

# *Emotional Expression and Skill Handling in Piano Performance*

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**Abstract:** Since the piano entered the domestic development, the music academic research community has started the research work on this music art, including "performance skills" and "performance emotion". In order to promote the development of domestic piano music and piano education, this paper hopes to analyze the "performance skills" and "performance emotion" in piano performance through this research, reflecting the value of piano performance for emotional expression (EE), I hope this research can contribute to the innovation and development of domestic piano music. This paper analyzes on the importance of the piano playing (PP) skills and the difficulties in the expression of musical emotion in the performance of the piano repertoire. Taking the Piano Sonata in A Major as an example, through the detailed understanding and analysis of Schubert's sonata, this paper expounds the playing skills of this music, analyzes the application path of EE, and provides a theoretical basis for more accurately grasping the deep emotional connotation of Schubert's music, and analyzes the EE and skill handling in the piano performance.

## 1. Introduction

Today, piano music has been developed in China for many years, but on the stage of the development of piano music in the world, there are still few people who can become first-class piano players. This problem also reflects the shortcomings of the current domestic music performance teaching and students' piano performance learning, and it is difficult to be recognized by world-class piano players. However, if you want to make a breakthrough in the stage development of domestic performance, Let the PP learner become a qualified and able to go to the world playing master, and bring spiritual enjoyment to piano music lovers. The learning of PP skills should be the first step to interpret the works in many aspects. Therefore, this paper will also discuss the EE in PP from this perspective [1].

Many piano players in history also have their own experience. The training of PP skills for the younger generation is important for the expression of music emotion. Therefore, in today's ever-increasing number of piano learners, the discussion of PP skills is conducive to the innovation and practice of piano education on the one hand, to avoid the students' learning attitude of eager for quick success and instant benefit, It is difficult to interpret the beauty of piano music because of its shortcomings in playing skills; On the other hand, it is also conducive to the integration and

innovative development of piano art and domestic art [2]. At present, although world-class performers such as Lang Lang and Li Yundi in China have started to interpret this aspect, if they want to make a breakthrough in this aspect, they will also learn more piano players to participate, but practice shows that the progress of this aspect needs to be based on good performance skills, which also reflects the importance and practical value of this study [3].

In the early stage of the study, the author collected a large number of documents about piano performance through Baidu, HowNet and Vip and other information resource platforms. Guided by this, the author discussed the value of piano performance in emotional performance in many aspects. The author also combed and analyzed the difficulties of emotional performance when performing the music through relevant actual research and the author's own experience in piano performance learning. On this basis, the author puts forward constructive suggestions on the learning of piano lovers' daily performance skills in view of relevant issues. It is hoped that through the use of many theoretical research methods such as induction, quotation, example and explanation, this research will be more in-depth [4-5].

## **2. Analysis of PP Skills and EE**

### **2.1 Handling of PP Skills**

#### **2.1.1 PP Skills are the Direct Means of Music Expression**

For performers, it is not easy to express the content carried by notes in the actual performance process. World class piano performers also demonstrated with their own experience that if the performance lacks the support of PP skills, it is almost impossible to present the content in music, which also reflects the importance of PP skills for music performance [6]. The practice shows that if the performer wants to show the charm of the piano through his own performance ability, if he lacks the support of relevant performance techniques, he is just talking on paper, especially when playing some relatively difficult songs, for this reason, the relevant technical training is extremely important for the piano performer. In a sense, the process of improving the player's playing skills is also the process of approaching the essence of music and understanding the composer's ideas, which requires a long time of training for the player. As far as the current situation of piano music teaching in domestic colleges and universities is concerned, most students majoring in piano performance in colleges and universities have not yet realized the importance of piano performance skills training for music performance, which causes them to keep away from each other when encountering difficult tracks in the actual performance process. On the one hand, it is difficult to promote the development of domestic piano music, On the other hand, it also makes it difficult for performers to go further on the road of piano music [7].

