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## **Micro Monothematic Technique in Music by R. Schumann (Based on Piano Works)**

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*The present article studies peculiarities of the thematic structure of music by R. Schumann, where an important role is played by micro monothematic technique. The essential properties of monothematic technique associated with depiction of multivariate artistic images, joining their contrasts into a deep unity, expression of their continuous development and deep ontological transformations are mostly based on the historical and cultural contexts of Romanticism. Monothematic principle finds an original deflection in Schumann's music: it creates the feeling of an integrated whole, bearing common micro intonations, which, in the end, bond its accord.*

*The distinctive features of the music's thematic development reveal themselves in the context of intonation analysis method, used for studying the field of intramusical semantics, connected to understanding intonation as a unity of sound and sense, forming a fundament for the living process of intonation.*

*Keywords: micro monothematic technique, Romanticism, underlying intonation, analysis, intramusical semantics.*

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Music by Schumann is one of the greatest phenomena in the history of European musical art. Its ability to depict lively, flickering, subtle gradations of human feelings is one of its main peculiarities, which cannot help touching the listeners' souls. The main features of Schumann's artistic nature are susceptibility, delicateness, depth, and at the same time ambiguity, personification of his own self as though wearing numerous masks. The latter manifested itself in his epistolary heritage, in his published articles devoted to music, and in his musical works as such. The Romanticist composer's confessions,

aspiration to express the complexity of the person's inner world, open in the age of Romanticism, takes ultimate and an extremely acute form.

At the same time it is important to notice, that the expression of such delicate, sincere and genuine parts of the person's inner life was not immediately understood and recognized by the audience. In literature devoted to Schumann one can often find proofs of his works' being misunderstood, perceived as strange, illogical, chaotic both by general public and famous musicians and composers: "For the majority of amateurs his works were too complicated and

hard to understand; to expert musicians they seemed to be too eccentric, deviating from the everyday routine and the rules, based on the lore of art” (Ambros, 1988:12).

Such feature of his music as kaleidicity, instability of images and emotions often makes an impression of disruptiveness, patchiness, fragmentariness. Frequently the obscurity of his works was the consequence of their form, apparent lengthiness, non-proportional sizes of parts, apparent excessiveness of some opuses’ length. These traits of Schumann’s music caused problems both in performer’s interpretation and in perception of the music by audience. That is what, inter alia, A. Merkulov writes about in his research “Schumann’s Piano Suite Cycles” (Merkulov, 2006). His book contains a series of quotations from different composers, performers and musicologists, who deny such features as wholeness, cohesiveness and unity to Schumann’s musical works. There are quotations from N. Zhilyayev, who noticed that “Schumann’s large forms “suffer of angularity and patchiness” (cited by: (Merkulov, 2006:6)), B. Asafyev, who said that in some of his works “the forms know no measure, no cohesion or any intellectual discipline” (Merkulov, 2006:6), B. Yavorsky, who remarked “easy incohesive illustrativeness instead of a cohesive integrity” in Schumann’s music (Merkulov, 2006:6) and others.

But in fact, patchiness and kaleidicity of the major part of the composer’s works are only the surface, the factors intended to emphasize certain details of these or those figures. Listening more attentively, one can open up the evident underlying connection of the exterior motives that seem segmentary at first. D. Zhitomirsky pointed at this peculiarity as follows: “At first, the principle of simple interchange of comparatively small isolated constructions hits the eye. It is necessary for the composer to demonstrate each separate figure in more details to create the atmosphere

a colourful combination. Upon further thought, the complicated compositional integrity of the figures is revealed” (Zhitomirsky, 1964:382). Schumann himself realized that his music was difficult for understanding and underlined that “the main symptom of the unusual is its being misunderstood: the majority of people is more susceptible to something more superficial, like listening to virtuoso pieces” (cited by: (Merkulov, 2006:80).

The main features of the composer’s creative techniques are closely bond to the expression of the deep inner world of human feelings. The first of them is the *procedurality*, open development of probabilities: “...almost all of Schumann’s forms, there is a rich flow of life. It is mostly manifested in the intensive continuous development” (Zhitomirsky, 1964:381). The tendency for open and intensive development based on underlying unity of Schumann’s music is defined with the term *sympsonism*, which stands for such properties as continuousness and graduality of development. Besides continuousness, underlying alliance of intonations, the development intensiveness of many works by Schumann is caused by *bipolarity* of their thematic core, the interconnection of two contrast condition-characters: Florestan and Eusebius counterparts. K. Zenkin points out that Schumann’s music reveals the “logic of *continuous development of character antithesis*, thereby opening up the structure of the process, either complete and framed, or open, dissolving somewhere in the unreachable distance” (Italics by O.Ia.) (Zenkin, 1997:79). Analyzing “Humoreske”, N. Nikolaeva writes of “typically Schumann dramaturgy of motion..., which now concentrates, then increases, and relaxes again, like a spring. Correspondingly, the melodic structure of parts contracts and expands as well” (Nikolaeva, 1990:159). Here we notice such property of the composer’s music that we shall define as *pulsation*.

