

**PIANO QUARTET OP. 6 BY LOUIS FERDINAND OF PRUSSIAN
AS A SOURCE OF ROMANTIC TRENDS**

Late XVIII – early XIX centuries period became the golden age phase in the ensemble performance development in European music culture, which traditions seated in the boudoir and home music playing and were the strongest in Austria and Germany. “Playing music was a great demand, a standard and an essential part as well in people’s life of different social groups” [4, p.143]. That is why; a chamber ensemble plays a great role in the artistic legacy of the most composers of the analysed period. However, not all of them survived. The given paper is in the mainstream of the holistic historical picture research tendency, which has been actual for two last decades, with all its diversity, including masters’ life and music, and whose skills, for a number of reasons, were not worthy of note and appreciation during the post-Soviet scientific and humanities period.

One of them is a gifted composer and pianist Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussian (Friedrich Ludwig Christian Hohenzollern, 1772-1806). His versatile personality and virility were demonstrated in various spheres – politics, military arena, but above all, music. His chamber ensemble music, the peak of which was Piano quartet f-moll Op.6, became the chain between two epochs in the evolution of music art – Classicism and Romanticism, along with the musical compositions of Beethoven, Schubert and Weber. I dare say, the very Piano quartet f-moll Op.6 music motivated the author to analyze the life and the music of Louis Ferdinand of Prussian.

The creative work of Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussian is widely covered in the works of German and American scientists, of which is R. Hahn, whose work, published in 1935, turned into a guiding star for numerous researchers of the next generations, such as E. Klessmann [8], B. McMurtry [9] and others. It is important to note the work of K. Shtahmer [10], as he concentrates his attention on the direct analysis of Prince’s compositions, as well as the culturological research of T. Debuch [6], where Louis Ferdinand’s work as a musician in the historical context of the era is the point of issue. In Ukrainian musicology, in spite of numerous late XVIII- early XIX centuries chamber ensemble music fundamental researches, among which the

works of P. Wulfius [1] and I. Polskaya are the most outstanding, the personality and the work of Louis Ferdinand of Prussian have not been an object of intense interest so far. So, this fact determines the novelty of the given research paper.

Hence, the object of the research is Western European chamber ensemble music of late XVIII-early XIX centuries and the subject of the scientific interest is the style of Louis Ferdinand of Prussian as a composer.

The aim of the article is an attempt to determine the tendencies in the Prince's creative work, relying on his Piano quartet f-moll Op.6 analysis. The aim implementation requires the solution of the following tasks: 1) to cover the specificity of the musical instruments role-playing interaction in the ensemble; 2) to develop the figurative sphere of nature and drama features; 3) to define the innovation in the scope of forming, tonal and harmonic solutions, music language and genre interpretation.

In the historical classification of the composer's legacy of Louis Ferdinand of Prussian there is an ambiguous picture, in terms of which, there are two opposing opinions: the Prince as Beethoven's minor composer-follower on the one hand, and the Prince as one of the greatest chamber music masters, who was a father of German Romanticism on the other. Indeed, Louis Ferdinand never attempted to avoid the direct influence of his outstanding contemporary. The greatness of his genius captivated and inspired the Prince not only to apply some of Beethoven's devices, but even to resort direct quotation to his themes. (Thus, in quintet op.1 Louis Ferdinand quotes the first part theme of Beethoven's piano sonata op. 53).

At the same time, the spirituality of his imagination, the aptitude to the lyric confession, and in part, the typical romantic unbalanced perception of the reality make Louis Ferdinand and Schubert related. However, both Schubert's authentic deep subjective psychologism in music and its proximity to the folk-song origins are strange to him. Independence from social status and other kinds of superstitious beliefs, sincerity and warmth of human interaction, highly appreciated by the Austrian composer, were, ironically, close to the Prince of Prussian as well. His perception of the world, formed from the childhood in the traditions of the Age of the Enlightenment in France, attracted Louis Ferdinand to the romantic world of Rahel Levin and Henriette Herz's Berlin literary saloons rather than to the fold of the court ceremonies and intrigues.

