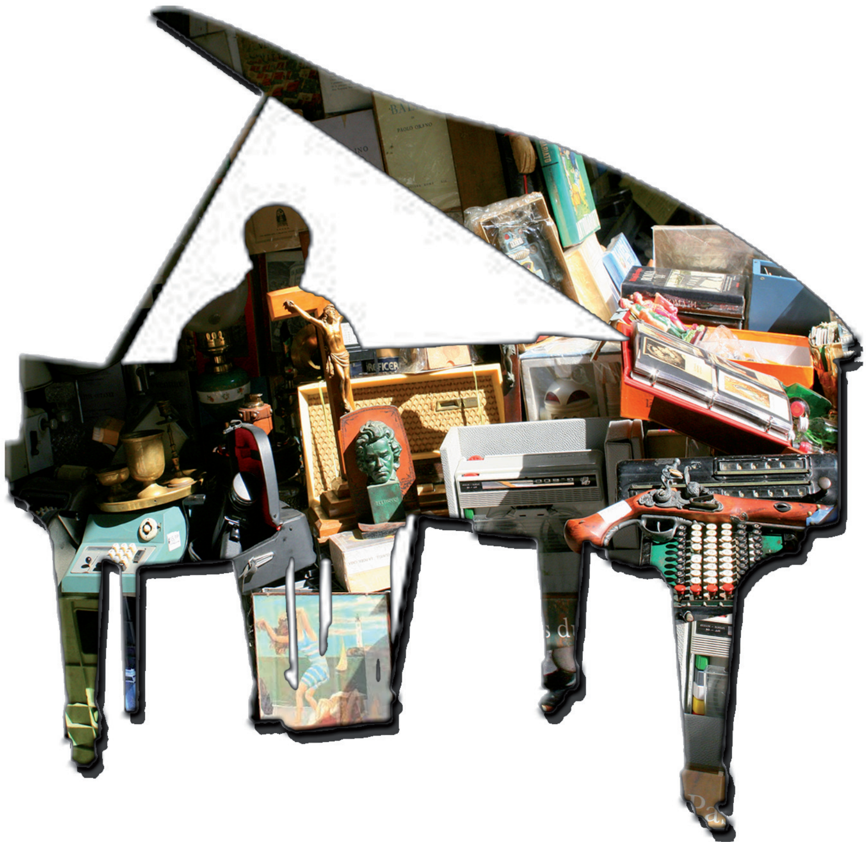
Lina Navickaitė-Martinelli

Piano Performance in a Semiotic Key

Society, Musical Canon and Novel Discourses



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PIANO PERFORMANCE IN A SEMIOTIC KEY

Society, Musical Canon and Novel Discourses

Lina Navickaitė-Martinelli

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To Dario

Abstract

In an attempt to expand and enrich the existing trends of musical performance studies, as well as exploit the potentials of semiotic analysis, this dissertation offers the theoretical perspective that would enable us analyzing and unfolding the multiple (musical, cultural, as well as social) meanings generated by and communicated through the performer's art. Such an approach, as well as the theoretical framework of the thesis, may be considered interdisciplinary.

Without denying that musical performance, particularly that of Western classical piano music (which is the focus of this dissertation), is inevitably associated with the opus, the semiotic approach, it is proposed here, should invoke a broader viewpoint and study performance as encompassing all the exogenic meanings that do not necessarily depend on a musical work. Thus, the focus of the present dissertation is the figure of a classical music performer as a significant part of society, as well as cultural, institutional and personal discourses that both generate the art of music performance and originate from it. The main targets here are: a) mapping the predominant tendencies of the art of musical performance during the twentieth century; and b) proposing a form of semiotic analysis of different representations and self-representations that musical performers, pianists in particular, put into action in their interactions with social and cultural contexts (including different types of performer-listener communication processes, scholarly analyses of the art, the various media through which the art of music performance is disseminated, and aspects related to the consumption, marketing and/or ideologizing of today's performance practices).

The dissertation is structured into four parts. Part 1 introduces a semiotic framework for studying musical performance. Part 2 discusses a variety of meanings communicated through the performers' art as well as the media in which the art of classical piano music performance is operating. Part 3 of the dissertation positions the performers' art within the Western musical canon by examining Beethoven interpretations as played by pianists of various cultural and historical backgrounds. The concluding Part 4 presents novel discourses on the art of musical performance by analyzing eleven personal websites of Lithuanian classical pianists as an important vehicle of contemporary performers for communicating their artistic identities with their audiences.

It is claimed in this dissertation that the combination of semiotic and musicological approaches provides significant research tools for the analysis of musical performance. The chosen methods and case studies are relevant and revealing in the study of musical performance art in that they strongly make a case for current musicology to elaborate increasingly interdisciplinary paradigms and modes of investigation.

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Lina Navickaitė-Martinelli

Introduction

Background and object of the dissertation. The notion of the music performer-interpreter, as we now understand it, is the product of the modern era: this figure became visible as late as in the eighteenth century, and gained cultural importance in the nineteenth, when contemporary performance art was formed with its idiomatic ideologies and practices.[1] Although interpretation history is rather short, the attitudes towards this cultural phenomenon have been constantly and rather dramatically changing in the course of time, as well as interrelations among music creators, performers, and those who evaluate their art, whether as listeners, music critics, or music scholars.

Some kind of interpretation of musical work is evident in all musicological studies which tend to say something about the meaning of the work. Yet, it might be considered a weak point if such analyses lack the exploration of the impact of sounding interpretations on the process of musical semiosis. Moreover, most of the existing research in the field of music performance studies is rather utilitarian; there is still no general theory developed. A deeper exploration of the performance phenomenon needs a solid theoretical background and research tools. In addition, a more expanded analysis, which would consider interpretation and performance as one of the *texts* of musical work, is necessary. When analyzing musical processes one needs to take into account the interaction of a work of music, its interpretation and reception.

A fundamental premise of the semiotic approach is the understanding of musical performance as a communication model, in which a series of coded messages are sent or enacted and their meanings received or decoded. For example, in a theatre or opera performance, which have been for a long time subject to semiotic analysis, the meaning is encoded and transmitted through the various systems of staging, such as the set, lighting, costume, music, etc.[2] In addition, rich and complex significations are provided by

[1] What is referred to here is the modern concept of the individual, thus the earlier performance practices, such as the importance of the figure of an opera singer or the origins of concert life and commercialized music performance, cannot be equated to it.

[2] As Elaine Aston (1996: 57) points out, this was mostly the emphasis of the early works in the field of theatre semiotics, while a more recent phase of semiotic theatre study rather focuses on the decodifying activities of the receiver (member of the

the performers/actors themselves, their bodies, actions and interpretive choices. All of this, however, can be said about the art of music performers as well, and if we think of a musical performance as a mere actualization of a musical score, we obviously overlook (or, consciously deny) the potential density of its semiosis.

Considering the variety of its possible paths, research on performance practices should not be (as it often is) restricted to the traditional study of printed texts, scores, instruments, or sound recordings as primary sources of interest. Not by chance, the art of musical performance is increasingly analyzed from the perspectives of various other disciplines, such as psychology, semiotics, hermeneutics, cultural sociology, and others. More and more often, music performers themselves tend to verbalize their insights, as the increase in artistic research studies demonstrates. In an attempt to expand and enrich the existing trends of musical performance studies, as well as exploit the potentials of semiotic analysis, this dissertation offers a theoretical perspective that would enable us to analyze and unfold the multiple (musical, cultural, as well as social) meanings generated by and communicated through the performer's art. Such an approach, as well as the theoretical framework of the thesis, may be considered interdisciplinary.

Research questions, methods and objectives. The focus of the present dissertation is the figure of the classical music performer as a significant part of cultural life and cultural, institutional and personal discourses that both generate the art of music performance and originate from it. The main targets here are: a) mapping the predominant tendencies of the art of musical performance during the twentieth century; and b) proposing a form of semiotic analysis of different representations and self-representations that musical performers, classical pianists in particular, put into action in their interactions with social and cultural contexts (including different types of performer-listener communication processes, scholarly analyses of this art, the various media through which the art of music performance is disseminated, as well as some aspects related to the consumption, marketing and/or ideologizing of current performance practices).

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audience), starting already from the spectator's pre-expectations of the theatrical event; this perspective is also a strong influence on the listener's perception of a musical performance, whether live or recorded.

The 'job' of a performer, as it is self-evident, does not only consist of mere music playing, but calls into question a number of variables of private and public, musical and extra-musical (and para-musical) articulation. Performers have their own personality and inclinations (as *people*, first of all, not just musicians); they are exposed to different forms of education and influences (starting from their teachers); they develop certain technical and stylistic abilities; they find certain repertoires more suitable than others; they confront themselves (ideally, or sometimes personally) with composers and their requests/indications; they have to take into account social demands to given repertoires (which can also not be of a strictly artistic nature, but be related to politics, fashion, historical circumstances, etc.); they also, intentionally or not, develop a public persona (consequently generating a reputation and social expectations that transcend the mere musical performance);[3] and, finally, and particularly nowadays, they create a number of media interfaces that allow the public to access all the previously-listed features (concert publicity, recordings, websites, interviews, etc.).

It goes without saying, each of these variables produce several different (yet, often inter-related) discourses and speech acts (in Austin's sense)[4] that make 'performance' and 'performer' extremely complex and dynamic concepts, whose understanding inevitably requires a broadened idea of musicology. When we face a pianist's record covers, posters and ads by such musicians as Lang Lang, Kathia Buniatishvili or Anthony de Mare (see Figure 1) we understand that the 'meanings of performance', or a 'performer's discourse', is a rich mix of ingredients that may include, besides the performed music, also pop culture, gender issues, rhetoric, advertising and ideology.

[3] To take just one instance, we have the difficult character and maniacal demands of such artists as Keith Jarrett, who, on more than one occasion, has not hesitated to interrupt his performances if the least, imperceptible sound was produced by the audience. There is no question, at this point of Jarrett's career and fame, that this attitude has contributed to his public personality, in all kinds of directions (from veneration to irritation, up to the audience's comprehensible terror at even producing the occasional, and traditional, cough). Among the classical pianists, Ivo Pogorelich is known for unpredictable reactions to any possible distractions on the part of his audiences; a rather harsh response by another pianist, András Schiff, to a coughing audience of his all-Beethoven recital at Helsinki Festival in the year 2007 was personally witnessed by the author.

[4] See Austin 1962, and particularly the idea of performative utterances as generators of social change.

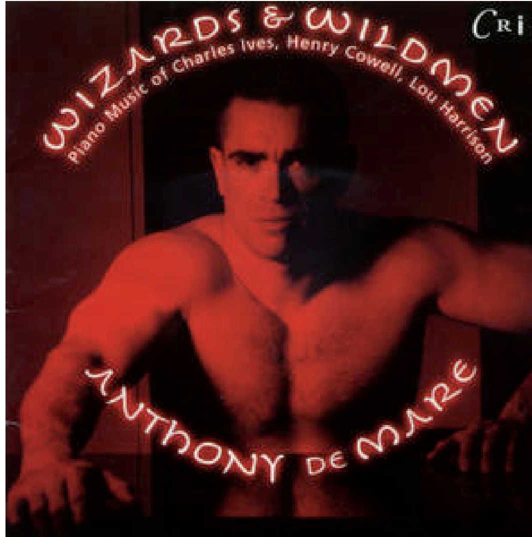

Figure 1. Front cover of Anthony de Mare's album
Wizards and Wildmen (CRI/New World, 2000)

The question is: is this a 'musicological' problem (regardless of the number of theoretical and methodological adjustments that musicology may need here)? This thesis suggests that it is in all cases (for the simple reason why a para-text is anyway part of a text), since even the most peculiar discourse associated to the performance/performer (such as, indeed, de Mare's marketing strategy of the time) is designed to convey *some kind* of information about the musician and/or the music. Moreover, in the frames of the present study, it is relevant that among the methodological approaches and possible questions raised by the semiotic analysis are also such issues as the values, aims and attitudes demonstrated by the given communication; what kind of features, or characteristics, are chosen to describe an artist; the type of communication, i.e. which channel of communication is used in order to convey the message to the potential receiver, etc. Hence, in this dissertation the nature and the extent of this musico-contextual connection are discussed, and this serves as a red line for the whole text: there will be no specific chapters to illustrate the issue, simply because it underlies every single task undertaken in this work.

