]. The nature of the musical images of the Medtners as special artistic and intonational phenomena today, from a pedagogical point of view, remains not so studied.

In this regard, the importance of thoughtful pedagogical guidance of the process of mastering the works of N.K. Medtner. A competent choice by a piano teacher of the necessary approaches based on identifying the internal and external connections of the musical content of Medtner's works with the metatext of culture can inspire future music teachers to a deep search for artistic meaning, direct them along the path of mastering the performing means of expressiveness necessary for its implementation.

The purpose of this research is the theoretical substantiation, development and testing of pedagogical approaches to mastering the piano style of Medtner by students in the process of solo instrumental training.

The study of the literature on the above problems, as well as the accumulated experience of working with students of the Moscow State Pedagogical University (MSPU), made it possible to suggest that the development of the piano style of N.K. Medtner in the piano class will be successful when:

- building the educational process based on a cultural approach;
- using a "complex" teaching method in piano lessons.

Based on the analysis of various interpretations of the concept of "culturological approach" contained in the works of E. Bondarevskaya, N. Krylova and others [2; 3], the elements of content, methods and organizational forms were identified, which are necessary for the students to master the piano works of N.K. Medtner. These include:

1. Study of the organic connections of N.K. Medtner with the culture of the era in which he worked.
2. Revealing and differentiated analysis of the characteristic features and key themes of the composer's work.
3. Mastering musical content in the context of N.K. Medtner on the problem of traditions and innovation in history and culture; continuity in the art of music of the spiritual and

aesthetic experience of previous eras; the need for philosophical reflection as the fundamental basis of the creative method in the work of a musician, composer and performer.

4. A detailed study of the figurative sphere of the composer's piano works, consideration of the features of the piano style through the prism of genre and means of musical expression.

5. Acquaintance with the peculiarities of N.K. Medtner-pianist, analysis of the author's performance of piano works.

6. The formation of the auditory experience of perceiving (comprehending) music Medtner through specially organized and pedagogically guided listening and subsequent analysis of interpretations of the composer's piano music by such masters as B. Berezovsky, E. Gilels, V. Horowitz, I. Zhukov, J. Zak, N. Lugansky, V. Safronitsky, S. Rachmaninov, G. Neuhaus, Yu. Ponizovkin, S. Feinberg, M. Yudina.

The "complex" teaching method [4] involves the use of all types of musical activity in the organic unity of piano lessons (music-performing, music-theoretical, music-historical, music-oriented poly-artistic, music-mediated), with an emphasis on performing.

These pedagogical approaches were implemented in the course of experimental search work with students. The study took place on the basis of the Faculty of Musical Arts of MSPU and consisted of three stages: ascertaining, formative and control.

At the ascertaining stage, a questionnaire survey of students was envisaged, aimed at identifying the initial level of students' ideas about the personality of N.K. Medtner and his multifaceted heritage. Along with the questionnaire, the audition of the performance of the works of Medtner by the students was carried out with an assessment according to the following indicators:

- awareness of performance, the depth of the embodiment of the composer's intention;
- compliance of the sound with the character and style of the music being performed;
- possession of the tempo-rhythm organization;
- the embodiment of the integrity of the form (the ability to build the drama of an artistic image based on the logic of the deployment of musical content).

An analysis of the results of the activities carried out revealed a very superficial and undifferentiated knowledge of students about the spiritual image of N.K. Medtner, his composing heritage, features of the piano style, peculiarities of pianistic art, philosophical and aesthetic views, etc. A similar impression was left by the interpretations of Medtner's miniatures presented by the students: "Canzones-Serenades" from the cycle "Forgotten Motives", op 38 № 6, "Fairy Tales" in b-moll op. 20 № 1, etc. The performance was characterized by fragmentation, lack of poetic expression, insufficient flexibility and spirituality in the transmission of sound ideas, testifying to the superficial perception of the

image, insufficient spiritual "attunement" of students with the deep world of the author's ideas.

The formative stage provided for the use of the methodological techniques developed by us in the lessons in the piano class and conducting specially organized conversations with the students. Our pedagogical efforts were aimed at expanding their thesaurus, accumulating ideas about the stylistic features of the music being studied, and improving performing competencies.

For these purposes, each of the students was offered the compilation of a specially developed "didactic passport" of a work containing tasks for analyzing the studied works from the standpoint of a cultural approach. In the course of filling it out, the students had to conduct a musicological and performing analysis of the works, answer questions related to the coverage of significant events in the composer's life, the key positions of the worldview, the genre of the work, the circumstances of its appearance, and the means of musical expression.

