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**JAN RUKGABER PIANO ENSEMBLES IN THE CONTEXT OF
HISTORICO-CULTURAL SOCIETY PECULIARITIES DURING
THE BIEDERMAIER PERIOD IN HALICIA OF THE 19TH
CENTURY**

Nowadays in Ukrainian musicology the creative heritage of last centuries composers has been researched as they made a considerable contribution into musical culture treasury. Researches were involved into searching for musical resources, which besides libraries and archives are kept in museums, second-hand book sellers' and private collections.

In the nineteenth century Lviv was a part of the Austrian Empire. Under the influence of European culture Lviv became one of the most

famous musical centres, in which known personalities lived and created. Among them was a pianist, composer, pedagogue, musical critic, who was at the head of musical life in Lviv, an Austrian musician Jan Rukgaber (1799-1876). He faithfully devoted all his life to the development of musical culture in Galicia.

At that time the piano was mainly used for family music playing. Gradually, favourable conditions were formed for chamber music active development. They included piano duets, sonatas and quartets with some peculiarities typical of a new direction style (German - *bieder* - honest, sincere; *meier* - committed). *Biedermeier* was formed in the period between classicism and romanticism and absorbed certain democratic features and opinions of lower middle-class representatives. On the contrary to heroic plots of high-class society and romantic artists. *biedermeier* dealt with everyday life: sadness and joy, problems and happiness of nature, sincerity, going into details (miniature), close connection with applied art. Chamber instrumental ensemble problems were analyzed by A. Tereshchenko [3], M. Kopytsa [3], I. Polska [7], A. Mykytka [3], Yu. Sokolovsky [3], A. Stanko [3] etc. Musical culture of the nineteenth century has been researched by L. Kyyanovska [5], N. Kashkadamova [4], K. de Long [13], K. Dalgauz [12], H. H. Eggebrecht [12], A. Sokhor [10]. Works of Ukrainian composers have been dealt by N. Dyka [3], V. Andriyevska [3], T. Slyusar [3], T. Mentsinsky [3] and others. The history of piano duet genre is described in the works of A. Hotlib [2], Ye. Sorokina [9] and others. Jan Rukgaber's biographical aspects have been analyzed by V. Tokarchuk [11]. The importance of family music playing in *biedermeier* period for musical professionalism formation has been examined by B. Kudryk [6], S. Lyudkevych, V. Vytvytsky and others.

More detailed research is needed to be done for ensemble performing of less known musical pieces in Galicia in the nineteenth century.

The article is aimed at showing and dealing with Jan Rukgaber piano ensembles in the context of historico-cultural society during the *biedermeier* period in Galicia of the nineteenth century. The new style direction was formed as the adaptation of high quality changes in European cultural process. Western European researches consider *biedermeier* to be a certain slogan for European society evolution [12]. The crisis following the Napoleon war period caused lack of attention to the personality (typical of romanticism), and returning to close family relations and idealized piece and calm (typical of *biedermeier*). It influenced the society and art preferences in all Austrian Empire and beyond.

In the nineteenth century the art of *biedermeier* became popular among Galician intelligentsia. *Biedermeier* was the prior form of communication at the family parties and became a peaceful and relaxing lifestyle for Galician people.

Jan Rukgaber (a real name – Jan de Montalbo; French Jean de Montalbeau) was born in the family of French emigrants. After his father's death the boy was adopted by his tutor, a Vienna citizen, Joseph Rukgaber. Young Jan was taught music by Joghann Gummel, who was W. A. Mozart's student. In 1818, after the successful concert tour round Ukraine, Jan Rukgaber settled in Lviv. A respected virtuoso musician and composer worked as a teacher of music in the family of rich people. From 1838 to 1842 Rukgaber was at the head of Galician Music Society [11, p. 225].

The information about the composer and his musical works are kept in the Lviv V. Stefanyk Scientific Library, the M. Lysenko National Academy of Music Library, in the central State Historical Archives in Lviv and private collections. There are also Rukgaber's autographs, copies of his musical pieces (they were rewritten by various performers and his students). Pattern titles and the dedications are written in German, French and Polish.

Versatility is typical of Jan Rukgaber's works that count 100 opuses. Some pieces were published in Lviv and some in Europe. They were often performed at that time. Those musical forms included overtures, cantatas, a piano concert for the symphony orchestra, chorals, romances, chamber-instrumental music, string quartet, duet for a piano and a violin [1].

Jan Rukgaber used popular genres of Classic-Romantic period including *biedermeier*. Ensemble compositions were suggested to be analyzed. They were preferably performed in salons. Family music making was a constant feature of the nineteenth century.

In Rukgaber's archives one can find piano duets (ensemble for two pianists and one piano), pieces for two pianos (pianists ensemble for two instruments), four-hand, six-hand, even eight-hand playing [1]. The composer created innumerable ensemble patterns: four-hand compositions for operas, transcriptions, miniatures, marches, dances. Almost all those compositions were dedicated to different people that was typical of that time. For example, Grande Marche (a 4 mains) op.13 was dedicated to Baron de Rath; Grande Marche №3 (a 4 mains) op.17 – to general Bikard; Grande Marche, op.10. – to Galician army general Duke Fresnel. The above mentioned pieces might have been published in Lviv at

Francois Piller's, in Warsaw at Yan Brzezina's.

Grande Marche, op.10. belonged to composer's daughter Janet, it was mentioned on the front page. Three marches for four-hand playing (3 marches a 4 mains), op 84: the first march was dedicated to a famous general Garibaldi, the second one – to his daughter Janet, the third one – to his student Eugenie Meulien. The piano duet became a prevailing genre of the nineteenth century. Its increasing development started in the late nineteenth century and obtained great popularity. The piano prevailing was influenced by the hammer piano with a wider range with ability to change and control sound volume and additional pedal resonator. It increased power of sound that incredibly enriched a new homophone style of music [9, p. 4].

