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# Piano music of composers-minimalists in the teaching repertoire of higher music education

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## Abstract

The study is devoted to Piano music of composers-minimalists in the teaching repertoire of higher music education. The materials of the study are educational technologies and specific pedagogical methods, which encourage future music educators to appeal to and master the contemporary piano music. As a result, that there are many unresolved problems in this area that require theorist and practitioners' attention. The results of the work allowed including minimalists' pieces in the teaching repertoire and thus improving the professional training process of music educators and making them acquainted with the XX century music.

**Keywords:** Music Educator, Professional Training, Piano.

## Música de piano de compositores-minimalistas en el repertorio docente de educación musical superior

### Resumen

El estudio está dedicado a la música de piano de compositores-minimalistas en el repertorio de enseñanza de la educación musical superior. Los materiales del estudio son tecnologías educativas y métodos pedagógicos específicos, que alientan a los futuros educadores musicales a apelar y dominar la música de piano contemporánea. Como resultado, hay muchos problemas no resueltos en esta área que requieren la atención de teóricos y profesionales. Los resultados del trabajo permitieron incluir piezas minimalistas en el repertorio docente y, por lo tanto, mejorar el proceso de formación profesional de los educadores musicales y familiarizarlos con la música del siglo XX.

**Palabras clave:** educador musical, formación profesional, piano.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

One of the important special professional competencies formed in the process of future music educator training is the ability and readiness to perform the highly artistic works of classical and contemporary music of different genres and styles in technically accurate and distinct manner. The works of contemporary music, however, are not included in the teaching and particularly concert repertoire of the current students of music education institutions. In other words, a music educator should perform vocal or instrumental works of composers of different times, however, in the course of

training only a limited number of styles and directions are mastered (teachers mainly limit the teaching repertoire to the works of the XVIII–XIX centuries). We are living long enough in XXI century, but the avant-garde music of the XX century is still left of the sidelines of the educational process. In this regard, the scientific problem of practical implementation of minimalist composers' piano pieces, representing a new, avant-garde style, rather than traditional one, in the teaching repertoire of higher music education institutions, seems to be highly relevant.

It is also relevant due to the fact that the younger generation of students has their own musical preferences and interests, and in the light of the personality-oriented concept of education, students must be acquainted with a variety of styles and genres and be provided an opportunity to choose those artistic trends, which are aesthetically close to them. After all, Baroque and Classical-Romantic music cannot meet the individual spiritual needs of each student. Pedagogical observation showed that many students do not want to play an instrument because of the lack of interest in the performed pieces, which they encounter in every anthology, offered by teachers for years. Why then music teachers do not present the avant-garde music of the XX century in the teaching repertoire? The answer is simple: it is not studied in the history of music courses and music-theoretical disciplines, it does not enter into the number of mastered works in the performing training class.

The most important task of modern education is the formation of a wide range of competencies in students, giving them the professional versatility and diversity of artistic and aesthetic tastes and ideas during the learning process. For this reason, the subject of the study is the American minimalist's music and its inclusion into the teaching repertoire of higher music education institutes, which success depends on the correct pedagogical approach to the practical solution of the problem. The theoretical relevance of the work is due to the fact that in the domestic literature the minimalists' works remain poorly researched and at the same time is totally absent in the educational process of institutions that train music educators. Practical relevance is associated with providing the methodological recommendations for the mastering of minimalists' music in the training of music educators. The subject under consideration has never been covered in the scientific literature before. However, there have been detailed examination of the basic concepts and artistic and aesthetic principles, as well as the expressive means of this music, the problems of perception of modern compositions and its presentation in the educational process of institutions, including music education institutions, the analysis and performance of avant-garde music, modern musical and theoretical systems and the theory of modern composition, the evolution of the piano performing style. These works reveal many aspects of the main subject of the study – the works of minimalist composers and the principles of their performance, but not the object - the ways and means, with help of which these works can be presented in the teaching and performing repertoire. This article, naturally, is based on the scientific and practical results of music

teachers' work achieved by researchers, develops advanced ideas of domestic and foreign authors, but first of all it is designed to solve the main dilemma of art and education: the stylistic restriction of music, mastered by future music educators; the availability of highly artistic musical works that require conventional performing skills, and their absence in the teaching and concert repertoire of musicians; insufficient use of educational potential of avant-garde music in the training of music educators; delay or lateness of teaching repertoire in the contemporary art.

