

Analysis of Performance Skills and Teaching of Liszt's Eleventh Hungarian Rhapsody

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Abstract. Hungarian Rhapsody is the Liszt's piano work with the most national emotion and national characteristics. Taking the Liszt's eleventh Hungarian Rhapsody as the research object, this paper focuses on analyzing the creation background, national characteristics, and playing skills of it, and discusses the training methods based on some playing skills and difficulties.

Keywords: Liszt's Eleventh Hungarian Rhapsody; Playing Skills; Piano Teaching.

1. Introduction

1.1 A Brief Introduction to Liszt's Life

Known as the "King of the Piano", Franz Liszt was born in Hungary in 1811. He was a famous pianist, conductor, composer, and one of the most outstanding talented musicians of the Romantic period. [1] Liszt was born in a family with a strong musical atmosphere. As a musician, his father was good at composing and proficient in musical instruments, which had an influence on Liszt's piano learning and music career. Liszt once learned piano playing from Czerny. In a very short time, he learned to touch the key timbre, correct fingering and reasonable musical clauses, and he could play all key scales smoothly. In 1832, Liszt listened to a concert of the famous violinist Paganini. Paganini's playing skill amazed Liszt. As a result, Liszt was determined to radically innovate the technique of playing the piano, and gradually began to establish new romantic principles. [2] He also created some works with pieces of showmanship, Cadenza of scales in Liszt Etudes d'execution transcendante is shown in Fig 1.



Fig 1. The 10th Liszt Etudes d'execution transcendante

Or sixth Hungarian Rhapsody, which begins with a continuous octave, then moves into homonym repeatedly, the chord progression in the left hand octave in bar 24 of part 1, and a lot of Skipping and rapid octaves in part 4, the presentation of the technique of the octave focuses more on successive sixteenth notes and the alternating occurrence of syncopated rhythms, as shown in spectrum Fig 2 and 3. In the 1870s, under the influence of Berlioz's music, he interpreted literature with music and created the musical genre of Symphonic Poem, such as Symphonic Poem No. 10 "Hamlet" S. 104. His continuous innovation of piano performance promoted the development of European music. At the same time, he also expressed his passionate love for the motherland with national works.



Fig 2. The sixth Hungarian Rhapsody



Fig 3. The sixth Hungarian Rhapsody

1.2 Creation Background and Characteristics of Hungarian Rhapsody

The influence of gypsy folk music and country music laid the foundation for Liszt's creation of Hungarian Rhapsody. In the 19th century, the large-scale national liberation movement broke out in Hungary, which made Liszt influenced by revolutionary thoughts. Under the influence of Professor Reha's harmonic method and counterpoint method, he combined with Hungarian folk songs and completed 19 Hungarian Rhapsody sets between 1846 and 1885. Rhapsody is an instrumental subject that combines the heroic and national characters of folk music. Throughout the repertoire, Liszt combined his strong personal emotions with the local folk songs and dances of Gypsies. For example, in the "Second Hungarian Rhapsody" for the Count Telecki, the allegro of the cheerful folk dance "Friska" appears, and the rhapsody is pushed to a climax by accelerating and interspersing variations, producing a unique appeal. In the 11th piece, the music uses the adagio material of the Hungarian folk dance "Chardash Dance", the rhythm is free and unrestricted, the tone is boldly contrasted, and the octave legato of the Hungarian national instrument, the cimbalom, is imitative to produce the unique harmony of the Gypsy style, showing the distinct cultural characteristics. The continuous modular chromatic scale and the accent of the lower register used in the third part of the first song also have national characteristics, which not only express their patriotic feelings, but also show the warm, lively and bold character of the Gypsy people, and promote the development of Hungarian folk music.