Topics and structure of the study. In this dissertation, an attempt is made to systematize the various forms of performers' communication into a theoretical frame that may work within a semio-musicological analytical environment. The core of the analysis consists of the application (sometimes adaptation) of some important models produced within musical semiotics, primarily Gino Stefani's theory of musical competence (as illustrated, e.g., in Stefani 1999), certain aspects of Eero Tarasti's existential semiotics (e.g. his theory of performer's subjectivity, as illustrated in Tarasti 2005, 2012a and 2012b), plus the addition of the author's own formulations. The description of this theoretical part appears in the first part of the dissertation, while diverse applications occur throughout the whole text. Not accidentally, the three semiotic models that are offered in Part 1 have much in common; their parts and the issues covered intertwine, thus contributing to the proposed semiotic theory of musical performance. Part 1, in addition, features the question of 'performance' as a research object, starting with the definition itself. A semiotic attitude is presented, which attempts at encompassing a wide variety of meanings that are conveyed in the performance, i.e. from the work-related (interpretative) ones to the extramusical, primarily performative significations.

When it comes to specific instances and illustration of theories, several types of performance/performer communication processes and the media in which they take place are described and discussed (particularly, in the light of the mentioned theoretical framework). The case studies that were chosen to illustrate each theoretical issue are rather heterogeneous in nature, but they are far from being selected at random. These various discourses are interrelated in ways that are often multi-layered and not necessarily visible at first glance: the result is a constellation of topics which appear very obvious in some cases and less explicit in others. For this reason, it was decided not to opt for the safe path of analyzing cases of strict, evident reciprocal continuity (for instance, an analysis of *Russian* pianists, followed by a discussion on the *Russian* school, coupled with an investigation on *Russian* repertoires): with this approach, one may lose sight of the complexity of the problem, creating a network of relations that is too neat for portraying faithfully the state of things. Instead, the bodies that are presented in this study exist both in themselves and as parts of wider constellations, without their connections being of an immediate patency. Thus it is more interesting, and altogether meaningful,

to display a discussion on *Lithuanian* pianists, the *Russian* school and the *German* repertoire canon, and to work on the grey areas, showing that the three of them are much more intertwined than one may expect. (To this particular endeavour, some chapters of Part 2 and the whole Part 3 of the dissertation are devoted.)

In the second part of the thesis, a perspective for analyzing the performer's work is proposed which permits taking into consideration a variety of elements that constitute the art of musical performance. The seven chapters of this part, even though conceptually interrelated, are not meant to present a strictly linear narrative; rather they are intended to offer seven independent perspectives on the same problem: the basic hypothesis is that musical performance, when considered a semiotic process, should not be underrated in its complexity and polyhedral identity. Such a perspective includes, as in the case of the present thesis, topics and case studies that in principle can be treated separately: from the variety of media in which the art of musical performance operates to the notion of 'school' that continues to puzzle both researchers and performers; from the performer's corporeality to his or her creativity; from the idea of 'authenticity' in performance art to its mechanical capturing, and so on. The main goal is precisely that of emphasizing how the theoretical heterogeneity of musical performance implies the coexistence of problems of a rather diverse nature, all equally deserving a musicologist's close scrutiny.

One of the important assumptions of the present doctoral thesis is that music performance art of the Western culture has its own immanent stylistic qualities and semantic features that exist in the interpretation schools, concert practices, contemporary media, and that strongly affect the process of musical communication. In addition, it is the author's conviction that essential insights into the performance practices and new types of analysis might be provided by exploring a phenomenon which lies at the core of performance art, i.e., 'a canon'. The works by one of the most canonical composers of the European music, Ludwig van Beethoven, have greatly influenced the art of piano performance in many different ways. It is for this reason that Beethoven's piano sonatas were chosen as the main repertoire-related case study for this research, as examining different interpretations of these works helps reveal not only the tendencies and transformations of Beethoven-interpretations, but also of the overall performance practices of the twentieth century. It is to be noted at this point that while the real, concrete instances

of musical performance are analyzed and compared in (mostly) the last sections of the third part of this study, the main goal as well as originality and academic importance of the present research is to offer a semiotically-based theory of musical performance and produce methodological tools for analyzing musical performance in relation to social and cultural contexts, instead of specific opus-related performance details. Therefore, even Part 3 of the dissertation, which deals with the issues of performance in relation to the opus, does it from the socio-cultural perspective, trying to outline the main motives behind the choice of a certain repertoire; how some repertoire becomes canonical; and how this musical canon then functions in culture.

To generalize, one may assume that there exist three main channels, or media, through which one receives, consumes, understands and appreciates the art of a musician, a pianist in this case. These are: (1) sonic-interpretative, (2) verbal-communicative, and (3) visual-representative. Each of them, in its own way, conveys certain messages about a given performer, and each deserves close scrutiny in performance studies. The so-called sonic-interpretative channel of a performer's communication, even though complex and highly interesting in itself, is however the most 'traditional' and evident aspect of the art of musical performance; hence the fact that there are still difficulties in finding effective methods for its analysis should not become the main focus of this study. However, this aspect is not overlooked in this dissertation, and the comparative analysis of Beethoven's Sonata Op. 31 No. 2 *The Tempest* is offered in Part 3.

The channel through which a performer conveys to his/her potential audiences his/her insights, ideas, personality, etc., is referred to here as a verbal-communicative. Given the communicative power of language, this is possibly the most effective and clear way to reach the listener (although not necessarily the fastest, as images and graphics may often prevail in this category). Along with the theoretical studies, and comparative analysis of different recordings, interviews with performers are considered in this dissertation an important research tool, as well as – on occasions – the rhetoric of musical para-texts such as concert programmes and recordings' liner notes. Verbal communication helps deepen one's understanding of the nature of a performer's work, such as those aspects concerning performance strategies, decisions about execution, and similar. Significantly, verbal communication contributes also to the artist's more conscious understanding

of his or her activity, because one often does not reflect upon certain issues before being asked about them.[5]

During the last few years, a lot of fieldwork has been conducted concerning the way performers describe themselves and their work, which is reported in the author's book *Pokalbių siuita: 32 interviu ir interliudijos apie muzikos atlikimo meną* (*A Suite of Conversations: 32 Interviews and Interludes on Music Performance Art*, in the Lithuanian language, Navickaitė-Martinelli 2010). These interviews, however, have not been available in English so far. Throughout the dissertation, abundant use of this first-hand material is made, mostly as quotations. In addition, it was thought as pertinent to include some of the talks with pianists as an appendix to the dissertation. The goal is to give the reader a complete, coherent picture of what has been going on during a given interview (offering the performers a chance to illustrate their reflections at length, and not only in the form of in-text excerpts). In some cases, a quotation in the text helps the understanding of a given topic, but does not represent totally every nuance the pianist meant to convey; in other cases the restrictions of the topic itself do not give one the opportunity to make the performers' opinions on certain other issues available to the readers, and yet they deserve to. Hence it is certainly hoped that this will be an additional tool, or even value, for readers, and particularly scholars.

A specific methodology was chosen for doing the interviews, on the premise that the context and the particular circumstances of any discourse are very relevant to the outcomes. It was thus the author's intention not to conduct the interviews with performers as a formal and systematic research interview, but rather to keep the type of questions and a general atmosphere that would allow the person interviewed to retain his or her personal style and spontaneous speech. Having this in mind, the aim was to discuss several recurrent topics in all the interviews, such as the matters of performing styles, national schools of playing/singing/conducting, the per-

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[5] Moreover, it is the author's conviction that significant contributions to performance studies come not only from strictly academic or artistic research, but also from the numerous books and/or biographies of non-academic nature written by/about performers (Barenboim 2002; Brendel 2001; Bunin 1999; Delson 1966; Freedland 1991; Peyser 1987; Rosen 2000; Siloti 1963, to name but a few), as well as dialogue and interview books (such as Previn and Hopkins 1971; Barenboim and Said 2004; Marcus 1979; Dubal 1984, among others) can be instrumental in analyzing performers' discourses operating on many of the relevant issues for this study.

former's relation with the composer, the choice of repertoire, etc. With two Lithuanian pianists, Petras Geniušas and Andrius Žlabys, two interviews each were conducted, the second one being of a more systematic nature and being related specifically to their performative strategies in interpreting Beethoven's piano sonatas.

Returning to the verbal-communicative channel, what has been mentioned so far constitutes the most traditional face-to-face interview, but of course nowadays there are additional variables that intervene in, and affect, the processes of performers' verbal communication with their audiences. One can find the most diverse contexts of internet communication (such as websites, blogs, social networks, etc.): through posts and threads, not only the performers (or their managers) communicate, but also the listeners can share their experiences online, in place of traditional conversations or musicological reviews.

This dissertation, as it has been already stated, sees musical performance as a multifaceted and intermedial art. Thus, we can also talk about how and if the musicians' viewpoints, as expressed in their statements and – ideally – in their musical performances, are somehow represented through the visual media. Underscoring the difference between the possible ways of approaching the art of musical performance, particular attention, with the whole Part 4 on its own, will be devoted to the last of the three, the visual-representative channel of performers' communication, as it is the one most rarely encountered within the traditional musicological discourses. The focus here is placed on the visual artefacts that often serve to promote, or communicate, the sonic art and its practitioners. By analyzing such data as personal websites and other visual representations of eleven currently active Lithuanian concert pianists, it is discussed in the closing part of this dissertation how the performers tend to create their artistic identities, what the audiences of their messages are, and if (or in what ways) these visually composed meanings relate to the music played.

PART 1
Unveiling the Significations of Musical Performance: A Theoretical Challenge

1.1. 'Performance' as the Object of Study: Terminological Premise

The performative dimension of music, perhaps mostly due to its ephemeral, non-tangible nature, has been traditionally situated at the margins of academic research. Having overcome long years of being neglected or approached with a certain degree of scepticism, performance studies have only relatively recently gained room in mainstream musicology and its various branches. Performativity – in several fields of culture, including also the art of music performers – has of late been acknowledged as an equally important object of study as the written aspect of music (see the work by José Antonio Bowen (1993, 1996, 1999, 2003), Nicholas Cook (2001, 2007, 2013), Daniel Leech-Wilkinson (2002, 2009a, 2009b), John Rink (1995, 2002) and others), and as such still calls for new methodologies and thorough investigations.

As the aim of this thesis is to concentrate on and contribute to the development of the semiotic study on the art of musical performance, 'mainstream' performance studies are not discussed at length here. However, the current status of research into musical performance shall be pointed out throughout the various chapters of the present dissertation in relation to the variety of different issues within the art of performing music. The focus of the present chapter is the concept itself of 'performance' as the object of scientific research and cultural discourses.

In cultural studies, the term 'performance' is commonly applied in the theatre[6] (or, at least, more minutely discussed in that area), while in everyday parlance the term suggests the idea of efficiency, in fields as diverse as computing and sports. 'Performance' is often a keyword in advertising language, and we are repeatedly exposed to slogans and campaigns where the word appears under the latest car model, sport apparel brand or fitness drink. Finally, it is very interesting to notice that, if we type the word 'performance' in Google Images search, the vast majority of pictures that

[6] It is also used to define a specific medium of artistic expression, 'performance' (or, more precisely, 'performance art'), which in terms of style, concept and technique ranges from Futurism and Dadaism to Body Art and Performance Poetry, and which, being in some of its branches a kind of antithesis to theatre, offers even broader perspectives on the interdisciplinarity, the barriers between high art and popular culture, and the role of the artist-performer.

we are offered consists of graphs, statistics, sport- and technology-related material. In Figure 1.1, we can see the 'most relevant' 115 pictures found by the renowned search engine. Of all these, only one is related to music (a cello player), and it appears after 52 entries (a more 'important' number, nine, relates to theatre activities).