I would like to admit, that in the composer's legacy of Louis

Ferdinand of Prussian the compositions of the chamber ensemble genres prevail, and they, to some extent, became the symbol of the romantic interaction: trio, quartet, quintet as well as some certain plays for different ensemble complements with essential participation of the piano. Despite the significant intensification of the viola and especially violoncello independent role in Louis Ferdinand's compositions in general, and particularly in quartet op.6, the tendency to the piano dominance is being followed, which is filled with brilliant virtuosic pieces, that obtain the element of the concert competition, though, with the obvious piano dominance. Exactly in the piano part, first of all, drama key elements are reflected. The fact that in full anticipation of the processes peculiar to the romantic chamber music of the mid XIX century could be the consequence for some reasons:

Firstly, the piano was always the only favourite instrument for the Prince. Louis Ferdinand quiet often played the piano part in his compositions. There are numerous comments of the contemporaries on his masterly performance, and first of all, the comments of Beethoven, who gave his praising view on the Prince's play in 1796, emphasizing that he who "plays not as a monarch, but as a genuine musician" [6, p.77]. Thus, a certain identification of the master's personality with the definite instrument is followed, which, perhaps, reflects the high status of Louis Ferdinand.

Secondly, there were objective factors of the organological character highlighted in the paper by I. Polskaya, a famous Ukrainian researcher of chamber ensemble music [5, p. 151]. Among them, the most fundamental are the transformation processes of the overall picture of the ensemble instruments role interaction and the dynamic changes in their construction; first of all, it concerns the piano.

In the process of the keyboard instruments improvement the important role was played by a famous Czech pianist and a composer Y. Dussik, a close friend and an associate of Louis Ferdinand (in Ukrainian musicology mostly known as Jan Dussek). His fruitful cooperation with a well-known piano manufacturer J. Broadwood as a consultant and populariser of English instruments led to considerable improvements in the construction of the pedal mechanism, the piano diapason extension and its acoustic abilities.

Thanks to Jan Dussek's efforts, the first publication of the Prince's works was accomplished, including Piano quartet f-moll op.6, devoted to a French violinist J-P. Rode. Composed in 1804 this cycle is the peak of his work and its appearance finally stated the fact that Prince's music was

beyond classical art. It is worth mentioning that the same year Beethoven completed his “the Eroica Symphony” and “the Waldstein” (piano sonata C-dur op. 53), where the classical traditions strength remained nearly firm. In 1804, twenty-year old K.Weber just started his career as an opera conductor and as a composer created nothing worth the public and critics’ attention, and the first Austrian romanticist F.Schubert was only seven.

The lyric idea tendency is the highlighted in Piano quartet op.6. Furthermore, it creates certain melancholy and the melody of the themes not only in the traditionally lyric sphere of the Second subject group and slow movement of the cycle, but also in the prime subject group of the first movement and the theme of the refrain in the final, which according to the classical tradition were invariable bearers of active and efficient images. On the assumption of such musical accents placement, the author takes the risk of being a stereotype statement victim. Although this composition of Louis Ferdinand is equally far from Schubert’s smoothing over the differences device, Beethoven’s collisions and the antitheses of drama, the favourite path of the mature romanticists, he overcomes difficulties with success. The close vicinity of the opposing dynamic inflections, sharp change of a rhythmic image and a texture statement type as well as unexpected, innovative at that time, tonal progress entirely outline the life-giving contrasts.

The primary theme of the first movement is filled with the poetic expressiveness and makes a considerable impact on the entire appearance of the cycle and represents a bright sample of the lyric romantic melodies, that immediately resonate with the audience and appear on the musical proscenium of the XIX century. Taking into consideration the tendencies of the new musical trend, E. Hoffmann of various manners of musical expressiveness gives preference to the melodic of similar type. “The first and the main in music is the melody. It excites human nature with its magic. I should say that, without an expressive lyric melody any instrumental ruses are only tinsel. It is not a body ornament, but is in the air and entails a stupid crowd like in “The Tempest” by Shakespeare. [...] A melody without lyric is just a number of discrete sounds trying to become music in vain” [2, p. 365].

