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Overcoming the Objectification of Western Classical Music with the Concept of Music as a Process

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Keywords

The objectification of Western classical music, the concept of music as a process, the 19th century music practice, the concept of self, the language, the transformation of Western music culture

Abstract

The purpose of this work was to examine the ideas about Western classical music. The main barrier for people at large to have a more multidimensional understanding of music, seems to be *the objectification of music*; i.e. that the music is generally understood as something complete, self-contained, something that can be defined, or even measured. Such knowledge, if isolated from the context of Western society, can lead to a limited understanding of music phenomenon. This dissertation suggests that the music may be understood as *the living interface of various processes inside Western culture* such as musical activity (e.g. composing, performing, listening), socio-cultural mentality (e.g. ways of thinking, education), the use of language, etc. An attempt was made to clarify the condition in which these processes influence each other.

The dissertation aimed to explain the objectification of music in the contemporary music practice, and tried to find the roots and the contributors to such an understanding of music. Finally, the work explored the idea of transformation of the Western music culture by the social changes and technological innovations of the 20th and 21th centuries regarding the main question: has the mentioned transformation helped overcome the deterministic concept of ‘music as an object’? The conclusions could not offer an affirmative answer to this question. Adding to the theoretical basis of this dissertation, a series of interviews was conducted in order to investigate the subject’s perception of Western classical music. Many traces of the objectification of music have been found in the answers but, on the other hand, some answers served with a holistic, multidimensional view of music. The variety found in answers may suggest that the understanding of music is a very personal issue, what would explain why it is so hard to generalize it.

Moreover, this work concludes with the thought, that the objective understanding of music is practically impossible. The closest we might get to the objectivity in our understanding of music phenomenon is to investigate music in a social context, and allow oneself to take into account the diversified thoughts on music, coming from the personal musical experience.

Palavras-chave

A objetificação da música clássica ocidental, o conceito de música como um processo, a prática musical do século XIX, o conceito do *self*, a linguagem, a transformação da cultura musical ocidental.

Resumo

O objetivo deste trabalho foi analisar as ideias sobre música clássica ocidental. O principal obstáculo para que as pessoas em geral tenham uma compreensão mais multidimensional da música parece ser a objetificação da música, ou seja, a noção de que a música é geralmente entendida como algo completo, auto-suficiente, algo que pode ser definido ou mesmo medido. Tal conhecimento, se isolado do contexto da sociedade ocidental, pode levar a uma compreensão limitada do fenómeno musical. Esta dissertação sugere que a música pode ser entendida como ‘o interface vivo de vários processos dentro da cultura ocidental’, como actividade musical (p. ex. compor, tocar/interpretar, ouvir), mentalidade sócio-cultural (p. ex. formas de pensar, educação), o uso da linguagem, etc. Foi assim feita uma tentativa de esclarecer a condição em que esses processos se influenciam mutuamente.

A dissertação teve como objetivo explicar a objetificação da música na prática musical contemporânea, tentando encontrar as raízes e os elementos contribuintes para tal compreensão da música. Por fim, o trabalho explorou a ideia de transformação da cultura musical ocidental pelas mudanças sociais e inovações tecnológicas dos séculos XX e XXI visando a questão principal: terá a transformação mencionada ajudado a superar o conceito determinista de ‘música como um objecto’? As conclusões não oferecem uma resposta afirmativa a esta questão. A acrescentar à fundamentação teórica desta dissertação foi realizada uma série de entrevistas a fim de investigar a percepção do sujeito da música clássica ocidental. Muitos traços da objetificação da música foram encontrados nas respostas mas, por outro lado, outras respostas apresentaram uma visão holística e multidimensional da música. A variedade encontrada nas respostas pode sugerir que a compreensão da música é uma questão muito pessoal, o que explicaria por que é tão difícil generalizá-la.

Assim sendo, este trabalho conclui com o pensamento de que a compreensão objetiva da música é praticamente impossível. O mais próximo que podemos chegar à objetividade na compreensão do fenómeno musical será investigando a música num contexto social e permitindo-se levar em consideração os pensamentos diversificados sobre música oriundos da experiência musical pessoal.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this dissertation is to contribute to a better understanding of classical music inside the Western culture. Due to the broad dimensions of the topic the dissertation will focus on discussing one main idea: the objectification of classical music in Western culture (Cook 2009: 79). This means that music is generally understood as something complete, self-contained, something that can be defined, or even measured. Toynbee (2003: 108) recognizes that our culture has a strong tendency to understand Classical music as “a canon of emphatically first-rate works composed by great auteurs.” This places the musical text and its composers as the highest reference within this specific musical culture. The physical object (the score) and the composer’s genius (a symbol of a higher force) both contribute to the idea of music as a static, closed in itself, non-dynamical artifact. As soon as the phenomenon of music is investigated in an interdisciplinary manner, it can be noticed that music cannot simply be objectified.

On the contrary, music seems to be more a phenomenon of a transformational, dynamical nature rather than something definite. The next example should make this statement clearer: every music piece results not only of the musical ideas the composer blends in his work, but also of other ‘external’ factors, like the way the composer is affected by the society - by the way she was educated, the way people want to hear music, the way people evaluate her music, the way her music is performed, by the use of language that carries meanings, by the limitations of the notation system, the instruments... All these factors play an important role in the production of music. Conversely, what a composer writes may change people’s tastes, demand new technical skills, create new ways of listening to the music, or help create new philosophical perspectives, etc. Such a multidimensional understanding of music seems to be more integral than a deterministic objectification of music. The phenomenon of music is now perceived as ‘the living interface of various processes’, such as the musical activity (composing, performing, listening, theorizing musical meaning, etc.), the cultural mentality (e.g. ways of thinking), the use of language, etc. These processes interact with each other in a certain way, making possible diverse and unique understandings of music. An aim of this work is to present some of the complexity in which these processes influence each other. If there is any value on the notion of ‘meaning of music’, it may lay not just in the interpretation of a musical text, but also in the manner how the processes involved in the phenomenon of music interconnect and what their outcome is. Since these processes are being investigated by

different branches of the social and natural sciences, interdisciplinarity will be an indispensable condition of this research.

The second chapter of this dissertation will briefly examine how the objectification of music is reflected in the contemporary music practice. The centrality of the music score and the importance attributed to composers and compositions, all contribute to the objectification of music. The idea that composers are the main pillars of the classical music tradition creates and promotes a hierarchy, in which composers are above performers and listeners. Even though the contemporary music industry trades with charismatic performers of classical music, such way of thinking is still very much present in the Western culture.

The third chapter will try to trace down the roots of such ideas. Several authors in our days (Blaukopf, Cook, Tomlinson...) agree that these ideas have their roots in the 19th century. They may be seen as the consequence of the big socio-economic changes of that time (industrialization, growth of capitalism, stratification of people, etc.). In the face of the harshness of the industrial world, art served as a form of hope – a ‘subsidiary religion’ – promoting ethical values, beauty, exploring the world of emotions, searching for a transcendent meaning, etc. Such ideas can be seen as to have formed the Romantic view of music, which is still very much present in our everyday music practice.

The fourth chapter will demonstrate other contributing agents to the objectification of music: the understanding of the self and the use of language. The chapter 4.1. will demonstrate that the objectification is not present only in the musical practice, but is rather deeply embedded in the whole Western culture, starting with the understanding of self. Who are we, what are we made of, how do we function as a unit, and similar questions, may be considered the most essential questions for our understanding of life. As it will be shown, common assumptions about the self may further our understanding of ourselves as something definite, and objective as well. This may affect our perception of music. The chapter 4.2. will focus on the mechanisms through which the language preserves and changes ideas about music. As it will be shown, the main binding agent between the language and the music is the use of metaphor.

The fifth chapter will explore the idea of transformation of Western musical culture by the social changes and technological innovations of the 20th and 21th century.

In the sixth chapter, five individuals related to the classical music practice – a composer, a professor and a performer, a secondary music school pupil, a university student of music, and a listener - will be interviewed. The purpose is to investigate the subjects’

perception on the issues that this dissertation explores. Interview mostly consists of an open-type questions.

It is expected that this dissertation will help understand the objectification of classical music in the Western culture, and its consequences on music practice. Finally, it may help to recognize the 'transformational' nature of music, i.e. to understand music as 'the live interface of various processes'.

2. The objectification of Western classical music in the contemporary music practice

2.1. The objectification is necessary for the understanding of Western classical music

We may consider the score is a physical object. It is rather predictable that the musical notation, being the main musical source for a performing musician, will lead the musician towards an identification of music with the score. When the music (sound) is identified with the score (an object), it may also adopt characteristics of an object, which means that its properties can be objectively measured.

However, the process of objectifying music happens on a more subtle level, i.e. through the use of the musical metaphor. Musicians tend to metaphorize the musical features - they make them become 'imaginary objects': the sounds are soft, hard, deep, sad (although they cannot be measured as such); the way the melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic materials are combined in a composition is named 'the texture of a musical work' (although we cannot really touch it); people use the phrase 'musical pieces' (even though they cannot be broken off a larger piece). The metaphor also presents an important part of the notation system which is, as Ingarden says (1980: 218), used to symbolize defined objects or processes. The musical notation represents music as moving up and down, from left to right (despite the fact that music cannot move, it is not a being). The tones are called 'high' and 'low' because they appear higher and lower in the notation system and because they vibrate in a higher or lower frequency (and not because we could actually measure their height in centimeters). It is rather evident that we treat music as an imaginary object (Cook 2009: 79-80).

Objectifying music – taking music out of the temporal experience - is an essential part of the musical process if one is to learn, understand and give meaning to classical music. However, the 'imaginary objects of music' (notes, signs etc.) should not be confused with the temporal experiences these objects represent (Ingarden 1980: 218).

2.2. The prevalence of music as a ‘composed’ activity

Inside the Western culture, classical music is generally understood as “a canon of emphatically first-rate works composed by great *auteurs*” (Toynbee 2003: 108). This means that the composers, and the musical notation can be seen as the main reference in the Classical music practice. Perhaps one of the reasons for this is that before 20th century the musical performance could not be recorded, so the notation was an important factor in conserving the musical tradition. Moreover, the famous composers were usually also a much respected performers of the time.

However, the prevalence of music as a ‘composed’ activity is perhaps one of the main reasons (besides the necessary objectification) why the phenomenon of classical music is objectified. The contribution to the objectification can be seen in indirect consequences of such thinking.

2.2.1. Consequences of the prevalence of music as a ‘composed’ activity

2.2.1.1. A hierarchy inside musical practice

The high status of composers in the Western classical music practice generates a hierarchy, where composers - as the creators of the basic product - are given the highest status, performers follow them as their ‘servants’. Finally, the listeners may be seen on the bottom of the hierarchic pyramid as the mere ‘receivers of the musical message’.

It can be argued that classical music concerts contribute to reinforce the place of composers in the mentioned hierarchy. The hierarchy is accentuated by non-written rules of behavior concert-goers respect and cherish in a classical music concert. Audiences are *subservient* to the composer by sitting still and listening attentively to the music, they are obliged to clap just at the end of the movements. They show their respect and the importance the musical event has on their life by abiding to an etiquette that regulates their way of participation and their dress code. The performer is supposed to wear a tailcoat (in what he may resemble a waiter). His subservience may as well be observed in the established tradition of performing by memory; this should ensure the performer plays more spontaneously, as if he were improvising, and letting the work itself takes hold of him during his performance (Cook 2009:

45-46). The fact that composers are usually absent at concerts “reinforces the creative supremacy of the composer...and the corresponding subservience of performers” (Toynbee 2003: 108).

However, the modern sociology of music posits another model in which the hierarchy inside musical practice cannot survive, because composers, performers and listeners are seen to be equally important in the musical process. A musical performance can be understood, not only as a reproduction of an outer existing reality (the composer’s genial ideas), but also as a creation of a ‘new way of understanding reality’. This vision calls our attention to the centrality of the performer’s importance. Moreover, the metaphors created by the listeners during the performance reflect the diversity of the experiences of the same musical moment. They do not just depict something, but are also transforming our perception of music (and specific musical pieces) (Hodge 1993: 247-58).

Leaving behind the idea of hierarchy in musical practice may help overcome the predominance of the objectification in music, because the musical meaning is no longer supposed to be given only by composers, but also by the way performers and listeners feel, understand, perform and speak about music.

2.2.1.2. Understanding music history as the canon of great musical works

Another consequence of the prevalence of music as a ‘composed’ activity is the understanding of music history as a mere index of (fully examined) great classical music works. The modern books of the music history explain the importance of the historical milieu for the musical practice of a certain epoch. The question is, if people, in their search for information, focus enough on the inter-cultural transfers of a certain time and culture that contribute to the written music, i.e. the interface of religion, philosophy, science, cultural mentality, criticism of music, musical performance, language, etc. (Dillon 2007: 73). Such thinking may help transform the comprehension of music history: instead of understanding it as the canon of music works, it may be understood as a process of “the always changing patterns of comprehension and sensuous perception, because of which certain musical works had appeared” [my translation] (Cook 2009: 82).

2.2.1.3. The absolute music

The primacy of the musical text (fixed through notation) underlines the wide-spread idea that music without words is absolute¹. This means that its language is not translatable into verbal language, and that it does not carry any (or carries very little) extra-musical meaning. It may be considered that such idea contributes to the objectification of music, because it is thought that everything that can be understood in the music is written in the score. It has been said already that the learning and understanding of Classical music requires the use of metaphors, so musicians need to give some form of extra-musical meaning to the musical properties if they want to learn music or simply acknowledge the metaphorical connotations of the musical notation. Dalhaus suggests that the concept of absolute music is more than two hundred years old: “(it) was the leading idea of the classical and romantic era in music aesthetics” (1989: 3).

2.2.1.4. The distinction between ‘high’ and ‘low’ music

The next consequence is the distinction between ‘high’ and ‘low’ music. For many classical musicians, the classical music canon and (consequently) the musical notation serve as the orientation point to assess the quality. Most of the music which is not written down and does not follow the classical music tradition is considered to be ‘second class music’, including almost all popular music and many non-Western musical traditions (Cook 2009: 52).