Musical minimalism emerged on the wave of interest in the philosophy, religion and art of the East, especially Zen Buddhism with its practice of meditation and contemplation of nature, as well as instruments, tonality, metre-rhythmic and timbre-colorful features of non-European music. As noted by Krom:

There were two centers of gravity that influenced the musical language of the minimalists: this is a fascinating refinement of the Indian raga and the hypnotic regularity of the African drum technique <...>. Improvisational nature of raga, its incompleteness and meditative contemplation were in tune with the minimalist aesthetic, initially gravitating to non-European forms of music-making (Krom, 2002: 18).

The minimalists practically mastered the performing technique of the Eastern masters. Therefore, La Monte Young and Terry Riley studied classical Indian dance and singing from Pandit Pran Nath, Phillip Glass studied Indian history, literature and game on a Tabla from Alla Rakha, Steve Reich took drumming lessons from the teacher

from Ghana and wrote music for Balinese gamelan and East African percussion instruments. Americans were fascinated by the intonation-harmonic subtlety of Indian raga and the hypnotic nature of the regular metric of African music for percussion. The exotic sound world of distant civilizations attracted composers along with religious and philosophical ideas. However, minimalists used quite traditional tonal and rhythmic system, treating it in a new way, acoustic instruments, features, different polyphonic techniques and methods of presentation and development of the material, such as contrast, comparison, variation, fragmentation, accurate and modified repetition, as well as other methods of professional European music of the Middle Ages, Renaissance and Baroque. This is what makes this avant-garde and unusual-sounding music available in terms of complexity for students of music education institutions.

The main idea of this work, which distinguishes it from previous studies, is the need and the real possibility of the modern youth' mastering of avant-garde music through the activation of motivational-valuable, cognitive and practical perception of a new style on the one hand, and familiarizing with the artistic avant-garde in its most simple forms available to students, which minimalism comprises, on the other. Already known and proven scientific and practical approaches to the problem of music educator's mastering the modern music are supplemented by a specific process model and pedagogical technologies of students training for performance of minimalists piano pieces, methodological recommendations for its mastering and presenting in teaching and concert repertoire, by introducing into the

scientific usage the new theoretical and historical facts, performing principles, teaching methods and ways of familiarizing youth with the avant-garde academic music.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

A great contribution to the study of minimalist music was made by historians and theorists who have identified artistic and aesthetic principles and methods of composition of avant-garde musicians. The music of La Monte Young, Terry Riley, Steve Reich, and Philip Glass was called in different ways in the period of its emergence: minimalist, repetitive, meditative, pulsating and acoustic (Gavrilova, 2005). The first term is related to the fact that music is based on the principle of reduction of sound material. La Monte Young described minimalist music, like music, which is made with a minimum of means (Schwarz, 2008). The composers returned to the tonality and modality in their simplest forms, not burdened with any system-harmonic interrelations. At the forefront, they placed the sound like a basic element of the whole composition, based on the principle of repeated playing of rhythmic-melodic patterns without modifications or with gradual modifications. Patterns could be presented as a simple sound complex (low-volume scale or triad), repeated throughout the large part of the composition if not throughout the whole composition. This composition technique has been called as repetitive technique (Stoianova, 1977). Now there is a process of continuous expansion of expressive means of music, the inclusion of new sounds in the music

world, continuous creation of new forms, detection of new and unknown processes of life of musical organisms (Denisov, 1986).

It was the most common, but not the only technique of minimalist style. Thus, Philip Glass combined the most complex rhythmic patterns, borrowed from Indian raga, with simple harmonic constructions – literally two or three melodic intervals or broken chords, repeated many times. Steve Reich, being fond of tape music, used techniques of changing speeds, such as gradual phase shift or phase connection. Minimalists also turned to the system of animation tapes, in particular, the principle of the loop, implying multiple scrolling of tape of small length folded as a loop on the tape recording, leading to the constant repetition of the same melodic figure. On the basis of non-European traditions, Americans created an original artistic and aesthetic concept, based on a fundamentally different, compared to the European, religious attitude to musical composition. Music should be a mediator between man and God and create special vibrations that have a beneficial effect on world harmony and balance. The minimalists revived the most ancient forms of art, bringing it closer to the mystical ritual action. Minimalist compositions immerse the listener in a meditation as if hypnotizing, immerse in a state of peace and balance, which are the main purpose of existence, according to Zen Buddhism. Hence minimalist music is also called meditative music. This music is characterized by a contemplative nature, as Young eloquently says: “If a listener is not floating on air, then I have not succeeded” (Schwarz, 2008: 10). The effect of listening to

minimalist music is close to immersion in the state of meditation practiced in Eastern religions.

