



To What Extent do Two Different Music Scores of Liszt's Vallee D' Obermann Influence the Pianist's Interpretation

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Abstract: Different publishers have published different editions of the same piece of music. When a pianist chooses a music score to learn or perform, the details in different music scores will influence the pianist's interpretation. The essay will be divided into three sections. The first section will introduce the piece of music, Vallee D' Obermann and give information about the two editors, Edition Peters and G. Henle. The second will attempt to compare and contrast the differences and similarities in tempo, articulation and dynamic marks in different editions and try to find how the marks influence pianist's interpretation. The final part aims to analyze how the different editions influence the pianist's interpretation in a positive or negative way.

Keywords: Vallee D' Obermann; Music; Edition; Composer

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1 Introduction

Different publishers have published different editions of the same piece of music. To be specific, *Années de Pèlerinage*, composed by Liszt during 1835 to 1839 has now been published in several versions. For instance, the edition printed by Peters and the original music score published by G. Henle are widely available. Though most of the details in the music score are similar, there are differences which may influence the pianist to interpret the music in different way. As a result, when a pianist chooses a music score to learn or perform, the details in different

music scores will influence the pianist's interpretation. This essay will focus on the specific music score, Vallee D' Obermann, published by two different editors, Edition Peters and G. Henle. The essay will be divided into three sections. The first section will introduce the piece of music, Vallee D' Obermann and give information about the two editors, Edition Peters and G. Henle. The second will attempt to compare and contrast the differences and similarities in tempo, articulation and dynamic marks in different editions and try to find how the marks influence pianist's interpretation. The final part aims to analyze how the different editions influence the pianist's interpretation in a positive or negative way.

2 Vallee D' Obermann is one of Liszt's solo piano pieces which come from *Années de pèlerinage: Suisse*

As far as the Vallee D' Obermann was concerned, the music is one of Liszt's solo piano pieces which come from *Années de pèlerinage: Suisse*. The music was published in 1855, and composed between 1848 and 1854. Vallee D' Obermann can hardly be found on the map; the valley exists only in the imagination of Liszt who had read the book *Obermann* written by Senancour. To be specific, the caption refers to Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.

Could I embody and unbosom now. That which is most within me, could I wreak. My thoughts upon expression, and thus throw. Soul, heart, mind, passions, feelings, strong or weak. All that I would have sought, and all I seek, Bear;

know, feel, and yet breathe-into one word, And that one word were Lightning, I would speak; But as it is, I live and die unheard. With a most voiceless thought, sheathing it as a sword."(Henle, P32, c1978)^[3].

The title also influenced by Senancour's Obermann, which including the crucial questions, "What do I want? Who am I? What do I ask of nature?" In accordance with the context, the whole piece of music establishes a solitary, melancholic, lonely and lugubrious sentiment^[4].

In respect of the two editors, Edition Peters is a German music publishing house, founded in Leipzig in 1800. The company publishes various music scores from the Baroque period music to contemporary music. Some of the music scores published by Edition Peters, without an urtext mark, were edited by the company and the musician who employed by the Edition Peter, such as Emil Georg Conrad von Sauer. As far as the G. Henle publishing house is concerned, it is a German music publishing house as well. However, G. Henle Publishers specialize in original edition of music score. The program includes music by composers from all different periods. In addition G. Henle Publishers also produces scholarly complete editions, books, reference works and periodicals.

After introducing the background of Vallee D' Obermann and two different editors, the similarities for Vallee D' Obermann in these two editions are obvious. To be specific, firstly, with regard to tempo marks, in both Edition Peter and G. Henle's editions, it is clear that from the beginning, both scores use Lento assai in the first bar, which means the music starts fundamentally in the same way. Generally, after comparing two editions of Vallee D' Obermann, it can be seen that the whole music, same tempo language such as Piu lento, Espressivo, Ritardando, Recitativo, Presto, and Sempre animando sin' al fine are all printed in the same bar and same place. As a result, though there are two different editions, they had same tempo marks and the uniformity will not mislead the pianist's interpretation, and in the meantime, emphasizes the significance of tempo language and helps the pianist to double check the accuracy of the music score.