Researchers also remark that one of the most significant features of Schumann's music is wide use of variation: "...variation principle, and, particularly, Schumann's innovative interpretation of the principle, is one of the main components of the composer's style" (Nikolaeva, 1990:134). D. Zhitomirsky writes about three main forms of applying variation in Schumann's works. The first of them is associated with "austere", classical variations: it is based on a complete, clearly performed theme. A bright Fig. of this form is "Symphonic Etudes" (Zhitomirsky, 1964:395). The main feature of the second type is "...the absence of a complete and totally established main theme, which is replaced by a *thematic "embryo"* (Italics by O.Ia.) (Zhitomirsky, 1964:395). The researcher underlines, that this variation principle is more specific, typical of Schumann's music, which forms fundament for such pieces as "Carnaval" and "Davidsbündlertänze". Quite close to this type is the third form, which is described as follows: "In some works by Schumann it is not a certain theme that is absent, but the source of variation material. The object for variations are some forms of motion and *melodic elements*, embodied in a different way every time, though finding an *underlying alliance* between them" (Italics by O.Ia.) (Zhitomirsky, 1964:401). Pieces where this specificity is found are: "Arabeske", "Kreisleriana", "Humoreske".

Here we would like to emphasize that two last forms of thematic development in Schumann's music, as described by D. Zhitomirsky, are classified as not variation, but monothematic development. N. Nikolaeva in her research (Nikolaeva, 1990) explains the mentioned method through the term of *micro monothematic technique* (Nikolaeva, 1990:145). It means that the development of Schumann's music, embodying multiple characters, tones of feelings and emotions, gets filled with the subtlest microintonation, which does not reveal itself

openly; hidden deeply in the musical matter, somewhere inside, it bonds the diversity of the musical whole, surreptitiously and secretly.

Monothematic technique is a phenomenon different from variation; its emergence is connected to Romanticist music as such, as it is mostly caused by Romanticist aesthetics: attention to the realization of an inner, sensual layer in revealing psychological states, depiction of such in development and dialectical unity of contrasts. In the present context, the unity of the outer (thematic invariant) and the inner (subject matter), contained in the theme, becomes more intense and natural in the music of Romanticists, and, as a result, the themes of such music acquire the capacity of expressing sophisticated, ambiguous characters, along with demonstrating multiple transformations and modifications<sup>1</sup>.

It is also important to mention Asafyev's understanding of intonation as expression of multidimensional content in music, that implies a deep, diverse element, the inseparable unity of "sound" and "sense", and, simultaneously, the base of live musical development. In this understanding of musical intonation B. Asafyev mostly relies on researches by E. Kurt; his ideas, in their turn, are continued in the works by I. Zemtsovsky, E. Nazaykinsky, V. Medushevsky, N. Kolyadenko<sup>2</sup>. This trend in Russian musicology is connected to the cognition of underlying immanent musical meanings, which is the field M. Aranovsky defined as intramusical semantics<sup>3</sup>.

V. Medushevsky introduces the notion of "underlying intonation" or protointonation, parent-intonation, based on the mechanisms of intonational and plactical generalization, "simultaneous generalization", intonational "contraction", "constriction" (Medushevsky, 1980:186-187). In this context, the theme of Romanticist pieces based on the monothematic principle embodies a sort of ontological basis,

an underlying parent-intonation, the “gene”, the “seed” from which grows, shoots, cultivates the musical development.

In Schumann’s music monothematic principle is remarkable for its distinctiveness, caused by the above-mentioned specificities of the psychological peculiarities of the composer’s personality and by typical traits of his creative approach.

In the present work we turn to the piano heritage of the composer. It is known that the “piano period” of Schumann is the 30-s. During those years, he wrote almost exceptionally piano pieces. The peaks of his piano composition refer to the mid- and late 30s: “Carnaval” (op. 9, 1834), “Symphonic Etudes” (two editions, 1834, 1837, the third one was published in 1852), Sonata fis-moll (op. 11, 1833-35), “Davidsbündlertänze” (op. 6, September 1837), “Kreisleriana” (op. 16, 1838), “Novelletten” (op. 21, 1838), “Humoreske” (op. 20, 1839).