1.3 Research Status

Yin Yanxiang explored the differences and similarities between the different versions of Liszt's 11th Hungarian Rhapsody by international musicians and pianists such as Leslie Howard and Gary Graffman in terms of dynamics, speed expression and timbre control [3]. Hou Wannan explored the connection between Gypsy national spirit and urban songs and Hungarian instrumental dance music

in Liszt's eleventh Hungarian Rhapsody, as well as Huang Fang's performance technique of some diversified, symphonic effects, a skip tone similar to that of a bell fiddle and brilliant cadenza in this work [4]. These studies provide new ideas and pave the way for the training of playing skills and difficulties as well as the topic of emotional expression, and try to combine pedagogy and the detailed skills of Hungarian Rhapsody in the aspect of how to teach students to play.

1.4 Article Structure

This paper is divided into four parts. The first chapter is the Liszt's introduction, creation background, national characteristics and research status of Hungarian Rhapsody. The second chapter analyzes the form structure, playing skills and emotional expression of Liszt's 11th Hungarian Rhapsody. The chapter three lists the technical training of some difficult points in the performance and summarizes and corrects the problems that are easy to occur in students' performance by combining teaching experience. The chapter four summarizes the full text and points out the shortcomings of this article.

2. Analysis of Performance Skills and Emotional Expression of Liszt's 11th Hungarian Rhapsody

2.1 Analysis of Musical Form Structure

The 11th Hungarian Rhapsody is structured as a Multi segmental free form, tetrachord that stepwise descending and Auxiliary style wrap-around trichord group perform variations on different levels of musical elements. The "11th Hungarian Rhapsody" has a total of 164 bars, and its bars 1-40 are slow parts. With the gradual acceleration of speed, the vocal range gradually increases. Therefore, its bars 41-164 are fast bars. "Hungarian Rhapsody" has a strong style of Hungarian folk-dance music, and is magnificent. The structure of its musical form is shown in Table 1:

Table 1. The musical form structure of the 11th Hungarian Rhapsody

Free form	Speed marks	Paragraphs	Phrase	Bars	Tonality
I	Lento a capriccio	A	a	1-4	a
			a1	5-9	
		B	b	10	C
			b1	11	E
			a2	12-16	a
II	Andante Sostenuto	C	c	17-20	A-b
			c1	21-24	D
		C1	d	25-31	b-A
			d1	32-40	b-A
III	Vivace assai	D	e	41-51	#f
			e1	52-69	
		E	f	70-91	
			f1	92-115	
			Connection section		
IV	Prestissimo	F	g	126-141	#F- #g- #F
			g1	142-164	#F- #g- #F

Part 1 (bars 1-16), structured as a rounded single trilogy form for the expanded middle sentence, speed as Lento adagio, tonality of A movement is a minor and consists of two unbalanced parallel phrases with a quavery texture in the right hand of the A phrase (bars 1-4), forming a hidden line of

descending progressive tetrachord from a minor tonic to dominant, semi-terminating in the dominant form. The a1 sentence (bars 5-9) makes use of similar material, with a fragmented presence of the surrounding lively triad with auxiliary notes added to the lower part, and some dance ornamentation added to the left hand. The second sentence terminates entirely on the major chord of the picardy third. In section B, sentence b (bar 10) uses texture variations on the original basis, the tonality of bar 10 is C major, and b1 (bar 11) is E major. There is a large span of intonation in the b and b1 sentences, and the texture of broken and polyphonic chords played in unison, three degrees of tonal layout, as well as the material surrounding the tonic. At the same time, it embodies the bold non-transitional modulation characteristic of Gypsy folk music, and the variation reproduction of a2 (bars 12-16), the melody changes the rhythm to increase the rhythm density, and puts the theme note on the strong beat of each unit beat. Through repetition of homophony, texture variation, local double tone, the cadenza melody is added, and the second sentence of section a is reproduced. The technique of texture variation and the obstruction of the 15th minor stanza expand the passage and finally the original key is returned. Section B is in sharp contrast to the smooth minor of section a.

