

# Мистецтвознавство

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## NATIONAL ROOTS OF PIANO SYMBOLISM OF A. SKRYABIN PERFORMANCE STYLE

**The purpose of given work.** Designation factors of piano performance style of Skrjabin, his symbolical sources, inveterated in impressionism-symbolism of C. Debussy and salon pianism of F. Chopin. **Methodological basis** of the work – intonational aspect of style comparative method, as this offered in the works of different authors [6; 4] and also in hermeneutic positions of A. Losev [5] and others. **Scientific novelty** of the work is defining by originality of idea of symbolical principle of clavierism of Skrjabin, which reproduce in conditions of piano play sounding of “equivalent hands” of clavecin traditions. **Conclusions.** Performance style of Skrjabin is determined by dynamic and technique limitations of salon tradition, which resisted to theatrical orchestral style of academic pianism after Liszt. The offered systematization of the information about Russian salon art. Also place of Skrjabin is chosen in symbolical salon of begin of XX cent. in accordance with traditions Russian salon piano art of Moscow and Petersburg.

**Keywords:** national style, symbolism, symbolism of piano play, performance style, salon art.

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### **Національні витoki фортепіанного символізму виконавського стилю О.Скрябіна**

**Мета роботи.** Визначити показники фортепіанного виконавського стилю Скрябіна, його символістських витоків, вкорінених в імпресіонізмі – символізмі К. Дебюссі та салонності піаністики Ф.Шопена. **Методологічна основа** роботи – інтонаційний ракурс стильового компаратива, як це запропоновано в працях різних авторів [6; 4], а також в герменевтичних позиціях А.Лосєва [5] та ін. **Наукова новизна** роботи визначається оригінальністю ідеї символістського принципу клавирності Скрябіна, відтворюючого в умовах фортепіанної гри «рівноручну» гру клавесинної традиції. **Висновки.** Виконавський стиль Скрябіна визначається динамічними та фактурними обмеженнями салонної традиції, яка протистоїть театралізованій оркестральній манері постлістовського академічного піанізму. Запропонована систематизація відомостей про російське салонне мистецтво. Також виділене місце Скрябіна в символістській салонності початку XX ст. відповідно до традиції російського салонного піанізму Москви та Петербурга.

**Ключові слова:** національний стиль, символізм, фортепіанний символізм, виконавський стиль, салонне мистецтво.

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### **Национальные истоки фортепианного символизма исполнительского стиля А. Скрябина**

**Цель работы** – обозначить показатели фортепианного исполнительского стиля Скрябина, его символистских истоков, укорененных в импрессионизме – символизме К. Дебюсси и салонности пианистики Ф.Шопена. **Методологическая основа** работы – интонационный ракурс стилизованного компаратива, как это представлено в трудах разных авторов [6; 4], а также в герменевтических позициях А.Лосева [5] и др. **Научная новизна** работы определяется оригинальностью идеи символистского принципа клавирности Скрябина, воспроизводящего в условиях фортепианной игры «равноручную» игру клавесинной традиции. **Выводы.** Исполнительский стиль Скрябина определен динамическими и фактурными ограничениями салонной традиции, противостоящей театраллизованной оркестральной манере постлистовского академического пианизма. Предложена систематизация сведений по русскому салонному искусству. Также выделено место Скрябина в символистской салонности начала XX века в соответствии с традицией русского салонного пианизма Москвы и Петербурга.

**Ключевые слова:** национальный стиль, символизм, фортепианный символизм, исполнительский стиль, салонное искусство.

The actuality of the chosen theme is prompted by the jubilee date: a century of the emblematic composer's departure from life in 1915, on the threshold of the forming-up of Mystery concept as a planetary playing act, the utopian idea of which in the peak of the First World War got the tragic glint. The creative activity of A. Skryabin – composer is well researched in musicology (refer to [6; 8]). However, piano art of this great musician is less covered, because of the underestimation of his salon specifics. A. Skryabin was recognized in Odessa, whence he started his triumphal concerts in 1998 in France and Europe [6]. N. Chegodayeva, the pupil of A. Skryabin taught in Odessa conservatory so this fact has defined the essential aspects of the influence of this sort of pianism on piano school of the South Palmira.