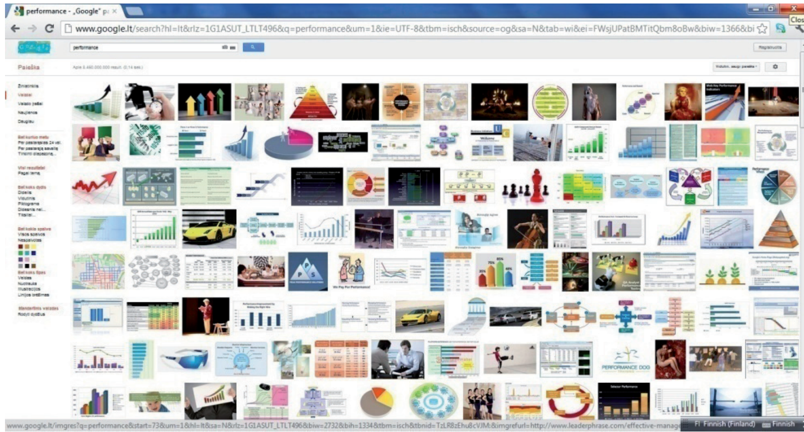

Figure 1.1. Google Image entries for the word 'performance'

In the context of theatre, the term 'performance' refers to the staging and presentation of physical objects – obviously, including also an actor's body – in a representative function (as put by Duttlinger & Ruprecht 2003: 11). Or, to paraphrase the famous golden rule formulated in different ways by such theatre directors as Eugenio Barba, Peter Brook or Jerzy Grotowski, "The minimal unit of performance is at least one person doing something in front of at least another person". It is not within the scopes of this study to discuss in more detail musical performance in relation to theatrical performance. However, precisely the field of theatre performance studies (cf. Schechner 1976 and 2002; Auslander 1997; and Campbell 1996, among others) provides several rich analytical tools that one may borrow in order to better assess the figure of a performer and the significations that his/her art and persona produce.

One of the initial problems in dealing with the art of *musical* performance is the lack of a clear definition of the term. It is no accident that in his essay "On Performance", Dario Martinelli (2010a: 51) expresses reserva-

tions concerning the terminology of the field. He remarks that even what is taken to be one of the most reliable sources, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, does not offer a satisfactory answer as to what musical performance is. Indeed, the author of the entry "Performance", Jonathan Dunsby (2000), speaks from the very first sentence about 'music making' instead of (or, sometimes, together with) 'performing'. Although a concept as generic as 'music making' contributes only a partial understanding of what the work of a music performer consists of, in a way it is a *de facto* admission of the complexity of the concept, and of its yet-unexplored potentials. Be that as it may, the term *making*, even though it denotes a kind of creating, producing something out of nothing, also contains a 'secondary' implication, a connotation of mere 'manual labour' as compared to the intellectual, intrinsically creative process of the composer's work. This may be compared to the difference in connotation between 'carpentry' and 'architecture'. Or, if we want to push the concept towards the archetypes (and the stereotypes) of human cosmology, it is yet another version of the eternal Cartesian dualism of 'body' and 'mind'.

Another terminological issue, or rather inconsistency, within the field of musical performance arises between two terms that are often used as synonyms: 'interpretation' and 'performance'. By *interpretation* we refer to the understanding and rendering of a musical work according to one's conception of the author's idea. The term is most commonly applied to the performer's understanding of a piece of music as made manifest in the way in which it is performed. In this respect, it is a personal and creative embodiment of a musical composition that depends for its realization on a mediating agent between composer and listener. Whether s/he does so consciously or not, a performer, while studying a musical piece, re-models it according to his/her own ideas and tastes, paying parallel attention to information in the notation, to the author's remarks, and to the context of the composition, as well as to his/her own artistic intuition and individual technical capabilities.

In contrast, the term *performance* designates the execution of something. As Lithuanian violist, conductor and musicologist Donatas Katkus notes, the corresponding Lithuanian and Russian words for the English 'performance', namely *atlikimas* and *ispolnenije* respectively, both stand for *execution*, that is, an act that embodies a set of previously-planned conditions. The German *Aufführung* and the English *performance*, too, are related to

the execution of a previously-planned work. All these terms demonstrate that the act of musicianship entails something to be performed; that is, a certain predetermined idea is put into action, or a certain musical structure – a song, a dance, a chant, or a symphony – is repeated. The term 'to perform', Katkus suggests, has widely replaced the previously-used 'to sing', 'to play', 'to make music', etc., in order to designate the concrete act of musicianship and its nature (Katkus 2006: 14).

Performance is above all a process, an activity. An interpretation is thus distinct from the performance in which it is embodied. Whereas a given performance is a unique event, which might be reproduced (as by a recording) but cannot be re-enacted, an interpretation results from a series of decisions that can be repeated on different occasions of performance: different performances by a given player or conductor can embody the same or a very similar interpretation.

Despite all these differences in implication, it is clear that the terms *interpretation* and *performance* both refer to the opus, a musical work that is being interpreted or performed, much more than the term 'music making' does. Musicologist Nicholas Cook aptly describes the situation, in saying that, according to the language we traditionally use to describe performance in its specifically musical sense,

> We do not have 'performances' but rather 'performances of' pre-existing, Platonic works. The implication is that a performance should function as a transparent medium, 'expressing', 'projecting', or 'bringing out' only what is already 'in' the work, with the highest performance ideal being a selfless *Werktreue*. (Cook 2001: 244)

Without denying that musical performance, particularly that of Western classical music, is inevitably associated with the opus (the latter being an apparent priority for mainstream musicological research), it is suggested in this dissertation that a semiotic approach would invoke a broader viewpoint, and study performance as encompassing all the external, extra-musical, exogenic meanings, which do not necessarily depend on a musical work. The claim is that musical phenomena are often not exclusively musical, hence it is meaningful to approach them in relation to a great variety of social, economic, and cultural factors.[7] A good example of an earlier such

[7] Studies in ethnomusicology and popular music as related specifically to performance are not subject to a closer scrutiny in this dissertation, however, they (such as

approach, although without purporting to be a semiotic study, is Christopher Small's insights on music performance. For him, music is not a thing at all but an activity, something that people do. It is of special interest how Small, in his book *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening*, proposes a framework for understanding all *musicking* as "A human activity, to understand not just how but why taking part in a musical performance acts in such complex ways on our existence as individual, social and political beings" (Small 1998: 12). Small's suggested definition for the word *musicking* is especially thought-provoking: "To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing" (ibid.: 9).

This study, however, limits its focus to the activities of the music performer and to the meanings that are produced by performance only, not venturing into the field of *any* human activity related to music, as Small advocates. But even so, as it shall be demonstrated throughout the pages of this dissertation, the phenomenon of musical performance encompasses much more than its relation to the score.

Béhague 1984; Nettl and Russell 1998; Frith 1996; and Inglis 2006, among others) cannot be completely overlooked as the authors from those fields had been tackling similar issues much earlier than classical performance studies began.

1.2. Signifying Music and the Self: Semiotically on Musical Performance

1.2.1. A Semiotic Approach to Musical Performance

The present chapter is devoted to the introduction and illustration of the role that the semiotic approach plays in this dissertation.[8] The theoretical output delivered by semioticians on the topic of performance is highly interesting, yet, to an extent, ambivalent. Notably, the theoreticians who helped in laying the foundations of the leading paradigms and schools of general semiotics showed a surprisingly poor interest in music, regularly failing to use it as a case study, even when the opportunity would appear at least as obvious as the cases chosen instead. When one reviews the works of the so-called American school of semiotics (based on the writings of Charles Sanders Peirce), or the Paris, or structuralist, school (founded by Algirdas Julius Greimas on a path already traced by Claude Lévi-Strauss), one finds that none of these great figures included music on their agenda. Neither did Yuri M. Lotman, the founder of the Tartu-Moscow school, nor Umberto Eco[9] (perhaps the most popular living semiotician), who, incidentally, is also a keen clarinet player. Curiously, this lack of interest in music did not coincide with a lack of interest in performance more generally, except that the focus of the investigation was mainly laid on *theatre*, not music, performance. Such an inclination to theatre studies would even see some prominent schools of semiotics as the very environment that gave rise to theatre semiotics (e.g. the Prague School of semiotics as early as the 1920s, as well as other European theorists, including later ones like Lotman, Eco or Marco De Marinis). Among the few mainstream semiotics scholars to notice the musical question within semiotics, Roland Barthes is to be

[8] Some parts of chapters 1.2 to 1.5 which summarize the author's view on the semiotics of musical performance appear in the following publication: Navickaitė-Martinelli, Lina (2014, forthcoming). Musical performance in a semiotic key. In: Peter Pericles Trifonas (ed.), *International Handbook of Semiotics*. Dordrecht: Springer.

[9] Even more significantly, Umberto Eco did actually deal with music-related problems, but that was in his pre-semiotic scholarly phase, during the 1960s (Eco 1964, for instance, having a whole section on the subject, and being, in its days, in the center of the discussion on popular music in Italy).

mentioned, who, more importantly for our purposes, also wrote specifically on musical performance.[10]

In the meantime, scholars who specialized in musical semiotics (such as Jean-Jacques Nattiez, Gino Stefani, Eero Tarasti, and many others) produced rich and very original literature that certainly contributed to rethinking, or even redefining a number of musical phenomena and practices, including performance (although not in such a consistent quantity as other topics). They also referenced major theories from general semioticians, applying them to their own field of study. Thus there do exist a number of applications of semiotic theories to musical performance: one of the goals of this and the following chapters is to take a closer look at some of them.

In addition to this, the aim is to present an original body of theoretical reflections based on existing models in general semiotics, which are particularly adapted to the case of musical performance (and piano performance, in detail). Some of these will be indeed mere adaptations, but, in a couple of instances, certain re-elaboration of the existing material, as well as novel proposals, will be necessary. Not accidentally, some parts of the models presented and the issues discussed overlap, thus emphasizing a common guideline proposed for performance studies.