The 30-s were the brightest time of the composer’s biography. This is when his “struggle for Clara” and a year and a half of separation (January 1836 – August 1837) happened; this was the time of overcoming the obstacles created by Friedrich Wiek, and, finally, finding his happiness. Volens nolens, these events made a significant impact on his music. As Schumann wrote to his friend H.Dorn: “There is no doubt that many of those struggles Clara cost me reflected in my music, and you understand that. Of the Concerto, the Sonata, the Davidsbündler, the Kreisleriana and the Novelletten, she is almost the sole “(Schumann, 1970:148).

Let us study three works by the composer: “Davidsbündlertänze”, “Kreisleriana” and “Humoreske”. The first two are cycles (suites of riddled structure, and the form of “Humoreske” is usually identified as a single-piece cycle, thereby emphasizing its similarity to cycles by Schumann: “There are the same dialectics of contrast and

unity, free flow of thought and, at the same time, an underlying directing thread... as one can see in penetrating structure suites. However, here it is all expressed within the framework of an expansive single-piece form” (Nikolaeva,1990:156).

In the mentioned works the special Schumann intonation finds a vivid expression, the originality of its “natural” development comes up. That is the reason, why they attracted our attention. The present work targets at presenting the thematic development process of the selected pieces as a spontaneous, multidimensional expansion, tracing its diapason of meaning as revelation of sensual, emotional tones of the main psychological state.

“*Davidsbündlertänze*” (“Dances of the League of David”) (op.6, 1837) is one of the best, of the most poetic piano works by R. Schumann. The whole piece is based on an extract from Mazurka op.6 № 5 by Clara Wiek. For a long time it was customary to consider this piece to be just an epigraph to the cycle, without bearing any thematic significance. It was not evident at once, that the “interchanging relations of both immanent motives, a dashed impulsion and a melodious downward figure, determine the tone for all the pieces in their creative diversity”<sup>4</sup> (cited by: ((Merkulov, 2006:22)).

In his book, A. Merkulov (Merkulov, 2006) quotes the words of the composer speaking about op. 6 by Clara<sup>5</sup>, but in fact implying his “Dance”<sup>6</sup>: “The pieces are born by such exotic fantasy, that in this case common skills are not enough to *trace all the exquisite intertwinements of its patterns*; they originated *from such spiritual depths*, that every time when all figural or anyhow realistic elements recede to the background, a problem arises: it is genuinely impossible to grasp their astral, self-concentrated matter. On one hand, <these pieces> reveal the delicate, overflowing *fullness of inner life*, capable of responding to even the slightest stimulus from outside; but at the same time, it reveals the richness of unusual

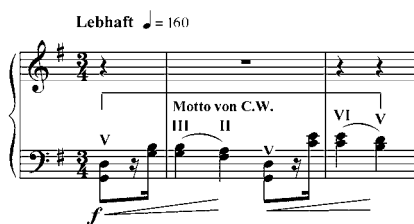


Fig. 1

techniques and a powerful ability to tangle, and then, to untie again the inmost, underlying threads of harmony...” (Italics by O.Ia.) (cited by ((Merkulov, 2006:32)).

The invariant expression of underlying intonation in Schumann’s cycle is the above mentioned extract from mazurka by Clara Wieck (op. 6 № 5), placed by the composer in the beginning of the piece:

In the fundament of the parent-intonation theme (the thematic “embryo”) there are two micromotives: an upward leap of major sixth (from V to III degree), enhanced with the swing rhythm, and a downward major second (represented in two variants: a step from III to II degree and from VI to V degree) (Fig. 1). The potential meaning complexity of this underlying intonation-theme is connected to the fact that the activeness of the first motive and the softness of the second are concentrated expression of the unity of two contrast states, typical of this composer, embodied in the major part of his works. It is well-known that Florestan sphere means impulsiveness, passion, dramatism, and Eusebius sphere stands for lyricism, delicateness, thoughtful self-contemplation. This bipolarity, set forward in the initial parent-intonation, includes both the primary, internal meaning of the piece, and, at the same time, is the impulse for expressing the musical whole. We can also notice that in the first edition of the cycle Schumann himself put remarks: F. (for Florestan) or E. (for Eusebius) (in some pieces, both F. and E.) to denote that the

order of the pieces is caused by the interchange of certain characters. This interchange of impulsive, excited pieces with calm, contemplative ones is the revelation of the pulse, the inherent property of a living, organic structure.

