
Musical Style and Playing Skills of Debussy Piano Suite "Children's Garden"

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Abstract

Debussy is a master of French Impressionism Music. He was one of the greatest and most creative composers of the twentieth Century, leaving some seventy or eighty works for the modern piano literature. Among them, the suite of "Children's Garden" is one works which completed during the period of Debussy maturity 's music career. It consists of six little tunes: " Etude' docto", " Calf Elephant of Lullaby", "Serenade for the Doll", " Snowflakes Dancing", "The Shepherd Boy" and "Golliwog's Cakewalk". These six pieces of music include Debussy's idea of music and aesthetic taste. This paper will study from three aspects of "children's garden": suite creation background, musical style and playing skills.

Keywords

Debussy's "children's garden" music style performance skills.

1. Introduction

The piano suite "Children's Garden" which was Debussy wrote to his daughter Elmar Claude, was inspired by Debussy Moussorgski's work "Children's Songs". Compared with other musical works of Debussy, the piano suite "Children's Garden" is easy to understand. The suite consists of six piano pieces is full of dramatic and fantasy.

This article will be based on comprehensive study of existing research and related literature, further summarizes the relevant Debussy piano suite "Children's Garden" on the characteristics of the musical style and playing skills, making in-depth study of the work style, emotion, skills and other aspects, striving to expand the research perspective about the work and especially hope that it will be profitable to performance of the work.

2. Debussy's life and the creation background of "Children's Garden"

Claude Debussy (1862-1918), a master of French Impressionist Music, an outstanding composer and pianist. Debussy was born in a merchant family of Saint Germain enlance in August 22, 1862. In 1872, he attend the Paris Music Institute, where he studied for 12 years. In 1884, relying on his "L' Enfantprodigue", Debussy won the Rome awards. Soon after, he went to Italy to study for two years. In 1888, he went to Bayreuth to attend the Music Festival and returned to Paris in 1889. In March 25 1918, Debussy died in Paris at the age of 56.

Debussy against the old tradition in the arts and influenced by oriental music and aestheticism, gradually formed impressionism which has profound influence on the modern western music . And its essence is closer to the symbolism. His musical works are characterized by less passion in music, which is associated with the change of title and rich tone. Harmonic is often used with the effect of color and the color of the parallel chord, fulling of strong sense of color. The rhythm is irregular, the music is dim and hazy. Debussy wrote many genres in his life, with piano works, orchestra works, chamber music, chorus,

opera, and songs. Among them ,piano creation runs through his whole life. The musician has developed a new technique in the field of piano, which broadens the new tone and gives the piano a new realm of creation. The piano suite "Children's Garden" is one of outstanding representative works during the period of mature career.

"Children's Garden" was written by Debussy for her daughter, when it published ,on the flyleaf wrte: "for tomorrow's all with his father's mild words, the book is dedicated to my dear little baby." The music premiered played by British pianist Harold Bauer in December 18, 1908 Paris. This divertimento consists of six piano pieces, inspired by the impression form daughter's life and toys. This works is full of Comparison in color and tonal, permeated with the magical charm, seems to make people into the smoke enveloped the fuzzy world, making everything around them into a fairy tale.

3. Piano suite "children's garden" style of music

3.1 "Etude doctor"

Debussy mock the dull as ditch water practice with satirical techniques in this work, showing those the emotions of children's who is unwilling to practices the piano. Debussy once described this song: "this is a song need practicing befor meals in the morninge ,it is a progressive, healthy care, training exercises etude, beginning with ease, gradually become strong and powerful." The melody adopt reduced three complex form.

A portion is C major, begining with sixteen note material, which is the core and the seed song. The right hand part of B section is A free reflection form, the melody is a homonym repeatedly, the smooth type appears in the left hand. The following third sections review the role of the subject, using the power of reproduction, with low voice as the main melody sound.

The B part is the central part of insert part, which can be divided into two parts. The introduction of I and the II center expansion. In tonal,it gradully changes from the B flat in D flat major.

Reproduction section is about Debussy imagined his daughter's eager mood for the upcoming end of the practice and get free play. In speed, it is to be slightly faster than the A segment, the intensity from PP has been pushed to ff. Strong efforts to change, direct and clear, make the whole song climax sonorous and forceful.

