

## *Original Paper*

# Explore the Aesthetic Characteristics of the Musical Form of Liszt Hungarian Rhapsody No.8

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### **Abstract**

*Liszt's eighth piece of Hungarian Rhapsody is his most classic and representative work, which can be called the fine work in the history of piano art. This paper takes the eighth piece of Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody as the research object, through exploring the musical form and aesthetic characteristics of this piano music work, we can have a more comprehensive understanding of the musical creation thought and artistic style of this outstanding composer in the Romantic period. A detailed analysis of the music structure, the use of harmony, the development of melody and the expression of emotion can reveal the unique artistic charm and profound aesthetic connotation of this music work. Through the in-depth analysis of this movement, we can more accurately grasp the neck of Liszt's music creation, so as to better appreciate and understand his other works.*

### **Keywords**

*Liszt, Hungarian Rhapsody, The eighth, Musical form, Aesthetic feature*

### **Introduction**

Franz Liszt, an outstanding representative of the Romantic period, has left a deep imprint in the history of music with his unique artistic style and exquisite playing skills. His "Hungarian Rhapsody" is not only the embodiment of his deep nostalgia for Hungarian folk music, but also the concentrated display of his musical creation talent. This series of works perfectly integrates the unique national customs and rich musical expression techniques, making it a shining pearl in piano music. The eighth movement, with its unique musical language and profound aesthetic thoughts, has attracted the attention of countless music scholars and performers. In the eighth movement, you can clearly hear how Liszt skillfully used the melodies, rhythms and harmonies of Hungarian folk music to create a musical language that is both national and innovative.

From the aesthetic point of view, the eighth movement shows Liszt's profound musical thought and

excellent artistic taste. Through complex musical structure and delicate expression techniques, he perfectly integrates emotion, imagination and reason to form a profound and moving musical experience. This experience not only touched the audience's emotions, but also triggered them to think deeply about the art of music and social culture. The eighth movement also embodies Liszt's ultimate pursuit of piano playing skills. He used many difficult playing skills in this work, such as fast scale running and complex chord jumping, which not only demonstrated his superb skills, but also provided valuable reference and reference for later piano players.

## **1. Brief Introduction of Liszt's life and the Style Characteristics of Hungarian Rhapsody**

### *1.1 Introduction to Liszt's Life*

Born in year 1811 in Retting, Hungary (now part of Austria), Franz Liszt, the music giant, showed great musical talent from an early age. At the age of nine, he gave his first piano recital in public, earning him a reputation as a "musical prodigy" for his skill and precocious performance. In 1821, Liszt set foot on the road to Vienna, under the guidance of Saari and Czerny, in-depth study of the art of composition, for his future music creation laid a solid foundation. In 1828, Liszt moved to Paris, the capital of the arts, which provided him with a valuable opportunity to interact with many outstanding musicians. Here, he met Berlioz, Chopin and Paganini and other musical masters, their artistic ideas and creative styles have a profound impact on Liszt, inspired his new musical creation. In 1837, Liszt began a ten-year piano tour throughout Europe, and his exquisite playing skills and profound musical interpretation caused great repercussions in the European music circle.

In year 1848, Liszt was invited to become master of the court of Weimar, during which time he not only showed outstanding talent in the field of conducting, but also reached new heights in musical composition. His works not only enriched the music scene at that time, but also left a valuable cultural heritage for later generations. In his later years, Liszt frequently traveled to major cities in Europe to continue his music creation and performance activities. The music giant died of pneumonia in 1886 at the age of 75, but his legacy and artistic spirit still inspire music lovers and professionals.

### *1.2 Style Characteristics of Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody*

In his youth, Liszt traveled to various parts of Hungary and experienced the local music culture and folk customs deeply, which accumulated rich materials for his later creation. Inspired by Hungarian folk and Gypsy music during his travels, Liszt composed Nineteen Hungarian Themes and Rhapsody between 1846 and 1853, and later in 1882 and 1885. These works are inspired by Hungarian folk instrumental dance music, urban songs and folk songs of the Gypsy style, showing a strong national identity. These rhapsody not only occupy a pivotal position in the history of piano art, but also become a peak in Liszt's music creation. These works of Liszt are not only the creation of music, but also a profound tribute to Hungarian culture. His music is infused with the soul of the Hungarian nation, showing the freedom and passion of Gypsy music, making these rhapsody musical treasures that transcend time and space. Liszt's creation not only enriched the connotation of piano music, but also

provided endless inspiration for later generations of musicians, and won Liszt the reputation of "the king of piano".