In part II (bars 17-40), the speed is *andante*, and section C is a four-bar parallel two-sentence modulation segment, using the subject material to start textural variations again, while the tone changes, elongating the breath. The c sentence (bars 17-20) is transferred from A major key to b minor key and ends on the major chord. The c1 sentence (bars 21-24) is transferred to D major with a dotted rhythm that highlights the style of Hungarian dance music. C1 is an expansion of a further variation of the material in C: d sentence (bars 25-31) has the key of b minor switched back to A major, at this time, the melody changes to the left hand, and the dotted rhythm also crosses the left hand, which echoes the previous paragraph, deepening the characteristics of the folk dance music, and the texture occurs the sixth chord and arpeggio chord, the rhythm also changes from the dotted to the two eighth note rhythm, paving the way for the closure. The original material of Part 1 is used, and the theme is interwoven with a small cadenza-like broken chord. Switching back to A major for closure after the key conversion. The d1 sentence (bars 32-40) is repeated, reinforcing the thematic impression and striking the mood, ending with the A major chord.

The part III (bars 41-115) is an unbalanced parallel period with a ternary form and *allegro* speed, and the e sentence (bars 41-51) is *#f* minor. The music is more animated with a second auxiliary tone on top of the equalized sixteenth notes. The addition of eighth note half-broken chords in a dance-like manner, and the heavy use of chromatic scales make the music more active. The e1 phrase (bars 52-69) continues to expand with chromatic scales. The use of a sequence phrase increases the range of the play, changes the mood, and increases the style of the dance, culminating in a chromatic transition to E. The f sentence (bars 70-91) shifts to a minor second, a strong beat to an *appoggiatura*, and combines a tetrachord and auxiliary style wrap-around trichord group. The melody is at its highest point and semi-terminating in the dominant. In the f1 phrase (bars 92-115), the harmony is hindered again, and the harmonic variations connect with the cadenza to expand, gradually pushing the whole song to a climax on the two-handed chromatic scale. The left-hand texture gradually becomes a bass and chord arrangement technique that changes from eighth notes to quarter notes.

The strong connection before Part IV (bars 116-225) and dominant chord based on the unstable *#f* minor raises the tension and sets the stage for Part IV, ending with the same tonic major chord.

Part IV (bars 126-164) is a one-part form with a *presto* speed, and section F is an unbalanced parallel period, starting with the g sentence in *#F* major (bars 126-141) shifts to *#g* minor, and ends with a return to *#F* major. The octave chord on the left and right hand in eighth notes with the accent mark provides brilliant acoustics. The g1 (bars 142-164) phrase is repeated, the first half of the lower octave is played, then the range continues to rise, the sound *crescendo*, *ff* and other marks continue to occur, and the whole piece ends in a grand effect on the major chord.

2.2 Analysis of Playing Skills

In the creation of the eleventh Hungarian Rhapsody, Liszt made use of a large number of ornaments used to decorate the melody, such as *appoggiatura* and *tremolo*. *Appoggiatura* refers to a

note that is attached to the main note but does not occupy the time value [5]. A tremolo is a sound effect such as a trembling effect when the chords are played quickly and repeatedly. [6] It also uses the skills of running chromatic scales, arpeggios that broken the continuous progression of chords, cadenzas that expand the technique of phrasal showmanship, and continuous octave chord playing. At the same time, it also shows many details in the aspects of force symbol marking and pedal application skills.

The performance of ornament has always required flexible skills to interpret, tremolo is the first playing technique in this song. In Fig 4, the text is quasi zimbalo, which means to imitate the sound of the Hungarian cimbalom. When playing tremolo, players should pay attention to whether the two notes fall at the same time, with their arms relaxed naturally and falling on the keys by gravity. And the tremolo should be played with a chime-like sound effect from far to near. It should also be noted that the speed should not go from slow to fast, because the original song is not labeled.



Fig 4. Music Example

As shown in Fig 5: the continuous appoggiatura goes down. In terms of technique, the time control of the appoggiatura must be precise. At the same time, in terms of stress, the appoggiatura must not occupy the strong beat position, testing the detailed control of the fingertips when playing. The player needs a joint of the fingers to actively exert force and control the strength from small to large, the hand shape is stable but not deformed, and the main chord is used to show the connotation of the music.