If we try to characterize the most general features of development of a sophisticated feeling-state, experienced by the composer and depicted in this opus, then in the first pieces of the cycle thoughtful and contemplative images prevail; probably, they are the embodiment of some nice memories. But then, as the music develops, the tendency for drama aggravation is noticed; finally, it leads to the climax: pieces 8, 9 and 10, placed by the author in the middle of the cycle. Here the drama reigns supreme, embodying the excited, furious and at the same time dolorous character. After the climax, the crisis passes, and from this gloomy state and hopelessness we move towards a light feeling, which embodies the achievement of a dream. In the last pieces, light figures prevail, but in comparison with the beginning of the cycle they express a sort of lofty ideal, and, in the context of the whole, such nuances as conciliation, pacification.

In the context of studying the piece’s thematic development as an underlying basis for real, spontaneous establishment of a sense-state, which embodies the unity of two opposite elements, it seems relevant to compare pairs of opposite pieces that follow one another in the cycle. In the present article let us give only two examples to illustrate the figure-bonding antitheses with a musical micromotive.

The first opposition of pieces, № 2 (E.) and № 3 (F.), bares a contrast of a light, subtly sad, fragile figure-memory and a figure of pure exultance and celebration. In the latter, the festive character of music, connected with the depiction of an exterior element, is emphasized: it is proved by quotations from “Carnaval”, extracts from

“Valse Allemande” and “Promenade”. In both of them, bonding element is a thematic invariant of the parent-intonation, represented with *motto* micromotives.

Piece № 2 (Eusebius imagery) is based on a downward, or in this certain context, wilting seconds’ intonation (a minor second step makes the pinching emotion more acute) which is represented here by both variants of the initial parent-intonation, as the combination of degrees III-II and VI-V (Fig. 2).

The base for Piece № 3 (associated with Florestan imagery) is the swing sixth-wise intonation, which, in this variant of *motto* micromotive actualization, is filled by forward motion in duplicated thirds (in the right-hand and left-hand parts) (Fig. 3).

The next pair of two opposite pieces (№4 – F., № 5 – E.) is the contrast of an anxious, dramatic, somewhat dolorous feeling which is expressed in stubbornly repeated, intrusive intonation, or, to be more precise, *fis* duplicated in octaves, and a detached, dreamy one, perceived as a development of retrospective memories.

In Piece № 4 the first *motto* intonation is present, but it is hidden so deep in the sophisticated multidimensional structure that it is not easily found. It gets into a different imagery context, and, as a result, the theme acquires a brand-new sensual tone (Fig. 4). In Piece № 5 *motto* intonations are delicately intertwined with the soft, gentle melody, but also secretly, inconspicuously, hidden deep (Fig. 5).