The purpose of the given study is to give a characteristic of the factors of piano performance style of Skryabin, his symbolist sources, which have roots in impressionism-symbolism of C. Debussy and salon pianism of F. Chopin. Hence the concrete problems are: 1) systematization of information on the Russian salon art, 2) finding the place of Skryabin in the symbolist salon of the beginning of the XX century. The methodological basis of the work is intonation foreshortening of the style comparative as it is presented in the works of different authors [6; 4], as well as in hermeneutical positions of A. Losev [5] and others. The object of the research is Skryabin's heritage and the subject is his piano style. Scientific novelty of the work consists in the originality of the idea of symbolist principle of clavierity of Skryabin, who reproduced under the conditions of piano performance "equalhand" play of clavecin tradition. Practical value is an expansion of materials for special pianoforte, history and pianism theory courses.

Piano heritage of A. Skryabin, as composer, which presenting fullness of the manifestation of the symbolism [8, 970], is taken out from C. Debussy salon, as well as from sacred for both Chopin salon heritage. A. Skryabin was denied the national rootedness of his creation: criterion of folklorism, approved by the practice of M. Glinka and his colleagues, for this particular Russian composer was impossible. In case of Skryabin, his goal for "spiritual radicalism" in creation is important. It excluded existence of expressions from his program, including the manifestations of the latter in warm-heartedness. Skryabin's art is ingrained by the Spiritual burning. This sort of "spiritual radicalism" is considered a specific Russian feature of both religious service, and mental activity as a whole since above named "spiritual radicalism" is organically bound with a phenomenon of "spiritual wandering life", "...which in theological literature is considered an asset of religious thought of Russia and which directs the thoughts of our compatriots not less than to "cosmic transfiguration" [3, 4-5] "general salvation" (provided that "saved will be the one who saves" [3, 7]).

In this respect, the Russian emperor Nikolay (Skryabin: 1871/2-1915, Nikolay II: 1868-1918) made a great historical parallel, and in chronologies of life limit to A. Skryabin as the author and enthusiast of the political union "from above" at first of Europe in the form of "the United States of Europe", and then of the world. From the beginning, this grandiose political idea was not utopian and was fed by the great spiritual discoveries of the beginning of the XIX century in line with the "Celtic wave" and "Biedermeier": the question is about Oxford religious movement, taken shape in the 30<sup>th</sup> of the XIX century and supported up to the 20<sup>th</sup> of the XX century:

"In the 30<sup>th</sup> of the past century (on the text of the publication of 1988 – D.A.) Oxford movement appeared in Anglican Church. The initiators of this movement tried to revive the spirit of catholicity in the Church of England and made it their mission to return to the tradition of Ancient Undivided church. The theologians from the Oxford movement directed their eyes at the Orthodox East, including Russia... The first world war disturbed further functioning of the commissions" [7, 90, 95].

Aristocratic status of Skryabin family as well as diplomatic status of composer's father provided the possibility to get information about the political pacific ideas of the Russian emperor, as well as about religious background of the organized alliance of the Entente, based on the memory about Gallicism of France before 1789, conceptually related to Orthodoxy [2, 398]. It was France that defined the world resonance to Skryabin, when he in 1898, after unsuccessful (as music critics, but not public put it!) piano concert performance in Odessa, got full recognition in French capital [6, 92].

Moscow origin of artistic findings of the Russian composer is logical: religious Moscow was a stronghold of "Russian Biedermeier". Moscow modernist style of the 1880<sup>th</sup> – 1890<sup>th</sup> was an organic continuation of Biedermeier's positions, in Russian variant painted with the tints of the cult of the high simplicity in the tradition of the teaching of Sergey Radonezhsky and the monks of the Monastery of Optina. The main difference of these non-monastic traditions, originated in St. Cyril church, was emotional openness and a sort of enthusiastic joy of confession of human deification. Such ecstatic of joyful service is recognized in music of Skryabin – as well as specific "Skryabin's bell-ringing", sometimes similar to Rachmaninov's (see coda of Fantasies op. 28) and different from it by non-artistic symbols (see final party of the above mentioned Fantasy of Skryabin, tt. 55-72, 133-149).

This feature of Skryabin pianism, as one of the consistent prolongators of the symbolist method in instrumental art (for C. Debussy the latter was considered by French music experts as "impressionism") is formulated for the development of a working hypothesis of symbolist principle of instrumentalism. The symbolism in vocal music is revealed easier and more naturally through the symbolist poetry, which by the beyond-the-routine rhetoric and non-theatrical pathetics of text pronouncing "shields itself" from opera vocal typology.

Piano symbolism is excessive conceptual expressiveness of piano substantiality embraced the cantilena poles of a piano nocturne or "songs without words" and tutti-chords, covering all piano registers and supported by powerful, orchestral on acceptance genesis crescendo-diminuendo dynamics. Skryabin abandoned the expression of contrasts of homophonic-harmonic cantilena and "humeral" findings of culminations, from pedal support "thickness" of support of the first and the second. In dynamics he selected the visible, quasi-terraced (clavecin-organ) correlations of "high refinement"/"high grandiosity", not determined by the developed crescendo-diminuendo.