Thanks to the phenomenon of globalization², the technology, the ethnomusicology and the findings of the sociology of music, the people’s understanding of music has changed significantly; they understand that ‘the ultimate music’ does not exist, that there are many different ‘musics’ which are, beyond the individual creativity of musicians, the result of the values and the mentality of the diverse cultures. Furthermore, nothing about a certain kind of music can be established as being universal, because the music practice, the meaning and the function of music are different in every culture (Dillon 2007: 74-77). This is a relativist approach to music, which diminishes the importance of objectification in music.

¹ More information about absolute music can be found in the chapter 3.2.

² The effect of globalization on music is described by Bob White in his book *Music and Globalization* (2011)

2.2.1.5. The objectification of music present in the public education system

Some consequences of the prevalence of music as a ‘composed’ activity may also be seen in modern music schools. Here are some examples.

The musical education often starts by the explanation of the basic elements of music (notes, scales, instruments...). This educational framework turns these elements (and not the sound itself) the building blocks of the Western music tradition. Unfortunately, little attention is given to the stimulation of imagination, the exploration of sonorities and their metaphoric parallels in the everyday life, the bodily gestures that follow a musical thought, improvisation, etc. These things have already been discussed by many scholars (Swanwick 1991, Choksy 1986, Jorgensen 2003, etc.). Choksy (et al., 1986: 29-30) asks himself: “Why does the study of music history not reflect the movement of peoples, societies, or individuals?”

Some music history textbooks (e.g. Honolka 1983) devote very little space to the ‘primitive music practices’; instead, the majority of text is devoted to present and characterize the ‘classical music canon’.

Furthermore, even today we find instances that the tests of harmony or counterpoint have to be ‘filled up’ like a form, without the help of an instrument; one may see this as a consequence of thinking that it is not needed to hear the music to understand or write it. Such practice may lead into a narrow-minded musical education where “students are permitted to write what they cannot hear or feel” (Choksy et al., 1986: 29-30).

It has just been the case in the last few decades or so (though insufficiently) that the universities have considered the importance of sociology of music and other interdisciplinary subjects and the important role they might have in the formation of young musicians. Much more attention is now given to teacher preparation; multicultural awareness has increased; new approaches to assessment have been developed; systematic philosophical examination of commonplaces has begun to emerge; school restructuring efforts have forced music teachers to take a more active role in advocacy for the arts and curricular development; and creative ways have been devised to relate music to its social context, other arts, and school subjects and to take advantage of recent technological advances. Still, in other fundamental respects ... music instruction remains very traditional, and its rationale has changed little since the early part of the nineteenth century... (Jorgensen 2003: 3)

Perhaps one of the reasons for this is that the ‘new approaches’ to teaching have had a short time to be firmly established.

3. The roots of the objectification in the 19th century: reasons for the prevalence of music as a ‘composed’ activity

Some authors (e.g. Cook 2009: 29-48, Tomlinson 2003: 31-44) sustain that the ideas that form the objectification of music emerged in the 19th century. This chapter will discuss ideas that may foster the understanding of this phenomenon.

3.1. “The musical religion”

The 19th century was a time of pronounced big socio-economic changes in the Western world culture. It was marked by the start of a classical industrial economy, based on production, distribution and consumption of goods. People started to move massively from the countryside to the cities, hoping for a better life. Many people must have been disappointed, because they experienced the negative side of the industrial world: the stratification of people, poverty, social alienation, the disruption of the nature, the monotony associated with the repetitive assembly line work... Since the common religion was to succumb to the power of science, the Classical music offered a new form of spiritual consolation; the so-called ‘musical religion’ appeared (Cook 2009: 46).

3.1.1. The composer as a link to an esoteric world

With the need for a spiritual consolation, an old idea was revived: the music could be seen as the medium for ‘God’s message’, “a window into an esoteric world” (Cook 2009: 42). In music practice, this idea instantly conferred the highest status to the composers – the makers of music.

The 19th century image of the romantic composer fitted into the concept of ‘musical religion’; the composer was seen as a ‘solitary artist’, whose social estrangement was considered as a consequence of her devotion to music: writing what she wants to write and not what people want to hear. She suffers all her life, but her art in the end overcomes the sorrow (and even death) with its eternal value and beauty (e.g. Beethoven, Schumann³). It may be seen that in

³ The image of a romantic composer is described by Martin Geck in his book *Robert Schumann: The Life and Work of a Romantic Composer* (2012).

this way, a composer gains an ‘eternal’ value, close to the one of mythical beings with supernatural powers (e.g. Jesus in the Christian doctrine).

The creative process of a romantic composer was often referred to be ‘solipsistic’.

Both germ and soil are located within (the composer’s) psyche and have no connection to other music making, past or present...creation is involuntary, and involves possession by creative demon that is not subject to conscious control...Composition takes place in stages, from inchoate 'new idea' to 'definite form'. This is a transformational approach to creation whose origins, as George Steiner points out, can be traced to the Christian doctrine of transubstantiation. (Toynbee 2003: 103-104)

In other words, the musicians and music lovers of the time helped to draw the figure of the inspired composer, mastered by God’s will. The historians were underlining such ideas with the falsification of the facts from composers’ lives. For example, some of those who were investigating the life of Beethoven (e.g. Schlösser⁴, Rolland⁵) were claiming that Beethoven did not make any musical notes and sketches, writing down the music directly from his ‘inner ear’ on the paper. Such descriptions of Beethoven’s compositional process were deemed false⁶ (Cook 2009: 76); discoveries of his handwritings proved the opposite - he was constantly making annotations, sketches, corrections, and rearrangements while writing a piece of music. This negates the idea of the composer being ‘possessed by a creative demon’.

Taking into account the romantic *bourgeois subjectivity*⁷, one of the main objectives of the composer’s creation was the ‘overcoming of conventional expectations’. The composer, however, also depends on the acceptance of his music, which suggests that he must please the expectations of his audience as well. It is true that the music “is fashioned by those who design and perform it” (Toynbee 2003: 103). However we cannot overlook one important fact: “new art works only emerge through the interaction of artists, coworkers, and audiences...When the interaction is intensely repeated, it may solidify in conventions that

⁴ Luis Schlösser met Beethoven in 1822. He paraphrased his words about the composer’s creative process. This description of the meeting with Beethoven can be found in Forbes’s book *Thayer’s Life of Beethoven* (1964).

⁵ His descriptions about Beethoven’s life can be found in the book *Beethoven* ([1921] 2009)

⁶ A discussion on this topic was made by Maynard Solomon (1988: 126-138)

⁷ *Bourgeois subjectivity* is an accepted term among historians, and describes the inclination of romantic artists towards the exploration of personal emotional world.

organize both the way the artist works and the audience responds” (Toynbee 2003: 103); this we might call 'tradition'.

However, the artist is not necessarily aware of such conventions. Rather in making a creative choice he or she works intuitively. Becker calls this the 'editorial moment', that is when the artist identifies creative options and then selects from them according to informal criteria that represents, in the case of music, an ideal listener's point of audition. For Becker, then, creation involves small amounts of individual agency and large amounts of regular, if complex, social interaction. Even the most intense and solitary moments of creative passion depend on careful monitoring of choices from a (virtual) position outside the creator's own subjectivity, and in the thick of the culture in which he or she works. As Becker puts it, 'art worlds rather than artists make art' (Toynbee 2003: 104).

3.1.2. The invention of the concert as a 'quasi religious' event

A classical concert – as a 'quasi religious' event – started to appear in the romantic era. The classical concerts of the time took place in the newly built spacious concert halls, which might have suggested the space in a cathedral⁸.

Another characteristic that bears an analogy with the Church is 'the hierarchy of the participants', described already in the previous chapter. The common authoritarian power structures in music: a) composer – *the father* of the musical product, b) performer - *the servant* of composer, executor of the musical message, c) listener – receiver of the musical message, resemble those in the Christian Church, where God is at the top of the hierarchy, the priest follows him as the medium through which God's word reaches the congregation, who can be found on the bottom of the hierarchic pyramid. The resemblance of the practice in Church and in a concert hall is underlined also by the unwritten rules of behavior, which have already been described before.

⁸ Is it a coincidence that the main hall of Budapest's Palace of Arts, officially opened in March 2005, is designed in a shape of the interior of a gothic cathedral?

3.2. The process of ascribing absolute values to the Western classical music

If the music was to become a kind of spiritual consolation for the turbulent social changes in the 19th century, something of a spiritual and permanent value had to be ascribed to it. The process of ascribing absolute values to music is extremely old and dates back to the Greek culture, though the modern concept of absolute music was founded in the era of Classicism (Dalhaus 1989: 8).

3.2.1. Desensualisation and decontextualisation of the Western classical music

According to Kurt Blaukopf (1992: 144), the desensualization of music started in late Antiquity – around the year 520 with the foundation of the Benedictine order. Benedictines were trying to detach the song from the body movement, instruments, and ecstatic dance. Their justification was that such music was ‘light’ and ‘dissolute’, so everyday contact with it was disapproved. When music was separated from body motion, “the Christian liturgy began the process of differentiating between music and language. This was one of the crucial prerequisites for the development of Occidental music” (Blaukopf 1992: 153). For the understanding of music as a phenomenon with its own intrinsic meaning. Moreover, it was precisely the Christianity’s ideological ‘hostility to the body’, says Blaukopf, that provided the basis for the subsequent autonomy of music (1992: 148).

Despite the influence of the Church, until the late 18th century the song remained the conceptual umbrella for all kinds of music around the world, including classical music. Perhaps one of the reasons for that was the human awareness that the song as “the universal corollary of the human propensity toward language, is not so much musical thing as music is songish” (Tomlinson 2003: 42). In the early 19th century, however, the early efforts of the Benedictines were compensated. The concept of the absolute instrumental classical music was founded, where the meaning/message of music was considered to be intrinsic.

Immanuel Kant was one of the main philosophers, who have raised a debate about pure instrumental music. In his analysis of beauty in his *Critique of Judgement*⁹ he wrote: “The judgement of Taste, by Which an Object is Declared to Be Beautiful Under the Condition of a Definite Concept, Is Not Pure” (Tomlinson 2003: 35). The message is clear: music with words represents ‘dependent’ beauty (music dependent on words). This is why, for Kant, real, free beauty is restricted only to instrumental music. “Kant prepared the ground for the ennoblement of instrumental music throughout the nineteenth century...” (Tomlinson 2003: 35). It may be considered, that Kant’s devaluating of ‘music with words’ contributed to the “eurocentric separation of music history from music anthropology” (Tomlinson 2003: 36).

When musical materials were detached from their “human creative matrices”, the activity of composing “seemed an inscriptive means endowed with non-semantic, mysterious, even transcendent significance. It was now conceivable, to a degree that it had not been before, that the work as embodied in music writing...could become the avatar of the transcendent spaces absolute music could attain and inhabit” (Tomlinson 2003: 37, 39). What had become important was how to understand this ‘transcendence’ and not what kind of social interactions happen at the scene of a specific music practice.

3.3. The music disciplines in the 19th century and their contribution to the objectification of music

3.3.1. Aesthetics

Following the romantic practice, music fell into the same conceptual field as the language and the fine arts, i.e. the field of ‘picture theory of the meaning’. According to this theory, language and plastic arts were supposed to represent reality. In this procedure they were thought to exist independently from what they were representing (they were making some kind of a ‘picture’ of the reality, though they were – as arts – separated from the time and space where this picture had occurred). This philosophical principle is the pillar of classical aesthetics, according to which one can evaluate artifacts (taken out of their daily use and function) on the basis of absolute standards of beauty. The classical aesthetic has its roots already in Plato, who believed that the world itself is a manifestation of the so called ‘forms’ -

⁹ Kant 1790: 48

absolute, 'pure' ideas of things. Therefore the conceptual background for the idea that art has the function of representation, and also for the idea of absolute music, was being prepared already 2500 years ago (Cook 2009: 83, 84). However, there was a difference between Plato's idea of absolute music, and the idea of absolute music developed in the 18th and 19th centuries. "Plato's idea, against which the (younger) idea of absolute music had to prevail...was that music consists of *harmonia*, *rhythmos*, and *logos*" (Dalhaus 1989: 8). Because *logos* (language as the manifestation of human reason) was considered to be an important part of music, the "music without language was reduced... (it was) a deficient type or mere shadow of what music actually is" (Dalhaus 1989: 8). The modern concept of absolute music, though, tried to detach language from music completely (see the chapter 3.2.). The two mentioned philosophical currents referring to absolute music remained central until today, and are discussed by many contemporary scholars (Swanwick 1981, 1988, 1994, Eisner 1985, 1991, Reimer 1989, etc.).

The theory of absolute music and the *bourgeois subjectivity* joined in the Romantic era, where artists were exploring their emotional world and simultaneously re-visiting the Greek standards of absolute beauty, after which the art could be evaluated. Consequently, the 'true' art (though charged with emotions) ought to overcome the social and historical context and embody eternal values. Such thinking seems to go hand in hand with the phenomenon of musical religion and 'decontextualized' instrumental (absolute) music carried out in the 19th century.

3.3.2. Music theory

The rapidly developing modern science was gaining more and more reputation within the society, where a rational approach was going to gain importance over a more emotional and intuitive approach to human existence. There was a need to build a solid science also in the musical field. The modern music theory was founded, and the musical analysis soon became its most celebrated branch. Following the trend of scientific reductionism, the music analysis tried to unveil the smallest musical parts and explain their function and place in the bigger units, and finally in the whole musical piece. Intuitive approaches and socially charged language about music were eventually eliminated by this new scientific approach. They were replaced with a professional language, and a complete symbolic system. The music theory discourse became less and less understandable for the amateurs, representing the majority of

the listeners. It is undisputable that music analysis of music has become an extremely important part of musical studies. However, one problem remained: music was examined because of itself, as if outrooted from the space and time where it was created, performed and discussed. It was anatomized, yielding results that largely ignored the frame of the social studies. Moreover, a big paradox occurred: the theorists wanted to build a solid, verifiable science, but it is arguable whether they ended up establishing a theory based on the romantic ‘L’art pour L’art’ view, i.e. that the music is a self-sufficient object with its absolute and intrinsic beauty and characteristics. The high quality of the famous musical pieces was ‘self-evident’ – the theorist’s job was to make this clear to the people (e.g. Schenker). Behind the cover of science - theorists were fulfilling an apologetic agenda to protect the value of the cherished repertoire, and to confirm its canonic status (Cook 2009: 103). “Analysis, in this light, can be seen to be the interpretive practice that arose from the absolution of instrumental music from its context in the moment of the apotheosis of music writing as manifestation of transcendent spirit” (Tomlinson 2003: 37). It offers “criteria constructed on a foundation of European views, including an ideology of writing, as a universal gauge of musical worth” (Tomlinson 2003: 37).