These four American minimalists have promoted the principle of the objectification of music, the creation of such compositions, which would reflect the processes occurring in nature. The idea of free improvisation was considered by minimalists as an important aspect of spontaneous self-expression of a performer, as a manifestation of the principles of peacemaking. A characteristic feature of the minimalist music is the identity of all elements – timbre, rhythm, meter and tempo, as well as all parts of the composition, which are equal to each other and are not connected by the principle of mutual subordination. There is no contrast, opposition and direction of development in the form: instead, there is a static development of the material with subtle changes and retention in one state, staying in it and immersing into it. Another feature of minimalism is the continuous rhythmic pulse that permeates the entire body of the composition, hence the term pulsating music. Acoustic music receives its name due to the repetitively leading principle in the composition that changes the timbre coloring of the sound of natural instruments. Minimalist composers, aspiring to create something different from everything that existed before them, turned to different artistic traditions, but created a single unique style. However, despite the commonality of trends and available close techniques of composition, each of the minimalists found his own creative way, breaking the boundaries of one musical direction.

As can be seen from the review of historical and theoretical concepts and views on minimalist music, it can be described as complex, unconventional and unordinary in comparison with that children and youth learn in the classroom or listen to on the radio or on television. As notes Lazarev (2003), the perception of avant-garde music is a certain difficulty for students, due to the specifics of the music itself, which is very different from the traditional compositions, as well as due to the fragmentary nature of its inclusion in the education content of future music educators. In other words, if this music were included in the educational process of schools and colleges, were studied from the early childhood, then in the culture and arts institutions teachers would not face such a lack of understanding to avant-garde music, which has long become a classic. According to the researcher of the process of music educator training, the skill of perception of avant-garde works will be formed under the condition that, among other things, specificity of students' perception of avant-garde music is defined and technology aimed at preparing students to perceive avant-garde music is developed (Lazarev, 2003). Understanding of music, its form and content can enhance an aesthetic experience. Thereby intellectual activity is enriched with emotional one (Kauzova & Nikolaeva, 2001). Igotti (2011) develops methods of mastering modern vocal music, Nikolaeva (1986) works on methods of mastering of modern music in children's choirs, however, in respect of piano music of the XX century, such methods or recommendations have not yet been developed. Aranovskaya considers that the comprehensive art and aesthetic development of student-musicians to be necessary. Balchitis (1967), following the same principle, offers a multidimensional approach to familiarizing children with modern music. Bogatov (1998) emphasizes the necessity of formation of spiritual and moral values of music teachers, and Komarova (1985) highlights the

aesthetic education of students. Vanslov (1984) distinguishes two components in avant-garde composition - traditional and innovative - which in the process of mastering modern art help students to perceive and understand it more easily. Ivanchenko (2001) in the choice of modern music also follow the principle of conformity of the material with the perception abilities of specific age groups of students.

Foreign researchers also largely touch on the problems of theory and history of minimalist music (Davachi, 2013), works of certain composers (Hoek, 2002); or modern music as a whole (Cope, 2000). Only some of them, for example, Mark and Madura (2014), consider contemporary music in the educational environment, and only Moncrieff explores in detail the process of learning and performing practice itself in relation to minimalist music. A detailed study of the results of scientific findings and pedagogical experience in the presenting of contemporary music in the educational process of higher music education institutions enables us to make the conclusion that there are still many unresolved problems in this area and they require the attention of theorists and practitioners. In the course of the educational process diagnostics, there was revealed insufficient development level of motivational-valuable attitude and cognitive perception of music of minimalists and almost complete lack of practical mastering of modern music, preventing the presenting of avant-garde works in the teaching repertoire of higher music education institutions. There have been no scientific and methodical developments in this area despite the urgent necessity of students' mastering of avant-garde music.