Before getting to the heart of the matter, an important disclaimer is called for. It is to be pointed out at this very stage that the present work, especially as purporting to be a semiotic study, presents no consistent disquisition on the topic of 'reception' and 'receivers' of performance. While fully acknowledging the importance of the issue (particularly when it comes to performance, which is, in its most direct sense, the action of bringing out a musical work for the benefit of its receivers, in different times and spaces), a relative lack of treatment of this subject is the practical result of a selection in focuses. The role of musical performance within a society, in relation to a musical work across epochs and places, and in the specific of distinct individual identities, is already too big a task for a single investigation. Moreover, as it became obvious during the course of this research, a lot of information needs to be captured already on the side of those who

[10] Eero Tarasti's last decades of activity, plus his status as internationally acknowledged semiotician, makes him a 'general semiotician' too, not only a representative of musical semiotics, therefore worthy of inclusion in this list. However, he explicitly started within the field of musicology and musical semiotics, hence the comparison of Tarasti's work with the authors such as Stefani and Nattiez.

perform, even without going to the other side (i.e. that of the listener, not to mention the side of the composer as the primary element of the renown 'composer – performer – listener' communication chain) as well. The necessity of establishing boundaries to one's own area of investigation leads inevitably to rigorous choices and exclusions, and this is one of those. However, it should be clear that even though there is no explicit theorization in this study about reception and receivers, nearly every reflection that shall be proposed below carries in fact the idea (if not a specific notion) of reception as an unavoidable implication. Reception may not be the focus of this dissertation, but its presence and visibility in the scenery is out of discussion. In some cases, like the author's application of Gino Stefani's model on musical competence, the theories used were originally conceived (at least also) as contributions to the debate on listening practices, musical audience and the likes (a debate profoundly affected by the Adornian categorizations).[11] All the methods employed here should be seen as double-layered, in that they provide information on how the process of performance is generated and how it is received at the same time. The performer may have his/her own individual strategies for incorporating a musical work into his/her performative gesture. So does the listener, when it comes to the reception of the very same work and its performance. Performance practices are affected by social processes, and so are listening practices. The parallels are numerous. Thus, there may be no room in this dissertation for focusing on the receiver in a systematic manner, and this is why this figure will be left in the background: however, while this thesis is about performance as a practice that is *generated* rather than *absorbed*, it is absolutely clear that one process cannot exist without the other. At any rate, at least three theoretical arguments will serve throughout the present work as a very tangible premise of the notion of a receiver. These shall be the following:

1) the above-mentioned (and discussed at length in Chapter 1.4) Stefani's model on musical competence;

2) the idea that the receiver of the performance text can be considered on two very different levels: a) the intertextual level, in form of *implied* receiver – what we may call the Model Spectator, re-adapting Umberto Eco's

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[11] Ironically, a major criticism to Adorno, well voiced by such authors as Richard Middleton (1990), suggests that the German philosopher had actually banalized the concept of 'musical audience', making it a mere abstraction (Middleton 1990: 60).

notion of Model Reader (Eco 1979)[12]: an interpretative cooperation 'foreseen' by the text's transmission and variously inscribed within it; b) the extratextual level, in form of *real* spectator, i.e., an actual receiver and interpreter of the performance text (as put by De Marinis 1993: 6);

3) François Delalande's theory of *musical conducts* (Delalande 1993), according to which music reception goes through three important stages: *exploration* (discovery and acquisition of familiarity with sounds), *expression* (a symbolic process that includes the association between musical sounds and extra-musical meanings: e.g., a sensation of spatial height when the sound pitch is high), and *organization* (the application of rules and codes to music, so that complex associations can be generated, the listener develops expectations, etc.). To put the issue in Peircean terms, conducts are similar to the concepts of firstness (a non-referential mode of being: a possibility), secondness (a reference to a second subject/object: a fact), and thirdness (the establishment and codification of relations: a representation), applied to musical reception.

As a final note on reception, a somewhat paradoxical presumption of the present methodological position shall be highlighted. It is the author's conviction that no matter what one's choices are, in terms of research focus, her reflections and attitudes as scholar do always imply the perspective of the receiver even though a listener/critic figure is not explicitly dealt with in the thesis. A musicologist may or may not be a musician, a composer, and so on, but s/he is *always* a receiver, a listener of musical phenomena. The meanings communicated by the performer's activity, like any other musical process, can only be perceived and interpreted from the perspective of a receiver's agency (hence also a researcher). Musicological research, regardless of the topic, can only avoid *conceptualizing* the notion of musical receiver, but can never avoid displaying its perspective and projections on the events described.

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[12] The following quotation aside, the reader's familiarity with this notion is taken for granted, including its obvious application to a musical context: "To make his text communicative, the author has to assume that the ensemble of codes he relies upon is the same as that shared by his possible reader. The author has thus to foresee a model of the possible reader (hereafter Model Reader) supposedly able to deal interpretively with the expressions in the same way as the author deals generatively with them" (Eco 1979: 7).

1.2.2. Selected Semiotic Studies on Musical Performance

This section is meant as a brief outline of several studies that concern musical performance and its semiotic investigation. The aim is not to sustain or comment on their contents thoroughly, but only bring to the fore some semiotic tools that they offer for examining the art of musical performance. Some of these studies, together with the author's own original models or applications of the existing research (presented below in the remaining chapters of Part 1), shall also constitute the theoretical framework of the present thesis.

The writings on musical performance by one of the well known authors in music semiology, Jean-Jacques Nattiez, are inseparable from his tripartite system of a musical work, with its neutral (or immanent), poietic, and esthesic levels. In his view, any interpretation (as performance and 'reading') involves not one but many symbolic forms, and as such is subject to the analysis of the neutral level, as well as a poietic and an esthesic inquiry. Nattiez's theories have received relatively much attention in performance studies (e.g. Bazzana 1997 is of primary interest for this dissertation), hence the choice was made in this dissertation to focus on the semiotic studies with the yet-unexplored potentials in the field. The same applies to the work of François Delalande whose study on musical gestures (esp. Delalande 1993), obviously, has influenced many a researcher into the performer's art. Theories by other semioticians, such as Raymond Monelle (e.g. 2000 and 2002) or Robert Hatten (e.g. his theory of a musical gesture (Hatten 2004) as applied in Virtanen 2007), have also been fruitfully analyzed in relation to the issues of musical performance.

In what follows, the aim is to briefly introduce a selection of semiotic studies on the art of musical performance, in that they are of a direct interest and influence (or, sometimes, opposition) to the viewpoints demonstrated further in the present work.

1.2.2.1. Roland Barthes' *The Grain of the Voice*: New Perspectives for Writing about Music

There is not much said about music in Roland Barthes' writings, but there is a rather special place attributed to performance among a few of his essays on the signification of music. This occurs in his articles on singing, or voice.

This fact is clearly due to the very subjective circumstances which also had a deep impact on Barthes' personal tastes as concerns the art of the singers.[13]

In his essay "The Grain of the Voice" (1977/1972), which is the focus of the present scrutiny, Barthes analyzes the voice's role in the intersection between textuality and musical vocality. Following Julia Kristeva's concepts of 'geno-text' (i.e., the text in relation to the process of generating signification) and 'pheno-text' (i.e., the text as a fact, a concrete manifestation), Barthes refers to *geno-song* and *pheno-song*. By the former, which foregrounds signifier over signified, Barthes understands "The volume of the singing and speaking voice, the space where significations germinate 'from within language and in its very materiality' […] it is the *diction* of the language" (Barthes 1977: 182). On the other hand, by the latter, Barthes defines the features that belong to "The structure of the language being sung, the rules of the genre, the coded form of the melisma, the composer's idiolect, the style of the interpretation: […] everything in the performance which is in the service of communication, representation, expression, everything […] which forms the tissue of cultural values." (ibid.: 182).

It is worth pointing out that Barthes' writings on the voice, as also his other essays on music, are clearly erotic, and emphasize the primacy of the body – most of all the performer's body – over many other elements, which we are more accustomed to, when talking about music. What we find at the core of his essay is an intrinsically corporeal phenomenon: what he calls the 'grain'. As Barthes himself puts it, "The 'grain' is the body in the voice as it sings, the hand as it writes, the limb as it performs" (ibid.: 188). As such, Barthes continues, some singers (or any other type of performers) possess the grain, some others do not. Hence, the physicality of the voice, the embodied nature of it is the true source of the difference between the rare voice in possession of the grain and the rest that are not. It is interesting though that a voice lacking in any grain, or in signifying weight, fits especially well the demands of an *average* culture:

[13] Barthes studied voice with the French baritone Charles Panzéra, whose status in Barthes' work is rather unique; for Barthes, he is the embodiment of an ineffable vocality beyond meaning, and at the same time a bridge to the popular voice. Panzéra was also the case study of Barthes' most focused discussions on the voice: "The Grain of the Voice" (1972), "Voice" in *The Pleasure of the Text* (1973), and "Music, Voice, Language" (1972).

> Such a culture […] wants art, wants music, provided they be clear, that they 'translate' an emotion and represent a signified (the 'meaning' of a poem); and art that innoculates pleasure (by reducing it to a known, coded emotion) and reconciles the subject to what in music *can be said*: what is said about it, predicatively, by Institution, Criticism, Opinion. (ibid.: 185)

Among Barthes' ideas, the one especially interesting and perhaps rather promising proposal is that of a different type of writing, or thinking, about music which, according to him, could be provided by using bodily notions.[14] According to Barthes, if one takes into consideration the normal practice of music criticism, it can be readily seen that "A work (or its performance) is only ever translated into the poorest of linguistic categories: the adjective" (ibid.: 179). He believes a better option would consist in changing the musical object, the way it presents itself to discourse, in order to alter its level of perception and the point of contact between music and language. Thus, following the scheme of perceiving the 'grain', one does not judge a performance anymore according to the rules of interpretation, the constraints of style (which belong to the *pheno-text/song*), but rather according to the image of the given body. If this approach would be possible, the simple consideration of 'grain' in music could result in a different history of music from the one we are accustomed to (which is, using Barthes' idiom, purely *pheno-textual*).

1.2.2.2. Naomi Cumming: 'Voice', Body, and Other Signs of the 'Self' in Musical Performance

Of all the accounts on musical performance conducted in semiotic terms, the deepest existing up-to-date one was arguably offered by Naomi Cumming in her book *The Sonic Self: Musical Subjectivity and Signification* (2000). Though not presenting any sustained, thorough exegesis of interpreting musical works (although it still offers a rather complete analysis of, for instance, the Adagio of the Bach G minor Sonata for unaccompanied violin), Cumming's essay is chiefly an introduction and demonstration of semiotic tools applied to the field of musical performance, in particular Cumming's philosophical arguments and Peircean theories. The primary

[14] Clearly, this is more suitable to the art of musical performance; although, in his another essay "Musica Practica" (1970), Barthes offers very similar views to the music of Beethoven.

focus of the book is placed within the Western European repertoire of works for violin, with a tangible emphasis on how such concepts as 'voice', 'music', or 'gesture' mean different things in different cultures. In her own words,

> Coherent strands of tradition, in which common terms are used, can be identified as continuing from the eighteenth century until the present day. Identifiable communities in the present can also be readily located, through the study of magazines devoted to the promotion of performance or the criticism of new CDs. Violinists of varying professional standing, and listeners of differing degrees of connoisseurship, all have access to this kind of literature. (Cumming 2000: 17)

Cumming's book is primarily concerned with aspects of subjectivity as they are experienced in music and by musicians. The primary work of the musician, according to Cumming, is to master the subjective potentialities of music itself on a given instrument and to connect them with the requirements of a style, combining the possibilities of a particular musical moment, the way it is *composed*, with his/her own choices of sound, emphasis, and tempo. Something of the musician's own 'character' will be heard in the choices s/he makes, in the patterns of emphasis that constitute a performance style. This is the process that allows the appearance and the manifestation of his/her own 'subjectivity'[15] (ibid.: 9).

Cumming presents her philosophy as – her own words – 'semiotic', in that sounds are not presented merely as acoustic phenomena, but as something capable of carrying connotations, including those human 'subjective' qualities stemming from voice, gestures and actions. Besides, Cumming's insights are importantly influenced by Peirce's pragmaticism and his interest in the play of signs, and by the whole area of feminist music theory (Marion Guck and Marianne Kielian-Gilbert, among others). Perhaps in relation to this, a significant part of Cumming's thinking on the performer's identity is devoted to the bodily signs of the performer – a part that is tackled at length in Chapter 2.2 of the present thesis.

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[15] Cumming actually begins her book by remembering her own experience of taking violin lessons, and gives a revealing picture of her first encounters on what a discovering of emotion as a quality of sound was, or how she became aware that playing the violin was not just 'expressing herself' but working with the demands of a style.