Fig 5. Music Example

The running of the chromatic scale up and down frequently occurs in this music, as shown in Fig 6: in the third part of Allegro, the chromatic running is interspersed with the modified technique to expand the wrap-around theme and gradually improve the vocal range. As the speed is gradually getting faster, in order to achieve a lively and active auditory effect, the chromatic running needs sufficient dexterity of fingers. At the same time, the skill of independent finger running can perfectly present the dance style with the left hand equalizing the eighth notes texture. The player shouldn't overdo the finger lift because it will affect the flow of the run. It should be grainy, nimble, and clean.

The subsequent obstructing expansion part is to lengthen the chromatic breathing, make strong and weak ups and downs and coherence more obvious, the wrist needs to relax to naturally drive the

chromatic running, and the strength control should also be focused. Too much force will affect the beauty of this phrase. As shown in Fig 7:



Fig 6. Music Example



Fig 7. Music Example

The cadenzas Liszt added to this composition give a feeling of gorgeous flow, in the first part, as shown in Fig 8: Liszt adds many beautiful and ornate cadenzas, bringing the vocal range to height, the skill that should pay attention to is that the thumb should highlight the hidden melody lines and the other parts should highlight the lines through the finger control, in order to show the texture variations of the theme. When playing with interlaced hands, the timbre should be flowing like water, and the fingers of the player should touch the keys gently and naturally, with firm and full play.

Arpeggiated phrases have the greatest impact on people's hearing, giving people a magnificent sound effect. As shown in music Fig 9: Liszt added additional thirds and sixths to the arpeggiated sentences, making his arpeggiated sentences more magnificent, strong and loud than those of other composers, but the accuracy of the player's palm position and rapid upward running requires more mature playing skills. Even if it only appears briefly in the second part, its skill of even touching the key cannot be ignored. At the end of the arpeggio, the power should gradually concentrate on the

chord, the mood of the player should also develop upward, resonating with the mood of the whole song, the hands must be accurate to change fingers to avoid interlocking fingers, the connection needs to be coherent. It should use the most convenient and labor-saving way to achieve the best speed and effect.

Figure 8 shows three systems of musical notation for measures 12, 13, and 14. Measure 12 starts with a treble clef and a common time signature 'C'. The right hand has a sequence of eighth notes with fingerings 3 1, 3 1, and 5 4. The left hand has chords with fingerings 2 4 and 6. The dynamic is 'p non legato'. Measure 13 continues the right hand sequence with fingerings 5 4 and 'leggierissimo'. Measure 14 is marked with a double asterisk '**)' and contains a complex right hand passage with many fingerings (1 3 2 5 1 3 1 3 2 4 3 8 5 4 3 4 2 3 1 2 1 5 2 3) and a left hand accompaniment. The dynamic is 'C'.

Fig 8. Music Example

Figure 9 shows a musical score with a 'rapido' tempo marking. The right hand has a sequence of eighth notes with fingerings 5 1 2 3, 5 1, and 1. The left hand has a sequence of eighth notes with fingerings 2 3, 4 3 2 1, and 4. The dynamic is 'f'. There is a jump note symbol and a flower-like symbol at the bottom.

Fig 9. Music Example

In the fourth part of the composition, as shown in Fig 10: the speed is marked as a sharp plate, in which both hands are required to continuously play chords and move quickly. In the section marked with a jump note, the chords should be played with full elasticity, and the player's upper arm, forearm and wrist should be relaxed, and the strength should be concentrated on the support of the palm. A

stiff upper arm will not be able to reach the due sharp plate speed. The octave needs to be accurately placed, and the difficulty is that it is easy to hit the wrong note when the octave chord is hurried for a long time. To play the free fall needs to avoid the action of hitting the keys down actively. In the repetition of the phrase, the vocal range gradually spans two octaves, and the hands cannot be too high from the key at this time, in order to complete the whole song.