The peaceful, slow disclosure of the primary part is suddenly interrupted by the brilliant descending triplets and the emotional chords in the dotted rhythm of the transition. I dare to emphasize that, neither in the given nor in the following developing episodes in the exposition and the development section, the virtuosic structures in the piano part, hurried by the tonal instability, by no means are perceived like featureless

replissages. In general, the principle of the virtuosity, taken by Louis Ferdinand from “brilliant style”, was one of the self valuable expressive means for the composer as well as an artistic beauty bearer that would become a fatal and natural form of the style internal realization during the epoch of romanticism. Besides, the virtuosity implemented into the changing combinations of the variation and variant themes development gives loads of opportunities to reflect the change of mood, thereby, anticipating the typical romantic drama comparisons. The author uses a kind of the change of scene theatrical technique, which F. Liszt, R. Schumann and G. Berlioz will gladly resort to later. It is necessary to notice, that the drama of the comparisons in the works of the mature romanticists is based on the hidden and evident ability to be programmed, but in my opinion, it is unfair to discuss this fact in the works of Louis Ferdinand of Prussian.

The melodious, Mozart-like simple theme introduction of the secondary movement in all themes of sonata allegro is premised with the small gallant cadenzas, reasonably drawing analogies with the sentimentalism appearance. In spite of the fact that the appearance of these compositions threatens, as it is, an unreliable form with the “loosening”, they efficiently differentiate the sphere of influence of the primal and second subject groups, which are very close in the mood.

Only once, flashed like an echo in the end of the exposition, the primary theme gave away the secondary one. In the paper, the author eventually researches the sphere of the sharp key, already emphasized in the exposition, where the theme of the secondary group is calmly and gently developed by the violin in E dur, and then it gains the peculiar expressiveness and even intimacy in the sound of the Cello in G dur, and the piano with its unobtrusive accompaniment only sets off the timbres of the strings.

However, the material of the dynamic transition blows up the idyllic peace, dramatically reverting the music into Es dur and As dur flat key course. The strings unconditionally capitulate under the pressure of the piano, which improvisation makes a wide circle of the tonal transformations with the raging flows of the unexpected harmonic combinations. Like a carried away by his dreams traveler, suddenly found himself in a strange place, the author has appeared in h moll and as if being frightened by his own daring, hides in an unsteady, anxious second intonation sounding. But they are “washed away” with the suddenly rolled waves of fis-moll chords, that increase in dynamics up to *fortissimo*, bringing to the traditional, for all classical authors culminating point of

the whole part – the primary part reprising implementation.

Against all expectations, the theme introduces *piano e mezzo voce* with the mysterious suspicion in alien to it h moll tonality, and only insistent triplets of the second phrase, as if casting off its magical chains, restoring primary part to the reality of the governing key f moll. Only its second development in the violin part with its pointed expression restoring the original form to the audience can be in full defined as the beginning of the reprise of the form. The similar drama solution not just infringes integrity on the classical sonata form, actually spanning boundaries between the development and the reprise, but also anticipates the mature romanticists' favourite "calm culminating points".

The secondary theme in the reprise gains greater tenderness and sincerity by means of the high register usage, where the instruments as though compete in sincerity, warmth and sounding refinement. The absence of the dynamic transition form in this section is compensated by the presence of the developing episode, which actually is the piano cadenza, abounding in plenty of virtuosic passages and dramatic unisons, where a lot of the strings are to be in the shadow of this might. And only during last times, the first theme intonation of the primary is reverted thanks to the dialogue between the violin, viola and cello, thus, it closes up the form of the quartet first part.

The quartet second movement is written in the minuet genre, which during the Classicism era became the aristocratism, the dignity and the beauty implementation of the Age of the Enlightenment of a perfect person. However, in the main part of the minuet the gallant dance's metrical principals $3/4$ time are only left – the perfection, persistently confused with determined, as if running ahead syncope. Sweeping, energetic, lifting sudden changes in the tonic of triad sounds, balanced by the following progressive spill, define the main theme of the minuet with the geometrical accuracy. Represented in f-moll key, pulsating with major rhythmic values in *agitato* beat, it pictures an integral, partly dramatic image, traditionally showing machismo.