The main line of conversations conducted with students was the analysis of the main philosophical and aesthetic views of N.K. Medtner, who had a key influence on his composing and performing work. Familiarization of students with scientific literature [5; 6] allowed them to conclude that the most important channels for the formation of the composer's spiritual outlook were his:

- commitment to Orthodoxy, formed in many ways, under the influence of representatives of the Russian religious idealistic philosophy V. Solovyov and I. Ilyin;
- passion for the art of Antiquity, Italian painting of the Renaissance (canvases on religious subjects by Giorgione, Titian, Perugino, Raphael, Lippi, Michelangelo), Russian literature (A. Pushkin, A. Fet, F. Tyutchev), German romantic poetry and philosophy (I. Goethe, G. Heine, A. Schopenhauer, I. Kant), the ideas of Russian Symbolism (A. Blok, A. Bely, V. Bryusov, A. Scriabin).

The students learned that the composer presented his philosophical reflections in the book "Muse and Fashion" [7]. Here, Medtner's ideas about the laws of harmony and the criteria of beauty, the purpose of art and the high mission of the artist-creator were reflected. These views formed Medtner's artistic ideal, caused the Master's need to rely on classical canons, to create in an Apollonian manner, to resist in music the spirit of inertia and chaos, and the negative manifestations of modernism.

The clarification of the stylistic features of Nikolai Karlovich's music was facilitated by a discussion with the students of the characteristics of his piano style. Concentrating primarily on composing music for his favorite instrument, Medtner revealed himself in this area as a romantic poet with a bright, life-loving acceptance of the world. Ostrodynamic

conflicts or deeply tragic concepts are not characteristic of his works. The lyrical sphere turns out to be the true element of the composer. In the center of the author's artistic world is the theme of a person with a dreamy and sublime soul, images of inspired youthful love, ecstasy with the joy of life and the beauty of nature. An irresistible charm gives many of his piano opuses a light fairy-tale haze, coloring them in ghostly-fantastic tones.

During conversations with students, Medtner's thematic issues were raised, a characteristic feature of which is the close interweaving of vocal and instrumental principles. He considered the topic as a seed containing the potential of form, and acted as "... the center ... in which the whole work is collected and illuminated" [Ibid, p. 153]. Along with the analysis of the melodic material, there was a discussion of the peculiarities of the harmonic language, the exquisite rhythm of Medtner's piano pieces, as well as the living, as if "breathing" texture, formed by gradually entering independently moving voices and echoes. The students got the idea that the composer found the ideal form for the embodiment of his ideas in the sonata, having realized in it the ideas of the synthesis of lyrics, drama and epic [8]. As a result, this led to the fusion of the sonata with other musical genres of elegy, ballad, fairy tale, which was reflected in the corresponding titles of the works "Sonata-Tale", "Sonata-Ballad", "Sonata-Elegy", etc.

The information about the characteristic features of the performing manner of the Medtner-pianist aroused genuine interest among the students. A brilliant graduate of the Moscow Conservatory, class of P. Pabst and V. Safonov, Medtner gave concerts for almost his entire life. In his performance, he found the implementation of the universal law of reconciling the diversity of elements in unity. This was expressed in the creation of a harmonious artistic picture of the performed work, where many details were organized by a common dramatic idea and were subordinated to a single center [9]. A holistic vision of the material helped the Medtner interpreter to reveal the concept of the work and convey its spiritual essence. The leading performing principle was the disclosure of the traditional "elements" and "meanings" of the musical speech of melody, harmony, form and rhythm inherent in music [7].

Listening to and analyzing recordings of Medtner's performances of his own works helped students to highlight the following distinctive features of his interpretive manner: intellectualism, masculinity, strong-willed rhythm, a kind of touch, harmony of the sound palette, masterful sculpting of form. In Medtner's pianism, the students were struck not so much by the enchanting sound of the piano and phenomenal virtuosity as by the improvisation and amazing spirituality of the playing. An important conclusion made by the students on the basis of the study of the recordings was the idea of the inextricable connection between the

performing culture of the Medtner-pianist and the general concept of his work - "artistic religiosity" [Ibid.], Which is a reflection of the individual worldview and characteristics of the composer's thinking.

The next step towards comprehending the spiritual image of the Master was the acquaintance of students with the pedagogical views of Nikolai Karlovich. Despite the episodic nature, Medtner's pedagogy was very fruitful, as evidenced by the names of his students, who showed themselves excellently in the performing and pedagogical field (M.A. Gurvich, G.L. Lukomsky, B.E. Khaikin, A.V. Shatskes, and so on).