Current views on the problem of perception and mastering the music of modern composers are narrowly centered on one: the need to develop and apply pedagogically appropriate methods, which would be effective and corresponding to the nature of modern youth's perception of music and their taste preferences that must be taken into account when teaching contemporary music to achieve results. With the approach of finding common ground between the XX century avant-garde music and the spiritual aspirations of the XXI century students, it is possible to avoid difficulties in solving the existing problems of musical education. Within the main problem - the lack of avant-garde music works of the XX century in the educational repertoire of higher music education institutions - we highlight the following unresolved problems: the lack of organizational and education environment promoting the presenting the minimalists' works in the educational repertoire of higher music education institutions, scientific and methodological aids on the theoretical and practical mastering of XX century avant-garde. This study is devoted to the solution to these problems.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The materials of the research are educational technologies and specific pedagogical methods, which encourage future music educators to appeal to and master the contemporary piano music. Study methods are based on the analysis and synthesis of philosophical, musicological and scientific-pedagogical works, theoretical foundations and ideas, relating to musical education, perception of contemporary music and

process piano performing training, diagnostic method (interviews, questionnaire, observation, experience summarizing) consisting of stating, forming and control stages, pedagogical experiment in implementation of effective methods and approaches, aimed at increasing interest and skills developing to perform minimalists' music and teach it students. Methodologists believe that in the process of educational work it is important to widely use generalization at the initial stage of training, formed on the basis of a minimum number of appropriately organized observations (Davydov, 1986).

Before starting to develop a model of the skills and competence formation process to perform minimalists' piano compositions, which fully deserve the attention of higher education students, mastering the game on the piano, it is necessary to form a motivational-valuable attitude to it and cognitive perception. The path of development of these qualities in a person is quite traditional: studying of history and theory of different styles of music, including contemporary music; identification of their philosophical and aesthetic principles, moral and ethical values embodied in avant-garde music, universal ideas, highly artistic ideas and images. With the inclusion of minimalists' works in the music history courses students form at least the interest in this culture if not a serious hobby, the desire to study it deeper, to master the artistic style, which may be in tune with students' state of mind. The minimalists spoke with the audience the today's language (Krom, 2006), however, the most universal musical style has developed in Terry Riley and Philip Glass, and for this reason, and their pieces have become the most popular and performed among the minimalists and do

not lose popularity until now. Therefore, there are good reasons to start mastering the music of American avant-garde with pieces of these musicians. As practice has shown, this music is spiritually close for today's audience as well.

The diagnostic method (interviews, questionnaires and observation) helped to reveal the lack of students' knowledge and motivation to study modern music. Moreover, many students for a number of reasons have developed a strong rejection of avant-garde music. Summarizing of pedagogical experience allowed not only to identify these problems, but also to determine the way to solve them: a pedagogical experiment, having the stating, forming and control stages that aims at the presenting of the minimalist composers' works in the teaching repertoire. At the starting stage, there were identified the grounds of the current situation and were developed an organizational and educational environment to improve it. Higher institutions teachers, who studied using the traditional methods (mastering the music from Scarlatti to Shostakovich, a study of the theory and history of music at best until the mid-twentieth century), excluding the study of avant-garde works, just are not able to transfer the needed knowledge to their students and to captivate them with the avant-garde works; they do not have the skills of performing minimalists' music and methods of teaching it others; in some cases they lack music sheets for these compositions. These data were obtained through interviews and questionnaires. Summarizing the experience led to the development of a plan for further work. The forming stage of the experiment involved the actual students' mastering of minimalist

music in theoretical and practical ways, which enabled to increase the motivational-valuable level of its perception. A key step in mastering the minimalists' music, as well as avant-garde art in general, was the development of cognitive perception, allowing students to understand the essence of this style, its artistic and aesthetic and even religious and philosophical principles. Finally, at the end of the experiment, the works of minimalist were studied in the performing training class of music educators, which allowed to select and include in the teaching repertoire of higher music education institutions such compositions that correspond to the level of students' training and are the most interesting for them and popular for audience (students played minimalist music on the exams in the disciplines Musical and performing styles and directions, Musical and performing training). Practical, personal, tactile acquaintance with avant-garde compositions gives grounds for it to become a part of the student's personality, to penetrate into student's consciousness and to cause an intellectual and emotional response.