In terms of melody, Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody has distinct national characteristics. The melodic lines in the works are rich and varied, with strong expressive force. Liszt skillfully uses the tone and rhythm of Hungarian folk music, and integrates these elements into the piano music, making the work full of Hungarian flavor. At the same time, Liszt is also good at using the deformation and development of melody, so that the theme in different passages full of new vitality.

In terms of harmony, Hungarian Rhapsody also shows Liszt's superb creative skills. Liszt's treatment of harmony has both bold innovation and respect for traditional harmony. His clever use of the seventh and ninth octaves adds a unique acoustic effect to the work. At the same time, Liszt is also good at using the contrast of harmony to highlight the different emotional colors of the theme. In the process of harmony, he often breaks the traditional functional harmony system and creates a novel harmonic language.

In terms of rhythm, Hungarian Rhapsody has a strong dance quality. The rhythm of the work is varied and elastic, full of Hungarian folk dance atmosphere. Liszt skillfully uses the deformation and compound rhythm of rhythm to make the rhythm of his works rich and dynamic. In addition, Liszt is also good at using the rest and the sense of frustration to strengthen the expression of rhythm, make the music more lively and interesting.

In terms of playing skills, Hungarian Rhapsody is extremely demanding for players. The fast notes, jump intervals and complex fingerings in the work require excellent skill. At the same time, Liszt also requires the performer to have a rich emotional level in the musical performance in order to better convey the connotation of the work. Therefore, "Hungarian Rhapsody" has become an important work to test the pianist's performance level.

## **2. Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody, the Eighth Musical Form**

### *2.1 Background of Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No. 8*

In the mid-19th century, Liszt's artistic career reached a new height. In 1853 he composed the Hungarian Rhapsody No.8 in F sharp minor, a work dedicated to Herr Augustus. Liszt was serving as master of the Weimar court at the time, a position that not only gave him creative freedom, but also required him to incorporate the gravitas and romance of the court into his works. Therefore, this rhapsody not only shows Liszt's romantic fantasy, but also reflects his solemn emotion.

Hungarian Rhapsody No. 8 is a work of skill and nationality. Not only does it have the brilliant sound effects of a band, it is also deeply rooted in Hungarian national culture. The melody of this piece is varied, from the slow lyric to the passionate allegro, which all show the customs and emotions of Hungary. Through this work, Liszt successfully presented a vivid picture of Hungarian life in front of the audience, making people feel as if they were in Hungary at that time, and feel its unique culture and emotions.

## 2.2 Musical form of Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No. 8

Hungarian Rhapsody No. 8, with its unique musical language and profound cultural connotation, has become a treasure in the world music Treasury. It tells the story of the Hungarian Gypsies and conveys the composer's love and respect for the national culture. It also skillfully combines Eastern and Western musical elements to create a unique and charming musical language. This work has become a monument in the history of piano music with its rich emotional level, complex musical structure and exquisite playing skills. In each performance and listening, the audience can feel the emotional resonance across time and space, as well as the endless charm brought by music.

### (1) Departure Department

The introduction to Hungarian Rhapsody No. 8, with its unique whimsical nature and soothing adagio rhythm, cleverly continues the style of its predecessor. This section is in the key of A major, and the clever introduction of the B-sharp in the third bar adds a unique touch to the whole movement. The music then moves into the "Rasu" part of "Chardash", which is full of Hungarian Gypsy flavor. The melody of this passage is simple and profound, and the rhythm is free and changeable, which fully demonstrates the unique charm of Gypsy music. The emotional expression in A major continues until bar 44, giving the listener an emotionally rich musical journey.

In this piece of music, the composer skillfully blends tradition and innovation, so that every bar is full of anticipation and surprise. The introduction of B-sharp not only enriched the sense of harmony, but also laid the tone for the subsequent musical development. The free rhythm of the "Lasu" part makes people feel as if they are in the Hungarian countryside and feel the passion and unrestrained of Gypsies. Music Example 1.

The image displays a musical score for Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No. 8, specifically the section marked "Lento a capriccio" and "f mesto". The score is written for Piano and consists of two systems, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The first system includes a trill (tr) and a fermata. The second system includes a fermata and a trill. The score is in A major and 2/4 time.

### (2) Extensor

In bar 44 of the piece, Liszt cleverly introduced an extended note mark, which not only marked the end of the current passage, but also paved the way for the next. The use of this extended note is like the

suspense set by a careful director at the climax of the plot, reserving a buffer for the audience to change emotions. It not only provides an opportunity for the emotional expression of music to deepen, but also creates conditions for the change of speed and tone, making the flow of music more natural and rich in layers.