He comprehensively developed the artistic individuality of students, their creative imagination and fantasy, brought up the ability to subtly feel the music and think about the laws of its organization. He taught to construct an interpretation according to the principles of harmony of all elements within an artistic whole based on comprehending the logic of the development of a musical idea.

The listed didactic principles were reflected in the composer's notebooks, which were subsequently combined by his students into the brochure "Everyday work of a pianist and composer" [10]. It presents general attitudes in the pianist's activities, highlights the issues of working on individual elements of musical performance, sets out methodological recommendations for the development of the technical apparatus, reflections on the will in artistic creation, etc.

The real quintessence of Medtner's pedagogy was the attention to the beauty of the piano sound. In the work on sound, the primary role of the auditory factor, the need to "pull sounds out of the deepest silence by ear" was emphasized. An interesting feature of Medtner's pedagogy was the actualization of the method of playing with closed eyes.

The most important feature of Medtner's pedagogical system was:

- the obligatory presence of all students of the class in the classroom;
- the requirement for students to keep records, stimulating reflexive processes.

The knowledge gained had a positive impact on the results of the performing mastery of the composer's works by students. At the control stage, an assessment of the educational achievements of students was carried out. Thanks to the applied methods, the idea of the piano style of Medtner reached a different, qualitatively higher level. A detailed analysis of the musical fabric in individual lessons stimulated the students' search for performing techniques to adequately convey the author's intention, which found expression in the plasticity of the melodic line, the flexibility of the tempo-rhythmic core, the subtlety of nuance, the variety of timbre coloration, and the building of a dynamic profile.

The experimental test carried out confirmed the hypothesis about the success of mastering Medtner's piano works when building the educational process on the basis of a culturological approach and an integrated teaching method. Their use in piano lessons made it possible to optimize the process of performing mastering of paintings by Medtner's students, to achieve a depth of penetration into the musical content, to translate the key features of his individual style into the performing interpretation. It taught students to think critically, to find their own strategies for mastering the artistic content of the works studied, to analyze in detail their own performing experience.

The pedagogical approaches developed and considered in the work make it possible to increase the productivity of the educational process, helping future musicians-teachers to creatively recreate the aesthetic essence of the composer's artistic images, to successfully solve the range of problems associated with penetrating the content of the work, performing the form, mastering the means of musical expression, solving technological problems. They are aimed at the formation of the spiritual "attunement" of students to comprehend a new style and contribute to a deeper comprehension of the author's idea.

### References

1. Dolinskaya Ye.B. Nikolay Medtner: a textbook for teachers and students of higher educational institutions in the specialty 072901 "Musicology" / Elena Dolinskaya; P.I. Tchaikovsky Moscow State Conservatory, A.G. Schnittke Moscow State Institute of Music. Moscow: Music: P. Jurgenson, 2013. 324 P.
2. Bondarevskaya E.V., Kulnevich S.V. Pedagogy: personality in humanistic theories and educational systems. Study guide for students. / Edited by E.V. Bondarevskaya. Moscow-Rostov-n / D: Creative Center "Teacher", 1999. 560 P.
3. Krylova N.B. Cultural education. M.: Public education, 2000. 272 P.
4. Neuhaus G.G. On the art of piano playing: Notes of a teacher. 5-th ed. M.: Music, 1988. 240 P.
5. Predvechnova O.E. N.K. Medtner and I.A. Ilyin Dialogues about the art of music, "Muse and Fashion". URL.: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/n-k-medtner-i-i-a-ilin-dialogi-o-muzykalnom-iskusstve-muza-i-moda/viewer> (appeal date: 18.06.2021)
6. Flamm K. Aesthetic Views of Nicholas Medtner. Protection of unwritten laws: "Muse and Fashion" (Chapter from the book "Russian Composer Nikolai Medtner") // Scientific Notes of the Russian Academy of Music. Gnesins. 2014. № 3(10). P. 3-34.

7. Medtner N.K. Muse and fashion: (Protection of the foundations of musical art) / N. Medtner. Paris: Ymca-press, 1978. 154 P.
8. Shitikova R.G. Synthesis of lyrics, drama and epic in the sonatas of N.K. Medtner // Fundamental research. 2015. № 2 (part 18). P. 4038-4043.
9. Danilova O.S. N.K. Medtner - reflective artist: composer, pianist, teacher // Musical art and education. 2020. № 1. URL: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/n-k-metner-refleksiruyuschiy-hudozhnik-kompozitor-pianist-pedagog> (appeal date: 12.06.2021)
10. Medtner N.K. Everyday work of a pianist and composer: Pages from notebooks / Comp. M.A. Gurvich, L.G. Lukomsky. M.: Music, 2011. 72 P.