#### **2.1.2 PP Skills are the Key to the Emotional Interpretation of the Music**

The original intention of piano performance is to convey the ideological connotation of the purpose of excellent piano music, mobilize the aesthetic interest of the audience for music or provide spiritual comfort to the music audience. If analyzed from the perspective of musical works, the main reason why the piano tracks created by the composer can stimulate the aesthetic interest of the audience or bring spiritual comfort to them is that the composer has injected his own feelings or insights into the notes in the actual creation process, and on this basis, he has endowed the works with sincere feelings through the change of melody height or the treatment of related skills [8]. For example, Liszt's Bell, which was created in 1834, is also one of Liszt's famous works. The prelude played alternately by both hands creates an artistic conception of distance and proximity for the

audience, which makes people deeply feel the crisp and pleasant bell sound in the magnificent palace in the classical music era. After the emergence of the main melody of low octave music, the sound of the "bell" gradually became clear, and the ethereal musical notes in the high voice area turned into strings of small bells ringing in the ear, which could easily mobilize the aesthetic interest of the audience, so that the audience could feel that Liszt's interpretation of time in the music was "seemingly close, but not within reach". After entering the second theme, the tone, playing range and playing method have all changed. The tune becomes bright and bright, and the bell rings at another place gradually. Later, Liszt makes the two bells cross by means of variation, and the momentum of the whole song gradually becomes magnificent, creating a grand picture of thousands of bells ringing together, which is intended to give people unlimited hope. Liszt lived alone and innovated, which made this piano piece very popular among the audience. Piano players such as Lang Lang and Li Yundi in China have played this piece of music. For beginners, although they can feel and experience the emotions contained in the works through the study of relevant music theories, it is not easy to interpret the sincere emotions in the works by playing in person, and the performance skills involved in the period also make most performers frustrated. Therefore, if we analyze from the perspective of emotional interpretation of piano music, if we lack the support of relevant performance technologies, Piano players can hardly interpret the composer's sincere feelings in music works [9-10].

## **2.2 Difficulties in Music EE when Playing Piano Tracks**

### **2.2.1 Skillful Control of Music Sense and Skills**

Musical sense is a kind of musical perception that music players must have first, which mainly comes from two aspects: congenital and acquired training. In the field of music and art, although the innate sense of music has promoted the music learning of learners in many ways, if they lack the acquired learning to consolidate their talents, their ability to understand music too often will be difficult to maintain. Therefore, for music players, the acquired sense of music training still plays a leading role in the development of their music career, this requires the performer to practice for a long time in the learning process [11]. The actual teaching experience shows that the training of students' sense of music has a strong connection with the PP skills. The learning process of students' playing skills is actually a process of gradual improvement of students' sense of music, but this is a major difficulty in actual teaching. Most students are difficult to persist in the boring process of technical practice, and it is difficult to achieve the control of the sense of music and skills skillfully, which makes it difficult for individuals to go further on the road of music.

### **2.2.2 Harmonious Unity of Emotion and Performance**

Emotional beauty is the basic feature of music, and the piano repertoire is no exception. Therefore, in the actual performance process, if piano players want to play moving melodies and mobilize the aesthetic taste of the audience, they also need to achieve the harmony and unity of emotion and performance. Many historical piano players have also demonstrated the importance of the harmony and unity of emotion and performance with their own experience, and why they can become a generation of performance masters, The reason is that they inject themselves and the composer's rich emotions into their individual performance, and perfectly interpret the internal emotions in the music through the ups and downs of the melody and the changes of the tune, so that the audience can feel calm. But it is not easy to do this. There are some performance learners in the music performance major of colleges and universities. Although they have excellent performance skills, they only regard performance as their own task, The piano repertoire played seems gorgeous,

but it has no inherent quality and is difficult to resonate with the audience. For this reason, it is a tough challenge for music teachers to guide students to achieve the harmony and unity of emotion and performance when teaching students to master PP skills.

### 3. Research and Analysis Methods of Piano Performance

#### 3.1 Research Methods

This paper uses the method of literature investigation to take the Piano Sonata in A Major as an example, which expresses the composer's most sincere feelings and yearning for a better life through the beautiful melody. This work is divided into three chapters. The first chapter is to understand the social and cultural trends and structural characteristics of the composer from his life and the basic situation of the sonata; The second chapter analyzes the overall structure and music theme of Piano Sonata in A Major; The third chapter discusses the key points of performance from the aspects of performance marks, strength, pedal, etc., so as to better grasp the way of Schubert's EE.