A. Skryabin measured one way or another his pieces of music with his own possibilities as a pianist. K. Morski, a researcher of art traditions of Chopin performance, straightly pointed to the salon-romantic line of Liszt–Busoni–A. Rubinstein–Rachmaninov as contrasted with Polish-French "lyric-poetical", presented by Paderewski and Cortot [10, 401]. Moreover, this researcher indicates the names of Cortot–Sofronitsky–Lipatti–G. Neuhaus as those, who considered the tendencies of Chopin's symbolism [in that place].

Importance of the left hand for Skryabin had more total aesthetic sense: pupil of S. Tanjejev, composer-polyphonist, he could not homophonally-traditionally accent "right hand" play, emphasizing polyphonic technique (French polyphony, more contrasting-polyphonic, than imitation character).

We emphasize that triumphal performances of Skryabin-pianist abroad and in the most largest cities of the Russia fixed the stylistic-ideological underlying reason of non-admittance of Skryabin's pianism – "flying", using "second keyboard" that is to say performance on "raising hand" that goes from oldclavier tradition of melismatic play. M. Mihaylov fairly perceived in these signs the national traditions, going from "pearl" pianism of J. Fild and M. Glinka [see 6, 64-65]. And the deep aspect of these traditions is brought up in the works of B. Javorsky, who gave reasons for national rootedness of piano heritage of A. Skryabin [in that place, 303-306]. In the work of Kuzemina, devoted to performance aesthetics of B. Javorsky, there are special pages about his "skryabinism" coming to Ukraine, in particular to Odessa [4, 21-27].

So "Russian spirit" of Skryabin is revealing itself, stipulated not by popular "going to people", but mental unity with religious "ecumenical" idea, dear to the maximalism of Russian life principles and aims. "Genre basis" of Skryabin compositions is appearing in biedermeier "chopin waltz" (according to the approach, accepted in modern musicology, Chopin heritage in unity with the style of his performance representation, impressed in "nocturne" of his image in "Carnival" of Schumann, is "Polish Biedermeier" [10, 237]), in Slavonic Europeanism of waltz-mazurkas of Chopin in whole). V. Rubtsova, the author of monographs about Skryabin specially fixes genre waltz character of composer's op.1, I and special devotion of early Skryabin to "chopenisms", having most of all mazurka genre reference [6, 47-49, 57-59].

We do not forget that only in Poland and Russia mazurka was firmly hold as a ball dance, unlike in other countries of Europe, which had its own special historic reasons. But, nevertheless introduction of mazurkas into Russian noble mode of life of the XIX century witnesses not about "absolute afolklorism" of Skryabin since only formally-populist interpretation of mazurka can be estimated "afolk-lore" and not in Russian-national quality. Mazurka themes of the author of "Poems of the ecstasy" became sources of famous Skryabin "leit-rhythmical" constructions of the type of sequences of triplets and dotted lines [in that place, 57-59].

However, mentioned mazurka-waltz music surroundings of Skryabin has else one specifying feature, which allows to speak about the national characteristic of the music of the composer, avoiding folklore argumentation of this national expressiveness: connection with Russian salon, having historically-religious (see as above about Gallicanism) established succession to French primary source. As in Chopin's, in Skryabin's waltz and mazurka do not have dance-applied quality, but form "music for listening" mainly of lyrical- hymn content.

Salon "atheatricality" and "rituality-encoding" of expression existed beside Chopin – as K. Mikuli wrote, Chopin-pianist "avoided the sharp accents, did not take surplus loud sounds, naming their "bark of the dogs" [see in article of K. Juszyńska, 10, 217]. C. Dzialinska continues this characteristic complementing it by contrast with piano effects: "forte beside Chopin must be pervaded and voiced, but piano unusually delicate. Forte cannot be dry, hard, done as gavel or staccato" [10, 217]. This, in general, is applicable to Skryabin as well, because "high grandeur – a high refinement" of the latter has its aesthetic support in a sort of "dematerialization" of the latter. Such generic salon lines – aristocratic in literal etymological importance of this word as presenting the "best" – an European art as a whole has its special tradition in Russia as well, and in the most original line of so called "Polish-Ukrainian salon in Ukraine".