The use of this technique allows the music to show rich variety while maintaining coherence. The extended note is more than a simple technical mark here; it is a means of artistic expression that enhances the appeal of the music by giving the listener a moment of silence and reflection. This approach allows each part of the music to be closely connected and at the same time independent, adding more depth and complexity to the whole piece.

Music Example 2.

The image shows two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system, starting at bar 44, features a complex, fast melodic line in the right hand with a 'rallent.' marking. The second system, starting at bar 45, is marked 'Allegretto con grazia' and 'dolce', showing a more rhythmic and melodic passage in both hands.

From bar 65, the allegro comes to life, and the music, like an awakened beast, begins to show its great power. Especially in the 106-132 bars, through continuous acceleration and changes, the formation of a storm of rapid melody, the audience's emotions to the climax.

Music Example 3.

The image shows two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system, starting at bar 64, features a complex, fast melodic line in the right hand with a 'un poco animato' marking. The second system, starting at bar 70, is marked 'risvegliato' and 'non legato', showing a more rhythmic and melodic passage in both hands.

### (3) The "Frisch" part

Entering the "Frich" part, the mood of the music becomes more intense, and the rhythm becomes more intense. After bar 140, the fast rhythm of F sharp minor strengthens the tension of the music, while the

frequent syncopated rhythm in bar 141, 144, 147 and 150 is like the dance steps of gypsies during carnival, manic and full of power, pushing the mood of the music to the extreme. This part not only shows the unique charm of Gypsy culture, but also reflects Liszt's deep understanding and unique interpretation of folk music.

"Hungarian Rhapsody No. 8" is very inclusive, not only adding Musical Instruments and dance features between the people of the Jeepvillage, but also drawing many eastern elements, which makes the music has a strong expression, such as "Lasu" variations imitated the sound of the dulcines.

Music Example 4.

The image shows a musical score for Hungarian Rhapsody No. 8, measures 105-110. The score is in G major and 2/4 time. It features a piano accompaniment with a syncopated rhythm in the right hand and a melodic line in the left hand. The music is marked 'poco a poco piu animando' and 'cresc.'.

#### (4) Climax and Splendour

The climax of the music is also its most colorful passage, both the left and right hands adopt the style of column chord playing, the strength and speed are reached the peak. This paragraph is extremely demanding for the skill of the player, requiring the player to have a solid foundation, a keen sense of touch and a strong explosive force. Here, Liszt not only showed the magnificence and brilliance of piano music, but also proved his extraordinary strength as "the king of piano" to the world.

### 3. Artistic analysis of Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No. 8

#### 3.1 Melody Characteristics

When analyzing the musical structure and form of Hungarian Rhapsody No. 8, it is not difficult to find that its distinctive national characteristics are its most significant stylistic symbols. The work was heavily influenced by the "Chardash" gypsy dance, known for its ability to express both revelry and deep sadness, and loved by the Gypsy nation. "Hungarian Rhapsody No. 8" cleverly draws on the traditional form of "Chardash" structurally, dividing it into two core parts: "Rasu" and "Fris". Among them, "Rasu" means slow, often used to express melancholy emotions, which is fully reflected in the men's circle dance of "Chardash"; And "Flix" means rapid, with its passionate characteristics, often seen in the performance of pas de deux.

The melody design of "Hungarian Rhapsody No. 8" is deeply influenced by "Chardash" and presents a strong contrast effect. The first half of the work is dominated by soft, slow melody, like a slowly

flowing stream, creating a calm and melancholy atmosphere. The second half takes a sharp turn, the melody gradually rises high, full of passion and vitality. In the climax of the work, Liszt skillfully combines piano music with the traditional sound effects of the nation, giving the piano melody a symphonic quality. This kind of integration not only enhances the pluralistic expression of the piano timbre, but also makes it have a strong appeal, and greatly enhances the artistic charm and appreciation value of the whole music.

### *3.2 Rhythm and Speed Characteristics*

"Hungarian Rhapsody No. 8" uses the typical 2/3 time, "the rhythm of the rhythm derived from the rhythm of the Hungarian national language", this structure is deeply rooted in the rhythm of the Hungarian national language. Composer Liszt skillfully blended piano music with the folk dance music of the Hungarian Gypsies, and innovatively introduced the "anti-strong and weak" rhythm form unique to Hungarian folk. This rhythm form realizes the change from weak beat to strong beat in the music, breaks the traditional law of strong and weak beats in classical music, gives unprecedented freedom to the rhythm, and greatly enhances the expression and sense of rhythm of the music.