Fig 10. Music Example

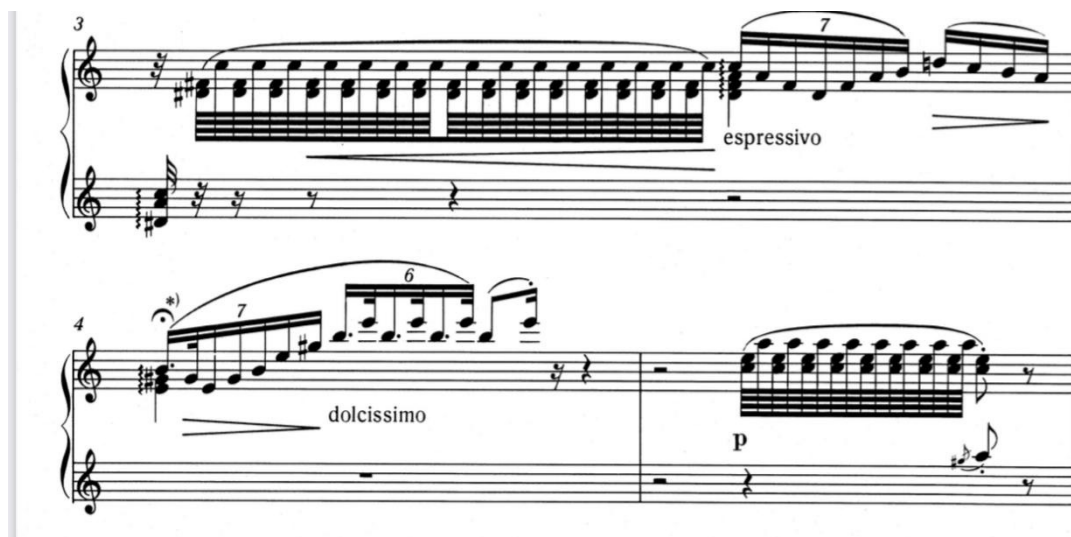


Fig 11. Music example

Liszt's pursuit of poetic, symphonic piano art, his playing tempo, speed and previous composers of the time presented a completely different feature. The classical music school regarded the extreme rigor and accurate rhythm as the highest standard for practicing music, but influenced by the liberal style of French Romanticism and Gypsy folk music, Liszt used some free variations of speed, sudden lengthening, pauses at the end of sentences, and other playing styles, as shown in Fig 11: At the same time, Liszt was also deeply influenced by the free expression of musical understanding imparted by his teacher Czerny. Therefore, in Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody, many passages expressing musical thoughts not only combine the dance rhythm of Hungarian dance music, but also attach importance

to the use of rest and extended marks. The performance should be filled with emotion in the free passages. To show the free and romantic style, avoid rigid hands, maximize physical and mental relaxation, the appearance of rest and other symbols suggest that it should be strictly followed with breathing, the rhythm should not be impatient to avoid the situation of rhythm confusion and rushing forward, which will destroy the original artistic conception. In the phrase of long breath, the player needs to gradually exert force, accumulate the force on the seventh chord after the vibratory note, and then slowly weaken, imitating the technique of long breath. Dealing with the freely extended pauses can set the stage for the next section.

In terms of strength, Liszt subdivided *p*, *pp*, *ppp*; *f*, *ff*, *fff* and other force symbols, as shown in Fig 12: in the first paragraph of this song, there is a continuous transition from *p* to *pp* phrase, players need to control the force according to each force symbol, joint support plays a great role in the control of force. There are also a number of musical terms related to force, such as the gradual disappearance of “*smorz*” instead of the weakening effect, and then the labels “*energico*”, “*quasi forte*” and “*rinforz*” all require force playing. The power should be concentrated on the fingertips, and the power distributed over the wrists also affects the sound.

