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Eclecticism of sound structures in sonatas for viola and piano by Rebecca Clarke and Arnold Bax

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The work of art of my doctoral thesis is a CD recording of sonatas by A. Bax and

R. Clarke.

The description of the work of art is based on the analysis of the recorded pieces. It consists of the characteristics which explain the phenomenon of sound structures in works of the two composers.

The choice of the larger chamber forms by the two, not very popular composers among the musical community has multifaceted aspects.

Due to the autonomy of musical centres, the number of sonatas for viola and piano that are in the mainstream concert repertoire adds up to several only. As far as Sonata by R. Clarke has recently been played more often, though it is still far from the frequency of performance of Brahms or Hindemith, Sonata by A. Bax is at the end of repertoire choice. The reason for that cannot be due to the less developed artistic level of the two works and their performance to wider academic audience will certainly inspire violists and pianists to look differently at these less popular but very interesting works of art.

A. Bax and R. Clarke are the composers who belong to the same cultural field which is the first half of the 20th century. The fact that they lived and created in the same times can help the reader to understand some marginalized aspects in the music history education and encourage to further explore the peripheries of the repertoires.

From the point of view of the interpreter, it is extremely important to define sound aesthetics of a performed piece in order to freely illustrate the musical matter and to choose the right medium of expression. The phenomenon of sound structures in both sonatas certainly demanded thorough analysis which aims are clear: to find the character and individuality of the sound and to eliminate any speculations about imitativeness in the individual style.

The piano part in both sonatas is a challenge for a musician. Apart from different difficulties connected to technique, the important factor is to generate the qualities of the

sound. On one hand, it is because of heterogeneity of the sound of viola and piano, on the other, because of the fragmentary homogeneity of motif structures.

The comparison of sonata for viola and piano by A. Bax and R. Clarke on CD, as well as a thorough analysis of the elements in question will hopefully influence the condition of the research of piano and viola repertoire. To find the method of how to study the key issues may inspire the reader to a more detailed and analytical work on the pieces which later may result in more accurate options of musical interpretation.

In the first chapter I define eclecticism as a new trend in music of the 19th century during which new forms of expression were searched for. I present the figures of A. Bax and R. Clarke in the context of the time and the composers contemporaneous with them. It is an essential step to describe their biographies in order to obtain the full picture of the specifics of their works, which unfortunately did not stand a chance to be included into a specialist literature.

In the second chapter I describe the analysis of the eclecticism of the sound structures in the sonatas. I describe variety of mediums of expressions. I systematize musical inspirations of Romanticism and Impressionism, etc. with particular reference to the piano part. To separate characteristic details of individual language of both composers allowed me to make the synthesis of the selected elements, hence, expose some analogies. Also, in terms of the structure of sonata cycle and in terms of formal structures I proved some similarities in both pieces.

In the third chapter I summarize previous examinations. The synthesis of selected elements of the sound material in terms of aesthetic analogies allowed me to find consistent strategy of how to function in a complicated sound material and helped me to shape the logics of the pieces.

A CD recording with the following pieces is attached to the dissertation:

Rebacca Clarke – *Sonata for Viola and Piano*
Arnold Bax – *Sonata for Viola and Piano*