If, by ideological reasons, the noble-aristocratic culture in Soviet Russia was accepted with reserve, so the price for this "reserve" turned out to be a grandiose figure of Skryabin. Instrumentalism of thinking of this representative of the "root system of the world vanguard" (as theorists of Köln-schools thought about Skryabin, having invited Marina Skryabina to the opening of the studio in 1952 [11, 57]) is a symptom of radical renovation of the Russian national music thinking in the XIX century inclining to national self-identity in line with vocal-choral singing expressiveness (see relation "friend-or-foe" in operas of Glinka, Serov, Borodin in comparison of choral-vocal and ballet-dance scenes). However, in the XX century it is Russian ("jumping") ballet-modern style that became the sign of the "national" in music art. It has direct parallels to condition of the Ukrainian culture from XIX to XX century.

The symbolism in the works of A. Skryabin, like in the works of other symbolist authors, reveals itself *in the redundancy* of semantic load – regarding images-abstractions, among which a special place belongs to the idea of "ecstatic", which gives some essential parties of the spiritual music (see by A. Wilson-Dickon [9, 9-10]), but represented by the given author in the areligious and the more so nondenominational context that creates *significant incomplete sense* of symbol ("a sign with endless number of senses.." according to A. Losev [5, 130]).

Ecstatic forms of Skryabin has its projection on interpretation of expressiveness of pianoforte. We remind that because of the trauma of the right hand after the attempt to play a "deep" sound [6, c. 36] the composer-pianist felt the danger of "overloading" of his right hand for the rest of his life. Accordingly, left hand support was natural for him. It significantly differed from the German tradition "support on the right hand" of the Russian piano school and that naturally moved Skryabin closer to the "clavecin style" of piano traditions to France and somewhat Chopin. We should not forget that Chopin "played chromatic scales most often with his three last fingers" [10, 417], and he did not stand "surplus loud sounding of pianoforte..." [10, 413].

An adopter of Chopin pedagogy and his play style K.Mikuli brought up such coryphaeus of Chopin piano school as A.Michalowski, M.Rozental, and P.Kochaliski, younger contemporaries of A. Skryabin. K. Mikuli was known in Russia – but was not recognized by A.Rubinstein and his company and the Mighty group members: for the Polish master there were three honored names existed – I.S.Bach, W.Mozart and F.Chopin [the same place, 403]. He did not want to know neither R.Wagner, nor I.Brahms, from whom the first was respected by the Petersburg school, and the second – by the Moscow school headed by P. Chaikovsky. This excursus into the Chopin style is essential in connection with "chopinism" in Skryabin play and whereas, salon delicacy of sonorousness was considered by him as a "defect", therefore he made an unsuccessful attempt to play "as Safonov" that is to say in "power" style, or so called "Russian", but by some sources Liszt piano style, whose representative was V.Safonov.

As a result there appeared the memories of M. Presman, who as a whole made pejorative remarks about a piano play of the great composer-pianist: "Not possessing by nature outstanding piano virtuosity gifts..." [cit.by 1, 34]. But after all there was the other position of N. Zverev, an experienced teacher and beautiful pianist, who valued piano talent of Skryabin more than his composer gift, – though the latter, as self-evident, was not discussed (see in book V. Rubtsova [6, 32-33]). There was a huge success of Skryabin in Paris in 1905, where his pianism was evaluated as "brilliant" [in that place, 228], as well as the following triumphal performances abroad and in the large cities of Russia.

This was "flying" pianism using a "second keyboard", in other words playing with a raising hand, which comes from the antique clavecin traditions of melismatic play. But S. Mihaylov reasonably saw here national traditions. Deep aspect to these traditions is brought up in the works of B. Javorski, a big enthusiast of national Russian roots of piano heritage of A. Skryabin [6, 65].

Thus, the symbolism of pianoforte of Skryabin reveals itself on the following factors:

1) in non-traditional "inversions of support on right hand" in favor of "dispersed" invoices (compare to "dispersed thematic invention" in characteristic of density of the semantic load of vanguard music of the XX century), basically in three lines on music record (illusory "three hands" performance efforts), which in principal differs from quasi orchestral density of the technique of Liszt tradition;

2) being turned towards the traditions of salon performance style, standing against theatricality of the post-Liszt variety show and concentrating principle "understatement", a certain "closed character" of expressions, that genetic derives from *spiritual stimulus* of this sort of art, developed in conditions of the cult of Orthodox Gallium of Early Christian Church [12];

3) categorical rejection of "sound naturalism of" presentation of the image of Greatness, etc. by means of dynamic "pressure" of forte play (Chopin, being a source of Skryabin style, did not stand "surplus loud sounding of pianoforte, – thence there is principle symbolism of effects of Skryabin's "high grandeur".

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