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| 氏名 | 石岡 千弘 |
| フリガナ | イシオカ チヒロ |
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| Name | Ishioka, Chihiro |
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The Comprehensive Study of Sergei Bortkiewicz

— An analysis of his life, view of music, and piano works based on his autographs —

Chihiro Ishioka

【Abstract】

Sergei Bortkiewicz was a pianist and composer who performed and composed mainly in Vienna during the first half of the 20th century. After his death, his works disappeared into oblivion, and he was forgotten. Recently, his music has been reevaluated with the discovery of his autographs and original editions. However, most articles about him are no more than impressionistic criticisms due to the lack of support from primary source materials. Therefore, this thesis presents information or data from three perspectives: analysis on previous researches and autographs (Part I), analysis on Bortkiewicz's life and his view of music (Part II), and the characteristics of his piano works (Part III).

In Part I, the current status of the previous researches is initially examined in Chapter 1. Though each case of research has certain value in terms of a basic study of Bortkiewicz, there is no article that demonstrating the formation of his view of music through his childhood and life experiences, or the application of his view of music to his works. Moreover, no research showed the complete list of Bortkiewicz's autographs including his autobiography and letters. Therefore, providing the complete list of his autographs to establish the foundation of study on him, and discussing the relationships between his view of music and his works through the prism of his life experiences gives us the firm criterion for Bortkiewicz's music.

In Chapter 2, Bortkiewicz's autographs, such as his autobiography, letters, and music are classified and analyzed to build the complete and detailed lists. The lists show us the abundance and accessibility of his autographs considering he was forgotten after his death. Subsequently, the complete catalog and currently available manuscripts of Bortkiewicz's works were assembled from his hand-written catalog and letters.

In Part II in Chapter 3, major life events influencing Bortkiewicz's personality are shown in a chronological order, divided into eight periods mainly based on his domiciles. Though Bortkiewicz was from a noble family in the Russian Empire, he suffered from poverty, being forced into exile and living in many different places due to the World Wars and the Russian Revolution in the first half of the 20th century. However, he was very active as a composer, pianist, and conductor. In addition, the importance of his lifelong friendship with Hugo van Dalen is enumerated.

In Chapter 4, Bortkiewicz's view of music is extracted from his life experiences. To examine the background of the formation of his view of music, the following five topics are presented. The first topic is the influence of his musical education. The second is whether he thought of himself as Russian or Ukrainian. The third is the influence of the Russian Revolution. The fourth is his resonance with Vienna. The last is his longing for Russia and Russian culture. The mentality of looking back and longing for lost beautiful memories, i.e., "nostalgia," sustained his creative attempts and formed his core view of music. Subsequently, it is pointed out that Bortkiewicz composed works in the consistent style of Post-romanticism and lyricism with Russian elements, and that he preferred composing house music to masterpieces. These characteristics show his view of music.

In Part III, the characteristics of Bortkiewicz's works are discussed based on his life and his view of music discussed in Part II. In Chapter 5, the classification method of Bortkiewicz's works that has three categories according to the composer's specific intention of where they need to be played is introduced for the first time in the history of the study of Bortkiewicz. The first category is Concert Pieces. The second is Salon Music and the third is Educational Pieces. The classification method is applied to forty-four pieces of Bortkiewicz's piano repertoire existing today, including piano concerti and works for four hands, and the result is shown in the table. The outcome is that two-thirds of his piano works are Salon Music. This is the reflection of a part of his view of music that musical activities at home were important.

In Chapter 6, the construction and characteristics of each piano work are exhibited in the table in accordance with the classification method introduced in Chapter 5. Subsequently, the

characteristics of each category are discussed further with music examples. For Concert Pieces, I initially argued that the recurrence of main themes and melodies are embedded in concerti and piano sonatas in the way listeners feel strong vibes. Considering the background of Bortkiewicz's view of music, that is "nostalgia," the recurrence has special importance in his works, and thus pianists need to pay attention to the recurrence while interpreting and performing his works. Secondly, I illustrated that Bortkiewicz once tried to produce novel harmonic patterns in *Twelve New Etudes Op. 29*, but he did not pursue this method beyond this opus and later went back to the Post-romantic style. For Salon Music, I arrived at four characteristics: "Smooth Flow of Music," "Simple Texture," "Simple Technique," and "Sophistication of Modulation." For Educational Pieces, I pointed out three characteristics: "Simplicity of Music," "Clear Instruction," and "Composer's Adolescence as a Subject." I revealed that Bortkiewicz required musical sensitivity and mature expression even in the Educational Pieces.

In Chapter 7, I argued about the characteristics can be commonly seen in three categories. From the viewpoint of performance, Bortkiewicz's original pedal marking and separation of voices are extracted. From the viewpoint of works, the similarity of melodies and motifs in different works and the quotation of Russian melodies are pointed out.

In conclusion, I exhibited the complete list of Bortkiewicz's autographs as the foundation of my study on Bortkiewicz. Through thorough examination of autographs, Bortkiewicz's view of music is determined as follows: consistent style of Post-romanticism and lyricism with Russian elements and regard of musical activities at home as very important. Subsequently, the classification method of Bortkiewicz's works is introduced in accordance with his intention as to where his works needed to be played. His piano works are discussed in connection with his view of music and the new criterion for his music is provided.