The use of Peirce's theory of signs, in Cumming's essay, is not necessarily literal, particularly the structure he gives to the sign itself, which is here manipulated in order to find a language for describing an area of artistic activity whose creations are neither purely material nor purely mental. Cumming illustrates this structure by reconsidering the practical exercise of producing sound on the violin, then giving it a quality of 'singing' in playing a 'cantilena' style (it must be said that the author restricts herself to only 'singing' or weight of tone/sound, which of course are not the only qualities within performance):

> Bodily movement has to become a vehicle for creating sounds that call to mind something they do not 'literally' possess, the qualities of a singing voice. In Peirce's terms, the material qualities of the sound are the sign vehicle, by which it comes to represent (to be a 'representamen' or 'sign'). The vocal grain it achieves is its 'object', what it stands for. Without interpretation, no material sound produced by a non-human instrument can be heard as a voice, hence, in the third logical position there is an 'interpretant'. It acknowledges two things: the conventions that allow a violin's sound to be heard as vocal in some contexts, and the act of recognition in a particular moment of listening. What transforms a dead, mechanical performance into a 'live' one is the creation of sound as a sign – in this case, a sign for 'singing' in an appropriate tone. (ibid.: 29)

1.2.2.3. Eero Tarasti's Analyses and Conceptualizing of Musical Performance

Among contemporary scholars in the field of semiotics, the one that pays most attention to musical performance, in particular of late within the frames of his existential semiotics theory, is Eero Tarasti. One important element in his semiotic approach to music performance is an attempt to theoretically situate musical performance in the act of signification, i.e. the music as written, played and heard. Some tools taken from Tarasti's existential semiotics, in particular his theory of the performer's subjectivity, are discussed below in the next chapter. Here, however, another one of his performance analyses is to be introduced.

A semiotic analysis of musical enunciation. One particular article by Tarasti is devoted entirely to the analysis of musical performance.[16] Both musical

[16] The first version of this text appears in Tarasti 1994 and is later elaborated and expanded in Tarasti 1995.

pieces and their interpretations, writes Tarasti, are created in order to produce certain musical significations. In this regard, one should search for a method that would enable us to approach the musical interpretation and the musical work itself expressively as a process of the production of meanings. Applying the 'generative course' by Algirdas Julius Greimas and referring to some of his own earlier studies, Tarasti compares and analyzes several different interpretations of the song "Après un rêve" by Gabriel Fauré and Romain Bussine, as well as examines the musico-poetic text itself. The analysis of the text (*énoncé*) draws mainly on the 'disengagement/engagement' level of a generative process with its spatial, temporal, and actorial categories, while the level of modalities is used in the analysis of different interpretations (*enunciations*).

Tarasti's study of interpretations consists of the investigation on how previously analyzed musical enunciate becomes manifest in the performance, and how it changes and becomes 'modalized' therein. As the author states, his aim here was to study "(a) how the same musical enunciate changes character in the act of enunciation; and (b) to what extent a semiotic analysis of the musical enunciate itself [...] might explain differences in various interpretations" (Tarasti 1995: 451). The empirical phase of the comparison of various interpretations (22 different sound recordings in this case) is enriched by conducting a semiotic analysis, which goes further: the author attempts to reveal the particular modal structure of each interpreter (his or her way of modalizing) and to explain this modalization as perhaps one variant of the internal energetico-semiotic paradigm of a composition. Tarasti gives eight parameters of analysis of the musical enunciation which were found to be pertinent after a first listening[17]:

1. ***Tempo***. This feature includes alternations of the general tempo of the interpretation among various performers and also more limited temporal strategies, i.e. retardations and accelerations, within the basic tempo.

[17] A similar systematization of the features of musical performance can be found in the article on performing styles and clichés (1997) by Donatas Katkus: 1) characteristics of the tempo and its changes; 2) types of articulation; 3) enunciation of rhythmical structures; 4) type of dynamics and its fluctuations; 5) modal characteristics of particular episodes; 6) rendering of the architectonics of work's textures; 7) level of the coherency of structural elements; and 8) type of narrativity (Katkus 1997: 177).

2. ***Instrumentality/speechlikeness*** of the voice concerns a question whether a singer takes into account the demands of the text, i.e. the comprehensibility of the words, and to what extent s/he focuses on the recitation of the poem.
3. The use of ***vibrato*** (concerning both singers and instrumentalists), as Tarasti says, is not at all arbitrary and unconscious, but a deliberate device which is economically distributed to different sections of the piece according to what is needed. On the other hand, vibrato is expressively a musical sign for the modality of 'Will' in music.
4. ***Respiration*** or phrasing is also an important stylistic feature which creates the impression of continuity/discontinuity, according to the markings in the text, or to the performers' own aesthetics.
5. ***Dynamic change***. Dynamic levels are either distinguished abruptly following so-called terraced dynamics, or there is a gliding between different degrees, thus yielding crescendos and diminuendos. In this respect, the deviations from instructions written in the score can be very great.
6. ***Glissandi***, as Tarasti writes, constitute a means of expression and a semiotic process of their own in the interpretation. The use of glissando can be considered another energetic means (as Ernst Kurth regarded the vibrato as a sign for need to increase the energy), although the kinetic or modal value of a glissando is rather varied and difficult to determine.
7. ***Phenomenal qualities***, i.e. the softness/hardness, lightness/gravity, of the voice itself (or – the very personal touch of pianist, for instance) can also function as signs that catalyze a semiotic process. This device can express the distance of a subject from an object in the process of musical signification. According to Tarasti, precisely this spiritual, inner energy that a singer or a player gives to the work forms the kernel of the *modalization* of the musical enunciate. It is the semiotic moment of the interpretation in the true sense of the word, and is built upon the 'will' expressed by the composer in the score as a kind of '*surmodalization*'.
8. The construction of the ***global form*** is the last important dimension in the analysis of an interpretation provided in Tarasti's article. It has to do with the construction of a musical piece as a semiotic object proper. The whole of a composition is dominated by a certain textual strategy

> of enunciation, and it is precisely at this level that the interpreters themselves manifest their own view of the fundamental isotopies of a musical work, a kind of narrative space, which is articulated through the musical text.
>
> (Tarasti 1995: 451–455)

An important point for Tarasti is the assumption that a musical performance cannot be studied without a prior examination of the inner kinetic energy of the work itself. In the study of performance, thus, he suggests analyzing the score as a primary focus, and then how the performer's modalizations accord to it. Admittedly, this is the viewpoint of many a researcher into classical music performance (e.g. Katkus, when presenting the aforementioned categories, also holds the view that a more profound analysis of the performance is by no means possible without the analysis of the particular piece, to which he adds that the features of the musical performance cannot be viewed separately from the broader stylistic context of the work).

In the next chapters of this dissertation, theoretical models (as well as the multiple case studies that follow them) shall be presented that offer precisely the perspective of analyzing the art of musical performance while de-emphasizing the importance of the opus and focusing on the semiotic density of performance as a phenomenon.

1.3. Semiotic Identity of a Performer: Endo- and Exo-Signs in the Art of Interpreting Music

Musical semiosis (also in musical performance), like all sign activity, is affected by many cultural, social, and individual factors. The artistic identity, interpretative choices, mental and physical selfhood of a performer are determined by various circumstances, including natural qualities, personal background, stylistic requirements of a musical work, constraints of a particular tradition, etc. In the present chapter of the dissertation, the existential-semiotics approach to the study of musical performance art is offered, so as to show that analysis of numerous both specifically performance-concerned as well as socio-musicological issues can be significantly expanded and enriched by approaching them from this perspective.

Certain key concepts of semiotics function well and continue to be increasingly employed in the performance-related musicological research.[18] In particular, the concepts that can be considered a potential broadening of the discourses on music performance practices and the new meanings created by them are those of the Semiotic subject, the artistic *Umwelt*[19], authenticity[20], or examination of the Semiotic self. Whereas the theoretical models in the next chapters are meant to discuss primarily (although not

18 Among others, see Clarke 1998 and Cumming 2000 (as discussed in Chapter 1.2), as well as Cook (forthcoming). Eero Tarasti, who during the last decade has been developing an approach which he names *existential and transcendental analysis* (Tarasti 2012a: xi), has included the questions of performer's subjectivity into his most recurrent topics (which are most explicitly presented in Tarasti 2005 and 2012b). In the course of making of the present thesis, also some colleagues at the University of Helsinki have started tackling similar issues, as, e.g., Dario Martinelli on popular music performance, as manifested in Martinelli 2010a, or Grisell Macdonel's work on double bass performance in the light of existential semiotics, in her Master's thesis *An Existential Semiotic Approach to Musical Performance* (2009).

19 The concept of *Umwelt* belongs to an Estonian-German biologist Jakob von Uexküll; it was also widely used in the work of Thomas A. Sebeok and Martin Heidegger. *Umwelt* is seen as a semiotic world of any organism (as the concept was conceived in the field of biology and biosemiotics), which encompasses any aspects of the surrounding environment that have meaning to that very organism. Significantly, while interacting with the environment, the organism is constantly re-creating and transforming its *Umwelt*.

20 The term 'authenticity' is meant here not in its sense related to the early music revival and the authenticity movement in the field of musical performance, but rather as a philosophical-semiotic term as used by Tarasti and Martinelli, among others, mostly

exclusively) the relation between the performance and the work, the one to appear below is concerned, if one may say so, with the performer's relation to the performance itself. In short, the issue of a performer's subjectivity shall be discussed herein.

Several authors in the field of semiotics have been dealing with the concept of the Semiotic self[21], which consists of two essential aspects; namely, an inward and an outward side within the subject. This duality has been expressed in different ways by different scholars. We have, for instance, the 'I' (self as such) and 'Me' ('I' in the social context) as theorized by George Herbert Mead; *Moi* and *Soi* by French authors (Ricoeur, Sartre, Fontanille use these concepts in their writings); Interoceptive/Exteroceptive by Greimas and Courtés; the Controlling, deeper self versus the Critical self (Charles S. Peirce); and the Bergsonian differentiation between 'deep' and 'superficial' ego.

Specifically in the domain of the semiotics of performing music, Naomi Cumming, who offered deep reflections upon what might constitute a performer's identity, speaks in this context – again – of 'an outward and an inward face'. On the outward side, Cumming sees the perceptible result of an individual's patterned choices within a social domain, those characteristic manners of forming sound or gesture that distinguish him or her from the 'crowd' – a personal 'style' (Cumming 2000: 10). Perceiving the selfhood as an intrinsically social, interactive, and mobile experience, the author writes:

> It is when I become aware of the "outward" face of my musical identity, as a pattern of actions, that I can begin to question how I am constrained in my performance. What is the ideology that governs me? What is the domain of my choice? How free am I? These are musical questions, and yet they are an allegory of broader questions about the expressivity of social life. Noticing those sounds I "cannot" make, I begin to gain awareness of those scarcely articulate "beliefs" that present themselves as inhibitions to a convincing performance of a work. I see that my musical inhibitions and social ones are not entirely unconnected. The "outward" identity, of choices audible in sound, reflects a pattern of belief, desire, and inhibition that constitutes an "inner self" – what it is to be "me". (ibid.: 11)

in relation to ethical choices in culture. For more on this cf. Chapter 2.4 of the present study.

21 Originally introduced by Thomas A. Sebeok back in 1979.

In the present study, the concept of the Semiotic self is applied to the analysis of the balance between subjectivity and culturally-determined standards in the art of musical performance. In addition, it is combined here with the code, or principle, of *Me-Tone* (*Ich-Ton*), borrowed from Jakob von Uexküll. By determining the characteristics – identity and individuality – of a particular organism, the concept of the *Me-Tone* suggests further revelations about the performer's art. Approaching musical performance from a semiotic perspective, we assume that every performer possesses one or several characteristic features, a kind of 'semantic gesture'[22], which dominates his or her interpretations and distinguishes them from other performances. In addition to these immanent personal qualities, one is nevertheless significantly influenced by all the social and cultural background that forms the external, or social, identity of an artist, who may accept only some environmental norms while refusing, or resisting, others.[23] Thus, a continual dialogue is established. Consequently, the semiotic model developed in the present chapter combines both: the inner self and the outward identity, the spheres of a performer's *Moi* and *Soi*, the individual and collective subjectivities. We thus speak of two kinds of signs: endo-signs and exo-signs, inner and outer characteristic features that dominate one's interpretative choices and that constitute the semiotic identity of a performer.

To give these reflections a more structured shape, a semiotic model is employed here, to illustrate the inner and outer influences, individuality and standards underlying the creative work of a performer. The scheme in Figure 1.2 is elaborated from Eero Tarasti's semiotic square[24] of a performer's subjectivity, based on four logical cases in the light of Hegel and Fontanille.[25]

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22 This broad and miscellaneous concept is used here rather freely. The term of a 'semantic gesture' belongs to the main figure of the Prague structuralism, Jan Mukařovský, and denotes (in the analysis of the individual aspects of a literary work) the uniqueness and entity of a literary sign.