The dramatic minor minuet was popular in the XVIII century music culture, and widely used in the works of Mozart (minuets in string quintets c moll and g moll, quartet d moll, the Symphony No.25, 40) and Hyden (minuets in the Symphony No.44,49; quartet op.76 №2 and others). According to a famous Russian musicologist L. Kirillina "Most of all, the dramatic minuet stylistically derived from the solemn and aristocratic one, as it is similar in semantics (valour and courage in the face of higher powers), but can also contain some elements of the gallant

minuet, which the minor gives “sentimental” melancholic tone” [3, p. 104].

The second movement of the quartet op.6 of Louis Ferdinand of Prussian does not bear even a hint of solemnity, pathetic and heroics, and all the more, melancholy. Disturbing excitement, impetuous tendency in a desperate and vain attempt to escape from something fatal, are typical to his music. Dynamic tempo, one accent in a bar, giving a feeling of running or flying, probably draw us away to the dynamic scherzo genre, which actually supplanted minuet as a genre movement in the works of Beethoven and reached its prime in works of many composers-romanticists.

It should be noted, that the main theme of the minuet performed three times, does not change its tonal system colouring, and only changes the sound shades, from f moll through as moll and to h moll in the culminating point, gaining the tragic, sorrowful sounding. We would like to remind that, the similar appearance of h moll at the moment of the highest emotional revelation has been already used by the author in the quartet first movement. Hence, Louis Ferdinand arranges the tonal semantics arches between the movements of the cycle.

The simple, childish innocent theme of the first trio (F dur), dramatically contrasting with the major part, nevertheless, does not abandon the scherzo. Actually, the dancing genre reveals just in the second trio (As dur) for the first time. The timid, tender theme, performing “*il tutto sotto voce e legato*”, encrusted with the elegant accents, graceful syncope and suspensions, and coquettish flageolets. As if it paints an idyllic, almost fabulous female image in watercolours, which losing any accuracy of the form, disappears under the pressure of the reprise of the major part of the minuet.

The third movement *Adagio lento e amoroso* performs the function of the lyric centre, the main theme of which is full of the warmth of a noble feeling of love. It is not alien to externally elegant, exceptionally ornamental symbols and devices of the “gallant style”, having, however, rather deep basis – “the idea of Eros as the main sense and motive power of being. This idea reflected all kinds of perception and spiritual attraction: passion, love, sympathy, awesome worship, friendly aspiration for a relative nature, love to God and World” [3, p. 21]. In the second half of the XVIII century “gallantry” actually became identical with “sensitiveness”. “The latter could introduce such supply of the dramatic effect into the “gallant style” that was able to destroy all etiquette conventionalities of the manner” [3 p. 22]. However, in that case we can

observe the transformation of Classicism mannered sensitiveness into Romanticism poetic and emotional expressiveness.

The slow development of the perception theme, every time enriched in new colours and nuances of the same state, further reveals intimacy and sincerity of the expression. Not often immersed into the bliss of the lyric and delicate improvisation in the piano part the theme reminds of itself by scarcely perceptible melodious contour and harmonic basis. The image development dynamic is that the refined lyric of the third part sometimes breaks the chains of gallantry and completely gives itself up to the internal emotional impulse uncovering all range of the lyric emotional state. The theme is not transformed by the end, but completely disappears, allowing the passionate dotted exclamations to dominate in the melody. They gradually lose their pungency and decline in the bliss of the harmonic figurations of the piano accompaniment, which consolidates the governing key of the movement– Des dur – which later gains the symbolic meaning in the works of the mature romanticists.