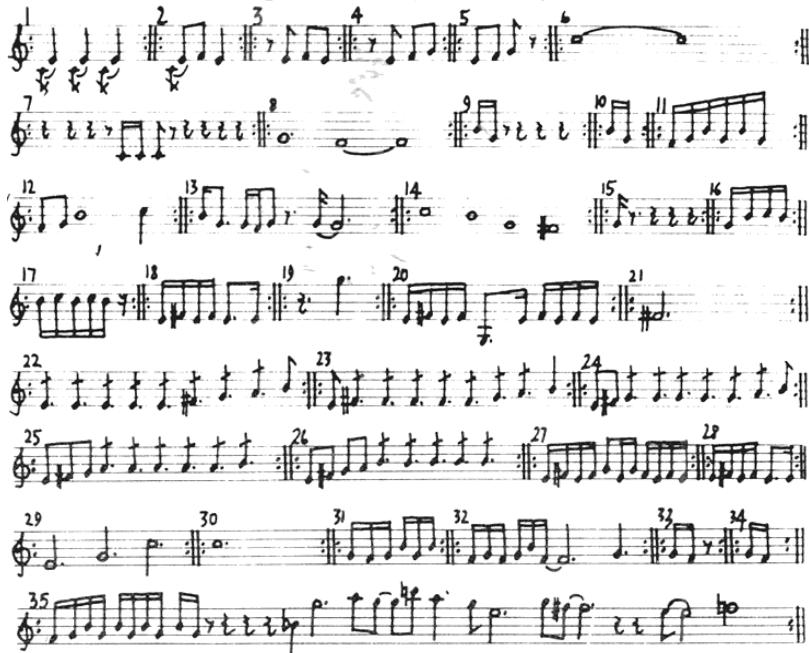
#### **4. RESULTS**

Hereinafter we present the historical and theoretical material studied by the students in the history of music course and in the art club Music of the XX century. In the study of Terry Riley and Philip Glass music, the students were given a specific problem task: to identify and formulate the minimalists' music artistic and aesthetic qualities and principles, with help of which this music was so popular

at the end of the XX century and which current audience may find close to them. The students, who are not well familiar with avant-garde art, were given a simpler task: to express their opinion about the advantages and disadvantages of these opuses. Thus, students formed a motivational-valuable attitude and cognitive perception of the minimalist's music. It should be noted that disclosed to the student's fact that the minimalist's music captured the interest of the largest representatives of business, politics and art, including pop stars, both in Russia and abroad, instantly attracted the attention of listeners and inspired them to study what once was trendy and advanced(Nurullina et al,2018).

In 1964, Riley created his most famous piece in C for several pianists, which is a typical pulsating composition where the change of accents, meter-rhythmic shifts and variations play the key role. This composition is more complex to perform, as 53 different phrases represent melodically and rhythmically much more developed motifs (Ex. 1). They are tonally expressive and specific: firm rising motion is replaced by sad short repetitions, and rising growing motion takes pause as if hanging note C. Then disturbing repetitions balance meditatively-lasting sounds, and finally, the music is filled with energy, movement, eventfulness. The initial phrase varies and gradually transforms, so that the process of development of the piece form, close to the Baroque one-part type of development, symbolizes the process of metamorphosis of the image-state. Riley sought to use a minimal number of sound elements, but when in the process of development more were required, he introduced new ones.

Example 1. T. Riley, In C (fragment)



The duration of one state in *In C* is accompanied by a continuous change. However, it is carried out in the development zone of quite strictly fixed form-scheme, which is an important aspect in Indian improvisation music. In the construction of the composition, there is reflected an idea of comparing several loops of magnetic tapes of different sizes, running on different tape recorders, and the emergence of numerous options of their overlapping (these methods composers practically mastered in the work on music for magnetic tape, widely developed in the United States). As usual, all figures are equal, melodically important and should sound clearly and expressively. T. Riley in his score to *In C* indicated only the heights and sequence of 53 figures

performed by musicians independently of each other: each musician independently decides the length and pace of each group of sounds, how many times to repeat it and when to move on to the next (Pereverzeva, 2018), which leads to a mismatch of phrase boundaries. Remarkably that the author did not specify the instruments in this piece, but most of the interpretations belong to the pianists.