3.3.3. Musicology

The early musicology appears in the early 19th century. Its scholars, influenced by romantic views¹⁰, were mainly engaged on the justification of the abstraction and structure of classical music pieces with ‘the hidden entanglement’ and ‘the story’, which would explain the obvious musical contrasts and inconsequentialities. Such examples may be found in the descriptive beginnings of E. T. A. Hofmann (Hofmann, Charlton 1989). They represent the ‘hermeneutic criticism’; creating metaphors with the purpose of leading the listeners’ understanding of music (Cook 2009: 101). Though efficient, such attempts alone could not survive as a plausible source of knowledge.

Modern musicology of the late nineteenth century has its roots in Guido Adler's famous manifesto of 1885 (Adler 1885; Mugleston 1981) with the title “Range, methods, and goals of musicology” (Blaukopf 1992: 35). Adler divides the discipline into two sub disciplines,

¹⁰ E.g. Dalhaus (1989: 7) writes that E. T. A. Hofmann was a very enthusiastic defender of the absolute music.

historical musicology, and systematic musicology¹¹ (these sub disciplines can also be traced in modern European musicology). However it has to be acknowledged “that the still young discipline of musicology was not alerted to the importance of ‘extra musical’ factors by sociological theories; rather this point of view was the result of the work in musicology itself” (Blaukopf 1992: 35).

3.3.3.1. Authoritative editions

The main interest of historical musicologists, who represented the majority of all musicologists, had become the so called ‘authoritative editions’. In other words, musicologists edited the musical pieces on the basis of information they gathered from the score, and from the composers’ lives, believing that this would bring them closer to the composer’s original ideas.

This new activity, which continued also in the early 20th century, is at a first glance much more plausible than the first musicological attempts. When it is closely examined, though, it can be noticed that it also grew up in the wake of the romantic conception of music writing. Many authors in the 20th and 21th century (e.g. Kerman 1985, Kenyon 1988, Taruskin 1988) criticized such projects, arguing that the ‘sources’ from the earlier centuries are fragmentary, deficient and, in many cases, contradictory; much guessing is required to establish a logical conclusion of what the composer might have thought. Moreover, sometimes even the composer published more authorized versions of the same piece (e.g. Chopin, Liszt). How could one possibly know which one is the closest to the original version (Cook 2009: 99)? The idea that composers would want to create one and only authorized version of the piece can perhaps be attributed to Beethoven. However, Beethoven’s profile does not match Chopin’s or Liszt’s, who were known to improvise and change the pieces from concert to concert. The authoritative editions at the end of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century had an important social mission: “to mark the new faith in the work, which is fixed in music writing; in the possibility of presenting it as a stable, authoritative text; and in the belief that this text can bring us closer to the singular expressive intent that motivated the composer” (Tomlinson 2003: 42).

¹¹ systematic musicology included comparative musicology, which later became an independent discipline: ethnomusicology

Musicology born in the romantic era

starts from a historically local and recent mode of musical self-awareness and projects it outward from Europe toward the rest of the world. As long as this gesture is clearly understood, it is not inevitably a bad thing. In itself it only points up the general role of musicology in a Eurocentric self-scrutiny that characterizes in varying degrees all the modern humanities... such self-knowledge becomes problematic when it is not accompanied by more or less strenuous attempts to gain other-knowledge." (Tomlinson 2003: 42)

It seems that both - music theory and early musicology were examining pieces of music from an esthetic (L'art pour L'art) point of view, characteristic for the Romanticism. They did not seem to consider what a certain piece of music could contribute to the understanding of the social and historical context. They were missing the 'critical'¹² approach to music. Perhaps the arrogance of music theory was even bigger, if we consider its ignorance to the social and philosophical knowledge in the field of music.

3.4. Musical canon ('virtual musical museum')

When music was considered as absolute, and its message as timeless, it needed a secure place to be stored. That is why the so-called 'virtual musical museum' was established. The 'virtual musical museum' is an idea of music as an 'aesthetic repository', which can be stored so that it can be enjoyed later. It may not be a coincidence that the idea of an 'aesthetic capital' appeared from within the 19th century capitalism, which was noted by its accumulation of goods, the fruits of the work force (for example, money). Similarly, the music was stored (accumulated) as a kind of 'aesthetic capital', which was called repertoire. The expression 'musical work'¹³, which appears exactly in this era, validates this analogy. Moreover, the phrase 'musical work' is conceivable only within the conceptual frame of industrial society, because it is unimaginable to think that a piece of paper itself could constitute any significant social work. The foundation of a musical canon was an important step towards the music's acquisition of a permanent value (Cook, 2009: 29).

¹² One of the most eminent critics of music theory, and a defender of the so called 'critical' approach to music' is Joseph Kerman (*Contemplating music*, 1985; *How did We Got into Analysis and How to Get Out*, 1980: 311-331).

¹³ One of the most eminent philosophers, who wrote about the phenomenon of 'musical work', was Roman Ingarden. His most famous work on this topic is the essay *The Work of Music and the Problem of Its Identity* (1980: 217-371).

The reason why the musical canon may be called a ‘virtual musical museum’ is that it was founded on the principle of other art museums of the time, in which the artifacts were taken from their daily circumstances and use and estimated by universal measures of intrinsic beauty. Since then, composers made sure that their music would be performed even after their death. It is not a surprise that in the era when musical works were protected from oblivion, the expression ‘classical music’ started to be used - following the model of Greek culture, where the concept of universal values was born and, once again, where the artifacts were estimated by universal measures of intrinsic beauty (Cook 2009: 40). Since then, classical music ‘earned the right’ to become the measure for evaluation of other musical cultures around the globe and the music history was orientated through the best pieces of the classical music canon (Tomlinson 2003: 42).

The concept of ‘virtual musical museum’ was founded and developed by Lydia Goehr in her book *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: an essay in the philosophy of music* (1994).

3.5. Conclusion

After briefly examining the musical practice of Romanticism, it is perhaps unavoidable to notice its tight connection with the present time. Many ideas that can be traced in the actual music practice have not grown far from the romantic thought: the idea of absolute music, the idea of hierarchy inside music practice, the division to ‘high’ and ‘low’ music, the prevalence of music as a ‘composed’ activity, the idea of ‘music as a link to an esoteric world’, etc. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of absolute music, with its intrinsic meaning, represents probably the most influential idea from the romantic era that has been preserved until today, and may be seen as one of the main contributors to understanding music as an object.

4. Other contributions to the objectification of Western classical music

4.1. The objectification of self contributes to the objectification of music

Another idea that contributes to the objectification of music, though not so evident at a first glance, is the idea of ‘self as an object’. That means that people have a tendency to determine the self (i.e. understand themselves) as a physical thing (e.g. the body or a physical place in the body), as some definite entity (e.g. soul, mind), or as a combination of both (e.g. the interaction of soul and body). The first two comprehensions of self belong to the tradition of Monism¹⁴ - a view that acknowledges the existence of only one substance; only the matter (the physical body), or only the mind (or soul). The latter comprehension of self belongs to the tradition of Body/Soul Dualism, which acknowledges that human beings consist of two substances (Body and Soul), which are in causal relationship. The Monistic theory has its supporters mainly in the scientific area and is less popular. Dualism, has many more followers, also among ordinary people. That may be the reason why it is perhaps reasonable to consider its contribution to the objectification of music as more significant.

4.1.1. The body and soul dualism

Dualism can be traced down all to the ancient times; it has been suggested that “dualism, with the possibility of soul immortality...was absorbed from classical Greek thought, through Origen, Augustine and Aquinas” (Turl 2010: 58). The reason for its popularity in the humans’ common-belief, and also in science, is probably the fact that it is deeply rooted in philosophical, psychological, religious, and other aspects of the Western culture.

The dualists’ view divides the human being into two substances - matter and mind. It is quite obvious that such a view is suggested by our everyday experience; our ‘body’ is a physical/visible thing, while our mental experience is more private, hidden from the public view, reinforcing the feeling that it is somehow separate.

¹⁴ The theory of monism is extensively presented in the Andrea Bächli’s book *Monism* (2003)

Other reasons for such historical influence of this view may be hidden in culture itself: cultural mentality can very much influence our views about the self; transparently – through religious education, or more subtly - through language and the way in which we refer to our daily experience.

Dualism was also an essential step in the development of scientific thought. Its direct consequence - separating means from ends - gave birth to reductionism, method of which may be considered to have formed the basis for many of the well-developed areas of modern science. In other words, “making the crucially important distinction between mind (or self) and all that is not mind, i.e. the depersonalized nature (was) to become the object of mechanics” (Ballard, 1957: 253).

A problem arises when dualism becomes the prevailing explanation on the human nature. This “encourages actors to categorize and hierarchically arrange aspects of the world into bimodal categories, or dualisms, such as human/nature, culture/nature, male/female, symbolic/material, reason/nature, reason/emotion, mind/body, civilized/primitive, and production/reproduction” (Steiner-Aeschliman 2003: 1). These bimodal categories can be seen in the musical practice as well: production - composition / reproduction - performance, civilized - Western classical music/ primitive - other musical practices, reason - control / emotion - spontaneity, mind - music/ body - technique...

Moreover, the fact that we acknowledge the existence of the soul (as something transcendent and essential) may have contributed to the birth of the musical religion; as it was mentioned before, music may represent some kind of ‘door to the transcendent world’. This gives it a status of something absolute and eternal, which further contributes to the primacy of composers (the ‘fathers of the musical product’) and consequently to the hierarchy in the musical practice, etc.

It has been said before that an indirect consequence of the body/soul dualism is the reductionism (separating means from ends). The reductionism also appeared in the music disciplines such as music theory, music analysis, etc. If the reductionists’ results are not understood under the larger frame of interdisciplinary studies, the musical knowledge can be diminished.

4.1.2. Self as a binding process

Denis Noble (one of the leading scientists in the field of system biology) offers an alternative view of understanding the self. He defends that it makes greater sense to understand the self as **one of the most important processes that are connecting one's body (an organic unit of many processes)**. In other words, self may be understood as a great *binding process, that binds all the other processes (mental and physical) in such a manner that we manage to function as a unit*. Thus, Noble's theory avoids a philosophical maze - to think of the self as something abstract or impossible to understand, or to comprehend the self as a physical thing - searching for physical places where self may be hidden. The main idea is now focused on something of a dynamic nature, *a process*; on *what is going on*, rather than *what is there to see* (Noble, 2010: 132). Such self is conceivable only within an updated multidisciplinary research, because the processes in the body depend on many complex interactions between the higher and lower systems in the body, mind and the environment (nature, society). We could extrapolate this theory to a broader explanation of the world; this could lead us to the conclusion that one's self is entirely conceivable only if we are able to conceive the whole world as an organic whole where everyone (and everything) contributes to everyone's state; where no self can be separated from other selves, since it must have some kind of impact on them.

This theory suggests to leave behind the defence of reductionism, which can itself lead to a limited understanding of life (because of the reducing complex data and phenomena to simple terms). It seems preferable to reintegrate its findings into a multidisciplinary view of the human being as an organic process, functioning as a whole, and where every of its constituting parts can have a similarly important impact on its balance.

Noble's theory blends dualism and monism. When he employs the term 'self as a binding process', he interprets the meaning of self as something non-material and fundamentally important - the binding process is not a *thing* and is fundamentally important. On the other hand, however, he makes it clear that such process is absolutely dependent on the living-matter so it cannot exist outside it: it is just its organizing principle.

Similar conclusions may be found in the interpretations of the early Aristotle, who was able to explain the connection between body and soul in the following way. Aristotel did not believe

in Plato's forms that exist independently from their manifestations. He considered forms¹⁵ as the natures and properties of things that exist embodied in those things (e.g. the soul is the form of body). Following these thoughts, it is possible to conclude that Aristotel understood the human soul as the organizing principle in a particular parcel of matter (Robinson 1983:123–44).

The contemporary philosopher Jonathan Lowe, in his theory of Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism (Lowe 2006: 5-23) shows some analogies with the interpretation of Aristotle described in the previous paragraph. He believes that “persons or selves are distinct from their organic physical bodies and any parts of those bodies. It regards persons as ‘substances’ in their own right, but does not maintain that persons are necessarily separable from their bodies, in the sense of being capable of disembodied existence” (Philpapers 2009: web). This theory seems to imply

a form of determinism in that, since there is no overriding centre of decision making – such as the mind or the "I" - the material self is opened to the same material influences as any other material substance (and therefore arguably determined by them). Lowe's counter-argument to this tries to show that it is possible that the will is a complex interaction of social and physical processes whereby no one cause is responsible for events. So, because the self contains all of these ‘parts’ - social, physical, mental, emotional, etc. - decisions and actions are brought about by the arrangement of these parts in a certain way (in the same way that a spider's web allows the spider to move by both restricting and facilitating its movements)” (Southwell 2010: web).

Steiner-Aeschliman (2010: 2-3), extracting from the Max Weber's Theory of Immanent Dualism, offers similar conclusions when searching for a solution for ‘reorganizing of late industrial capitalistic society, accumulating environmental degradation’. She suggests to gather the dualistic methods – acknowledging theological views, separating the means from the ends, “promoting rigorous experimentation, precise concept formation and logical deduction and induction in the manner of science”, with a monistic approach - acknowledging that “biological and cultural factors are ultimately inseparable, so radically transcendent knowledge - knowledge of that which cannot be derived from the material world - is not possible.” It is necessary to understand the “...symbolic and material realms as inseparably intertwined into a oneness of existence” (Anthony and Robbins 1990: 491-492).