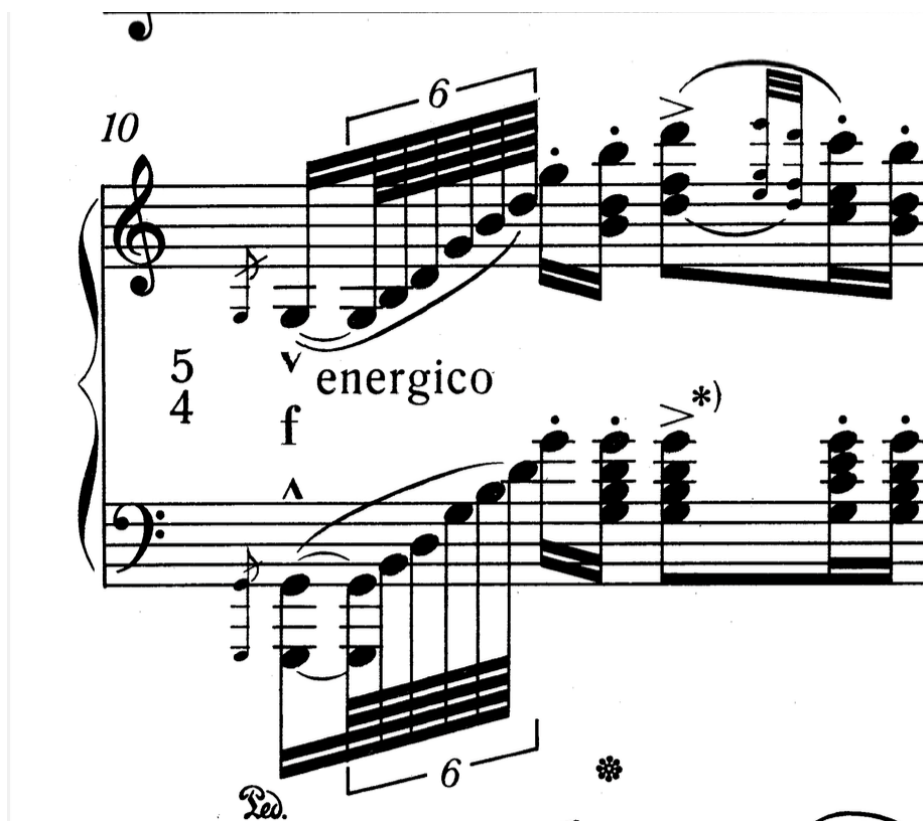


Fig 12. Music Example

The technique of pedaling is used greatly in Hungarian Rhapsody. In the 11th “Hungarian Rhapsody”, the vibrancy at the beginning of the work, which mimics the tone of the Hungarian poplar, is marked “*una corda*”, translated as a string. When the left pedal of the piano is pressed down, the sound becomes softer. In the second part, the “*tre corde*” is translated as three strings, indicating that the left pedal is to be played, and the chords are played with a certain impact and brilliance. When playing, the pedal technique mainly uses the post-tone pedal, which makes the notes of the sentence more coherent. Full chords cannot be separated from the use of the pedal, and the value should be controlled when used. Dragging too long will lead to the clean sentence becoming protracted, and not enough time will lead to the sentence being incoherent. As shown in Fig 13 of the music.