3.2 Calf Elephant of Lullaby

The elephant of in title named Jimbo, is the daughter of Debussy cherished toy. This work vivid depict the scene of the little girl holding a baby elephant, humming a lullaby to sleep. This song is a typical single three form.

The music A paragraph the low voice is a steady bass melody,making people reminiscent the pace of the elephant. Eleventh - 14 bar voice appeared lullaby melody, the melody of a cradle is based on the French folk story, the melody is the B section of the theme of motivation.

The theme motivation of music B segment from the cradle song, faster than the A segment slightly. The theme of middle voice speed up the lullaby melody doubled which appeare A segment. The eight note bass's intermittent sound in bass increases the sense of movement, like the elephant with beautiful melody lullaby relaxed with happy dance.

The music in reproduction sectionwas is quiet and slow and the last of the two unsolved chords seemed to be a little girl sleeping safely when listening music.

3.3 Serenade for the Doll

This piece of music is very successful to show the happy scene of little girl holding a favorite toy doll singing. Adopting the technique of pentatonic scale, in order to achieve the humorous and light style. This song is a typical three complex form three.

The A section began to imitate the effect of the guitar or a small toy stringed instrument, showing a light graceful serenade in the rhythm. The theme of the A section first appears in the bass tone melody, and then in the high five degrees. The theme of B part appears in the bass part, melody to be more beautiful. The melody of B paragraph theme is soft and beautiful. From the 66 section, the rhythm was inspired by jazz, melody on a regular cycle, with manual mode, every clause at the end of the Boeing chord, seems to be imitate the sound of gongs and drums blow.

The reproduction section reproduces the tightening techniques, only reproduces the theme of A paragraph a part, fades out on the outro there.

3.4 Snowflakes Dancing

This song as its title contains poetic and pictorial splendor, the description of the little girl looked at a quality suggestive of poetry or painting, the tumult of the snowflakes, eagerly looking forward to the mood of early spring. This song is a typical complex form three. The main feature is the reproduction of the Ministry of austerity.

A paragraph a part is lively, the beginning of four sound in the music vividly depicted snow dancing in the wind, which is the foundation of the whole song parts develop. From the second section, the emergence of the sixteen notes, showing the snow falling continuous, coming into being the dance of snow unwittingly. Part B, adding four tone row voices in the background and the same in loud bass melody, seemed to in background of float snow, there is a gentle melancholy song came.

In the B segment, three legato and eight note appearing, the passage in the rhythm to be free.

A sudden change of music in the style of reproduction section, indicates that the appearance of sun. At the end of the music of the far away and disappear, also indicates that the disappearance of the dance of snow.

3.5 The Shepherd Boy

The Shepherd Boy is actually the shepherd toys belong to a little girl. Debussy creates a beautiful scene of children playing happily in nature. This song is a style of variation theme.

The four section which is the beginning of the main part is the single melody theme, as A major, described around the silent music background. Next, cheerful melodies enter and forming of a sharp contrast with former. From the fifth section, continuous dotted rhythm, vivid and lively is a fast dance rhythm, in contrast to the start of music emotion, emphasizing dance rhythm. However, the three legato in low voice is order and stable, like a little boy sitting in the back of the cow casually playing small reed. The first variation and second variations are free variation, the third variation back to A major to be passionate music. Among them, increasing by two degrees make its tone be full of oriental fun.

3.6 Golliwog's Cakewalk

Puppet Golliwogg which is a part of the toy box belonging to small girl, is a little black doll popularly. His hair is up, have a pair of big and round eyes, very cute and funny image. The earliest origin of the Gait dance in 1870, belongs to the southern United States of the black slaves, with the 2/4 beat rhythm. Debussy used the black music rhythm showed intense dance, puppet strength queer-looking, very funny. This is three complex form.

4. Piano suite "children's garden" performance analysis

4.1 Etude doctor

The performance of this piece of music is very detailed, which will undoubtedly give the player a good hint, the play must be strictly followed by a variety of signs to practice. The whole work about force control is relatively more exquisite and large amounts sordine can be used, just pay attention to changes in the constantly changing harmony rhythm, it can clearly hear the melody.