¹⁵ Aristotel's ‘theory of forms’ can be found in his book *De Anima*. A recent commentary on the book *De Anima* was made by Ronald Polansky (2007).

4.1.3. The language contributes to the objectification of self

Noble ascertains that it is very important to step out of one's own culture, and take a look at how differently the world can be perceived in the frames of other cultures, because different cultures can have very different views of the abstract concepts, such as 'reason', 'soul', 'self' (as well as theological concepts such as 'God') (Noble 2010: 132). The meanings of such concepts are carried by language: the way people choose, combine and understand words, which describe these abstract concepts.

Thus, one may come to the observation that, in contrast to the Western culture, in many countries of the Far East, where Buddhism is the central religion (e.g. Japan, Korea), people have a different notion of self. Moreover, one of the goals of Buddhist meditation for over 2500 years has been to achieve the so-called 'No-self' or 'Loss of self'. It may be suggested that the 'absence of self' is ingrained also in their languages. For example, they are permitting the omission of the subject. The words 'I' and 'you' are only used as accents. The word for 'I' does not even appear in verbal form. The words 'I am', 'you are', 'he is' in these languages are all the same. Context, or/and the persons' names are the entities revealing what/who relates to what/who. Obviously, these languages are emphasizing 'doing' - a process in progress, a predicate, and not the subject that owns some entity or some doing. Often the verb itself makes the whole sentence, as it would not require anyone who would lay claim to it. It may not be surprising that the concept of the self in such a culture has much more in common with the process than with a thing (Noble, 2010: 129-131).

4.1.4. Conclusion

'How do we perceive ourselves' is one of the central questions of human life. Western understanding of the self gravitated culturally towards the body/soul dualism. Some of the possible consequences of such view have already been mentioned at the beginning of this chapter (dualism becoming the prevailing explanation on the human nature, reductionism isolated from the cultural context, etc). An alternative view of Noble (and also Aristotle and Lowe), on the other hand, can bring us much closer to some more plausible conclusions about the self, because when the self is conceived as a process that organizes matter and mind, this organizing principle can be scientifically examined.

Extrapolating to music, we may understand that the *spiritus agens* of the musical phenomenon is an organizing principle by which all the parts of the musical process (composition, performing, language, individuality, etc.) form an active and meaningful unity and are absolutely interdependent. This theory instantly excludes the idea of any predominance inside the musical practice (example of the composers and the musical notation), because it treats all the factors inside the practice of Western classical music as essential and equally important. It also contributes to the idea that the meaning of classical music perhaps lies in how all the persons (and their ideas) are connected inside the phenomenon of music rather than what the exact meaning of the musical score is.

4.2. Language and its contribution to the objectification of music

The idea that the human language and the musical language interact may be suggested already by similarities between these two systems of communication (see the following paragraph). Moreover, the human language (as the carrier of human semantics) works as a vehicle for the interpretation of musical language. This interpretation can happen through the use of metaphor, when people attribute metaphorical meanings to the musical discourse. The consequence of such attribution is the objectification of Western classical music. As it has already been indicated in the first chapter, objectification is necessary for the understanding of music, but its predominance in comprehension of music can lead to a limited interpretation of the musical phenomenon.

4.2.1. Similarities and dissimilarities between language and music

We cannot deny a kind of resemblance that music shares with language. Firstly, both music and language are systems of 'signs'. 'Dealing with signs' is probably one of the most distinctively human activities. Secondly, music and language are "organized into temporally bounded or 'closed' texts, which are organized into discrete units or segments" (Agawu 2001: 142). Perhaps this is the reason why we find "morphological or expressive resemblances between systems" (Agawu 2001: 142). However, different semiotic systems cannot be inter-translated;

...although segmental, the musical text is more continuous in its sonic reality or 'real-time unfolding' than a verbal text. Verbal texts rely more on virtual or physical rests than do musical

texts... A musical segment (phrase, period, sentence, paragraph, section, movement) exist in two interdependent planes, the plane of succession ('melody') and the plane of simultaneity ('harmony'). Language lacks the place of simultaneity. This plane of simultaneity is one of the factors that make music untranslatable... (Agawu 2001: 143-146)

Music can not be called a language, “since no linguistic act can substitute for the musical act. Nor is music a system of communication in the ordinary sense, although it can be used to communicate” (Agawu 2001: 146). Regarding the meaning,

units of language have a more or less fixed lexical meaning, while units of music do not. Musical and linguistic meaning (or reference) may be extrinsic or intrinsic. However, in music, intrinsic meaning predominates over extrinsic meaning, whereas in language it is the other way round. Whereas language interprets itself, music cannot interpret itself. Language is the interpreting system of music (Benveniste, 1985: 235)...It is just impossible to escape, at a fundamental level, the intervention of natural language, with its formidable apparatus and its undeniable semantic baggage. Even in the most musical of metalanguages, such as Schenker's graphic notation, there is no escaping the intervention, at a very basic level, of concepts and therefore of language...One piece of music can comment on another (as in genres that use the variation principle or the variation form), or that one section of a work can refer to, and indeed amplify, ideas exposed elsewhere...But...only through the mediation of a metalanguage. (Agawu 2001: 140-146)

4.2.2. Metaphor as the main cause of the objectification of music

The strongest binding agent of language and music is probably the use of metaphor. Roman Ingarden agrees on that (1980: 247), saying that the function of music score is “the symbolizing of defined objects or processes”. It can be seen that almost everything of what we speak about in music adopts the form of metaphors, which are understood through linguistic analogies. Perhaps this is the reason why musical scholars are “trying to secure basis for framing certain kinds of musical knowledge as semiotic” (Agawu 2001: 146). Metaphors are in the center of musical discussion: they can be heard among common listeners, critics and musicologists when discussing musical characteristics, and musical meaning. But there are also metaphors that are less obvious and we do not think of, because they are not self-evident at all (examples have already been shown in the first chapter): metaphorizing sounds, the metaphor of notation system, etc. We may notice that all metaphors in music fit into the main metaphor called ‘music as an object’ (Cook 2009: 79).

The problem is that people are not aware of the metaphors, because their meaning is ingrained already in the words (people speak about ‘sound colors’, about ‘musical moods’, about the ‘height of the sounds’, even though they cannot be measured as such). Using a metaphor for attributing the objective characteristic to music may subconsciously instill a general understanding of music as an object.

There are also theorists and musicians who disagree that music can carry an extra-musical meaning. One of them was Igor Stravinsky. In his book *Chronicle of My Life* he wrote: “I consider that music is, by its very nature, powerless to express anything at all, whether a feeling, an attitude of mind, a psychological mood, a phenomenon of nature, etc...” (Stravinsky 1936: 91-92). Deryck Cooke argued:

Obviously, everything depends on what Stravinsky means by ‘express’: if he means ‘express explicitly, as words can’, his mark is a truism; if he means ‘convey to the listener in any way whatsoever’, he is merely offering an expression of opinion, without adducing any proof...Composer’s theories tend to be based on their own artistic needs, and it is evident that Stravinsky, bent as he has been on removing music as far as possible from the romantic aesthetic, would naturally formulate a theory of this kind... (Cooke 1959:11)

Even Aaron Copland, who himself was a disciple of Stravinsky, disagreed with his teacher, saying: “Heaven knows it is difficult enough to say what it is that a piece of music means, to say it finally so that everyone is satisfied with your explanation. But that should not lead one to the other extreme of denying to music the right to be expressive” (Copland 1939: 17).

4.2.2.1. The word ‘music’ as the metaphor for the objectification of music

The word ‘music’ itself is a word which represents a metaphor of its objectification. In other words, the objectification of music is instilled already in the word ‘music’, because its singular form may be seen to express the ‘one and only’ music. The phenomenon of “circumscribing the ontology of music in the singular” also appeared in encyclopedias (Bohlman 2001: 26). One example is the German encyclopedia from the year 1961 - *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*; it can be read: “Music is the artistic discipline whose material consists of sounds” (Blume 1967: 970). “This definition is derived from a preconceived idea of ‘art’ rather than from the verifiable phenomena of musical activity,

which extend far beyond classical music” (Blaukopf 1992: 3). It may be seen as another consequence of eurocentric activity of a

privileged group with a specific educational and economic status. The nomenclature that distinguishes between 'the music' and 'musics' results from an extreme case of understanding music as an object...It is creating a differentiation between 'absolute' music and other 'relative musical practices' and contributes to an imperial power, musical discrimination and intellectual control. (Bohlman 2001: 26)

4.2.3. Creating reality

Even if it is true that language depicts reality, this is not its only function. The language is also transforming reality. If we promise something to somebody, it means we are moulding one of many possible futures (and not just depicting something that had happened). The founder of this so-called 'constructivist view' was the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein¹⁶. It is extremely important to recognize this function of language when we discuss the limits of our understanding of music. The musical performance observed in the light of such perception can be understood not only as a reproduction of an outer existing reality (the composer's abilities), but also as a creation of a 'new way of understanding reality'. The metaphors listeners create also lead to peculiar experiences of music - they do not just depict something, they are transforming each individual's perception of music (or specific musical pieces). This is why the listeners can be considered as an important and active part of the musical process. The idea that the effects of music may have even bigger importance than its illustration is essential in transforming the music culture: it helps justify the importance and the role of the musical performance (performers and listeners), which has long been neglected by academic scholars (Cook 2009: 83-86).

4.2.4. Conclusion

If people are to continue discussions about music, the treatment of music 'as an object' is unavoidable because metaphors are in the center of musical metalanguage. It is precisely the metaphor that gives meaning to the organized sound. Nevertheless, it is important to

¹⁶ The 'constructivist' view of art (with the references of Wittgenstein's texts) was summarized by the contemporary philosopher Joanna Hodge (1993: 247-58)

recognize the objectification of music as just one part (although unavoidable) of the big phenomenon of music: understanding of the basic structure and elements of a musical piece. But this should not be exchanged for the temporal experience of music, represented by these objects (Ingarden 1980: 218). The idea that the effects of music may have even bigger importance than its illustration is essential in transforming the music culture: it helps justify the importance and the role of the musical performance (performers and listeners), which has long been neglected by academic scholars.

5. The idea of transformation of Western musical culture

5.1. A monolithic style dispersed into many different styles

Globalization, the mass media, and the advanced technology of the 20th and 21th centuries have brought considerable changes into the Western society. One monolithic culture has been dispersed into many subcultures, where certain groups of people have found themselves more unified by their common beliefs and life style. Similar happened in art: many sub-genres have been founded by the groups of artists who shared common aesthetic views. Consequently the main aesthetic ideal disappeared. Umberto Eco suggests that art was diffused “by the mass media of the 20th century and beyond” (Eco 2004: 428). Perhaps this is why we are obliged nowadays to “surrender before the orgy of tolerance, the total syncretism, and the absolute and unstoppable polytheism of Beauty”, says Eco (2004: 428).

This ‘polytheism of beauty’ may also be traced in the contemporary Western classical music, where one monolithic style (which was common until the beginning of the 20th century) has been dispersed into many different genres such as dodecaphonism, neoclassicism, electronic music, a fusion of classical music and jazz, minimalistic music, etc. In popular music, the variety of genres has become even larger. Moreover, certain genres have become tightly connected with certain subcultures, underlining their values, participating in their activities, and serving as a means for their identification (Dillon 2007: 77). The new musical diversity that had appeared supported the modern musicological posture of musical relativism.

5.2. The transformed image of performers of classical music

In the contemporary music practice the great performers of classical music are very respected by both professional and experienced listeners. The first reason for that may be that the number of good performers of classical music has increased immensely since the beginning of the 20th century. Then there had been just a few schools in the Western culture, which could offer a good practical music education. Nowadays there are many great music academies all over the world (e.g. even the distant China, Japan and Korea have become a reference for one of the best piano schools).

Another reason for the validity of great performers may be that the music industry promotes classical music through the polished market-driven images of the great performers. This may be seen as the mirroring of pop music culture, where the performers gained an absolute primacy over composers (e.g. people think of Madonna when they hear the song 'Frozen', and not of the real composer of the song). The 'selling of the music stars' also goes hand in hand with the industry of the 20th and 21th centuries, based on the 'extraordinary products' (in contrast to the 19th century industry, based on production, distribution and consumption of goods).

5.3. Technology and the cultural lag

Cultural lag is a social phenomenon that occurs when the material conditions present within a certain culture change very quickly, and the non-material culture cannot adapt to them at the same pace. The consequence is that it comes to a certain delay of the non-material culture when trying to adapt to the new material conditions.

If this definition was applied to musical reality, one could perhaps say that the system of values in our culture that supports hierarchy in musical practice (according to which creation is more important than recreation and listening (Cook 2001:24)), is lagging behind the reality altered by the modern technology.

With globalization, technology and an active music industry, the mass of musical production has become enormous. Practically all musical practices in the world have become recorded, distributed in some form (CDs, internet...) and accessible to the majority of people in Western culture. People do not listen only to the Western music genres: they may understand that every culture has its own system of values and music that fits into it. They may also understand that in many cultures the creation and recreation are not separated, that music is often inseparable from dance or rituals, etc. (Dillon 2007:75).

Inside this vast storage of musical information and changing society, the common listeners may choose their music according to their taste, mood and also choose the precise moment to enjoy it; the "contact between performers and listeners is no longer required - they no longer need to be in the same place at the same time. Music is no longer dependent on conditions

given by the shape of the space in which it is performed” (Blaukopf 1992: 177). This is transforming the image and the significance of the classical music concert.

Despite the plurality of cultures, tastes, life-styles, musical genres, the active sociology of music and the popularity of charismatic performers, etc., the general opinion remains: the composers are innovators as well as the main pillars of the classical music tradition. The primacy of written music, the hierarchy inside musical practice, the distinction between ‘low’ and ‘high’ music, and other ideas contributing to the objectification of music are still very much present. This has been suggested also by the empirical part of this thesis. Blaukopf warns that, paradoxically, even technology may be seen as a contributor to the objectification of music, because it transformed the “musical activity... into a *real object*” (e.g. CDs) (Blaukopf 1992: 175). Before, the

musical performance remained a service and did not manifest itself as a material object. Only the composition, the plan for musical performance, could assume the character of a commodity in the form of printed music; even in industrial society the performance itself retained its economic character as a service until the beginning of the twentieth century. (Blaukopf 1992: 175)

5.3.1. Conclusion

It seems that the mentality has not managed to adapt to the reality created by modern technology and transformed culture of the 21st century. However, several changes can be seen. People are starting to perceive music in a broader context. This helps slowly transform the definitions about music and also diminishes the dominant view of ‘music as an object’.