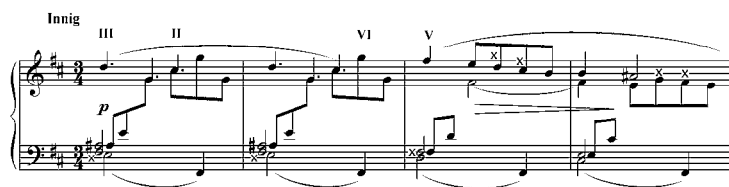


Fig. 2

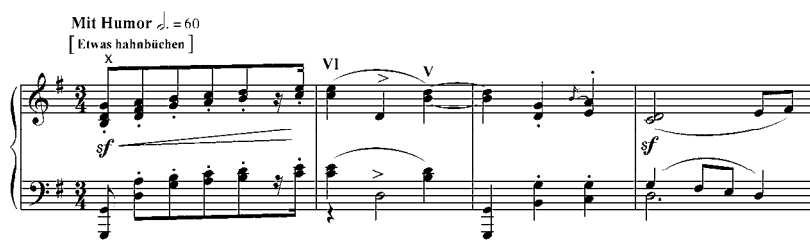


Fig. 3

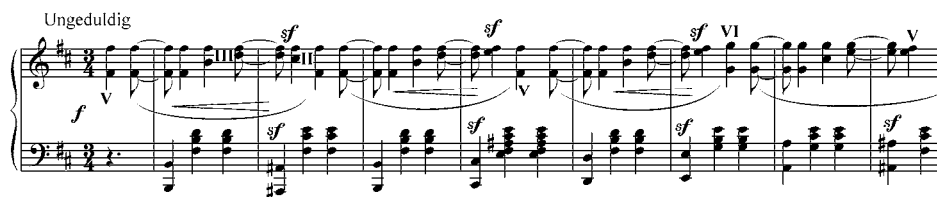


Fig. 4

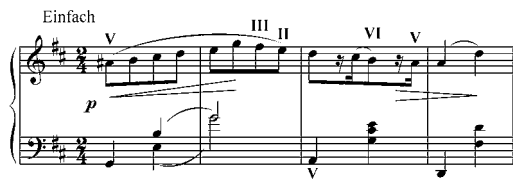


Fig. 5

In the subsequent development, new imagery tones of the primary parent-intonation theme, containing the internal polar sense-state, are heard. Though not targeting at tracing it throughout the cycle, we notice that it is important to intend to perceive the underlying sensual background of the musical piece, the exterior embodiment of which is based on such method of thematic development as micro monothematic technique. It is required to emphasize, that in all pieces of the cycle, with no exceptions, there are micromotives as an exterior invariant expression of the primary parent-intonation, which reveal themselves with great evidence, brightly and explicitly, or sometimes hidden within the depths of sounds, bringing the whole of the piece together. Every time appearing under different conditions, let it be structural, rhythmical, or dynamical, these motives express new sides and tones of emotions and experiences.

Speaking about this work, it is important to point at the pulsation created in Schumann's music with the help of certain rhythmic means. So, the first piece of the cycle, on one hand, acts as a microvariation cycle based on the development of *motto* intonations, and on the other hand, demonstrates the technique of rhythmic contraction and expansion by means of enlargement or, on the opposite, shortening of the primary intonation's (two micromotives') rhythmic values, creating the "living pulse" effect: bars 6-25 expansion, bars 26-33 contraction, bars 34-52 expansion, bars 53-62 contraction, bars 62-73 expansion (Fig. 24 a,b). As we have mentioned

before, this technique is one of the typical ones used by Schumann.

So, the brightest expressions observed in the present piece, are: the polarity of the underlying primary intonation, creating metamorphosis of figures, their internal and natural mutual transformation—"flowover" of one into another, and the pulsation feature. Paraphrasing Schumann's words, we could say, that this piece embodies the "overflowing fullness of inner life". In this embodiment, the polarity of Florestan and Eusebius elements of the initial parent-intonation theme as the underlying spiritual fundament of the composer can be revealed due to the "deeply hidden" and "strained threads" of the invariants of *motto* micromotive.

The creation of *Kreisleriana* (op. 16, 1838), just like that of "Davidsbündlertänze", is closely connected to Clara. In one of his letters, Schumann wrote: "How full of music I am now, and such lovely melodies all the time! I'm going to call it Kreisleriana; in it, you and a theme of yours play the principal role. I want to dedicate it to you, yes, to you, and no one else! You will smile such a gentle smile when you recognize yourself in it" (Schumann, 1970:354).

At the same time, the composer establishes the ideal of music as deep and high art, created to spiritualize and dignify a person. We have already mentioned the specific attitude of Romanticists to music. Here it is necessary to turn our attention to Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler, main character of novels by E.T.A. Hoffmann, endowed with some biographical features of the writer. Through this character, in his novels Hoffmann establishes a special role of music as a subtle, poetic art, opposing such understanding of it to philistine, chintzy perception. He wrote: "...art allows men to sense their higher destiny, and that it will lead them from the futile hurly-burly of everyday life into the Temple of Isis, where nature will speak to them in sacred sounds, unheard before

yet immediately comprehensible” (Hoffmann, 1990:15). He calls music “the most romantic of all the arts since its only subject-matter is infinity; the mysterious Sanskrit of nature, translated into sound that fills the human breast with infinite yearning; and only through it can they perceive the sublime song of – trees, flowers, animals, stones, water!” (Hoffmann, 1990:15). Consequently, for Hoffmann music is the “Sanskrit of nature”, underlying, deep, invisible, intangible. Similar ideas we can find in the works by many other Romanticists; they were also appealing to Schumann. In his music there are no direct plot analogies, adoption of certain facts from Hoffmann’s novels. It is widely known that the composer often named his pieces (which concerns the present cycle as well) after they were written. But the ideas embodied in the figure of Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler are the gist of what Schumann’s music conveys: deep, secret meanings, inexpressible in words. Another important sense aspect of this piece is the fact that Kreisler, furious, vicious, eccentric, is mostly close to Florestan character. This could be the reason why Schumann used Kreisler’s name in the title of his music: he is a bright embodiment of such Florestan features, as impulsiveness, extraversion, impetuosity. On the other hand, in this piece Kreisler’s figure, is, by all means, the embodiment of the composer’s struggle for his ideas, for establishment of some sincere, sublime sides of the human life, manifested in the dramatic tones typical of this music.

The drama of “Kreisleriana” finds its reflection in the penetrating principle of development, which is distinguished in its intensity, continuousness, drive, and culmination, the most spectacular moment of which is the last piece of the cycle. Consequently, development of this music follows the way of constant accumulation of new properties, enhancement, extension of the initial characters. This is why researchers define

it with the term *symphonic style*: “It is hard to name any other work of Schumann, where his specific “piano symphony”, or the continuousness and lyrical drive, achieved with only means of piano, would be expressed with the same force and integrity, as in “Kreisleriana” (Zhitomirsky, 1964:309). Development of this piece can be also interpreted as a deeper plunge into the gist of the primary character, expression and revelation of its deepest and subtlest tones, gradual exhaustion of all its capacities.