Thus, the piano pieces of Terry Riley reflect the author's intention to immerse a listener in sound vibrations, causing vivid emotional impressions that immerse into the acoustic process. Unusual means of sound transformations, concentration on the acoustic phenomenon as such, internal sonoric metamorphoses of the material instead of external changes of thematic. However, Riley developed individual methods of presentation and development of repetitive music, creating captivating, fascinating, alluring and hypnotizing effects on the listener. The aim of Riley as a composer was to cause the emotional vibrations in the listener, he was convinced that the music should move at its own speed, and the audience should be captured by its movement. This feeling is caused by many improvised piano pieces-meditation of Riley. However, the purpose of the composer's music is not in effects: the main purpose it fulfills, namely, it has a peaceful psychological and positive physiological effect, reflects the laws of the universe, in particular, the principle of continuous evolutionary variation in the repetition peculiar for nature. Short motifs or sound phrases are played for the gradual changes by analogy with genetic changes in biology. Motifs undergo metamorphosis, like some animals or plants. They also replace each other as representatives of different generations in society. Different phrases in such compositions-

improvisations are very closely correlated with each other, like all members of society.

Repetition itself is meaningless for Riley, what it expresses is central - the emotional vibrations in the listener's mind. Riley believed that music must embody spiritual categories, such as philosophy, knowledge and truth, the highest human qualities, and to realize this, music must achieve balance and peace (Mertens, 1983). One of the methods to achieve spiritual balance, according to Eastern philosophy, is the objectification of activities, including those in the field of creativity. Riley embodied in his art of composer and performer the idea of free improvisation as an important aspect of spontaneous self-expression, activation of creativity. Most of his piano compositions imply a certain degree of freedom of an interpreter, who has the right to embody his own concept of music, if it is consonant with the author's worldview.

The most famous minimalist Philip Glass got an excellent musical education in the famous Juilliard school of Music, he studied from Indian performers of traditional music - Ravi Shankar and Alla Rakha, and then more than a year lived and studied Eastern music in Tibet and India. He was fascinated with musical traditions based on the additive structural principle, when one or two sounds are added to the multiple repeated musical phrase, changing it and introducing an element of development into a static repetitive composition, as well as leading to a mismatch of texture layers, similar to a phase shift (Stoianova, 1977). The additive process has its roots in Indian music and distinguishes it from Western with its principle of proportional time fragmentation when a large unit is divided into equal small ones. In traditional Indian music, according to

Philip Glass observations, the performer (or rather, the improviser) creates large time units of the composition by bringing together smaller units with different structures, with small units being different from the large ones that they form as a result. Large units, or periods, are integrated into a lengthy cyclic process, where a new cycle brings new groups of durations, and the rhythmic pattern thus undergoes a continuous transformation. Philip Glass called such type of compositions, as self-expanding.

The practical mastering of the minimalist's music was the study of the music sheets of Philip Glass' piano pieces as the most simple and popular among performers and listeners, as well as the training for the public performance of the new XX century music by students. In the process of studying and memorizing the music sheets, the students were given specific recommendations for the performance of sound material, the use of certain performance techniques and methods, the organization of melody, rhythm, dynamics, articulation of the composition, the development of dramaturgy of the development of the images, the establishing a certain direction of emotional movement, building the form of the whole. The repetitive technique of Philip Glass is characterized by the structuring of musical figures according to the additive process, and this method of sound phrases organization is a specific feature of the composer's style. Having theoretically mastered the additive process of Philip Glass, the pianist will be able to practically translate it into sounds. The additive process is used in the piece two pages, where five sounds of the first phrase are first added to the new 4 in the second phrase, then another 3 in the third, etc., while all sounds, starting with the first, are constantly repeated. The melody line is thus extended by adding more and more new sounds. Two pages is a one-voiced composition that attracts

listener's attention with a hypnotic sound, since each phrase is a return to the origin - a repetition of the same sounds of g-c-d-es-f, which appeared at the very beginning invariably presented by octaves. The author directs the audience to the origin of everything in the world – to the initial peace and balance of being, which is constantly changing and transforming (Ex. 2).

Example 2. F. Glass, Two Pages (fragment)



It should be noted that the composer embodies such a serious concept in a one-voice piece, which is quite accessible to the student of higher music education institution, therefore the piano music of minimalists not only deserves the attention of future music educators, but also is useful in terms of the formation of professional competencies of a specialist. Other opuses – Music in Fifths, Music in Contrary Motion, and Music in Similar Motion - contain long and short melodic figures that

expand or contract by including or excluding sounds. At the same time, all of them have an unexpected beginning and an unpredictable ending, creating a feeling among the listeners that it is a fragment from a permanent musical continuum, which sounds. As Glass remarked, the best music is what is perceived as an event without beginning and end (Mertens, 1983). In order to create such a psycho-acoustic effect, he applies the additive process more flexible, so that the audience would listen to the sounds, rather than follow the structural changes. Music in Similar Motion begins with two voices and gradually increases it to 4 in bar 23. The simplest initial figures develop in different ways in both compositions: in the first they change, moving horizontally, in the second vertically, forming rich sound combinations between the poles of consonants and dissonances (Ex.3).