The tempo of the Eighth Hungarian Rhapsody is not only fast, but also extremely variable. Through in-depth analysis of the composition, we can observe that the music is marked with various speed indications between bars 43 and 141, Examples include Allegretto con grazia, un poco animato, poco a poco piu animando, and presto giocoso assai. These marks show that from bar 65 onwards, the rhythm of the music began to accelerate continuously, and showed its unique charm in the dynamic change. This dynamic change of rhythm not only enriches the layered sense of the music, but also enables the performer to grasp the emotional expression of the music more flexibly when performing.

### *3.3 Tonality and Harmonic Characteristics*

From the point of view of the structural tonality of the form of the work, the melody of the opening part of Hungarian Rhapsody No. 8 is based on the key #f minor. The reason why Liszt adopted the rising minor at the beginning of this work is to give the melody of the work a deep and emotional quality, with strong lyricism, which properly reflects the internal character of the music part of "Lasu". With the use of the rising minor, the musical mood underwent a significant shift, from the initial melancholy and lyricism to a more warm and cheerful atmosphere, as if depicting a vivid picture of gypsy mass dancing carnival. Liszt skillfully uses the contrast technique of the major and minor keys of the same name here, which not only effectively connects the different musical passages of the work, but also greatly enriches the color of the harmony, thus enhancing the aesthetic appeal of the whole music.

On the other hand, from the perspective of melodic scale composition, Hungarian Rhapsody No. 8 adopts scales with Hungarian characteristics. This scale, marked by the rise of four notes in F-sharp minor, is the key to the formation of the national harmonic style of the work. In bars 3, 16, and 22, we can clearly hear the rise of the sharp. In addition, the work also incorporated some dissonant intervals in the minor scale that were rare in Europe and acoustics at the time, such as the reduced sixth and the increased seventh. The use of these dissonant intervals not only greatly enriches the harmonic effect of

the music, but also highlights the unique exotic characteristics of the work, thus creating the unique artistic charm of Hungarian Rhapsody No. 8.

#### **4. Liszt's "Hungarian Rhapsody No. 8" Playing Skills**

##### *4.1 Musical Aesthetic Performance Characteristics of Singing Timbre*

"Hungarian Rhapsody No. 8" shows the unique characteristics of singing music aesthetics, which makes the whole work full of exotic customs and artistic aesthetics not harmonious nature. As an outstanding musician in Hungary, Liszt has a deep emotion for the music of his motherland, and transforms this emotion into a clever use of national music materials, thus creating a series of immortal works, Hungarian Rhapsody.

Liszt perfectly combined the Hungarian local national style with piano composition skills, and put forward higher artistic requirements for players. In the performance process, the performer must accurately deal with the three-dimensional relationship between the traditional Hungarian national style dance melody and the piano multi-part interwoven, in order to maximize the performance potential of the Hungarian national style music melody, so that this style in the piano art full of new vitality. In addition, the performer also needs to have the ability to sing the way of playing, which includes the accurate grasp of the piano touch techniques. For example, when playing the theme melody, the touch technique should show a light and lively quality. In order to ensure the performance of the singing timbre, the performer must pay attention to the training of liniment playing, paying attention to the use of "easygoing and intermittent speed, stretching but not coherent technique", which can add a unique sense of rhythm and dynamic beauty to the music.

##### *4.2 Aesthetic Characteristics of Grace note Performance*

In Liszt's piano works, the use of grace notes is a highlight of his music creation. They are not only the embellishment of music, but also the key element to enhance the artistic expression of the work, and greatly enhance the musical aesthetic of the whole work. In bars 144 to 166 of "Hungarian Rhapsody No. 8", the clever use of grace notes makes the music present a light and flexible texture, as if the wind chimes gently swaying in the breeze, creating a unique musical atmosphere. These grace notes are usually composed of short time value and fast speed notes, and constitute colorful sentences through the decomposition of scales and chords, making the whole song appear bright and brilliant.

Music Example 5.



It is not easy to perfectly present the performance of grace notes, which constitutes a technical difficulty in the performance of Hungarian Rhapsody No. 8. There are many kinds of grace notes, and each grace note has its unique aesthetic effect and performance requirements. Therefore, players must conduct meticulous training for different types of grace notes during practice. For example, in the process of playing grace notes, players often encounter the problem of inaccurate position of the left and right hand keys, which is an easy to be ignored but extremely critical technical detail. Players need to practice constantly to ensure that they can maintain the accurate position of their fingers during high-speed playing.

