

How to Perform *Floods of Spring* of Rachmaninoff

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Abstract

Floods of Spring is an exquisite Vocal Romance, composed by Sergei·Vassilievitch·Rachmaninoff (1873-1943). It is a representative of Russian Romance during Romanticism, which nowadays is still very popular after it has gone through a long time. This paper intends to investigate a better way to perform *Floods of Spring* through the overall-grasp of its style, breath, articulation, and some tips for important phrases, the cooperation of the singer and the piano accompaniment player.

Key words: Sergei·Vassilievitch·Rachmaninoff; Vocal romance; *Floods of Spring*; Perform

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INTRODUCTION

Floods of Spring as a Vocal Romance, is Russian composer, Sergei·Vassilievitch·Rachmaninoff's early work, which was composed in 1896. Rachmaninoff as a pianist, composer, and conductor, was very popular during Romanticism, and left very precious fortune for Russian and this whole world.

"Romance is vocal or instrumental works, with romantic and melancholy sentiment, and it's exquisite and lyric" (Wang, & Zhou, 2010). Among Russian music, Romance could be artistic music. Since 19th century, Romance refers to a kind of music genre which has only one instrument (mainly piano) for music accompaniment, and combine with poems.

Rachmaninoff had composed 83 pieces of Roman throughout his whole life. His Romance work has rooted deeply in Russian folk music and they are instinct of distinctive national features; the music line of his works is long drawn out, spacious; the harmony of his music is colorful. The piano accompaniment in his romance has excellent acoustics as well as his piano works, and is symphonic, full of epic verve. The Tonality was applied in his works freely, which imposes great artistic feelings to the audience.

1. THE EMOTIONAL MOOD OF FLOODS OF SPRING

The Russian February Revolution and October Revolution broke up in 1917, and Roman, *Floods of Spring* was composed in 1896 to call for spring, and express that before the revolution storm came, the composer yearned for the new life which was supposed to be hopeful and bright.

The emotional mood of *Floods of Spring* is positive, so it should be performed with passion. It depicted the circumstance of the coming of spring. The snow is gleaming, and the floods are surging heavily. The singer is the messenger of spring, announcing the arrival of spring in a modest and passionate way. The song ends in a hilarious atmosphere that the earth revives and people are celebrating the arrival of spring.

2. OVERALL GRASP OF FLOODS OF SPRING

2.1 Style

The music of Romanticism broke the music conventions in Classicism period. Moreover, the composer pursued individual characters in their music. Although Rachmaninoff is a composer in late Romanticism, his

music is not only romantic but also with tremendous momentum. The melody is spacious, fluent, and mellifluous; the harmony is with bountiful languages, which are lucid and brief, and the national feature is vivid. Romantic solo was vastly used in *Floods of Spring*. Based on the premise of feature with the romanticism music style, the composing style of Rachmaninoff was also stranded out: stressing melody and music line, abundant harmony, and Russian features (Xu, 2004).

2.2 Breath

The melody of every phrase in *Floods of Spring* is feeble, which requires light start melody; at the end of every phrase is a long during *Marcando*, which requires the stamina of breath that eventually supporting sound. When gets to a long during *Marcando* at the end of phrase, the breath should keep fluent, the sound should be bear in chest; the body should be kept elastic. The sound shouldn't be burst with man-made interfere, but be kept in the tubular vocal system, and be transferred to visor, pursuing the silver penetrating tone color.

When performing *Floods of Spring*, the breath should change as dynamics varies: when singing the phrases that its dynamics is weak, numerous breaths are needed, so that the sound will be sent to visor firmly and the tension of sound will be shown. If the strength of phrases could be dealt clearly, fine and smooth, bass be as natural as telling stories, soprano be penetrating, the ability of master sound freely of the performer would be reflected in the whole song.

2.3 Articulation

The original lyrics of *Floods of Spring* are in Russian. As for the grasp of its articulation, attention should be paid to the pronunciation of central vowels and consonant in Russian. Among these, consonant can be divided into voiceless consonant and voiced consonant. When articulate, we should distinguish their differences, and we also can ask for advice from experts. Singing Chinese lyrics is also feasible when your Russian is not so good. No matter what kind language you sing in, the preciseness and clearness of articulation must be assured.

3. TIPS FOR IMPORTANT PHRASES IN FLOODS OF SPRING

3.1 Phase-Staff A

In *Floods of Spring*, the phrase of lyrics, “spring has come”, the composer used FFF dynamics and E flat major harmony and octave decomposition in arpeggios up to announce the advent of spring. While singing, don't chase the volume of sound by using the power of throat muscle, but using the breath support, which makes sound pass forward to head cavity. What's more, the singing of octave arpeggios should remain the same tone color. In

this phrase the tension of sound is completely manifested by using the glorious tone color, which also needs great breath support, so that the sound could be powerful. While performing, the singer's body can stretch along with the melody freely, and the expression in the singer's eyes can deliver the firm faith of the advent of spring and hope.

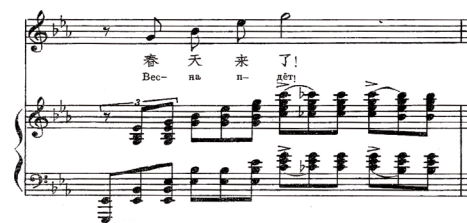


Figure 1
Phase-Staff A

3.2 Phrase-Staff B



Figure 2
Phase-Staff B

In *Floods of Spring*, tonality of the phrase of lyrics, “delivery the news that spring has come” varies. The sound and melody temporarily diverse, so pay attention that the treble should be singed precisely, escaping that the throat muscles are pull and breath is leak, which influence the preciseness of treble. Therefore, the singer should keep a better breath pivot, escaping the incorrect utterance I have pointed out before. All attentions must be full focused, and define the exact intonation, so that the pitch of the varying sound in this phrase can be performed precisely.