Developing the dramatic concept of the cycle Louis Ferdinand rejects the traditional optimistic final. The fourth movement *Allegro ma moderato ed espressivo*, against all wishes, redirects us to the common gloomy character of the quartet. The final is close to the rondo-sonata by its form, where the comparison and conflict drama devices are organically combined. It should be noted that such form becomes typical to Louis Ferdinand. Actually, it looks like the following structure: A B A¹ C A² C¹ A³ D A⁴, where A is a refrain performing the function of the prime subject, and C the episode with the second subject function. It is noteworthy that in both the refrain and C and C¹ episodes, the variant and variation principle of the theme development dominates, where the author sequentially uses the device called by B. Asafiev “a parallel material implementation”. Thus, in A the theme is fully conducted four times – twice in the governing key f moll, in As dur and as moll. The “fusion” of the mentioned keys that have a great meaning for the internal logic development guarantee is at the centre of the composer’s attention. While changing the major key into the minor key (and vice-versa) Louis Ferdinand, like Schubert, “feels and develops its semantic equivalent – the expression of the duality of the single state” [p. 78], the contradictoriness of the inner life.

The sorrowful reverie of the theme is emphasized by the expressive hopelessness of the descending diminished fifth, which is adorned with the poetic improvisatory passages in the following appearances, but is absent in the major implementations, full of light melancholy. The refrain

theme gains its maximum expressiveness in part A², where the melody, complicated with the poetic recitatives, is the very moment of the revelation and lyric confession.

The author also uses these improved devices in the secondary part (episodes C and C¹). The lyric, Schubert-like vocal theme, played in unison in the first appearance of the violin and viola part, is of the same intonation origin as the refrain theme – III IV III degree in rhythm half and two-quarters. However, it is a bearer of something different – gentle and love image. In addition, it emphasizes the choice of the tonality - Des dur, which perceptual semantics was defined by the author in the third movement of the quartet. While developing, the theme gains numerous timbre and tonal variants (Des dur, es moll, f moll, B dur, d moll), provoking a long term immersion in all nuances of the mood, not abandoning the lyric perceptual origin, though.

The sonata principle in the quartet final is used in episodes B and D, where the motive development section is dominant. In episode B, it is formed on the conflict of the contrasting motives – measured dotted tread of the reality and anxious impulse of the triplets, trying to tear themselves from the reality's embrace. These desperate attempts gain peculiar expressiveness in the cello voice. The given section is just the first shy tide, which humbly disappears in the sorrowful reverie of the refrain.

The dynamic and emotional culminating point of the whole movement is in episode D – “*forte e agitato con piu di moto*”. It does not contain an obviously expressed theme, but is an inserted developing episode based on the motive nature development. Its insistent sequent repetition introduces the character of the passionate excitement, fits of the flaming feeling. Simultaneously, the intonation structure of the motive itself, having the shades of the doom and obedience, predetermines the groundlessness and ephemerality of the impulse.

The author makes such conclusion in the Coda – the last shortened implementation of the refrain theme, where in the shy permission, like a gleam of hope, A natural flashes only once. “Louis Ferdinand refuses from the classical triumphal apotheosis and leaves the audience in the doom of the bass *morendo*, playing the echoes of the principle theme in the same tonality and character *con duolo* as in its first implementation” [10, p. 21]. The vital nature absence makes an overemphasis in the classical genre conception of the piano quartet in the spirit of romanticism perception of the world.

It is not occasionally, that exactly these themes from the quartet underlay into the compositions of the great composers of the mature

romanticism era: in 1828 R. Schumann composed the cycle of the four-handed piano variations on the theme of Prince Louis Ferdinand [3 p. 103], and in 1843 F. Liszt published his first “Elegy” on the themes of Louis Ferdinand of Prussian.

To sum it up, the Piano quartet f-moll op.6 analysis gives the author the right to claim that, on the winding road of a new tendency formation in music, Prince Louis makes his first resolute steps. Exactly in the bounds of his composer’s style the formation of the romanticists’ music language occurs through the poetic details and melodious language flexibility, liveliness and, unprecedented for that time, modulation courage as well as harmonic solutions complication. An aspiration for higher emotional expressiveness, virtuosity, lyric nature domination, which dictate the dramatic devices of the independent development and figurative and emotional comparison appear in the music of Louis Ferdinand of Prussian. And they were widely spread in the works of the composers of the mature romanticism era.

Keywords: *chamber ensemble music, early romanticism, Louis Ferdinand Prince Prussian.*

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