6. Empirical part: 5 interviews

6.1. The purpose of the interviews

Despite the fact that the basis of this thesis is mainly theoretical, a contribution in the form of an empirical part is supposed to give it an added value.

Five individuals were interviewed which, in geographical terms, live inside the praxis of Western classical music: a composer, a professor and professional performer ('professor'), a university student ('student'), a secondary music school pupil ('pupil') and a listener. By choosing the interviewees from different spheres of the classical music practice, it is expected to get a more comprehensive feedback about the subject's perception of Western classical music. Due to a small number of interviewees it is not possible to satisfy the quantitative needs of an empirical study. Therefore this study is based mostly qualitatively: the interviewees were chosen carefully - professional musicians are very successful individuals in their fields of work¹⁷.

The interviewees were questioned through the internet: they received the questionnaire in their email-boxes, and were given fourteen days to answer the questions. They did not receive any information about the content of this dissertation until their answers were sent back. The analysis of answers was orientated through the main emergent topics explored by this dissertation: the objectification of music, the understanding of musical meaning, the prevalence of music as a 'composed' activity, 'the musical religion', the eurocentrism and the hierarchy inside practice of Western classical music, the understanding of music history, the awareness of the connection between verbal language and music, etc.

1st question: How would you describe Classical music, in a few sentences?

The purpose of the first question is to get the most individual views concerning classical music. It will be observed whether the answers reveal any ideas about the objectification of classical music, described in the theoretical part of the thesis.

¹⁷ Short biographies of the interviewees can be found in the annex number 3.

2nd question: Can classical music carry any meaning? If yes, what is this meaning? How important do you think the music score is in conveying the musical meaning?

The purpose of the second question is to investigate the subject's understanding of musical meaning. It will be observed whether the subject perceives musical meaning as extrinsic or/and intrinsic. It will also be examined how much importance the subject gives to the musical notation.

3rd question: Is the message of the classical music independent from the historical and social milieu where the music was created? If yes, why? If not, why?

The third question is actually an extension of the second question, since it continues to inquire about the concept of musical meaning. It will be investigated how much importance the interviewees lay on the historical and social background in which the music was created, and how this contributes to their understanding of music.

4th question: Do you think that the Western classical music represents the pinnacle of musical creation in the human history? If yes, why? If not, why?

The purpose of the fourth question is to detect the presence/absence of eurocentrism in the subject's understanding of Western classical music.

5th question: Classify the following persons (who appear in the classical music practice) according to the order of importance (with 1, 2, 3...). If you think that more persons are of equal importance, rank them with the same number.

Professional performer, Composer, Listener, Critic, Professor of music (also of instrument), Music historian, Music theorist, Music sociologist, Scholar of music aesthetics, Manager, Improviser

The fifth question is supposed to investigate the subject's contribution to the hierarchy inside practice of Western classical music.

6th question: When you hear the phrase 'music history', what are the first three things that come to your mind?

The sixth question has been added with the purpose to investigate the subject's perception of music history.

7th question: Is there any relation between the instrumental Classical music and the written/spoken language? If yes, what? If not, why?

The answers to seventh question are supposed to clarify the subject's awareness of the connection between verbal language and music.

6.2. Analysis of answers

First question: How would you describe Classical music, in a few sentences?

Three interviewees seem to consider music 'as a link to the spiritual world'. The composer wrote that the music is "a spiritual discipline" (1e:1:1)¹⁸. Similar suggestions has been made by the piano student ("Music is the language of love, which only speaks to those who want to be loved. Moreover, we all understand it, since we are the cause of love" (1c:1:1)), and by the listener ("music can represent a form of meditation and bring you into different spheres you might not have experienced before" (1a:1:4)).

The objectification of music may be traced in the following thoughts: the pupil describes music as "a colour" (1d:1:1), as something "written" (1d:1:2).

The student perceives classical music as "the affinity for a pure, basic, essential, natural understanding of oneself and the environment" (1c:1:4). The words "pure, basic, essential, natural" may be suggesting that the interviewee understands classical music as absolute.

In the descriptions of music, made by the pupil, the student and the professor, the idea of the importance of composer in the musical practice may be traced. The pupil wrote: "Music is written because of the need of the composers to express themselves, to tell a story" (1d:1:2). The student thinks that music demands understanding of "the composer's message" (1c:1:9). The professor wrote that classical music can be seen as the artist's expression through the "creative musical scripts" (1b:1:3). The latter sentence may be understood as a contribution to the idea of prevalence of music as a 'composed' activity.

It is interesting that despite all the aforementioned ideas most of the interviewees perceive music as a relatively broad and changing concept and that, at the same time, they are

¹⁸ The references for the quotations of interviewees are given in the following way: (x - the number of annex: x - the number of question: x - the number of line)

overcoming the objectification of music. The pupil wrote: “Classical music is harmony, dynamics, melody, colour, rhythm, thought, story, idea, etc. (1d:1:1). Classical music is alive and therefore always free for interpretation” (1d:1:3). This answer may reveal the understanding of music as a sum of specifically musical characteristics (harmony, dynamics, melody...), extra-musical characteristics (thought, story), and musical metaphors (colour). The thought that “music is alive and therefore free for interpretation” may be seen to oppose the idea of absolute music, and to place importance on the performer. The idea of music as an ever-changing concept may be deduced from the student’s thought that the understanding of music is a constantly changing process. The same, says the student, may be said for the personal understanding of the world and of oneself. The latter, she believes, is tightly connected to the understanding of music. The student continues: “I think that classical music is also the most complex one since it demands a constant search of the external and the internal in us and also demands an emphatic understanding of time, place and the composer's message” (1c:1:5-8). This statement may be seen to reveal the student’s multidimensional perception of music: as a complex concept, demanding a broad spectrum of competences and their integration. The listener is also familiar with the complexity of the phenomenon of music. She writes that music is “a harmony of sounds, a complex concept” (1a:1:3). It may be noticed, that the listener lays more importance on the effect classical music has on the listener (“It evokes a wide range of emotions and can help bear certain states of mind whether they are positive or not” (1a:1:1)) than professional musicians, who tend to determine the meaning of the classical music.

Second question: Can classical music carry any meaning? If yes, what is this meaning? How important do you think the music score is in conveying the musical meaning?

The composer’s answer suggests that the meaning of music lies in its beauty, which takes care of the “mental health and mental and spiritual well-being” (1e:2:6) of the people. The composer did not define the word ‘beauty’ and did not comment on the importance of notation in conveying this beauty.

The pupil understands the meaning of music as the sum of two meanings: the composer’s message (meaning) and the meaning given to music by the performer. Although the pupil emphasised the importance of the performer in his first answer, he confirms the composer’s high status in the Western music culture when answering the second question: “The composer

gives the piece of music its actual meaning, he develops, creates it. Of course this meaning then also depends on the performer” (1e:2:5). The professor supports the pupil’s thought by writing: the composer uses the music score through which she can “express her ideas by using the notation system codes. The task and the quality of the performer is to search for meaning in these codes and to express it through the performance” (1b:2:2).

The ideas about the objectification of music can be found in three answers. The pupil wrote: “Every note has its value...” (1e:2:2). The student wrote: “The music score is...self-sufficient in letters, words, sentences...it is a script where the composer can in most cases clearly express what she wants from the performer” (1c:2:1). The professor equals the notation with “the script of musical thoughts” (1b:2:1). All these ideas seem to support the thesis that the subject is influenced by the idea of absolute music (with intrinsic meaning).

The student and the professor may be seen to have recognised the meaning of the musical metaphor in reading and interpreting musical score. The student wrote: “Every manifestation of the composer can also have a symbolic meaning, which naturally demands a broad knowledge and a holistic understanding of time, purpose, understanding of the composer's affinity for the manifested work” (1c:2:2). The listener wrote: “classical music... can express a wide range of emotions, it can express certain states of mind, it evokes...different associations” (1a:2:1).

Both the student and the listener think that the exaggerated search for meaning in the music score can limit people’s understanding of music. Student thinks that it is possible to analyse music with a rational approach and “formal understanding”, but we must not forget to “free ourselves from reason...only at this stage can the other side of notation be understood and the symbolic meaning discovered, which is in most cases subjective” (1c:2:8). The listener wrote: “The music score is certainly an important means of conveying the musical meaning since it helps bring together different sounds into harmony, but at the same time it can limit the possibilities of interpretations and can in this way dictate certain understanding of the meaning the music is trying to bring forward” (1a:2:2).

Third question: Is the message of the classical music independent from the historical and social milieu where the music was created? If yes, why? If not, why?

Four interviewees agree that music depends on the historical and social milieu in which it has been created. The pupil believes music is “some kind of a *valve* for autonomous expression, a social cry, etc. Therefore we can recognise the composer's perception of ... the environment” (1e:3:2). The professor answered that “every composer is undoubtedly influenced by the time he/she lives in, i.e. the current time – the political and the social. Different style periods are the first factor, which has had an influence on the composers, everywhere and in every period of time. Beside this, different arts...evolved also according to the social and economic state. Many composers were economically weak and have written what they were told to write. Some works therefore have an ‘ordered’ direct message. Others are written as a form of protest...” (1b:3:1). Similar understanding may be seen in the answer of the listener: “In my opinion the message of a certain piece of classical music cannot be independent from the historical and social milieu where it was created, since the person creating it is also determined by those milieus as is thus his or her state of being and state of mind as well, so the meaning is therefore a result or a reflection of the current state of mind, so also of the current state of the world the creator of the music lives in” (1a:3:1). The composer shares similar opinion, though it comes to an irrational contradiction in his answer. He first says: “Classical music, as well as any other kind of art, has mostly been created as an echo of the social, political and historical tendencies and as such represents and depicts certain historical periods” (1e:3:1). After this he states that music is “certainly international”, since “when music art is excellent enough, it can be owned by the whole world...” (1e:3:5). This contradiction may be interpreted in the following way: the composer is aware of the manifestation of the external meaning in music, but he gives more value to the intrinsic musical meaning (the organization of sounds in a musical piece).

The student was the only interviewee who gave a negative answer to this question. She believes “the message of classical music does not depend on the time and space where it was written” (1c:3:1).

Fourth question: Do you think that the Western classical music represents the pinnacle of musical creation in the human history? If yes, why? If not, why?

Most of the answers to this question are negative, which supports the idea of cultural/musical relativism. The pupil answered: “I cannot give a definite answer to this question since I haven't heard all pieces of music yet... Every piece of music has a certain value (the one from

the East as well as the one from the West), so I cannot say that the value of a certain piece of music is larger than the value of some other. Each of them is special in their own way” (1e:4:1). The listener wrote: “I think that our knowledge and understanding of other forms of classical music, e.g. the classical music from the Far East (China, Japan etc.), is limited, since we are not familiar with it, because of its geographical distance, as well as of different mentalities the Western and Eastern cultures have. This is why I think that it is not possible to say that the Western classical music is the pinnacle of musical creation just because we are not familiar with other forms of it” (1a:4:1). The composer wrote: “Since I grew up and were musically raised and educated on the pillars of Western culture, it most certainly represents the pinnacle of musical creation. However, it cannot represent the same thing to those who are not from the same geographical region, in this case the Western world. Other geographical regions, e.g. Asia, Africa, South America etc. have their own pinnacles as well and that is right, too” (1e:4:1). The professor also didn’t give an affirmative answer to this question, although, as she said, for her “the Western classical music definitely stands out in its development, recognition and tradition throughout the centuries” (1b:4:1). She continued: “However, it is hard for me to say that this is the pinnacle of creativity in the human culture... In general, it is hard to judge what is more creative in art...” (1b:4:2).

The only interviewee who gave an affirmative answer to the question is the student. She answered: “Yes, because it is the only music that can combine the harmonic pythagorism and the individualism of the human soul” (1c:4:1). The phrase “harmonic pythagorism” may be understood as a student’s affinity to the concept of absolute music; the harmonic pythagorism probably relates to the mathematical frequency questions between tones (and aliquots), which were discovered by Pythagoras, and may be seen as the basis of all tone relationships in classical music. The phrase “individualism of the human soul,” on the other hand, may suggest her awareness that the understanding of music is a very subjective concept.

Fifth question: Classify the following persons (who appear in the classical music practice) according to the order of importance (with 1, 2, 3...). If you think that more persons are of equal importance, rank them with the same number.

Professional performer, Composer, Listener, Critic, Professor of music (also of instrument), Music historian, Music theorist, Music sociologist, Scholar of music aesthetics, Manager, Improviser

All the interviewees, except for the student, ranked the persons in the musical practice according to importance (they were given an option to rank them as equally important). This may suggest that they contribute to the existence of hierarchy inside the Western classical music practice.

All of the interviewees have put the composer in the first place, which confirms the hypothesis about his absolute primacy in the Western classical music. It is surprising that, in two answers (the answers of the pupil and of the professor) the composer shares the first place with the professional performer. This seems to confirm the growing importance of the performer inside the Western culture in the 20th and 21st centuries. In the other two rankings the performer comes in second place, which confirms her status of a 'executor of the composer's message'. The listener was usually ranked after the composer and the performer, what is confirming the hierarchical scale in the practice of Western classical music. It is rather interesting that the improviser was ranked relatively high in two rankings. The listener ranked him after the performer and before the listener, while the pupil put him on the top of the scale, together with the composer and the performer. The improvisation is not highly valued in classical music culture; thus it is surprising that the pupil ranked the improviser so highly.