#### 3.2 Data Processing and Analysis

In this paper, SPSS 22.0 software was used to analyze the results of the questionnaire survey, and t-test was conducted. The t-test formula used in this paper is as follows:

$$t = \frac{\overline{X} - \mu}{\frac{\sigma X}{\sqrt{n}}} \quad (1)$$

$$t = \frac{\overline{X}_1 - \overline{X}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{(n_1 - 1)S_1^2 + (n_2 - 1)S_2^2}{n_1 + n_2 - 2} \left(\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2}\right)}} \quad (2)$$

Wherein, Formula (1) is a single population test,  $\overline{X}$  is the sample average,  $s$  is the sample standard deviation, and  $n$  is the sample number. Formula (2) is a double population test.  $S_1^2$  and  $S_2^2$  are the variance of two samples, and  $n_1$  and  $n_2$  are the sample size. Through the detailed understanding and analysis of Schubert's sonata, the author tries to elaborate the performance skills of the music from the aspects of the work's structure, music theme and performance method, and analyze the application ways of EE, so as to provide a theoretical basis for more accurate understanding of Schubert's deep emotional connotation of music.

The Piano Sonata in A Major has three movements, which is one of Schubert's most vigorous and poetic works. The lyrical melody, complete structure and mature creative techniques of the whole piece mark the beginning of the mature period of Schubert's piano sonata creation. The first movement uses the sonata structure as a whole, and the detailed structure is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The first movement uses the sonata structure as a whole

structure		Presentation part		Expansion part		Reproduction unit		Epilogue	
	Main part	Connecting part	Deputy Department	Ending part	Main part expansion	Insertion part	Deputy department expansion		
Number of sections	1-19	20	21-41	42-47	48-56	57-64	65-79	80-126	127-133
tonality	A	A	E	E	#f E #C	A	A	A	A
Typical sonata form									

## 4. The Analysis Results of EE and Skill Handling in Piano Performance

### 4.1 Performance Skills of Piano Sonata in A Major

#### 4.1.1 Hyphenation Mark

In Schubert's works, legato is used more often, and the soft and lyrical music has a strong singing quality. This kind of playing method should be consistent and smooth in the music.

The main theme melody of the first movement of "Piano Sonata in A Major" in the first movement 1-5 bars of the first movement of "Sonata in A Major" is characterized by outstanding singing. The right hand is full of pastoral melody, bright and clear, which makes people sing and dance along with it, and deeply depicts the appearance of a female singer. The melodic range of this song is relatively wide, such as the first chord of the first bar, which is not very smooth, so how to play a song like feeling in such a fluctuating melodic tone, of course, needs to be distinguished from the style of Chopin and Liszt's music in the romantic period, so the legato mark plays a considerable role. The left hand is the accompaniment type chord decomposition. The slow key down process should be soft and suitable for playing with the keys. Whether the aesthetic feeling of the lines can be highlighted has a close relationship with the performer's control of his own fingers. The addition of the continuous tone mark makes the music more flowing and comfortable, so that there is a clear connection and exchange of breath between the phrases. Each phrase has a strong singing and lyricism.

The arrival of the sub theme seems to have changed a beautiful scene. Both the melody and rhythm have changed. The rhythm of the left and right hands is like two birds talking constantly, and the mood is uncertain. There are more two tones connected in the right hand part to achieve the effect of falling. In this theme, what cannot be ignored is the eight part rest that appears after connecting the second tone. This rest can make the melody have a process of breathing. The accompaniment type of left hand triplets needs to maintain a uniform speed, and each bar should be played coherently and clearly with the finger pulp.

#### 4.1.2 Jump Mark

Tipping marks mainly show a lively and cheerful mood in playing. In this work, there are two main forms of Tiao Yin: the combination of Tiao Yin and Lian Yin; A solo performance of skipping.