Imagery and contents of “Kreisleriana” in many ways is the extension of “Davidsbündlertänze”. Just like in “Davidsbündlertänze”, the prevailing image and emotional atmosphere of this piece is connected to the manifestation of an ultimate psychological state, interaction of who sensual images, Florestan and Eusebius. However, in comparison with “Davidsbündlertänze”, in “Kreisleriana” these motives are actively developed: the lyrical sphere is deeper, it becomes more introverted and concentrated, intellectualized, and the dramatic figure gets more acute, tense, determined, extraverted, thereby expressing the volcanic outburst of emotions (which reveals the similarity to Kreisler’s image).

The unity of the two figures composes the sense configuration of the piece’s parent intonation. Its invariant component, or the bipolar intonational core of penetrating thematic development, comes up in the beginning of piece № 1 (Fig. 6). In this theme we can identify *1*. An iambic upward second intonation, the fundament of Florestan sphere, and *2*. An intonation (better illustrated in Piece № 2 (Fig. 7)), of a gentle move from I to VI degree, omitting IV degree (in Piece № 2 returning to I, following the tonic triad), best manifested in the lyrical (Eusebius) episode of the musical work.

Florestan character is actualized with the help of such techniques as iambic structure,





Fig. 6



Fig. 7

swing rhythm, fast tempo, domination of upward steps, expressing determination and activeness. Inside Piece № 1 the character metamorphosis occurs. In the background of preserving the basic microintonations of the primary theme and the general character of narration, some subtle parameters transform, thereby creating a new figure: light, gentle, weightless. The melody is transferred to the higher register, the dynamics change (*f* for *p*), the direction of steps turns downward instead of upward; the active, determined part of the octave bass disappears. So, the very first piece sets the bipolarity of the theme, embodying a multidimensional sensual image, which brings opposite elements together. This bipolarity becomes the impulse for the further development.

Eusebius sphere is connected with such expressive means as slow tempo, downward or wave-like steps, but in general, rhythmically straight. These expressive means determine its calm, soft, gentle character. The volume and sophistication of this character's sound are created with polyphonic techniques, a wide register

diapason, wide, extensive position of voice parts (Fig. 7). Its first emergence in the cycle falls on the main theme of the second piece. It is accentuated with three contrast episodes: a scherzo-like one, an agile, agitatedly lyrical one and an image of a concentrated self-contemplation, a focused thought. The piece acquires a complicated form which resembles rondo: ABACDA. The themes of the accentuated parts are based on the second initial micromotive, which, undergoing some rhythmical transformations, and playing in the context of a different texture, acquires a different character.

These moments of accentuation of the main figure cause close "intertwinedness" (R. Schumann) of two contrast sphere of figures, forming the underlying intonation fundament of the whole work. The active interaction of contrast figure variants on the basis of similar microintonations occurs both inside each piece of the cycle and between different pieces, representing opposite spheres. Consequently, everything gets connected and intertwined, both intonationally and rhythmically. This active

thematic interaction of the opposite spheres based on the initial parent-intonation is the main confirmation of the symphonic style of “Kreisleriana”.

Another manifestation of symphonic style is the preparation of the culmination moment, which is actualized gradually, during the stage preceding the culmination, thereby creating the active direction for the development of a new theme, leading to the development climax. It is evident on the Fig. of the next themes, where the main expressive role is played by the intonation of the downward minor seconds and

swing rhythm: № 1, middle episode; № 3, *Noch schneller* episode; № 6, *Etwas bewegter* episode; № 7, *Noch schneller* episode (Fig. 8).

If in the first pieces (№№ 1, 3, 5) *Florestan* motive played in the background, as though gradually developing on its own, by the end of the cycle it “comes closer” and in Piece № 7 plays in the foreground. In № 8 this character acquires the features of a spatial sound created by such means as a huge register diapason, diversity of structure (accord structure combined with polyphonic techniques). When its sound is through, the character melts away, disappears in nowhere, as





a		№1, middle episode
b.		№ 3, middle episode
c.		№ 6, middle episode
d.		№ 7, middle episode
e.		№ 8, middle episode

Fig. 8

though embodying the complete exhaustion of the sensual and meaning contents, ended to the parent-intonation.