The other figures are ranked very differently. Perhaps it is necessary to point out the fact that the persons 'music theorist', 'music historian' and 'scholar of music aesthetics' were ranked in the same place (4 or 5) in three answers, which shows that the interviewees tend to put this professions in the same category, separated from the musical production, reproduction and listening. Approximately the same status has been given to the music professor, which was ranked in the middle of the hierarchical scale (except in the pupil's ranking who put 'the music professor' in the second place). This ranking may suggest that the interviewees considered the profession of music teacher as less essential. Except in the professor's ranking, the critic is usually ranked in the last place, which testifies that the interviewees do not lay much importance on him.

The student was the only interviewee who did not want to classify the persons according to the order of importance. She wrote: "It is very unpleasant for me to rank people, which are dependent on one another and can perfect themselves only mutually" (1c:5:1). Student's answer supports the sociological thought, developed in this work, that all the persons inside classical music practice should be considered as equally important.

Sixth question: When you hear the phrase 'music history', what are the first three things that come to your mind?

The answers to this question are very different. The understanding of music history as 'the canon of first-rate musical works' may best be seen in the answer of the student, who answered: "Bach, Mozart, Beethoven" (1c:6:1). The pupil answered: "Listening to music, composer's life, geniuses" (1e:6:1). His answer may be seen to resemble the answer of the student, because all the words are linked to the idea of composer and her first-rate works.

The answers of the other two musicians (the composer and the professor) showed a broader understanding of music history. The composer thinks that music history is defined by "necessary knowledge, chronology of historical events, and general knowledge of culture" (1e:6:1-3). This suggests that he is aware of the intercultural exchanges inside Western society (the phrase "necessary knowledge" may be understood as theoretical understanding of music or its evolution). The professor answered: "Evolution of music, revealing the backgrounds of music and listening, stories about music" (1b:6:1). Her answer may be interpreted similarly as the composer's.

The answer that particularly stands out is the one of the listener. She wrote: "Bone flute, piano, elite" (1a:6:1). The word "bone flute" probably points to the beginnings of musical activity in the world. The answer "piano" may suggest that the music history is marked by the quantity and the popularity of piano music. The listener also seems to be aware of the fact that the Western classical music was a product of the artistic and several other "elites". The choice of these words suggests that her associations about the music history come from her general knowledge about history, without an effort to construct the concept of music history (what may have happened in the case of interviewed musicians).

Seventh question: Is there any relation between the instrumental Classical music and the written/spoken language? If yes, what? If not, why?

The composer is the only interviewee who believes that the connection between the language and the music is almost non-existent, since he understands the musical language as international. This thought can be seen to support the romantic 'l'art pour l'art' concept, i.e.

perceiving the art as a self-sufficient formation with its intrinsic meaning, divorced from any social function.

The pupil seems to believe that it exists a kind of interaction between language and music, although he cannot define it in details. He gives an example of the written story, which can present “a basis for classical music...(or) its inspiration” (1e:7:3). The student also gave an affirmative answer to this question. She believes language and music are homogenous, although she does not explain this assertion in detail. She also wrote that the language “places stress on quantity”, while music places stress “on the quality of the spoken word” (1c:7:2). This sentence may be seen to support the following assertion of Agawu: “A musical segment (phrase, period, sentence, paragraph, section, movement) exist in two interdependent planes, the plane of succession ('melody') and the plane of simultaneity ('harmony'). Language lacks the place of simultaneity” (2001: 143). The professor believes the correlation between language and music may be understood in the following way: “in both cases someone is creating something (writing a text or composing), in the second phase someone is performing this work, re-creating it and in this way contributes to the performance by including their own feelings in the performance (reading the text or playing the music), while a third person is receiving this performance (if he/she is present)” (1b:7:1). The professor also added that “when sound performances of written texts or performances of music are concerned, similar techniques are used to expresses our own feelings and emotions – dynamics, stresses, the presentation of development and culmination etc.” (1b:7:6). Such thinking follows the Agawu’s statement that “morphological or expressive resemblances” can be found between language and music (Agawu 2001: 142). The listener also seems to acknowledge the connection between music and language: “especially between classical music and poetry” (1a:7:1). She explains this thought in the following way: “...poetry as written language in my opinion represents a kind of written form of music and since classical music for me evokes a lot of emotions and feelings, I think it can be in a way expressed or at least compared to writing poetry” (1a:7:1). She seems to determine the connection between poetry and music on the basis of a similar emotional effect, which the two art forms have on her. It may also be suspected that, comparing music and poetry, the listener is aware of the fact that the both art forms function through the use of metaphors. In most cases the interviewees seem to acknowledge the interaction of language and music, but they do not define it in detail.

6.3. Conclusion

The interviewees have shown many traces of the objectification of music in the answers. Various answers contained the idea of the prevalence of music as a ‘composed’ activity, and the idea of hierarchy inside musical practice. The assumption that people perceive music history as the canon of top-rated musical works has been partially confirmed. Some answers suggested that the interviewees consider music as a ‘link to the esoteric world’, etc.

However, many thoughts confirm the modern sociological theses about classical music. The interviewees mostly do not acknowledge the idea that Western classical music is the pinnacle of the musical creation in human history. They seem to be aware of the importance of historical and social milieu for the study of music history. Although the interviewees think of the music score as very important, they seem to be aware that the musical product also depends on the performer.

It is interesting to observe that the answers of the professional musicians contain more traces of the objectification of music than the answers of the listener. Perhaps, one of the reasons for this may be that the listener is not burdened with school knowledge about classical music, and that her understanding of music is mostly constructed of the sensual musical experience and general knowledge.

The interviewees’ answers cannot be simply generalised, since they do differ considerably from one another, already in one person alone. This suggests that the perception of music is considerably subjective concept.

7. Conclusion: The idea of music as a process

This dissertation has not dealt with all the topics one multidisciplinary (though mainly sociologic) discussion about music could. However, this was not its intention. The main purpose of this dissertation was to present the idea of the objectification of Western classical music, to find the roots and contributors to such perception, to point out its consequences on the Western musical practice, and finally - to suggest an alternative view of music. It has been shown that the music may be understood as ‘the living interface of various processes inside Western culture’ such as musical activity (composing, performing, listening, etc.), socio-cultural mentality (ways of thinking, education, etc.), the use of language, etc. An attempt was made to clarify the condition in which these processes influence each other. Some examples will follow.

It may be considered that the idea of ‘music as the link to the transcendent world’ originated as an interface of philosophy (e.g. Plato’s Theory of forms), ‘musical religion’ (e.g. music as a new form of spiritual consolation in the 19th century), early musicology of 19th century (e.g. musicologists’ attempts to legalize the concept of ‘timeless’ music), etc.

Similarly, the idea of ‘absolute music’ may have originated from the religious practice (e.g. Benedictines’ decontextualization of music), philosophy (e.g. Kant’s definition of ‘music without words’), science (e.g. the method of reductionism in music, isolated from the social context), cultural mentality (e.g. eurocentric favoring of the Western culture/music), etc.

The hierarchy inside Western classical music practice may have preserved itself through the phenomenon of ‘musical religion’ (e.g. the common authoritarian power structures in music resemble those in the Christian Church), music theory (the prevalence of music as a ‘composed’ activity), etc.

The invention of a ‘musical museum’ (musical canon) may be understood as the interface of objectification of music, cultural mentality (Western culture’s fear of oblivion), idea of art museums (where the artifacts are taken from their daily circumstances and use and estimated by universal measures of intrinsic beauty), etc.

It has been shown that language and music interact through the use of metaphor, which gives the meaning to organized sound. Moreover, the metaphors listeners create lead us to experiencing music differently - they do not just depict something, they are transforming our perception of music.

This work has also suggested that the understanding of music may be affected by the understanding of self, and that musical practice was transformed by the growth of modern technology, etc.

7.1. Music as a process: the analogy with the theory of genes

Many people perceive classical music through the main music pieces of the classical music canon. With the conclusions about the importance of performance and listening (gathered in this work), music can no longer be seen this way; the temporal experience of music has to be added to the understanding of music history.

Cook (2009: 81, 82) presents the analogy between music and Dawkinson's theory of the 'selfish genes'. According to the latter theory, people are just fugacious constellations in the 'river of genes', which means that the genes are the true creators of the whole evolution. If this theory is applied to music, it encourages us to perceive music not through the main classical compositions, but through that what lies between them: "the always changing patterns of comprehension and sensuous perception, because of which certain musical works had appeared" [my translation] (Cook 2009: 82). Following this idea

...musical works are just traces of historical processes, empty shells, which can be revived only with the imaginative reconstruction of musical experience, which gave them a meaning in the past. Imagination necessary for such 'resuscitation' is that of our own. In this way, we could understand the history of music as a description of our own journey through the imaginary museum of musical works; the study of music does not offer only discoveries of some outer reality, but, even more importantly, the study of ourselves. If music is an imaginary object, it seems there is now other way of approaching it. [my translation] (Cook, 2009: 82)

That is the reason why it may be important to consider that the understanding of musical phenomenon depends also on the understanding of ourselves.

Furthermore, we may replace the application of Dawkinson's theory with Noble's theory of genes (2010). His theory is opposing Dawkinson's theory about the 'selfish genes': it proves that the human being is not just a constellation in the 'river of genes' (genes are just a possibility), but an active group of processes inside and outside the human body, which are all equally important and interconnected. The process that enables us to be aware of ourselves – the self – is the main binding process of all the processes. According to such theory little is predetermined and most of the creative power is given to the human will and human's interaction with an environment. If this concept is applied to music, one can consider music as a group of processes too. Each individual should thus present a binding process that makes these processes interact with each other in a certain way. This would explain the diverse and unique understandings of music.

7.2. Conclusion

The conjunction of these two analogies and of all what has been written in this dissertation, may bring us closer to the idea of how large and complex phenomenon music is. A completely objective understanding of music seems impossible because of the unavoidable factor of a personal musical experience.

Hennion understands

the work of art as a mediation...reviewing the work in all the details of the gestures, bodies, habits, materials, spaces, languages, and institutions that it inhabits. Without accumulated mediations-styles, grammar, systems of taste, programs, concert halls, schools, entrepreneurs, and so on-no beautiful work of art appears. At the same time, however-and against the usual agenda of critical sociology-we must recognize the moment of the work in its specific and irreversible dimension; this means seeing it as a transformation, a productive work, and allowing oneself to take into account that (highly diversified) ways in which actors describe and experience aesthetic pleasure..." (Hennion 2003: 82)

If the music is taught and discussed in this way, it may be expected that musicians and music lovers alike will be encouraged to search for the musical meaning inside the larger frames of social knowledge; recognizing the inter-cultural exchanges that lead to the written music. The inter-cultural exchanges can be proved and can serve as a good starting point for an understanding of Western classical music. Such a multidimensional perception can, perhaps,

transform teaching, theorizing, listening, and performing of Western classical music in a positive way.

8. Bibliography

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Appendix

1. Interviews (translated by Jasna Džambič)

1a. Interview with a listener

1. How would you describe Classical music, in a few sentences?

Classical music represents some sort of relaxation and a state of mental retreat to me. It evokes a wide range of emotions and can help bear certain states of mind whether they are positive or not. It is realized through harmony of sounds and in this form it is a complex concept. It can represent a form of meditation and bring you into different spheres you might not have experienced before.

2. In your opinion, can classical music carry some kind of meaning? If yes, what? How would you rate the music score as a mean to convey the musical meaning?

Yes, classical music certainly carries some meaning, it can express a wide range of emotions, it can express certain states of mind, it evokes feelings, different associations. The music score is certainly an important means of conveying the musical meaning since it helps bring together different sounds into harmony, but at the same time it can limit the possibilities of interpretations and can in this way dictate certain understanding of the meaning the music is trying to bring forward.

3. Do you think that the message of classical music is independent from the historical and social milieu where the music was created? If yes, why? If not, why?

In my opinion the message of a certain piece of classical music cannot be independent from the historical and social milieu where it was created, since the person creating it is also determined by those milieus as is thus his or her state of being and state of mind as well, so the meaning is therefore a result or a reflection of the current state of mind, so also of the current state of the world the creator of the music lives in.

4. *Do you regard Western Classical Music as the pinnacle of musical creation in human history? If yes why? / If not, why?*

I think that our knowledge and understanding of other forms of classical music, e.g. the classical music from the Far East (China, Japan etc.) is limited since we are not familiar with it because of its geographical distance as well as of different mentalities the Western and Eastern cultures have. This is why I think that it is not possible to say that the Western classical music is the pinnacle of musical creation just because we are not familiar with other forms of it.

5. *Classify the following persons (that appear inside Classical music practice) according to the order of importance (with 1, 2, 3...) (if you think that more persons are of equal importance, rank them with the same number):*

Professional performer, Composer, Listener, Critic, Professor of music (also of instrument), Music historian, Music theorist, Music sociologist, A scholar of music aesthetics, Manager, Improviser

1 composer, 2 professional performer, 3 improviser, 4 listener, 5 professor of music, 6 music historian, 7 music theorist, 8 music sociologist, 9 a scholar of music aesthetics, 10 manager

6. *When you hear the phrase 'music history', what are the first three things that come to your mind?*

bone flute, piano, elite

7. *Is there any relation between the instrumental Classical music and the written/spoken language? If yes, what? If not, why?*

In my opinion there is, especially between classical music and poetry, since poetry as written language in my opinion represents a kind of written form of music and since classical music for me evokes a lot of emotions and feelings, I think it can be in a way expressed of at least compared to writing poetry.

1b. Interview with a professor and professional performer

1) How would you describe classical music in a few sentences?

Classical music has evolved through centuries in a way that has set rules. In different periods these rules have been modified and have copied other kinds of art. Classical music is a tool the composer / artist used to express him/herself by producing creative musical scripts, and also a tool of expressing for the performer of this script.

2) Can classical music carry any meaning? If yes, what is this meaning? How important do you think the music score is in conveying the musical meaning?

Music score – the script of musical thoughts, is a form through which the composer can express his/her ideas by using the notation system codes. The task and the quality of the performer is to search for meaning in these codes and to express it through the performance.

3) Is the message of the classical music independent from the historical and social facts in which it has been created? If yes, why? If not, why?