In this phrase, the last sound has reached soprano, two-lined octave, sharp A. when singing soprano, do not afraid of it, but relax yourselves. Through practicing utterance scientifically, increase your confidence in singing soprano. Also pay attention that this soprano should be firm and full of passion. When singing soprano, do not just try to raise your voice, but use breath pivot, tubular vocal system, accurate articulation, and use bright tone color to manifest the joy of the advent of spring. The singer as the messenger of spring is endowed with holy mission, that is deliver the news of spring and boost popular morale.

3.3 Phrase-Staff C

In *Floods of Spring*, the phrase of lyrics, “spring brings laughter and happiness”, the dynamic of sound goes from heavy *ff* to the extremely heavy *ff* at the end of it, which makes the intension of dynamic need more powerful breath to support. While singing, the singer should bear the rejoicing and excitement in heart, focus sound, and accelerate the turning of breath. By the last sound, at the two-lined octave, flat E, keep the force of breath, making the duration long enough by using the full and glossy sound, and push the song to the perfect splendid ending.

The image shows a musical score for the song 'Floods of Spring' by Rachmaninoff. It consists of two systems of music. The first system shows a vocal line with lyrics in Chinese and Pinyin: '春天带来了欢笑' (Chūn tiān dài lái le xiào huāo). The piano accompaniment is marked with 'ff' (fortissimo). The second system is marked 'Allegro vivace' and 'fff' (fortississimo), showing a more energetic piano accompaniment. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Figure 3
Phase-Staff C

Besides, the attention should be paid to the demisemiquavers in this phrase. The demisemiquavers are the accumulation of the emotion, which is about to explode, so the passionate and explosive sound appears after a pause. For the ending phrase, the singer can use a splendid gesture with his eyes full of happiness, and combine the bright tail to end this song. The floods of spring can melt the icy world, and bring new vitality and hope to earth. In the season of spring, people are full of optimistic mood, and bearing new hope to life.

When singing *Floods of Spring*, except for vocal technics that we should pay attention to, the body language and eye expression are also indispensable. Only when the body language of the singer coordinates with his eye expression to express the artistic conception of the song, and be fully-hearted, this song can be well performed.

4. THE COOPERATION OF THE SINGER AND THE ACCOMPANIMENT PALYER

The piano prelude of *Floods of Spring* expresses the situation that the floods wallow and are full of force. The surging of floods of spring is well manifested in only two passages. These two passages are called the motivation of floods of spring, and this motivation run through the whole song. The prelude is only two passages, which requires the singer can enter the situation quickly.

The piano accompaniment is of splendid acoustic effect. When doing the accompaniment cooperation, attention should be paid to that the sound melody does not start with the first tempo forte, but the anacrusis after demisemiquaver. The accompaniment at the anacrusis after demisemiquaver is not easy relatively, so on the basis of coordinating with the accompaniment tempo, pay attention to know well about the texture of the melody of piano accompaniment, and master the technique of starting with the anacrusis. At the beginning of doing the accompaniment, make sure the tempo speed with the piano accompaniment player. The voice melody must match with the piano accompaniment according to the requirement of tempo speed. You can slow down the exercise at the beginning, and then go back to normal. At the beginning the singer should focus on listening to the piano accompaniment, and after more cooperation, and getting familiar with the piano accompaniment relatively, the singer should move to the controlling of his own voice, and coordinate the piano accompaniment and his own voice; with the overall grasp of this song, integrate the human voice with piano accompaniment, and devoting yourself fully-hearted into your performance.

CONCLUSION

The vocal melody of *Floods of Spring* is flow and bold, which can completely show the singing ability of singer; the piano accompaniment part is symphonic, and can construct extensive vigor. *Floods of Spring* is a paragon of romance composing. Compared to other vocal romance and artistic songs, the vocal melody *Floods of Spring* has more ups and downs, which makes it suitable for the vocal learners to learn. It is also chosen as competing song in different vocal competitions. This song is short but exquisite, and the singer's singing techniques can be soon manifested in this song. In vocal competitions, if you can perform well this song, it's easy for you to get a good score; if you choose it as one of the songs of your concert, your concert would be more marvelous.

You can practice the extension of entering sound and the endurance of breath in long phrases by singing *Floods of Spring*. By singing *Floods of Spring*, you can also practice the accuracy of the pitch of the varying sound the enduring force for soprano. While performing, the singer should well understand the whole style of this song, the accuracy of language and articulation, based on the staff. Combine the vocal techniques with emotion manifestation, body language, eye lights, and the cooperation of the singer and accompaniment player. Besides, the singer should also keep healthy, escaping that vocal organs are influenced by cold. For example, the endurance of breath may be not long enough due to lack of physical strength. The singer should also improve literature and arts accomplishments. Make yourself a better me from every aspect. And then combine with

the scientific uttering way, and practice more, so that you can finally present this whole song on the stage to the audience. Therefore, the performance of *Floods of Spring* that can move the listeners can be called successful.

The *Floods of Spring*, composed by Rachmaninoff is as glitter as gem, and attracts vocalists of every generation. Its melodies are full of vitality just like spring, flow into people's heart, and bring people hope and life.

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