For example: In Piano Sonata in A Major, the left hand part of the third movement 1-8 bars and the third bar of the first movement adopts the combination of forward skipping and backward legato. The skipping appearing on the accompaniment texture of the left hand part should be played lightly but not too short, with a lively and naughty feeling. The melody voice of the 34th bar of the

first movement turns to the low voice part. With the decomposition chord of the right hand, the combination of skipping and legato, the melody of the low voice part looks like a steady cello pulling out a more powerful voice. With the rise of the mood of the 36th bar, the inner changes are also complicated. The first section of the third movement is that the skip played repeatedly with homophones should be played relatively lightly and cheerfully. In this movement, the movement of the sixteenth note requires a strong sense of granularity. The addition of punctuation highlights the strong dance characteristics, and the unique vocal range position of the high voice part does not lose its fluidity. Section 36 of the third movement is the sub theme of the movement. It adopts the method of combining the preceding legato with the later skipping. The theme has a strong characteristic of triple time dance. The rhythm of this rhythm is fully reflected in the whole song, and the use of the skipping mark strengthens the rhythm of the song.

### 4.1.3 Accent Mark

In music, it refers to the position marked by the stress mark, so the sound should be stressed forcefully. In this song, stress marks are mainly divided into two forms: stress and homophone or the combination of the same chord; The stress in the melody line. The use of stress in the melodic lines has repeatedly appeared on the first beat of this section. For example, the stress marks of the 13th and 47th sections of the first movement appear on the beat points and are all notes of a longer duration, which is not only conducive to better grasp the rhythm of the music, but also greatly enhance the rhythm of the song, making the theme melody seem to have a sense of belonging. When the stress mark of the 52nd bar of the first movement appears in this position, it plays an important role, meaning to highlight the chord. The stress mark of the 11th bar of the third movement appears in the last three beats of a six beat movement. The first three beats are lively and light continuous beats, and the last three beats are theme melodies with strong singing. The stress mark strengthens the dance of this section, and its rhythm obviously makes the dancers themselves more aware of their dance steps.

A skip with a hyphen. Tipping is a happy and relaxed expression of emotion, so the Tipping with a connecting mark enhances the lyricism of the music. This form mostly appears in the homophonic repeated or chord repeated paragraphs in this work. When playing, it should not be too active. Fingers should stick to the keys and play. Grasp the changes of strength and weakness here to make the changes of chords more prominent.

### 4.1.4 Strength

Strength refers to the intensity of sound in music. The strength marks in music are represented by symbols, words and abbreviations. The change of strength in a piece of music and the number of times a certain strength mark is used can reflect the level sense of this piece of music from a macro perspective. In addition to the playing speed of notes, the emotional rendering caused by the change of strength will all affect the view of the work. The author uses diagrams to count the strength changes of the three movements of this work, and analyzes the impact and role of the strength changes in the music.

Table 2: Table of Changes in the Strength of the First and Second Movements

	1	11	13	14	16	42	44	46	56	57	58
Movement 1	3	4	3	5	3	2	4	3	2	4	3
Movement 2	2	3	5	4	3	2	3	4	5	3	2