23 For more on this topic see Tarasti's reflections on the semiotics of resistance, in Tarasti 2009.

24 Due to its wide usage and familiarity, here, the semiotic square is employed merely as a schematized illustration, without its further theoretical explications.

25 Tarasti's theory of a subject is developed in the light of Hegelian logic, namely his categories of *an-sich-sein* (being-in-itself) and *für-sich-sein* (being-for-itself), which (as well as their expansion in Tarasti's work – 'being-in-myself' and 'being-for-myself') are altogether renounced in this study due to a different theoretical emphasis. For a

The way it is seen in this dissertation, the *Moi* of the performer's self is intrinsically related to the Greimassian internal (endogenic) modalities Will and Can, while the *Soi* part of one's identity is reflected by the external (exogenic) modalities Know and Must; thus, encompassed are all the spheres and categories through which the performer's art is communicated.

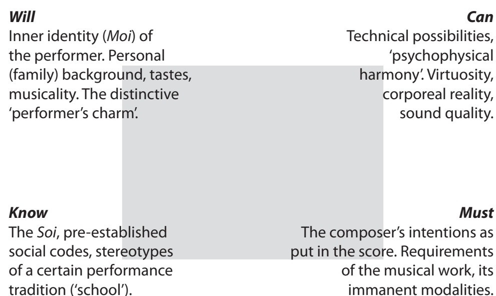

Figure 1.2. Individuality and standards in the art of a performer (after EeroTarasti's theory of subjectivity)

1. Greimassian modality of 'Will'[26] means the inner identity (*Moi*) of a performer. This may include personal (family) background, artistic tastes, or spiritual beliefs. It also encompasses the person's musicality, together with a distinctive 'performer's charm', or charisma.
2. 'Can'[27] embraces the performer's technical capabilities, 'psychophysical harmony'. Also included here are virtuosity, corporeal reality, and a certain sound quality as realized in performance.

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broader explanation of these philosophical and semiotic concepts cf. Tarasti 2000, 2005, 2012a and 2012b.

[26] Modalities of Will (*vouloir*), Can (*pouvoir*), Know (*savoir*) and Must (*devoir*), offered by Greimas in the field of linguistics, were for the first time applied in musicology by Tarasti. Modalities provide music with semantic meaning. In that they can be *endogenic*, i.e. inherent to the immanent meanings of the music, or *exogeni*c, that is, 'activated' from outside depending on how the music is interpreted and performed. While talking about the composer's work, Tarasti explains the modality of 'Will' as follows: *vouloir* appears in, say, Beethoven's sonata in those episodes where the composer is particularly heroic, that is, the way he wants to be (here and below – from Tarasti's Musical Semiotics seminars at the University of Helsinki, year 2005).

[27] 'Can' is an inner force, the possibility to express one's Will. In composition, that would be the author's creative power, compositional ideas.

3. 'Know'[28], which enters the *Soi* side of a performer, consists of pre-established social codes, stereotypes of a given performance tradition (school); usually, according to certain standards, some manners of playing are rated higher than others.
4. 'Must'[29] means the composer's intentions as put in the score, the work's immanent modalities. It is something called for by the requirements of a musical work: the subjective potentialities of its style, without which, as put by Cumming (2000: 26), the work could not 'live'.

Further in this study, the present model will be used in several analytical contexts as applied to various aspects of the performer's art, such as a performer's corporeal identity (Chapter 2.2), the impact of sound recording technologies to the art of musical performance (Chapter 2.5), and the concept of a 'school' (Chapter 2.6 and Chapter 3.5, the latter with the application on the twentieth century Russian pianists interpreting Beethoven's music). Admittedly, it is useful when one needs to conceptualize in a structured manner even the most complex phenomena of musical performance art and their development. Leaving its further specifications for the next chapters of this study, and with the aim of deepening the theoretical aspect of a semiotic investigation of musical performance, below an elaboration on Gino Stefani's theory of musical competence in relation to musical performance is offered.

[28] 'Know', in composition, means how the composer masters his/her compositional technique, and how well s/he is capable of employing the knowledge (of certain rules, for instance) while composing.

[29] 'Must' is the genre-determined and other rules, norms, etc. that the composer must follow in his/her work.

1.4. Gino Stefani's Theory of Musical Competence as Applied to the Study of Musical Performance

In Gino Stefani's model, it is argued that musical competence exists at various levels, not only the 'strictly musical' or the 'musical expert' ones, and that it intervenes in the construction of any discourse around music: from casual listening practices to professional composition. This model was generated as a result of Stefani's conviction (repeated on several occasions, starting from Stefani 1976) that music should not be studied *in se*, but rather

> […] in the most comprehensible of ways, without excluding anything, and at the same time paying attention to the heterogeneousness of the diverse musical experiences, practices and ideas. Given this assumption, the principle is: the musical *sense* is extended over a space that goes from the most general human experience to the most specifically artistic one. (Stefani 1999: 15)[30]

Stefani specifically points out that several human categories can construct musical sense. The intention is to provide at the same time for a) the existence of several forms of appropriation on the musical phenomenon, and b) the theoretical importance of each of these forms, refusing, for instance, to ignore very general aspects that a traditionally-minded musicologist would probably label as secondary or irrelevant. According to Stefani, indeed, any typology of *user* of the musical phenomenon (from the so-called amateur to the so-called expert, from the listener to the performer, etc.) has a certain musical competence, different from each other but all in a way useful for analytical purposes, exactly because it constructs one of the many possible discourses.

It is possible to set a similar target with musical performance. The hypothesis that is intended to defend here is that performance is a coherent series of processes and gestures that covers the whole sphere of a musician's

[30] Given that the majority of Stefani's early works, including his most important accounts on musical competence, have not been available in English so far, the Italian originals were consulted for the purposes of this study. The author is grateful to Dario Martinelli for his competent assistance (not merely as a native Italian speaker, but, also, as a former pupil of Stefani) in providing accurate English translations to the passages cited herein.

cognition, including aspects that transcend music as such. The actual goal, following Stefani, "is not properly music, but *musical experience* in its entirety, before any articulation and a distinction between subject and object. […] Within a semiotic perspective, experience is a production of sense *on* and *with* music" (Stefani 2009: 19).

The idea of 'musical competence' that was hinted within (ethno)musicology by authors such as John Blacking (1973) and was already circulating in linguistics (e.g., Ruwet 1972) and semiotics (e.g., Eco 1964), was developed by Stefani into a recognizable model that indeed encompasses all such processes and gestures. Musical competence, argues Stefani, is articulated on five levels, i.e. the so-called *general codes*, *social practices*, *musical techniques*, *styles* and *works*.[31] It is important to underline (and that is particularly applicable to performance, as shall be seen throughout this dissertation) that these levels do not work in isolation, but are in fact complementary to each other, and coexist in various shapes and forms. There is no such a thing as a performance *exclusively* based on, say, social practices, without taking into consideration the other four levels. Such situations exist only theoretically: what is more realistic (and shall be offered in further examples) is to spot those cases where one of the five levels *dominates* over the others, or at least emerges more distinctively. Stefani himself (1985: 93–100) offers several possible ways to read his model (five schemes and a total of thirteen applications of them), and in all cases the interpenetration of each element is a primary feature. Without going deeply into the details of these schemes, we can perhaps pick the fifth one as representative of the way it is intended here to apply Stefani's model into research on musical performance art (see Figure 1.3). In it, "The five levels are equidistant and topologically equivalent in relation to an ideal central point [such a point obviously being the musical experience]" (Stefani 1985: 97).

With this in mind, an attempt shall be made to illustrate the model in relation to Stefani's original formulation and to some possible application

[31] In order to clarify the correct placement of all the key-words in the present argument, it is perhaps necessary to specify that the first step is the musical *experience* (i.e., the meeting between a subject and an object: say, a performer touching the piano), which generates a musical *sense* (of different types: an emotional response, a musicological evaluation, etc.), which in turn is organized into a musical *competence* (i.e., one or more of Stefani's levels), and which ultimately is manifested and shared in musical *discourses*.

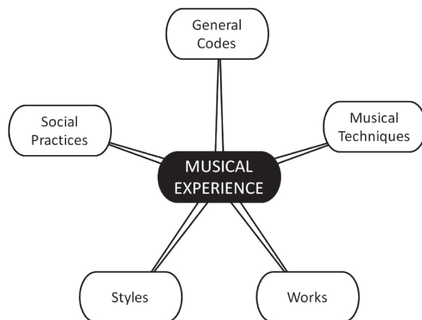

Figure 1.3. Scheme 5 in Stefani's model of musical competence (Stefani 1985)

within the field of piano performance (the latter, as previously mentioned, being picked among those instances where one level is more tangible than the other four):

1) **General codes**; Stefani defines them as "sensorial-perceptive schemes (spatial, tactile, dynamic, kinetic, etc.)" and "logical schemes, that is, mental processes of simple or complex nature" (Stefani 1985: 86). Some aspects in the musical experience (hence, also in performance) pertain to the bio-anthropological nature of the subject, and, as such, have a universal component: general codes investigate an area of musical discourse that transcend cultures and rather typify the subject as a human being. The performer plays, and while s/he plays an array of extra-musical processes more often studied and interpreted by kinesics and proxemics than by musicology (such as non-verbal communication by the performer, facial expressions, muscular tone, etc.) take place. Such processes are not music, yet they are part of it, and it is virtually impossible to separate them from other manifestations of performance (e.g., following the score) that are more intrinsically musical. When one thinks of piano performance, there are even cases where the extra-musical processes are so prominent that they are liable to being criticized for getting in the way of the music itself, and ultimately damaging the purity of the performance. One of the most prominent cases is Keith Jarrett's unusual postures, body movements and – perhaps most disturbingly – vocalizations:

> Critical accounts of Jarrett's pianism set up a hierarchical opposition between a pure acoustic signal from the piano and the adulterated sound resulting once the human voice is superimposed. An intruder, the voice is perceived as a separate layer, or, as the critic Owen Cordle puts it, "a singing over." Here the preposition "over" – with its attendant spatial connotations – constitutes no empty journalistic jargon. Rather, it suggests the existence of an ideal space, the sound of the piano, that can and, in the critics' opinion, should be contemplated without interference. Their position is predicated on the concept that improvisational creation is an internal process of which the piano constitutes its most intimate (i.e., authentic) expression. We may call this internal process cognitive or imaginative. (Moreno 1999: 77)

However radical this instance may appear (it is indeed the intention to provide here examples that *stand out*, in terms of their focus on each of Stefani's levels), what is clear is that the traditional critic perceives the existence of a gap between the strictly musical 'pace' and any other space (vocal and corporeal, in this case), while at the same time it is very obvious that such pianists as Jarrett (or, to provide a famous example from art music performance, Glenn Gould, with his hums and conductor's gestures) do not see a separation between the traditional-musical gesture and other forms of *performance*. In actual fact, the gap does not exist altogether, even in cases where corporeal participation is much less ostentatious than Jarrett or Gould, simply because it is an essential part of the performer, who – evidently – cannot transcend his/her biology just because s/he is playing music.[32]

Jarrett, moreover, is a perfect case to explain what Stefani means by "sensorial-perceptive" and "logical" schemes, since, according to above-quoted Jairo Moreno, Jarrett's vocalizations constitute a connection between the two categories:

> What are we then to make of Jarrett's "singing" musical lines simultaneously with the piano? I believe that by this procedure he reveals the presence of a conscious thought process. He makes explicit the fact that imagining sound and structuring it around the chord progressions and melodies of the songs he improvises on entails embodying it in mind, soul, and body (here, body signifies the voice). The sound of his voice unleashes what in the critics' minds should be a metaphysical presence. (Moreno 1999: 79)

[32] The Finnish pianist Olli Mustonen may be mentioned among such examples. Mustonen has been repeatedly, and very harshly, criticized for his over-emphasized gestures while playing. However disturbing or not-always-pertinent those gestures may be, it is rather evident that a person like Mustonen cannot in fact control or suppress his corporeal identity while onstage.