Every composer is undoubtedly influence by the time he/she lives in, i.e. the current present – the political and the social. Different style periods are the first factor, which has had an influence on the composers, everywhere and in every period of time. Beside this, different arts of different kinds had a strong influence among them and have evolved also according to the social and economic state. Many composers were economically weak and have written what they were told to write. Some works therefore have an »ordered« direct message. Others are written as a form of protest against the current ruling, the circumstances etc.

4) Do you think that the Western classical music represents the pinnacle of musical creation in the human history? If yes, why? If not, why?

The Western classical music definitely stands out in its development, recognition and tradition throughout the centuries. However, it is hard for me to say that this is the pinnacle of creativity in the human culture... In general, it is hard to judge what is more creative in art...

5. *Classify the following persons (that appear inside Classical music practice) according to the order of importance (with 1, 2, 3...) (if you think that more persons are of equal importance, rank them with the same number):*

Professional performer, Composer, Listener, Critic, Professor of music (also of instrument), Music historian, Music theorist, Music sociologist, a scholar of music aesthetics, Manager, Improviser

I. composer, professional performer, improviser

II. professor of music

III. listener

IV. music historian, music theorist, music sociologist, a scholar of music aesthetics

V. manager

VI. critic

6) *When you hear the phrase 'music history', what are the first three things that come to your mind?*

evolution of music, revealing the backgrounds of music and listening, stories about music

7) *Is there any relation between the instrumental Classical music and the written/spoken language? If yes, what? If not, why?*

Music performance is in the same way as the language (written or spoken) a way of expression. The correlation between the two is that in both cases someone is creating something (writing a text or composing), in the second phase someone is performing this work, re-creating it and in this way contributes to the performance by including their own feelings in the performance (reading the text or playing the music), while a third person is receiving this performance (if he/she is present). When sound performances of written texts or performances of music are concerned, similar techniques are used to express our own feelings and emotions – dynamics, stresses, the presentation of development and culmination etc.

1c. Interview with a university student of music

1. How would you describe Classical Music, in a few sentences?

Music is the language of love, which does not only speak to those who want to be loved. However, we all understand it, since we are the cause of love.

In the term »classical music« I would especially point out the work »classical«, which I understand as the affinity for a pure, basic, essential, natural understanding of oneself and the environment. It is a constant search for the essence and the cause of »I« and I think that the answer is always different, since it changes constantly, it adjust to the current understanding, so I think that classical music is also the most complex one since it demands a constant search of the external and the internal in us and also demands an emphatic understanding of time, place and the composer's message.

2. In your opinion, can classical music carry some kind of meaning? If yes, what? How would you rate the music score as a means to convey the musical meaning?

The music score is the only script which can also be »spoken« and is self-sufficient in letters, words, sentences and at the same time scientifically and symbolically read. Every manifestation of the composer can also have a symbolic meaning, which naturally demands broad knowledge and holistic understanding of time, purpose, understanding of the composer's affinity for the manifested work.

Notation is a script, where the composer can in most cases clearly express what he/she wants from the performer. Since music can be performed by treating it rationally and analysed with formal understanding, we often forget that it can enable us to free ourselves from the reason, sense, which can be gained through time. Only at this stage can the other side of notation be understood and the symbolic meaning discovered, which is in most cases subjective.

3. Do you think that the message of classical music is independent from the historical and social milieu where the music was created? If yes, why? If not, why?

The message of classical music does not depend on the time nor space where it was written. It is up to the listener or the performer here and now to decide whether it depends on it or not. The performer and the listener here and now are the same person, which can, independently of the current time point to the place and time and the intention of a certain musical piece, in which it has been written by having knowledge of the history, the place and the mentioned intention.

4. *Do you regard Western Classical Music as the pinnacle of musical creation in human history? If yes why? / If not, why?*

Yes, because it is the only music that can combine the harmonic pythagorism and the individualism of the human soul.

5. *Classify the following persons (that appear inside Classical music practice) according to the order of importance (with 1, 2, 3...) (if you think that more persons are of equal importance, rank them with the same number):*

Professional performer, Composer, Listener, Critic, Professor of music (also of instrument), Music historian, Music theorist, Music sociologist, A scholar of music aesthetics, Manager, Improviser

It is very unpleasant for me to rank the people, which are dependent on one another and can perfect themselves only mutually. The manager needs to be a good listener, critic, musical sociologist and a scholar of music aesthetics, the performer needs to be a good professor, historian and critic to be able to give the listener the sense of the learned piece of music to have just been improvised in the moment of performing. Ratio – emotion.

6. *When you hear the phrase 'music history', what are the first three things that come to your mind?*

Bach, Mozart, Beethoven

7. *Is there any relation between the instrumental Classical Music and the written/spoken language? If yes, what? If not, why?*

Of course there is. The one and the other are homogenous. The difference between them is that one places stress on quantity, while the other on the quality of the spoken word.

1d. Interview with a secondary music school pupil

1) How would you describe classical music in a few sentences?

Classical music is harmony, dynamics, melody, colour, rhythm, thought, story, idea etc. Music is written because of the need of the composers to express themselves, to tell a story. Classical music is alive and therefore always free for interpretation. Classical music never leaves you cold, it always gives you something.

2) *Can classical music carry any meaning? If yes, what is this meaning? How important do you think the music score is in conveying the musical meaning?*

Yes, classical music carries some meaning already in its core, given to it by the composer. Every note has its value; the composer did not write it there for nothing, the performer has to give it his/her own meaning.

If I understood correctly, music for you is a sum of two meanings: the one, given by the composer and the one given by the performer. Which of these meanings is more important (if any)?

I think that the meaning given by the composer is a bit more important from the one, given by the performer: the composer gives the piece of music its actual meaning, he develops, creates it. Of course this meaning then also depends on the performer and his/her performance.

What role does the listener have in this process of creating the meanings?

The listener interprets the music he/she hears.

3) *Is the message of the classical music independent from the historical and social facts in which it has been created? If yes, why? If not, why?*

Yes, it depends. The composer lived in such a social environment and the music presented some kind of *valve* to be able to freely express him/herself, to tell a story, to rebel in the society etc. Therefore we can recognise the composer's perception of that time and environment.

4) *Do you think that the Western classical music represents the pinnacle of musical creation in the human history? If yes, why? If not, why?*

I cannot give a definite answer to this question since I haven't heard all pieces of music yet (which is probably also not possible at all). I think that every piece of music is a pinnacle in itself, no matter the geographical position. So, no.

Can you explain your sentence "I think that every piece of music is a pinnacle in some way, no matter the geographical position"?

Every piece of music has a certain value (the one from the East as well as the one from the West), so I cannot say that the value of a certain piece of music is larger than the value of some other. Each of them is special in their own way.

5. *Classify the following persons (that appear inside Classical music practice) according to the order of importance (with 1, 2, 3...) (if you think that more persons are of equal importance, rank them with the same number):*

Professional performer, Composer, Listener, Critic, Professor of music (also of instrument), Music historian, Music theorist, Music sociologist, A scholar of music aesthetics, Manager, Improviser

1. Composer, professional performer
2. Listener
3. Music sociologist
4. Critic
5. Professor of music, music historian, music theoretic, a scholar of music aesthetics
6. improviser
7. manager

6) *When you hear the phrase 'music history', what are the first three things that come to your mind?*

Listening to music, composer's life, geniuses

7) *Is there any relation between the instrumental Classical music and the written/spoken language? If yes, what? If not, why?*

Yes, instrumental classical music has its own story and written language has its own story as well. One of these two can be made on the bases of the other one, i.e. one can influence the other. For example, a written story can be a basis for classical music, can be its inspiration...

In your answer, as I understand it, you are concentrated especially on the written language – on the story, which can represent a basis of meaning for the musical work (programme music). Is there any other connection with the everyday spoken language and the musical language?

I think some influence can be observed. You carry it onto the music.

1e. Interview with a composer

1) How would you describe classical music in a few sentences?

Classical music is a spiritual and artistic discipline and a segment of the whole artistic creation in all artistic periods.

2) Can classical music carry any meaning? If yes, what is this meaning? How important do you think the music score is in conveying the musical meaning?

To me classical music is of key importance, since it is my profession, my life style and my mission. I would most certainly recommend to all of those who are not professionally musically oriented and to all of those who are not familiar with the beauties of classical music, to engage some time in listening to it, to go to concerts, to buy some good-quality sound devices and to change their listening to classical music into a habit, a need... This would be good for their mental health and spiritual well-being.

3) Is the message of the classical music independent from the historical and social facts in which it has been created? If yes, why? If not, why?

Classical music, as well as any other kind of art, has mostly been created as an echo of the social, political and historical tendencies and as such represents and depicts certain historical periods. It is certainly international and as the French egocentric composer Eric Satie said: »Art does not have its own home country, the poor thing is not rich enough to have it...«. When music art is excellent enough, it can be owned by the whole world, it belongs to all of us and therefore »the poor thing« truly does not have its own home country.

4) Do you think that the Western classical music represents the pinnacle of musical creation in the human history? If yes, why? If not, why?

Since I grew up and were musically raised and educated on the pillars of Western culture, it most certainly represents the pinnacle of musical creation. However, it cannot represent the same thing to those who are not from the same geographical region, in this case the Western world. Other geographical regions, e.g. Asia, Africa, South America etc. have their own pinnacles as well and that is right, too.

5. *Classify the following persons (that appear inside Classical music practice) according to the order of importance (with 1, 2, 3...) (if you think that more persons are of equal importance, rank them with the same number):*

Professional performer, Composer, Listener, Critic, Professor of music (also of instrument), Music historian, Music theorist, Music sociologist, A scholar of music aesthetics, Manager, Improviser

Composers, performers, listeners, music theorists, musicologists, etc.

6) *When you hear the phrase 'music history', what are the first three things that come to your mind?*

1. necessary knowledge
2. chronology of historical events
3. general knowledge of culture

7) *Is there any relation between the instrumental Classical music and the written/spoken language? If yes, what? If not, why?*

In my opinion such a connection hardly exists. This is of great importance especially because classical music can be listened by people from all geographic regions, all ages, all tastes etc. Music can be understood internationally, since, as already said before, it does not have its own home country.

2. Interviews in the original (slovenian) language

Intervju s profesorico/glasbeno poustvarjalko

1) Kako bi opisali klasično glasbo v nekaj stavkih?

Klasična glasba se je skozi stoletja razvijala tako, da je postavljala pravila. V raznih obdobjih so se ta pravila prilagajala in posnemala druge zvrsti umetnosti. Klasična glasba je način izražanja umetnika skladatelja z ustvarjalnim glasbenim zapisom in izvajalca poustvarjalca le-tega zapisa.

2) Lahko klasična glasba nosi kakšen pomen? Če da, kateri? Kako pomembna ocenjujete da je partitura (note), pri posredovanju glasbenega pomena?

Partitura - zapis glasbenih misli, je oblika, preko katere skladatelj s pomočjo kod notnega sistema zapiše svoje želje in ideje. Naloga in kvaliteta poustvarjalca je, da v teh »kodah« poišče pomen in sporočilo ter ga z izvedbo prenese.

3) Je sporočilo klasične glasbe neodvisno od zgodovinskih in socialnih dejstev v katerih je glasba nastala? Če da, zakaj? Če ne, zakaj?

Na vsakega skladatelja nedvomno vpliva čas, v katerem živi, torej trenutna sedanost - politična in socialna. Različna stilna obdobja so prvi dejavnik, ki je zaznamoval skladatelje povsod in vedno. Poleg tega so imele umetnosti različnih zvrsti močan medsebojni vpliv in so se razvijale tudi glede na družbeno in socialno stanje. Mnogi skladatelji so bili finančno šibki in so pisali, kar jim je bilo naročeno in plačano. Nekatera dela imajo »naročeno« direktno sporočilo. Druga so napisana kot način protesta proti oblasti, razmeram...

4) Smatrate zahodno klasično glasbo kot višek glasbene ustvarjalnosti v človeški kulturi? Če da, zakaj? Če ne, zakaj?

Zahodna klasična glasba prav gotovo izstopa v svojem razvoju, prepoznavnosti in tradiciji skozi stoletja. Če je pa višek ustvarjalnosti v človeški kulturi, pa težko rečem... Sploh je težko soditi v umetnosti, kaj je bolj ustvarjalno...

5) Razvrsti osebe, ki se pojavljajo v praksi klasične glasbe, po pomembnosti (npr. najpomembnejši osebi dodajte št. 1, itd.). Če smatrate, da ima več oseb enako pomembnost jih lahko označite z isto številko.

Osebe: Skladatelj, poslušalec, profesionalni poustvarjalec, improvizator, profesor glasbe, glasbeni zgodovinar, kritik, glasbeni sociolog, glasbeni estetik, menedžer, glasbeni teoretik

I. Skladatelj, profesionalni poustvarjalec, improvizator

II. profesor glasbe

III. poslušalec

IV. glasbeni zgodovinar, glasbeni teoretik, glasbeni sociolog, glasbeni estetik,

V. menedžer,

VI. kritik

6) Naštejte prve tri stvari, ki vam pridejo na misel, ko slišite pojem 'zgodovina glasbe'.

Evolucija glasbe, razkrivanje ozadja glasbe in poslušanje, zgodbe o glasbi

7) Ali obstaja zveza med instrumentalno klasično glasbo in (govorjenim in pisanim) jezikom?

Če da, kakšna je? Če ne, zakaj?

Izvajanje glasbe je tako kot jezik (pisan ali govorjen) način izražanja.

Povezava je v tem, da vedno nekdo ustvarja (piše besedilo ali sklada), v drugi fazi nekdo to delo poustvari in doprinese k izvedbi z umestitvijo svojih čustev (bere besedilo ali izvaja glasbo), tretji pa sprejema (če je prisoten). Pri zvočnem (po)ustvarjanju besedil in izvajanju glasbe se za izražanje lastnih občutij uporabljajo podobne tehnike – dinamika, poudarki, prikaz razvoja in kulminacije...