In Europe, in the early nineteenth century numerous pieces for piano were created. Therefore, wide repertoire promoted piano ensemble independent musical form [9, p. 5].

For four-hand playing sonatas were composed, as well as variations fantasies, suits, program series, various dances, marches, etudes, concerts. Duet performing was made in the direction of texture setting up and intensity.

Four-voice "Canon" (f-moll) and a large form – "Variationes na Theme Russe" op.12 are poliphony examples of Jan Rukgaber's piano duets. Plays rank among his piano compositions. For four-hand playing Jan Rukgaber wrote a suit of six walses "Suite de Valses" op.85, titled "Souvenir des Bords de la Moldowa" and "Valse avec Coda" a 4 mains op.81, titled "Souvenir des Bords du Sereth". These lines testify the nostalgia typical of middle nineteenth century and biedermeier period.

At that time dances enjoyed a great popularity. Jan Rukgaber's piano innumerable musical pieces were written in dance forms. For four-hand playing the composer wrote "Mazurka" C-dur a 4 mains, op.75, "Suite de Valses" a 4 mains, op.85, "Polka Szamszurka" a 4 mains, op.104. This piece is characterized by transparent texture and expressive dancing rhythm. Dances demand skillful performing.

On the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the orchestral compositions were rewritten for four-hand playing. They were added to symphonies, chamber ensemble pieces and operas. It became the only source of learning. While playing in four hands a lot of musicians got acquainted with the works of J. Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven, Felix Mendelssohn, Brahms, P. Tchaikovsky, F. Liszt, Richard Wagner, J. Verdi.

Four-hand duet in the style of chamber music making became more

popular than the originals. The transformations for piano playing in four hands – “Ouverture zur Komischen Oper der Doctor und Apothecker von Josef Kitzler”, op.40, overture to melodrama “Saviour”, op.53 – clavier for the piano four-hand playing are kept in Rukgaber’s archives. Due to the texture division into a few parts it became simplified and suitable for playing not only dance forms and marches but opera extracts too.

Transcriptions were important in the nineteenth century. For the piano duet Jan Rukgaber made transcription of Andante and Kavatina, op.59 on the theme from opera “Zelmira” by Rossini. The peculiarity is that the second part is technically sophisticated, it could have been written for a teacher of music.

Due to their simplicity four-hand playing musical pieces (late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries) were performed by low skilled pianists and were noted for developing ensemble skills among both adults and children. Gradually, a new quality of the piano duet was formed.

Texture for four-hand playing helped to display orchestral effect. It became possible to show the saturation of sonorous tutti, various ways of making sounds, strokes (for example, synchronous sound making, moving voices, that playing legato, non legato, staccato) and some timbre features of orchestral pieces [9, p.5].

Principal style basics of four-hand playing differ from the performance on two instruments. Playing the two pianos gives more freedom, independence in register using and pedals. Close relations of performers who play one keyboard create conditions for union and mutual understanding. Pieces for two pianos have a tendency to virtuosity and concert performing, whereas four-hand patterns – to the style of chamber music making [9, p.4]. Besides the piano, the Jan Rukgaber’s duet wrote compositions for six-hand playing (Mazur a 6 mains), op.56 (the first part is marked Prima, the second one – Seconda, the third one – Basso). For eight-hand playing for two pianos the composer wrote the dance collection on Polish theme “Melange sur Differentes Themes Polonoise a 8 mains, op.29”. The piece consists of a Marché, mazurka, krakovyak and other dances.

In the conditions of expansion of general European creative process in Galicia in the nineteenth century, the biedermeier as a new style direction was formed. It caused and affected the connection of piano playing with the process of musical life, the democratization of spreading the traditions of salon music playing. It was suitable to the preferences of historic-cultural society.

By I. Polska’s definition the piano ensemble pieces had a function of

“hearts union” [7, p. 12].

Compositions which are simple and catchy for usual audience, not sophisticated for performing, not demanding by content belong to *biedermeier*.

Great popularity of these pieces caused certain influence on professionals: F. Shubert, K. Veber, F. Mendelssohn, D. Sichynsky and Jan Rukgaber.

Rukgaber’s compositions were popular in Galicia in the nineteenth century. Ensemble patterns are different by sophistication. They were played at concerts, parties, in salons and are characterized by external effectiveness, sound display and brilliant style. Ensemble texture is full of brilliant passages, double mediant, sextet. Music is simple and pleasant for listening, aimed for general audience.

For family music playing Jan Rukgaber wrote different compositions, not very large. Composer directed “Religioso”, “Alegro con Energia”, “Allegretto Agitato” and simple patterns for performing.

Their musical language and harmony don’t differ much from classical style. Some versions of one piece differ by tonality and texture simplicity. It was aimed for amateur musicians who played music at home. Jan Rukgaber defines dynamics, agogics, pedalization and application. It testifies his consideration of the text as a composer, performer and pedagogue.

Jan Rukgaber’s piano ensembles for family music playing influenced the formation of aesthetic basics of demanding Galician people. These compositions are worth being included into academic and concert repertoire, because they are a great contribution to the treasury of cultural heritage.

Nowadays, not very famous musical pieces of composers of the nineteenth century are promoted in Europe. They are promising for future performing of piano ensembles written by not famous composers of Galicia in the nineteenth century. They are worth being commented. It will popularize music not only as a substance, but also help to adopt music in the context of a certain epoch connected with the history and culture of the region.

Keywords: *piano ensemble, family playing music, biedermaier, pedagogue-pianist, Rukgaber, Halicia.*

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