So, if in “Davidsbündlertänze” such principles, as polarity, pulsation, clear expression of the underlying intonation invariants are best manifested, then in “Kreisleriana” the key property is the symphonic style, expressed, first of all, through the intensity, continuousness of development. Its characteristics are gradualness, successive aspiration for the target, which is determination, construction of the process diversity, creation of the primary image. The peculiarity of the invariant manifestation of an underlying parent-intonation theme in this piece is its unobviousness, veiledness, “perplexity” of the thematic elements, of the way they grow in the process of development. But still the two constant microintonations, the mobile parameters (tempo, rhythm, tonality, harmony etc.) of which undergo various transformations, are perfectly recognizable in all pieces of the cycle.

Another peculiarity of “Kreisleriana” is that every polar character is accentuated, and, at the same time, emphasized, concentrated, thereby embodying the plunge into the underlying meanings of the parent intonation. This peculiarity is closely bond with Kreisler theme, with understanding music as an underlying, inmost, essential expression of life itself, of its being, “mysterious, Sanskrit of nature, translated into sound”.

“*Humoreske*” op. 20 was written by Schumann in 1839, when he had gone through a lot, when many of the obstacles had already been overcome, but the result of the “struggle for Clara” was still unknown<sup>7</sup>, so the mood of “Humoreske” is calm, and at the same time, a little sad: there is a sort of submission present in it. In its imagery and emotional content, it is different from “Davidsbündlertänze” and “Kreisleriana”. There is no dramatic acuteness, no figures of

clear, open pain or suffering. “Both humour and lyricism bear a more open, objective character” (Nikolaeva, 1990:159).

This piece also reflects the idea of interconnected polar states, which, in the present case, are the soft, lyrical, a little sad beginning and an active figure with some ironic traits. Due to the name of the piece, it is important to consider the question on how Schumann interpreted the word “humour”. Many researchers emphasize, that Schumann “...used the word “humour” not in its common narrow meaning, as a special form of wittiness, but also in the wider meaning, in which it is used in the novels by his favourite authors, Jean Paul and E.T.A. Hoffmann, as the expression of integrity of irony and seriousness in life, of the way it combines laughter and tears” (cited by (Merkulov, 2006:56). In one of his letters, the composer wrote: “My dear Clara, is it possible not to write to you for whole eight days? But I dreamt of you and thought of you with such love which I had never known before. I have been all the week at the piano, composing, writing, *laughing and crying, all at once*. You will find this state of affairs nicely described in my Op.20, the *Grosse Humoreske*” (Italics by O.Ia.) (Schumann, 1970:444). Or, in another letter: “It may be the saddest of my works” (Schumann, 1970:501). The mix of sadness and joy, gentleness and irony, lyrical and active elements is the essence of this piece’s inner contents. To illustrate it, we can also quote E.T.A. Hoffmann, who wrote: “Who would dare to deny the irony, rooted deep in human nature... The strongest pain or complaint of hopeless despair is often *reborn* into laughter and broad mirth. The complete cognition of this strange feature, peculiar of the human nature, may be the thing we usually call “humour” (Italics by O.Ia.) (cited by (Literaturnye manifesty..., 1980:214)). In the context of the present research, the romanticist understanding of humour, which



Fig. 9

means the focus on the underlying, invisible plan, on the essence of things, uniting the polarity of the opposite emotional elements, acquires special significance.

*Invariant* of the present piece's thematic development, due to which the underlying intonation constantly finds itself in the text, includes, precisely speaking, three micromotives instead of two: **1.** Primary expressive upward second intonation, with the simultaneous harmonic sequence with an augmented triad; **2.** Intonation of the upward perfect fourth, embodying the active element; **3.** Downward, degree-wise step from IV to I, the further fundament of the development of a lyrical image (Fig. 9).

Just like in "Kreisleriana", thematic invariant of "Humoreske" is the element due to which all imagery transformations get intertwined with each other. The actualization of the underlying intonation theme in this piece is made through the line of continuous development, through gradual accumulation of two opposite qualities, polar antitheses, forming the subsequent series of the primary state's metamorphosis. Just like in "Kreisleriana", the culmination of this development is the ending part of the piece. Both lyrical and active edges of the integrated, sophisticated image, acquire new properties at the end of the piece. However, unlike "Kreisleriana", "Humoreske" presents different sensual tones of the polar imagery spheres: the mentioned gentleness and the active element; sadness and joy.

As it has been mentioned above, "Humoreske" can be divided into four parts and a conclusion. The first three are based on the three-part principle and end with a recapitulation; the fourth one is a united, piercing line, leading the listener to the final. At the beginning of the piece, the parent-intonation theme, as an integration of the lyrical and the ironical, is generally characterized with such sensual and meaning tones, as softness and gentleness on one hand, and lightness, joy, activeness and irony on the other.