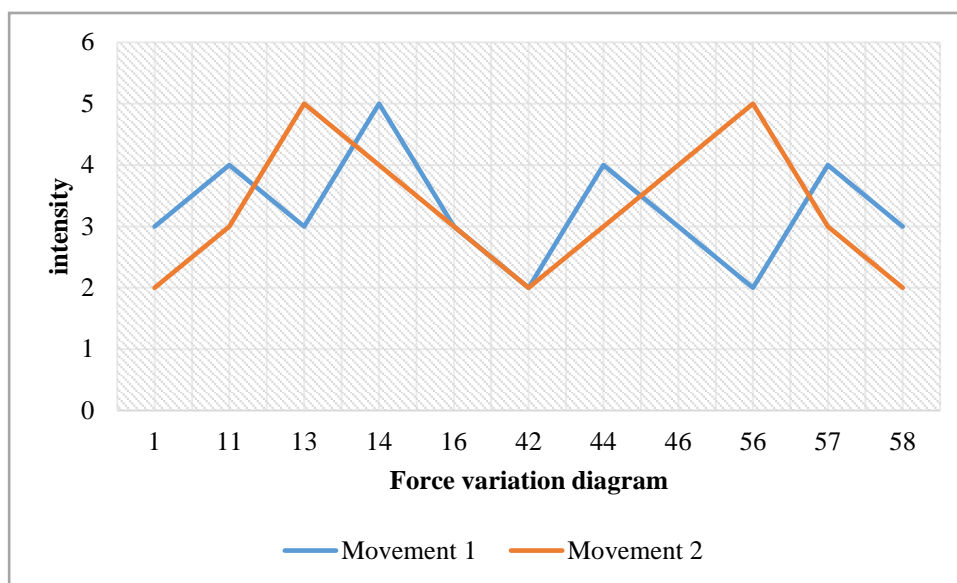


Figure 1: Force variation diagram

Table 2 Figure 1 shows the dynamics changes of the first movement and the second movement of Piano Sonata in A Major. The basic dynamics of this movement are pp, p and mf. The interval times of these three dynamics marks in the whole song are 6, and the interval times of ppp and f are 3. It can be seen from the above chart that the first movement is like a song praising spring, and the soprano sings a beautiful melody with the accompaniment of chord decomposition, which is soft and beautiful. Although the basic dynamics are pp, p, mf, it can be seen from the figure that this song also has a direct drop from f to ppp, which hides the writing techniques of the classical period, and has some similarities with Beethoven's sonata dynamics changes; The second movement is like Schubert's melancholy soliloquy. The depressed mood wants to tell some sadness, but it is not always so calm. There is a force mark of fz on the 42 bars of this song. This bar is almost a golden section of the whole song. It needs the strength of the whole arm and even the body to send the voice down, play a full voice, and finally return to the deep, sad calm.

#### 4.2 EE of Piano Sonata in A Major

The word "emotion" is considered in psychology as "an attitude experience generated by people whether objective things meet their own needs". Everyone's emotion will be expressed in different ways, and the expression way is also related to their personality and the things they pursue. Schubert's nature is modest and frank. He is very shy in daily social life and often feels lonely and depressed. Under such a melancholy appearance, it is hard to imagine that as long as he sat on the PP, his appearance would suddenly be lively, and he was simply endowed with new life.

There are three main ways to obtain the emotions contained in musical works: one is from the composer himself, mainly including the composer's own narrative, relevant "material evidence" (letters, articles, etc.), and some suggestive marks in the manuscript of the work, among which the information of the original score is the most important; Second, through the interpretation of the works by the performers, this approach contains certain characteristics of "re creation", but it is based on respect for the original works; The third is the subjective emotional experience of the listener.

Among the three ways of obtaining music emotion, the first one is the way that can obtain the most objective information, and it is also the most objective way; The second way is based on the information obtained by the first way, although it has certain subjective cognition of the performer;

The third is too subjective, which may not accurately reflect the true feelings of the work itself. Based on this, the first way is particularly important. Through the analysis of music score, it can reflect the composer's emotional intention to the greatest extent on the premise of existing data, which has guiding significance for performance.

## 5. Conclusions

Piano Sonata in A Major is the most perfect piece of Schubert's early sonatas. The three movements in this piece are simple and clear, recording the beautiful scenery in nature through the song tune. From the composer's life, the creation background of the works, the sonata overview and the performance analysis of the works, the author successively aims to enable people to better understand Schubert's innermost feelings. The author believes that the understanding of a work is to slowly dig from the surface to the inside, from the shallow to the deep, and then use his own mind to reflect the composer's mind. This paper analyzes how to play music scores, and more importantly, to understand what they are thinking. After a series of preliminary studies on Schubert's personality, life, performance analysis, etc., the author has a deeper understanding of Schubert, and can also help the author better understand the feelings Schubert wants to express in playing his works. However, there are still some shortcomings. I hope that scholars can continue to explore. A master of spiritual color like Schubert deserves us to explore his music more.

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