Music Example 6.

In the cadenza in bars 185 to 202, the player needs to increase the speed of the performance further, ensuring that the coordination of the left and right hands can accurately present the rhythm. When playing with the left hand, special attention should be paid to the coherence of the melody, which can be achieved through the coordinated movement of the arm and the wrist, while moderately reducing the initiative of the fingers to ensure the fluency of the melody and the integrity of the music. Therefore, the performance of grace notes not only requires technical precision, but also requires the performer to deeply understand the connotation of music, and perfectly convey the emotion and beauty of music to

the audience through delicate playing skills, so as to edify the audience's musical aesthetic.

#### *4.3 Artistic Features of Fingering*

In the analysis of Liszt's piano music, it is not difficult to find that he is very good at adding gorgeous skills to the performance of music. The same is true of Hungarian Rhapsody No. 8, which has a high level of finger-playing for the performer. Especially in bars 12 to 15, the player must keep the wrist steady while increasing the strength of the fingers. From bar 197 onwards, the intensity of the music gradually increases, requiring the player to concentrate the strength of the arm and wrist to the fingertips in order to achieve the dynamic change of the music.

In order to achieve such a performance effect, players must carry out systematic fingering training. On the one hand, mastering the force of the touch is key. Touch keys not only directly affect the timbre of the piano, but also determine the core factor of the overall performance quality. In the actual performance, the strength of the touch determines the richness and expressiveness of the timbre. Therefore, the performer needs to precisely control the strength and depth of the lower keys of the fingers to ensure that the timbre is uniform and coherent, so as to find a balance between unity and contrast, and enhance the aesthetic value of the music.

On the other hand, the training of touch mode is equally important. Piano performance has a high demand on the player's finger flexibility, strength and speed. Therefore, the players need to enhance the muscle strength of the fingers and the flexibility of the joints through high finger lifting training. This training not only helps to improve the independence and control of the fingers, but also enhances the stability of the metacarpal joint, so that the performer can more freely deal with a variety of complex key needs, thus improving the overall level of performance.

In addition, the wrist also plays a crucial role in the process of touching the key. The wrist is a bridge connecting the arm and fingers, and its stability and flexibility directly affect the efficiency of force transmission. Therefore, players should pay special attention to the coordination of the wrist and power control in training to ensure that the strength of the arm can be smoothly transmitted to the fingertips, providing solid technical support for the performance.

### **5. Piano Pedal Technique Aesthetics**

The high-frequency use of the right pedal is another major feature of Liszt's piano works. According to the depth of the pedal press, Liszt's works can be distinguished by four pedal techniques: 1/4 pedal, 1/2 pedal, 3/4 pedal and full pedal. From a time point of view, the use of pedals can be divided into synchronous pedals, pre-tone pedals, post-tone pedals and tremolo pedals. In "Hungarian Rhapsody No. 8", the use of pedals is particularly exquisite, not only does not destroy the integrity and independence of the music, but also complements the harmonic effect and greatly enhances the appeal of the music.

In the colorful passages of the music, the clever use of pedals gives the music a grand and magnificent momentum, as if the rich effects of a symphony orchestra are displayed, thus strengthening the cheerful atmosphere of the music. Therefore, in the process of playing, the use of pedals can not be ignored.

However, the use of pedals is not just a simple step, but a unique skill system. In the performance process, the use of the pedal has strict requirements, especially the cleanliness of the pedal is very high. In other words, the use of pedals must ensure that the sound effect is clear, and then according to the actual performance, the pedal is added in time. Especially in notes dense passages, the role of the pedal is particularly critical. Through the clever use of pedals at the beginning of each small vocabulary, the atmosphere can be better set off, so as to achieve a more ideal performance.

## 6. Conclusion

"Hungarian Rhapsody No. 8" by piano master Liszt is a very classic musical work, which not only shows the high technical characteristics of musical art performance, but also shows the high level of musical art aesthetics from the aspects of music creation concept and composition elements. When the audience is enjoying this song, their bodies can't help but sway, as if they are infected by the natural enthusiasm and optimism of Gypsies. As a piano player, when playing Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No. 8, through the understanding of music connotation and aesthetic experience, adding playing skills, and repeated contact and perception, players can improve their own musical art aesthetics and effectively improve their own performance level.

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