2) **Social practices**; "The production of musical sense occurs through codes that stem from social practices. It is due to this that the beginning of a classical piece may be constructed/perceived as a ceremonial entrance or the beginning of a speech; that the articulation of a melody may remind of a spoken utterance […]; that so many rhythms and meters in music recall similar patterns in poetry or dance; and so forth. It is within this network of sense that one ends up constructing, more or less systematically, the relations among the different practices of a society" (Stefani 1985: 87). In other words, working on the level of social practices means working on different forms of cultural discourse in music. Needless to say, an important component in music is its social significance, and obviously this applies to the particular case of musical performance, too. A performer's choices, attitudes, approach to interpretation, may and do say something about the community, or communities, s/he belongs/refers/addresses to, with their habits, values, dynamics and myths. An appropriate example is that of national identities. National schools in piano interpretation is a subject that shall be tackled on several occasions during this dissertation (including the level "Styles" of this model), but apart from developing specific stylistic orientations as a result of national traditions in teaching and playing, performers may also display other dimensions of national identity that have more to do with the identity as such, in the cultural, geographical, social and historical senses. The question (not only in relation to musical performance, of course) was brought to brand new attention in post-colonialist studies, in innumerable cases. Tarasti discusses the Sibelius cult and influence on Finnish music (and culture altogether) in terms of its centrality and unavoidableness, "Even giving up the ideology of national togetherness and taking a critical position towards certain regressive phenomena of Finnish contemporary culture" (Tarasti 1999: 222); Leith Davis (2005) finds the crucial catalyst for developing Irish national identity between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the discussions and texts on Irish music; Kofi Agawu (2003) tries to set the record straight on what Western colonialist discourse has superficially labelled "African music", discussing in detail the various African *musics* and identities; and so forth.

In relation specifically to musical performance, we shall later have the chance to discuss how vivid a sense of 'Lithuanianness' can be in Lithuanian performers: in the way they play, in the repertoire they choose, in the contexts they operate, etc. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis' centrality

in the Lithuanian music scene can be described in similar terms as Tarasti does for Sibelius in Finland, or Gerard Béhague, Lisa Peppercorn (and Tarasti himself) do for Villa-Lobos ("I don't use folklore, I am the folklore" was his famous motto for introducing his music in Europe). As later will be illustrated, there are 'tendencies' in Lithuanian performers to approach the interpretation of Čiurlionis' pieces as a quest for the representation of certain *intrinsically Lithuanian* qualities, such as sincerity, simplicity, spirituality, and similar.

3) **Musical techniques**; This level includes "theories, methods, procedures that are specific and (sometime) exclusive of music-making (instruments, scales, compositional forms, etc.)" (Stefani 1999: 15). In other words, one is facing music as an idiom provided with its syntax, its grammar and, in general, its rules. These are of course many and of the most varied nature (qualities, parameters, typologies…), which is why Stefani considers this level the most 'heterogeneous' of the whole model (cf. ibid.: 18). To an extent, the technical aspects of music constitute the most typical type of discourse occurring among professional performers and/or scholars[33]: it certainly is the most typical discourse stemming from the traditional notion of musical interpretation, where the focal (and sometimes exclusive) point seems to be such aspects as dynamic indications in a score, sound differences between one instrument and another, the presence/absence/necessity of embellishments, etc. As such, this level does probably not require a great degree of exemplification. We are familiar with such notions as 'virtuosity', and its changes in perception over history (from the superstardom of virtuosi in the nineteenth century to the current idea of virtuosity as a compulsory requirement for a performer); we know of pianists obsessed with a particular instrument (refusing to play on anything else, even of the same model/brand); we are aware of peculiar technical expedients that ended up being very fashionable among performers (such as Gould's trademark *non legato* interpretations of Bach, which influenced entire generations of pianists), and so forth.

[33] Although Stefani himself warns that it would be a wrong assumption to think that *only* professionals possess a competence based on this level. The average music-lover, too, can be 'acculturized' in musical techniques, although not necessarily 'alphabetized' in them, as the professional obviously is (cf. Stefani 1999: 18–19).

4) **Styles**; A style, says Stefani, is "a set of formal-technical characteristics that shape musical objects and events in relation to a given epoch, environment, person; and by consequence trace – in music – agents, processes and contexts of production" (Stefani 1999: 19). This is the level of discourse rooted in between musical techniques (in that it is primarily forged by them) and the specific details about a particular opus (which are consequent to it). Performance techniques of a particular historical period, or geographical area (e.g., the notion of school, not anymore in cultural sense, but in specifically stylistic terms), or even a composer in terms of his/her whole repertoire (finding thus certain constants in the way s/he wants his/her music to be performed) belong to this area of the discussion.

In the specific of our topic, and similarly to Musical Techniques, there is no doubt that Styles receive the attention of the most common (and/or traditional) discourses on musical performance. Styles are recognizable at least as 'individual' units (e.g., when a performer possesses a style that can be clearly recognized as his/her own), 'collective' units (e.g., when the imprinting of a school emerges) and 'inter-textual' units (i.e., in the degree of a *dialogue* established with the composition and the composer's will – an aspect that shall be deepened in the next level of the model). In the vast majority of the cases, a style is a combination of such units. Such an exuberant personality as Ivo Pogorelich is certainly recognizable as an *individual unit* (in a league of his own), yet the enormous influence exercised by his teacher (and later wife) Aliza Kezeradze and the Liszt-Siloti school has always been acknowledged (by himself, first of all) as integral part of his musicianship. Finally, although many of his critics would find it extremely challenging to agree, Pogorelich is actually convinced that his eccentric performances (that of late are more and more often related to as having generated "from *weirdly fascinating* to *just plain weird*", according to *The New York Times*' critic Anthony Tommasini) are in reality constructed "to serve the composer."[34]

[34] On the CD booklet from the famous 1980s Chopin-Ravel-Prokofiev recording (DG CD 463 678-2), the pianist himself is quoted: "I would never hurt or harm a composer. People tell me I alter things, deal in distortion for, no doubt, vainglorious reasons, but that is precisely what I do not do. My aim is to clarify and refine, to enliven and vivify what is there." One may suspect – having in mind his latest performances – that at least the recent views of Pogorelich are of a different nature, however, in 2013, the pianist confirmed to an interviewer: "As an artist, the best thing you can do is to be a loyal servant to a composer." (Pogorelich, in Boissard 2013).

5) **Works**; This level focuses on performance techniques that are typical and specific of a given opus, in itself and as distinguished from other works of the same author/historical period/form, etc. With his definition of this type of competence, based on the "repetition and reproduction of an identity" (Stefani 1985: 92), and most of all his slightly iconoclast comment to it ("this is normally the lowest degree of sense production", ibid.), Stefani already hints the problematicity of this level, when it comes to musical performance. If General Codes and Social Practices are topics that performance studies (and many other fields of inquiry in musicology) are increasingly interested in including in their paradigm; and if Musical Techniques and Styles are the most easily recognizable territories for any discussion around performance, that of Works remains the most ambivalent issue, and the cause for the most animated debates. What is the actual relationship between composers and performers, and between opus and performance? The fact itself that the various definitions of 'performance' oscillate among a variety of meanings that include 'interpretation', 're-creation', 'translation', 'delivery', 'execution', 'mediation', is only one of the many instances of this ambivalence.

At any rate, the relation of performance and the work deserves a discussion on its own and shall be addressed in more detail both below in this chapter, and, even more explixitly, in Part 3 of this study. It is, however, to be repeated that this problematic issue is not considered the main target of the present dissertation (and, in the author's conviction, of performance-oriented research in general), and the intention is in fact that of making a specific point in exploring aspects of performance that all in all transcend the work. The author's goal, in this particular context, is not to contribute to the debate, but rather to matter-of-factly frame the problem for the purposes of the illustration of Stefani's model. With that in mind, the level of Works certainly constitutes the environment where performer and composer are most closely connected. Pertinent to this form of competence are the specific indications (or lack thereof) that a work has for a performer; the degree of autonomy/freedom that a performer is given (or decides to take) in executing a given work; the special bond that may be established between a particular repertoire and a particular performer (e.g., when a composer writes with a specific performer in mind, or when – centuries after the work was written – a given performer delivers the 'ultimate' version of it, i.e. it becomes 'canonic'); the limitations or the extentions of the

work in relation to a performative space (e.g., Ravel's Piano Concerto for the Left Hand in D major, or several contemporary works that require the playing of unusual parts of the piano), etc.

In the economy of the present dissertation, this model will serve the function of a solid background to the author's analyses, rather than being specifically applied to one or more concrete instances. It should appear obvious that all the cases examined in this study show traces of one or more of the five levels of competence, often resulting in a balanced combination of all of them.

1.5. A Theoretical Model for Semiotic Analysis of Musical Performance

Departing from the above-mentioned Stefani's model, and setting the aim for this study to develop a semiotic theory of musical performance, what follows is an attempt to present yet another possible model for such an analysis. As can already be detected from the previous considerations, a semiotic performance analysis presupposes a particularly wide range of issues to be addressed, including the social context of the performance, the nature of the performance itself, and the performer's intentions as well as the composer's directions and the listener's experiences. This very model below, however, first and foremost is designed in order to provide the answer to a research question like this: When we encounter a musical performance in any concert of current Western musical culture, or from the sound and/or video recordings, what meanings are being communicated – produced and received – there? And how, then, does the semiotic approach contribute to a deeper understanding of the art of musical performance?

To begin with, while dealing with musical performance (and here the term 'hearing' is consciously avoided, because there are multiple channels of perception involved in this case), a semiotic study should be able to differentiate those semantic and pragmatic elements that stem from the musical work itself from those deriving from the performer's input. Accordingly, it should be possible to extract the meanings emerging from the opus *in se*, that is, the modalities of the musical work; the meanings produced by the performance – for instance, how a performer modalizes the piece, what kinds of effort produce certain new significations; and the elements that operate in the activity of a performer as a cultural figure.

Figure 1.4 below presents a theoretical model following the tradition of musical semiotics that, through Eero Tarasti, stems from the theories of Algirdas Julius Greimas. By employing the Greimassian square and taking into account the above-mentioned considerations on musical performance, we may posit four types of logical relations between performance and musical work: P–W, P–Non-W, Non-P–W, Non-P–Non-W.

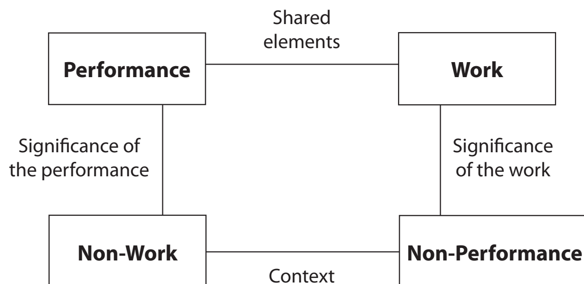

Figure 1.4. Four types of logical relations between performance and musical work

1) Within the duality Performance–Work[35] we can trace the combined, or shared, elements. These are signs that stem from both the performance and the work; they are produced out of the interaction between composer, score, and performer. For instance, among many other things, a certain type of gesturality is determined by the piece and realized by a performer.[36] In contemporary music, there are many types of compositional practice which presuppose very close collaboration between a composer and a per-

[35] A somewhat reductionist concept of the 'work' employed herein, primarily as denoting the message coded by the composer, is admittedly problematic. As we see from numerous examples, musical semioticians offer a much more holistic vision of music and consider the work as something encompassing creation, interpretation and perception; also philosophers (such as Ingarden 1966; Goodman 1968; or Kivy 1993, among others) have been pondering upon this issue, often coming to the conclusion that the work is a changing entity; even in traditional musicology it has been stated that "fixing a musical work through notation is not sufficient for constructing the notion of a work" (Dahlhaus, quoted in Nattiez 1990: 70). However, in conventional musicological analysis, the musical work may often be reduced to its structural, written-down properties. Hence, for the sake of the model's simplicity, it is reasonable to limit the meaning of the 'work' concept to its score-based elements and use these two terms as equivalent, since in most cases the score is our only source as to what the work is, and especially because in Western art music it is after all the score that guarantees the work's identity through its multiple realizations in sound. The point can be summed up in Nattiez's claim that "In the Western tradition, the thing that ensues from the composer's creative act is the score; the score is the thing that renders the work performable and recognizable as an entity, and enables the work to pass through the centuries" (ibid.: 71).