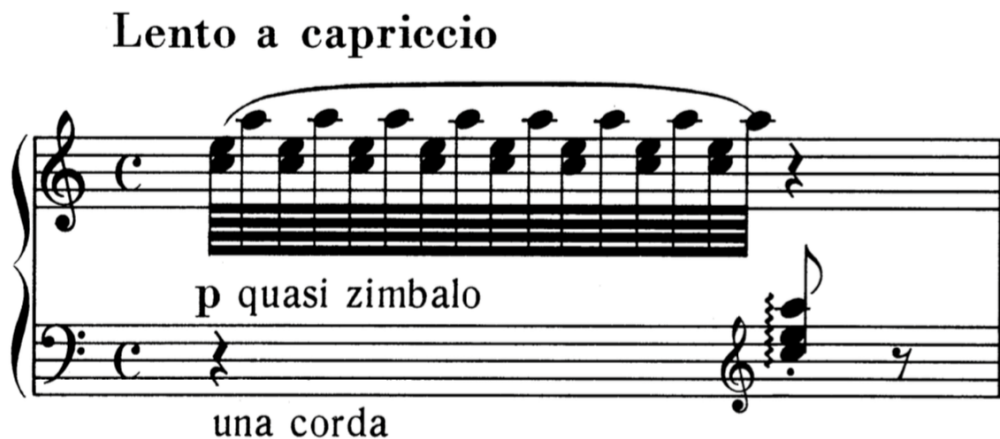


Fig 13. Music example

3. Technical Training for the Performance of Liszt’s 11th Hungarian Rhapsody

The technical difficulties and skills in the performance of the eleventh piece of Hungarian Rhapsody have been discussed above. Liszt created the “whole body playing method”, that is, in addition to finger playing and arm support coordination, the shoulders, back and legs are involved in the playing process. For example, when playing strongly, the shoulders and back should be used to exert force, and the legs should be well supported [7]. Therefore, in this section, combined with teaching experience, we will explore the key touching skills of playing chords, and the coordination and training skills of the body when the two-hand column chord moves continuously and rapidly.

According to previous teaching experience, when playing this work, students tend to make the mistake of ignoring the sign of staccato translated into staccato marked at the beginning of the fourth part, as well as skip, stress, intensification and other marks, as shown in Fig 14 of the score: If the staccato is not played in a time when the left-hand plays the chords, the sentences and chords will sound too cohesive and confused, which will greatly reduce the acoustics that the author intended to achieve. The skill training should be divided into stages, the left and right hands should be practiced separately, and the pedal should not be used. In the practice process, every falling note or chord should be staccato immediately, the chronaxie should not be delayed, and every falling key should be played solidly to form muscle memory. In the second stage of two-handed ensemble, attention should be paid to slow practice first. The rhythm of the two hands is different, and staccato of each note should be ensured. After reaching certain coordination, speed up should be achieved. Again, make sure that students sit correctly and practice in a natural descending forceful manner, repeating each phrase as a unit of practice. Finally, practice with the pedal, step on the pedal after the tone in strict accordance with the sign, and practice repeatedly to form a memory. At the same time, when reading the score, focus on the marks, pay attention to the stress mark of the last sentence in the fourth beat of the bar and the bar marked with the crescendo mark, strengthen the visual memory and play out its dramatic contrast effect. As shown in Fig 15:



Fig 14. Liszt's 11th Hungarian Rhapsody



Fig 15. When reading the score, focus on the marks

At the speed of this part, students' emotions will become high when they play the music. At this time, they are prone to improper exertion during the running of continuous chords, and mistakes such as stiffness of the body to the arm and wrist will occur, which not only affects the sound effect of touching the key, but also causes confusion in the rhythm and fails to reach the ideal speed. The first step of students' practice should be to ensure good sitting posture and appropriate playing power distance. The second step is to start slow practice. During the process, the hands falling down must avoid actively providing acceleration and hitting the keys hard. The correct force should rely on the natural gravity falling down at a certain height when the arm is relaxed, and the touch key is the most natural at this time. And the power should be mainly focused on the support of the octave span and fingertips, after the fall the wrist can be relaxed and free to rotate that is correct. Otherwise, the whole body will be rigid, the above points from slow to fast in order to perfect the technology to show its magnificent sound effect and dramatic effect.

4. Conclusion

Focusing on the 11th Hungarian Rhapsody, this paper first expounds Liszt's life experience, creation style, creation background and characteristics of Hungarian Rhapsody. Secondly, it analyzes the structure of its musical form, and gives an appreciation of playing techniques such as grace note, cadenza, arpeggios, pedals, speed and strength control are analyzed. Finally, the difficulties in playing and the problems in the playing process are analyzed, and the phased training methods are proposed.

Due to the limited research time, there are some shortcomings in this paper. For example, in the part of student training, the author only analyzes the technical difficulties in the fourth part of this piece, and rarely mentions the ornament, tremolo and cadenza in the first part of the work. There are many areas that need further study, and more comprehensive and in-depth discussion and research should be carried out in the future teaching and exploration process.

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