Example 3. F. Glass, Music in Similar Motion (fragment)



Music in Contrary Motion complicates the tasks of the performer: the texture includes three melodic lines – convergent, divergent and unifying. They create a variety of harmonic consonance, contrapuntal combinations and expand the register scale, which

undoubtedly contributes to the development of technical skills, hearing, and sense of rhythm, harmony and polyphonic skills of the student.

Example 4. F. Glass, Music in Contrary Motion (fragment)

The musical score consists of five staves of music. The title 'Music in Contrary Motion' is at the top, followed by 'Philip Glass'. The first staff has a tempo marking 'fast, steady' and a clef. The subsequent four staves show complex rhythmic patterns of eighth and sixteenth notes. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines.

Creating his music, Philip Glass sought to develop a new way of auditory perception:

Music transcends the usual timeline and replaces it with a non-narrative and lasting time... When it becomes clear that nothing happens in the ordinary sense, and the listener's attention instead is drawn to the gradual formation of the musical material, then another way of auditory perception is revealed – that in which neither memories, nor premonitions (the usual means of psychological influence of the program music of Baroque, classicism, romanticism or modernism), nor objects of reality, nor musical experience is found in the indivisible sound tissue.

It is hoped that this method will make it possible to perceive music as a pure sound environment (Mertens, 1983:15).

## 5. DISCUSSION

There is the undeniable positive result of the conducted pedagogical experiment. During their study of minimalist music in the music history class, students analyzed it in detail and performed it in the class and on the exam for performing training not just having got acquainted with a new piano style, but also have become interested in it and convinced of its great educational and artistic potential. Future music educators have discovered a new world that provides many opportunities for pedagogical, educational, enlightening and performing activities. At the control stage, the method of survey and questioning revealed a significant increase in the motivational value, cognitive and practical components of the perception and development of the American minimalist's music.

The system of higher education is being improved in the Russian higher school, including the universities of culture and arts, and in accordance with this trend, the entire educational process is being reexamined from the goals and objectives to the teaching repertoire of creative specialties. An inclusion of new works of the XX century to the system of professional training of music educators becomes important in view of the universal culture-congruent education replacing the professionally narrowly-focused education. Its

integral part is avant-garde music, reflecting the contradictions of postmodern society human. Diverse in its style, it forms the individual's independence of mind, respect for all points of view, the uniqueness of creative expression, enriches the spiritual world. In this regard, students training for the perception of the avant-garde music is certainly important (Lazarev, 2003). In-class learning of minimalist composers' piano works and performing them on the stage is one of the options of such training. Their inclusion in teaching repertoire will contribute to the formation of professional performing competencies of the future music educator, the education of a versatile specialist who on a practical level has the skills of performing music of different times and styles.

It is always difficult to change the centuries-long system of instrument play teaching on the example of perfect images of the art of the past, focused on strict adherence to traditions. However, it is high time to update stuck in the past educational technologies in the field of music-pedagogical education with new styles and directions of music mastered by students. In the XX century, avant-garde academic music and artistic interests, spiritual needs of listeners for certain reasons went divergent ways, which led to the exclusion of academic music from the lives of people who turned mainly to the pop and entertainment culture. It is time to stop this process of oblivion by the majority of listeners of avant-garde music, especially since among avant-garde musical works there are not only highly artistic samples, but also quite accessible ones in terms of training of modern music-educators.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

American minimalist composers have created a unique, fabulous, hypnotizing musical style that radically differs from the Classic-Romantic one, being a main material for high music education institutions students to master the piano, and changes the traditional view of musical art, which contributes to the development of creative potential of students and independent thinking, consolidation of already mastered and obtaining new skills and abilities, necessary for the formation of professional competencies of specialists. The new always attracts the youth looking for contemporary works of art that suit their spirit, attitude, nature of feelings and images. Piano music of American minimalist composers is worthy to enter the teaching repertoire of higher music education institutions, as it provides a comprehensive education of future music educators in the field of history and theory of music, the evolution of the musical language and performing style, students' mastering of special competencies, thereby contributing to the formation of students' universal professional performing skills and abilities.

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