Secondly, as far as the articulation marks are concerned, between the editions published by Edition Peter and G. Henle, the articulation marks in these two editions are similar as well. Specifically, the

articulation marks, which include the Slur, Phrase mark, Staccato, Staccatissimo, Accent, Sforzando, Rinforzando, and Legato are all same in these two editions. The correspondence means these two different editions of Vallee D' Obermann have same articulation marks and no matter which editions the pianist may choose, the sameness of the articulation marks in these two scores will hardly influence the pianist to interpret the scores in different way^[5].

Moving away from the similarities, though the tempo marks and articulation marks do important and obviously influence the pianist's interpretation in details, the different dynamic marks in these two editions could affect pianist's interpretation significantly. For instance, there are two different extra dynamic marks, which exist in the Edition Peter's edition but not in G. Henle's. It is effortlessly to find out in details how the two editions with different dynamic marks influence the pianist's interpretation and if the different dynamic marks play a positive or negative role.

With respect to the first difference in two editions of Vallee D' Obermann, at the end of the first page, there is a diminuendo mark printed on the edition published by Edition Peter, with the notes go to the low pitch, the diminuendo mark leads the music to more darkness and distress. However, in the original music score published by G. Henle, there is no diminuendo mark. With the notes becoming lower and lower, the music with no diminuendo remains brave and has strong emotion. As a result, the influences of two different editions lead the pianist's interpretation in different ways. To be specific, if the pianist performs in diminuendo as Edition Peter wrote, the music will maintain the melancholic and tenebrous mood from the beginning. However, the attraction and colour of the music will decrease which may result the music into monotony and tediousness. Nevertheless, with no diminuendo mark in the music, the edition published by G. Henle not only reflects the composer's thought, but brings the conflictive sentiment into music and shape the music to be more emotional and colourful as well.

With regard to the second difference in the two editions of Vallee D' Obermann, in the middle of music, there is a bar which has a piano mark followed by the forte mark at the same time in the edition of Edition Peter. The piano mark here provides a large dynamic range for the music itself and is also

immensely influential in the pianist's interpretation in terms of music and emotion. In addition, after having forte sounds for two pages, the dramatical piano sound here provides a chance for the pianist's interpretation to return to the main sentiment from the beginning and enhances the seductiveness of the pianist's interpretation. However, the negative influence of the piano mark for the pianist's interpretation in the Peter's Edition is that, the music lacks a transition between forte and piano. Such interpretation may cause a minor confusion regarding to the context of music. Nevertheless, in G. Henle's edition, the forte mark continued until the end of the sentence, which means there is no piano mark in the music as compared to Edition Peter in same bar. For the pianist's interpretation here, the positive influence, without a piano mark, is that the music will emphasizing the conflictive mood and leads the pianist's interpretation into darkness step by step. However, as far as keeping the forte sounds for a long time is concerned, the music could be less interesting and lack dramatic elements.

3 Conclusion

Above all, based on the background information of the music Vallee D' Obermann and two different editions published by Edition Peter and G. Henle, after comparing and contrasting the similarities and differences in tempo, articulation and dynamic marks, the same tempo and articulation marks in two editions reflect the accuracy of the publishers and help the pianist to realize the significant function of each tempo and articulation marks. However, the

different dynamic marks in the two editions result in the two different interpretations by the pianist. To be specific, with the two extra dynamic marks in Edition Peter's edition, the pianist's interpretation is led into more personalization, which means the interpretation may not reflect the composer's intention completely. In terms of the original edition published by G. Henle, the edition will bring the pianist to interpret the Vallee D' Obermann in Liszt's way. However the negative influence is that, the interpretation may lack a little personality and dramatization. As a result, both Edition Peter and G. Henle's editions have positive and negative influences for a pianist's interpretation. The best way to improve the pianist's interpretation is to combine the benefit in each edition and succeed in finding the personality which should be based on the composer's intention.

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