In the conclusion of the piece, the active, living, toccata element, following the spontaneous and paradoxical logic of Schumann's dramaturgy, is suddenly reborn into a pompous figure (*Mit einigem Pomp* part), which is the culmination of this development line. The instrumental signals, specific for this theme, can be the genre key to the figure of a pompous, demonstrative, spectacular element. We can suppose that in the context of "Humoreske" this pompousness expresses the emotional pain, reborn into "irony and broad mirth" (E.T.A. Hoffmann), irony about the suffering.

The culmination of the lyrical figure is the final part of "Humoreske", *Zum Beschluss*, when the figure opens up completely. The piece's theme is based on the continuation of the second part's motives. If in the active figure culmination the external element, the pompousness, affectivity, was the brightest, then here the plunge into internal states is obvious. The main peculiarities of development of this figure are: recitativensness,

wide and long breath, improvisation. The polyphonic “rollcalls” that appear during the development process, weaken the lyrical element, thereby reflecting the aspect of meditation, contemplation, doubt, creating a sort of distance, a view from outside. Despite the major tonality, one can hear the repressed pain and submission in the music. The tones of meaning for this image are expressed through the combination of distance and, at the same time, longing for the freedom of expression, through the interaction of light, lyrical and sad states.

So, in “Humoreske” we considered another variant of micro monothematic technique. Just like in “Kreisleriana”, here we observe the intertwinedness, intangibility, but at the same time deep underlying alliance of opposite components of the initial theme diapason, in the exterior connected to each other with invariant microintonations. This alliance is found despite the difference of the “flickering” images. In the development process, new variants of the initial micromotives, on the base of which the subsequent pieces are constructed, are born; for this reason we can speak of “melody growth”.

In general, in the Fig. of Schumann’s music we managed to study the functioning variant of monothematic principle defined as micro monothematic technique, which implies the penetration of the whole with general microintonations, binding its integrity together. The specific peculiarities of development in the studied works by Schumann are: continuousness, gradualness of accumulating new qualities through intertwinedness of contrast thematic elements. Their living, interconnected development, in the process of which new intonational variants, or impulses for the next images, are born, lets us speak of musical growth as actualization of the initial theme’s creativity, of the active and deep character of thematic interactions. Moreover, one of the typical techniques specific for the composer’s creative pattern, is the moment of intensive pulsation, created by rhythmic means.

Consequently, monothematic principle as self-development expression of a certain underlying base of a musical thought, embodying the actualization of a psychological state, finds its original deflection in Schumann’s music.

<sup>1</sup> See also: (Iarosh, 2 (2010)).

<sup>2</sup> See also: (Iarosh, 7 (2010)).

<sup>3</sup> Research of the musical sense cognition mechanism is also the subject of work by N. Garipova (Garipova, 2011). Study of the text’s sense organization, found on the border of extramusical semantics and intramusical one, forming on the basis of timbre character, lies in the fundament of work by I. Basharova (Basharova, 2008).

<sup>4</sup> See also: (Merkulov, 2006).

<sup>5</sup> Collection of piano works of Clara Wiek «Soirées musicales» op. 6.

<sup>6</sup> It is also important to remark, that the word “dance” in the name of the piece does not imply the obligatory actualization of the music in dance, but it is first of all connected to the Romanticist interpretation of the dance element as the expression of genuineness of the lyrical emotion.

<sup>7</sup> Turning to the biography of Schumann, on July 16, 1839, Robert and Clara applied to court in order to solve their conflict with Friedrich Wiek, which lasted for thirteen months.

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## **Принцип микромонотематизма в музыке Р. Шумана (на примере фортепианных произведений)**

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*В статье рассматриваются особенности тематической организации музыки Р. Шумана, в которой большое значение имеет принцип микромонотематизма. Сущностные качества монотематического метода, связанные с воплощением многомерных образов, соединяющих контрастные стороны в глубоком единстве, запечатлены в их непрерывном развитии, глубоких, сущностных изменениях и во многом обусловлены историко-культурным контекстом романтической эпохи. Оригинальное преломление монотематизма находит в творчестве Шумана, представляя собой пронизанность целого общими микроинтонациями, скрепляющими его единство.*

*Характерные черты тематического развития в музыке композитора раскрываются в контексте интонационного метода анализа, исследующего область интрамузыкальной семантики произведений, связанного с пониманием интонации как единства смысла и звука, являющейся основой живого интонационного процесса.*

*Ключевые слова: микромонотематизм, романтизм, глубинная интонация, интонационный анализ, интрамузыкальная семантика.*

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