When playing the first 1-6 section, the right hand should emphasize the backbone of the sound and smooth to the sound of each of the uniform. Finger touch key, the fingertip should be like through the veil to play in general, force is not too large, the wrist should be flexible. Also should pay attention to the differences in the core tone, it is from short to long lines. Section 7-9 which in bass, F sound has to maintain sound mark, the F must maintain its inherent value, and should emphasize the sound when playing a little. This section of the overall tone of the require to be light and clean, force to maintain a weak. When play section 33-36, using PP force to make the fingers as close to the keys, to produce a sleepy voice. When play section 37-40 left high pitch the two tone small line adopt the way that we often say "off the roll", showing the child because the tedious exercise and unabashedly yawning.

4.2 Calf Elephant of Lullaby

This piece of work, using 2/2 to shoot the mark. When playing, the position of the hand should be lower, making the melody coherent and clear. Requiring accurately according to the spectrum of the mark to play, pay attention to the division of value and phrase rhythm. In pedal, the 19 - 29 and 6 - 69 section original music marked superscript, playing should put the melody singing. In addition to fifty-third has mf strength marks, the rest are adopting PPP to p force to play. So the whole song can use soft pedal or use more soft pedal and strive to tone innovation in the required range.

4.3 Serenade for the Doll

When the music playing, we had better use light pedal (1/2 or 1/4), it will be get better sound. At the same time, the player will need to pay attention to the performance of legato and staccato contrast and meet the requirements of dynamics for accuracy, at the same time, grasp the accuracy of the rhythm. When play 1-8 section sound, playing lightly and there was a great phrase feeling and can not touch the keys too hard. When playing 71th 75th and 79th section should emphasize the right melody in with the sense of two beat and should be clearly playing out syncopation. When playing, note that each small phrase can crescendo force.

4.4 Snowflakes Dancing

The whole work of the performance appear transparent and unreal, as the music constantly changing. When playing, not only grasp the tone the, but also a variety of emotions in music such as elegant, lonely or sad should be conveyed accurately and naturally. Music in the music marked with signs of the pedal can be used 1/2 pedal. The pedal just use the position of strong voice, singing or melodic passages, the pedal must use matched.

When playing the sixteen points, making the finger stick key and need to pay attention to the coordination of the left and right hand movements, playing uniformly. When playing the 22-25 section, highlight the melody tone of the crystal clear and soft. To meet the requirements of Debussy repeatedly reiterated the kind of floating effect.

4.5 The Shepherd Boy

This song is short and full of expressions, the piano lively imitate a cowboy's funny sound of the reed. When playing, the tone of the PP's intensity should be transparent and simple. About the pedal, not to use the the single melody of the right hand best or only use in the long sound, so the less the better. If in the 10-11 sections section and the sound want to extend, it is best to use a long pedal. The decorative tone in paragraphs of 3,4 seems like the birds' singing that not far away, when playing, need to emphasize, and the music notes that marked with "-", can't be played too short.

4.6 Golliwog's Cakewalk

The difference between this work and former is that it starts with a sharp, bouncing touch. When playing, using your fingertips touch key, make sound slightly sharp and we should pay attention to the marked stress and staccato in music score, showing jazz music segmentation rhythm and style, which makes the puppet funny image more prominent. When playing A paragraph, it should be performed at a speed. The

arm is relaxed, touching key is neat and clean, playing a clear and direct sound, because the left hand's span is larger, we should pay attention to the strength of the transfer and stressed that each section of the shoot. Particular attention should be paid to the use of the intensity notation, especially stress. Pay attention to the proper use of two mark in the section 24th and 25th " > "and" Λ ". The second " Λ " should be stronger. Playing B section, the rhythm can be a bit slower, to achieve a loose and beautiful tone. In the 63th, 65th, 71th and 78 sections, we should return to the speed of beginning part.

5. Conclusion

Debussy's piano suite "Children's Garden" is full of playful, various figures and chords use into each song title and song can arouse the visual image of the world for us. These 6 pieces of theme mostly are monophonic melodies and have different emotional themes contrast such lively, or soft, or melancholy and so on. Everywhere reflects Debussy's love for her daughter. Therefore, when playing, we should pay attention to strictly according to the author's intention to play. Debussy in a letter to his friend special mention that strictly abide by the various standard playing mark to practice and suggested that it can all use sordine. Thinking carefully what is limited by the requirement of mark, carefully listening to the sound of color and texture with the ears, you can enjoy the music by Debussy brings us a fairy tale mood.

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