Intervju s študentko glasbe

1. Kako bi opisali klasično glasbo v nekaj stavkih?

Glasba je jezik ljubezni, ki nagovori le tistega, ki želi biti ljubljene. Razumemo da pa seveda vsi, saj smo ljubezni vzrok. V klasični glasbi bi pa poudarila predvsem besedo 'klasika', katero razumem kot afiniteto do čistega, osnovnega, bistvenega, naravnega razumevanja sebe in okolja. Nenehno je spraševanje po bistvu in vzroku 'jaza' in mislim, da je odgovor vedno drugačen, saj se nenehno spreminja, prilagaja trenutnemu razumevanju, zato mislim, da je klasična glasbena govorica tudi najbolj kompleksna, saj zahteva nenehno raziskovanje

eksternega in internega v nas in empatično razumevanje časa, prostora in skladateljevega sporočila.

2) Lahko klasična glasba nosi kakšen pomen? Če da, kateri? Kako pomembna ocenjujete da je partitura (note), pri posredovanju glasbenega pomena?

Notacija je edina pisava, ki je možna biti "govorjena" in samozadostna po črkah, besedah, stavkih in ob enem znanstveno, simbolično brana. Vsaka manifestacija komponista ima lahko tudi simboličen pomen, kar seveda zahteva ogromno znanje in holistično razumevanje časa, namena, razumevanje afinitete skladatelja do manifestiranega dela.

Notacija je pisava, v kateri se skladatelj največkrat jasno izrazi, kaj želi od izvajalca. Ker jo lahko izvajamo z racionalnim pristopom in s formalnim razumevanjem analiziramo, večkrat pozabimo na morebitno, s časom osvojeno osvoboditev od razuma, saj se šele takrat začne druga plat razumevanja notacije in odkrivanje simboličnega pomena, ki je predvsem subjektivno obarvan.

3) Je sporočilo klasične glasbe neodvisno od zgodovinskih in socialnih dejstev v katerih je glasba nastala? Če da, zakaj? Če ne, zakaj?

Sporočilo klasične glasbe ni odvisno od časa in prostora v katerem je bila napisana.... Od poslušalca oz. izvajalca je tukaj in zdaj odvisno če je odvisno ali ni. Izvajalec in poslušalec je tukaj in zdaj ista oseba, katera s poznavanjem zgodovine, prostora in namena s katerim je glasba bila napisana lahko neodvisno od trenutnega časa in prostora nakaže prostor in čas in namen, s katerim se je glasba rodila.

4) Smatrate zahodno klasično glasbo kot višek glasbene ustvarjalnosti v človeški kulturi? Če da, zakaj? Če ne, zakaj?

Da! zato, ker edina združuje harmonikalni pitagorizem z individualizmom človeške duše.

5) Razvrsti osebe, ki se pojavljajo v praksi klasične glasbe, po pomembnosti (npr. najpomembnejši osebi dodajte št. 1, itd.). Če smatrate, da ima več oseb enako pomembnost jih lahko označite z isto številko.

Osebe: Skladatelj, poslušalec, profesionalni poustvarjalec, improvizator, profesor glasbe, glasbeni zgodovinar, kritik, glasbeni sociolog, glasbeni estetik, menedžer, glasbeni teoretik

Zelo neprijetno mi je razvrščati osebe, ki so ena od druge odvisne in se lahko same po sebi izpolnjujejo samo vzajemno. Menedžer mora biti dober poslušalec, kritik, glasbeni sociolog in estetik, izvajalec pa poleg dobrega pedagoga, zgodovinarja in kritika mora dati poslušalcu občutek, da je naučeno delo pravkar iz-improvizirano. Ratio-emoio.

6) Naštejte prve tri stvari, ki vam pridejo na misel, ko slišite pojem 'zgodovina glasbe'.

Bach, Mozart, Beethoven

7) Ali obstaja zveza med instrumentalno klasično glasbo in (govorjenim in pisanim) jezikom? Če da, kakšna je? Če ne, zakaj?

seveda, da obstaja. Ena in druga sta vendar homogene. Razlika med njima je le, da ena daje poudarek na kvantiteto, druga na kvaliteto izgovorjene besede.

Intervju z maturantom glasbene gimnazije

1) Kako bi opisali klasično glasbo v nekaj stavkih?

Klasična glasba je harmonija, dinamika, melodija, barva, ritem, misel, zgodba, ideja... Glasba je napisana zaradi potreb skladateljev po izražanju, po izpovedi. Klasična glasba je živa in zato tudi svobodna za interpretacijo. Klasična glasba te nikoli ne pusti ravnodušnega, vedno ti nekaj da.

2) Lahko klasična glasba nosi kakšen pomen? Če da, kateri? Kako pomembna ocenjujete da je partitura (note) pri posredovanju glasbenega pomena?

Da, klasična glasba nosi že v osnovi pomen, ki ji ga je dal skladatelj. Vsaka nota ima svojo vrednost, skladatelj je ni zastoj napisal in izvajalec ji mora dati svoj pomen.

Če sem prav razumel, zate glasba nosi vsoto dveh pomenov: tistega ki ji "ga je dal skladatelj" in tistega, ki ji ga je dal izvajalec. Kateri od teh pomenov je pomembnejši (če sploh kateri)?

Menim, da je skladatelj malo več kot pa izvajalcev; zato ker dejanski pomen skladbe da skladatelj, on ga razvije oz. ustvari. Je pa odvisen tudi od izvajalca.

Kakšno vlogo igra v tem procesu ustvarjanja pomenov poslušalec?

Si interpretira skladbo, kot jo čuti.

3) Je sporočilo klasične glasbe neodvisno od zgodovinskega in socialnega okolja v katerem je glasba nastala? Če da, zakaj? Če ne, zakaj?

Ne, je odvisno. Skladatelj je živel v takšnem socialnem okolju in glasba mu je bila »ventil« za svobodno izražanje, izpoved, socialni krik, ipd. Zato lahko v glasbi prepoznamo skladateljevo doživljanje takratnega okolja.

4) Smatrate zahodno klasično glasbo kot višek glasbene ustvarjalnosti v človeški kulturi? Če da, zakaj? Če ne, zakaj?

Težko odgovorim na vprašanje, ker še nisem slišal vseh skladb (po vsej verjetnosti tudi ne morem). Menim, da je vsaka skladba po svoje svoj višek, ne glede na geografski položaj nastanka. Torej, ne.

Lahko natančneje razložiš frazo "Menim, da je vsaka skladba po svoje svoj višek, ne glede na geografski položaj nastanka."?

Vsaka skladba ima neko svojo vrednost (tista ki je na vzhodu in tudi tista ki je na zahodu), in ne morem reči, da je vrednost neke skladbe večja kot od druge. Vsaka je zase nekaj posebnega.

5) Razvrsti osebe, ki se pojavljajo v praksi klasične glasbe, po pomembnosti (npr. najpomembnejši osebi dodajte št. 1, itd.). Če smatrate, da ima več oseb enako pomembnost jih lahko označite z isto številko.

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1. SKLADATELJ, PROFESIONALNI POUSTVARJALEC

2. POSLUŠALEC

3. GLASBENI SOCIOLOG

4. KRITIK

5. PROFESOR GLASBE, GLASBENI ZGODOVINAR, GLASBENI TEORETIK, GLASBENI ESTETIK

6. IMPROVIZATOR

7. MENEDŽER

6) *Naštejte prve tri stvari, ki vam pridejo na misel, ko slišite pojem 'zgodovina glasbe'.*
Poslušanje glasbe, življenjepis skladatelja, geniji.

7) *Ali obstaja zveza med instrumentalno klasično glasbo in (govorjenim in pisanim) jezikom? Če da, kakšna je? Če ne, zakaj?*

Da, instrumentalna klasična glasba ima svojo zgodbo in tudi pisani jezik ima svojo zgodbo. Eno izmed teh dveh pa je možno narediti na podlagi drugega oz. ima vpliv od prvega. Npr. pisana zgodba je lahko podlaga klasični glasbi, je njen navdih...

V svojem odgovoru, tako razumem jaz, se koncentriram predvsem na pisani jezik - na zgodbo, ki lahko predstavlja vsebinsko podlago za glasbeno delo (programska glasba). Ali obstaja morda še kakšna povezava z vsakdanjim govornim jezikom in glasbenim jezikom?

Po mojem je viden nekakšen vpliv. Preneseš to na glasbo.

Intervju s skladateljem

1) *Kako bi opisali klasično glasbo v nekaj stavkih?*

Klasična glasba je duhovna in umetniška disciplina ter segment celotnega umetniškega ustvarjanja v vseh obdobjih umetnosti.

2) *Lahko klasična glasba nosi kakšen pomen? Če da, kateri? Kako pomembna ocenjujete da je partitura (note), pri posredovanju glasbenega pomena?*

Za mene je klasična glasba temeljnega pomena, predvsem zaradi tega, ker je moj poklic, ker je moj življenjski utrip in moje poslanstvo. Vsem, ki niso profesionalno glasbeno orientirani in vsem tistim, ki niso potopljivi v lepoto klasične glasbe, bi za njihovo mentalno zdravje in dobro duševno in duhovno počutje vsekakor priporočil, da se potopijo v poslušanje klasične glasbe, da obiskujejo koncerte, da si privoščijo mnogo katere nosilce zvoka in z dolgim poslušanjem lepoto glasbe spremenijo v navado, v potrebo...

3) *Je sporočilo klasične glasbe neodvisno od zgodovinskih in socialnih dejstev v katerih je glasba nastala? Če da, zakaj? Če ne, zakaj?*

Klasična glasba, kot tudi ostala umetnost, je v glavnem nastajala kot odmev socialno političnih in zgodovinskih tendenc in kot takšna predstavlja sliko določenih zgodovinskih obdobj. Je vsekakor internacionalna in kot pravi francoski egocentrični skladatelj Eric Satie : »Umetnost nima svoje domovine, sirotica ni dovolj bogata, da bi jo imela.....« Ko je glasbena umetnost vrhunska, je lastnina cele zemeljske oble, je lastnina nas vseh in zato »sirotica« res nima svoje domovine!

4) *Smatrate zahodno klasično glasbo kot višek glasbene ustvarjalnosti v človeški kulturi? Če da, zakaj? Če ne, zakaj?*

Zame, ki sem odraščal in se glasbeno vzgajal in izobraževal na temeljih zahodne kulture, vsekakor predstavlja vrhunec glasbene ustvarjalnosti. Ampak to za ljudi, ki niso iz tega geografskega področja sigurno ni vrhunec glasbene umetnosti. Druga geografska področja, kot so na primer Azija, Afrika, Južna Amerika.... Imajo svoje vrhunce in prav je tako.

5) *Razvrsti osebe, ki se pojavljajo v praksi klasične glasbe, po pomembnosti (npr. najpomembnejši osebi dodajte št. 1, itd.). Če smatrate, da ima več oseb enako pomembnost jih lahko označite z isto številko.*

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Skladatelji, poustvarjalci, poslušalci, glasbeni teoretiki in muzikologi ...

6) *Naštejte prve tri stvari, ki vam pridejo na misel, ko slišite pojem 'zgodovina glasbe'.*

1. Nujno znanje
2. kronologija zgodovinskih dogajanj
3. splošna kulturna razgledanost

7) *Ali obstaja zveza med instrumentalno klasično glasbo in (govorjenim in pisanim) jezikom? Če da, kakšna je? Če ne, zakaj?*

Mislím ,da ta veza skoraj ne obstaja. To je zelo pomembno prav zaradi tega, ker klasično glasbo lahko poslušajo ljudje z vseh geografskih področij, vseh starosti , vseh okusov... Glasba ima svoj internacionalni jezik zato, kot sem že povedal , sirotica nima svoje domovine.

3. Short biographies of the interviewees

A listener

Subject 1 is a teacher of English and German language. She studied at the Departments of English and German at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana, Slovenia, and also studied abroad for three months, having been granted the Erasmus scholarship in Brussels. She is currently working on her PhD studies at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana. She works as a teacher of language courses in Pionirski dom in Ljubljana (Centre for Youth Culture) and also translates for several agencies in Slovenia and abroad. She was a board member of IATEFL Slovenia (International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language) and a board member of SEETA (South Eastern Europe Teachers Association) from 2009 until 2012 and is also the Secondary School Competition Coordinator at IATEFL Slovenia.

A professor and professional performer

Subject 2 comes from a recognized music family. She studied at the Moscow's State Conservatory P. I. Tchaikovsky, in the class of Igor Gavriš. She continued her postgraduate studies on the Academy of Music Ljubljana (in the class of prof. Škerjanc) and on the Paris' Ecole Normal de Music Alfred Cortot (in the class of prof. Barthe).

She is a very active concert cellist. She has performed with the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra, the Moscow's State Orchestra (in the hall of Bolshoi Theater), the Moscow's Academic Symphonic Orchestra, and with the Orchestra of Academy of Music Ljubljana. At the moment, she works as a professor of cello and chamber music on the three important musical institutions in Slovenia and has a very rich concert life.

A university student

Subject 3 is a young Slovenian pianist. She started her musical education by the age of six in the Music School Rogaška Slatina, and continued her education on the Artistic Gymnasium in Ljubljana (in the class of prof. Gadžijev). She started her superior education on the Academy of Music Ljubljana (in the class of professors Jarc, Petrač, and Mlinarič). She is continuing her studies on Vienna's 'University of Music and Performing Art' (in the class of prof. Flores (1935-2012), and prof. Krist). She lives a very active concert life in Slovenia and abroad. She has recorded for the archive of Slovenian Radio and won many prizes in the international

competitions. She has performed the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto in B flat minor with the Orchestra of Slovenian Opera and Ballet.

A secondary music school pupil

Subject 4 is a young slovenian trumpeter and composer. He finished the secondary school of music in the year 2012. Recently, he was accepted on the Academy of Music Ljubljana to study trumpet and composition. He frequently performs chamber music, and plays as a member of different symphonic and wind orchestras.

A composer

Subject 5 is a slovenian composer. He studied music theory and composition on the Academy of Music Belgrade. He was a professor for the analysis of musical form, composition and orchestration in Novi Sad and Belgrade (Serbia), as well as the founder of many festivals and ensembles for contemporary music. In the year 1977 he has returned to Slovenia and settled in Velenje's Secondary School of Music, where he teaches counterpoint and the analysis of musical form. His works are frequently ordered and performed by the Slovenian Philharmonic, and Slovenian RTV Orchestra. He won many international prizes for his compositions.