[36] This type of performer's signification, the 'composed gestures' that are embedded in the score and actualized by a performer, is thoroughly discussed in Virtanen 2007.

former, or even require from the latter a particularly imaginative input. Such techniques as aleatory or graphic notation can go so far in this direction that it becomes not very clear anymore whether we are still in the Performance–Work field, or it is the performer who becomes the primary author of the piece.

An interesting situation which should also be ascribed to this realm occurs when a composer develops a close relation with a particular performer, and their collaboration brings forth new artistic fruit. Some well-known instances in music history include the artistic tandems of Luciano Berio and Cathy Berberian, Alfred Schnittke and Gidon Kremer, or, expanding the boundaries of the genre, John Cage and Merce Cunningham.

Also belonging to this category of relations are certain prevailing stylistic requirements, standardized performances, and performance clichés related to the creative output of a specific composer. Before reaching our days, a musical work from the past accumulates, in addition to its internally implicated meanings, all the performance traditions of its history. A student who begins learning a Beethoven sonata cannot approach it without being aware of the passionate-dramatic cliché of its previous performances, just as the soft-melancholic Chopin reaches us not only from his scores, but also from existing recordings.

2) The Performance–Non-Work relation has to do with significations that are purely due to the performer: his/her personal characteristics, creative individuality, corporeality, imagination, etc. It is the above-mentioned semantic gesture which will prevail in all the interpretations by this performer and which permits him or her to be distinguished from other musicians. Some aspects belonging to this realm might be called the 'performer's theatre': emotions conveyed onstage, bodily signs, as well as creation of setting, tension, and atmosphere. Some artists, surely, have more to offer in this respect than others. A study of, for instance, Glenn Gould's creativity, writings on music, media work, physicality, psychology and ideology can be conducted without even opening a score of the pieces the pianist performed.

3) Work–Non-Performance: Significance that is purely due to the work. These are parameters determined explicitly by the score (which, it is suggested here, are a rather tiny part of the whole process). Other than the brief remark above, there is no intention to venture in this thesis into the

well-documented philosophical discussion about what a musical work is, and how little or much of it we can perceive from the musical notation. Even if we ascribe the work's primary signification to its notated structure, there are some aspects of the score that can be approached with various levels of flexibility by a performer, such as tempo and dynamics. In current Western music performance practice, it is normally only pitch, and perhaps durations and rhythms, that are adhered to with exactitude. It follows from this that even certain parameters and requirements of the score might be placed in the first (rather than the third) block of relations, that is, Performance–Work: let us remember the practice of Baroque ornamentation, for instance, which clearly illustrates how certain elements are dependent on the consensus within a given culture (hence their attribution to the various blocks of the model may vary accordingly).

Here, some examples can be mentioned of situations in which the composer's requirements are so strict that there is no ground at all for a performer to input his/her own creativity. First and foremost, that applies to tape compositions (computer performance is, after all, a *performance*), but not only: most serialist works, for instance, provide performers with particularly rigid constructions and exact performance parameters, with very little or no room for interpretation. However, even in 'mainstream' performance practices, certain composers, especially at the beginning of the twentieth century (Stravinsky and Ravel come first to mind, but by no means were they the only ones of their kind), were profoundly hostile to the idea of performative freedom, and required performers to reproduce their work faithfully.

4) Non-Work–Non-Performance. This side of relations includes context-related or even ideological matters, such as romanticized performance, the *Werktreue* ideal (even though the idea as such is inseparable from the 'Work' realm), the requirements of the authenticity movement, etc. It is to be noted that any performance is culturally and socially mediated; that is to say, no performance, be it a live concert, a recording or any other representation, exists in isolation from the surrounding culture. If what we have thus far discussed is a *performance-as-text* (where text is purely 'musical' action: performance and/or musical work), here we enter the realm of *performance-as-paratext*. This includes, for instance, those socio-cultural elements surrounding the text that normally support one's comprehension

of it, offering clues, alternative interpretations, etc., while not being the musical action itself. Such socio-cultural matters as notions of schools and traditions, styles and identities, repertoire choices, competitions, different media, marketing, image constructing, verbal communication of and about the performers – all these constitute a significant part of the phenomenon of musical performance. Important also to the whole process are the institutions through and in which the Western classical music tradition is disseminated, performed, and listened to today.[37]

It is relevant to point out that all these aspects are interrelated. As in many other cases, it is impossible to have only four sharp angles and no gray areas in which several of the elements can fit. For instance, to name just one such aspect, the performer's relation to the instrument, which in musical anthropology is considered an extension of one's body, is a very important corporeal experience to a performer, and thus could easily be placed in the P–NonW realm; and there are multiple aspects of that relation to discuss. However, an instrument might also have an important social or indeed ideological role, especially in the case of the piano, say, in the nineteenth century[38], and this aspect of instrumentation can be ascribed to the NonW–NonP field of the semiotic relations.

In addition to this, it is in the nature of the work–performance relation itself to exist as a multifaceted dialogue. Any of the four combinations suggested may be *dominant*, but hardly *isolated*. In other words, if it is true that Glenn Gould's renditions of Mozart's sonatas or Brahms' Piano Concerto No. 1, due to the whole philosophy behind those performances, qualify first and foremost as a 'Performance–Non-Work' affair, it is also true that they are not totally independent from the other three corners of the square, whereas the relatively 'obedient' treatment that Gould makes of Bach or even Beethoven, for instance, tends much more towards the 'Work–Performance' or the 'Work–Non-Performance' dimension (although that is only very relatively applicable to artists of Gould's kind).

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[37] For a condensed account on the contextual, socio-cultural and ideological elements of musical performance, see Navickaitė-Martinelli 2007 and 2010b. Particularly the latter article discusses at length the relations of the transformations of musical performance art during the twentieth century, in terms of factors such as socio-cultural background, matters of repertoire, marketing, schools of performance, and sound recordings. A more thorough discussion of these issues shall follow in Part 2 of this dissertation.

[38] See the studies by Richard Leppert, among others, Leppert 1993.

Another legitimate question that might be raised is: When *listening* to music performance, are all the elements audible? The answer generally is 'no'. But then again, it has been already pointed out that a performance is not simply something that we 'hear', but something that we 'experience'. Some elements, therefore, are already added to the perception when we *see* a live performance, while others come *before* we even decide to hear a certain performance, and so on. It is not necessary that a performance is only that which we receive and perceive from a 'blind listening': listening without even knowing who is playing (such a beloved method by many devoted music lovers!). Moreover, it is worthwhile once again to remember Stefani's theory of musical competence, especially the idea that the competence of any receiver is also worthy of the musicologist's attention. It is obvious, for instance, that most of the score, including the stylistic or the technical aspects in music performance, are accessible only to a professional listener, some perhaps more to the musicologist (structural matters), while others are only relevant to the practicing musician (fingering, pedalling tricks, etc.). However, there are many nuances that may draw the attention of the lay-listener (for instance, the dress or gestures of the singer, or the purely anthropological aspects that traditional musicology tends to ignore), and these also need to be taken into account while studying the phenomenon from a semiotic perspective as shall be demonstrated in the following chapters of this study.

PART 2
Meanings and Media of the Art of Music Performance

2.1. Performer (Not) as a Medium: On Socio-Cultural Practices of Music Performance

2.1.1. Introduction

> Our fine arts were developed, their types and uses were established, in times very different from the present, by men whose power of action upon things was insignificant in comparison with ours. But the amazing growth of our techniques, the adaptability and precision they have attained, the ideas and habits they are creating, make it a certainty that profound changes are impending in the ancient craft of the Beautiful.
>
> Paul Valery[39]

As this beautiful passage presupposes, the circumstances many of the arts experience nowadays are significantly different from the ones under which they were born. This dissertation mainly discusses performance of music that was created a few hundreds years ago; this field of art has undoubtedly undergone enormous changes since the times when such a figure as a music performer first came onto the scene.[40] Music has since become a global phenomenon, where pieces or styles either travel, 'migrate' from one country to another, or appear everywhere at once, through various means of reproduction and dissemination. Taking this assumption as a point of departure and reflecting upon it in relation to the performer's art, this chapter shall discuss how the mediation of music itself has influenced the world of musical performance.

In the twentieth century, the technological aspect of art gained huge importance both in the production (creation of artworks) and the reproduction (their performance). Actors, musicians, and artists, while specializing in separate fields, have attained new heights of mastery. In the art of musical performance, such a historical and social development has contributed to a striking distance between the two artistic/societal groups: dilettantes and professionals. Western art music had become especially elitist

[39] The quotation taken from the famous essay of Walter Benjamin (1936). The original is: Paul Valery, *Pieces sur l'art*, «La conquete de l'ubiquite» (1928), Paris, 1931.

[40] The assumption here, as also stated in the Introduction, is that the music interpreter as a self-sufficient figure of musical life is the product of the modern era: s/he became visible as late as the eighteenth century, and gained cultural importance in the nineteenth, when contemporary performance art was formed with its idiomatic ideologies and practices.

and highbrow, and the natural ties of the previous centuries between the performer and his/her listeners had become flawed. On the other hand, as it will be shown below, the means by which the art of musical performance is being disseminated and marketed at present suggest a gradual recoiling of artists from the 'purist' approaches.

The aim of the present chapter is to discuss several important aspects of music performance practices, to which the age of reproduction either gave birth or contributed significantly, and to ground the importance of polyfunctionality to the modern performer's activities. The investigation is conducted on the musical, cultural and social functions attributed to classical music performers. The changing realities of music performers' work and the functions attributed to them in today's culture (from the intellectual artistic researchers to the entrepreneurs of their own activity, from music pedagogues to the mysterious stage stars, etc.) are analyzed and discussed. Starting with a brief glimpse into the specificity and perspectives of a performer-oriented research, some socio-cultural issues as well as performers' signifying practices in various social and cultural circumstances shall be tackled. The art of musical performance is seen here primarily as an event-oriented affair (as opposed to performance as a record, another very important aspect of the twentieth century performance practices) and as a sort of contest, which is deeply affected by the overwhelming industrialization and commercialization of classical music performance.

2.1.2. A Performer-Oriented Approach

2.1.2.1. Performer as Mediator

When we think and talk about music, we rarely conceive of the act of musical performance as something meaningful in its own right. That is hardly surprising, given our longtime veneration of the 'musical work' as the essential cornerstone of Western art music. Musical performance, if considered at all, is usually understood as an approximate and imperfect presentation of a work. The conviction that musical meaning resides specifically in its 'objects', i.e. musical works, has further ramification. It leads to the implicit assumption that musical performance plays nearly no part in the creative process, but is simply the medium through which a completed and autonomous musical work must pass in order to reach the listener. Thus, a

musical performance is thought of as a one-way system of communication, running from composer to listener through the medium of the performer. Each performance is construed as mediating between 'objective' fidelity to the score and 'subjective' performative expressiveness. In all cases, the composer's intention seems to be taken as a kind of absolute, and the performer is supposed to remain as 'transparent' as possible.

A crucial concept, or even a cliché, in the just described paradigm of performance is that of *mediation*. Since music-making and listening were not so long ago social activities with rather strong religious or ceremonial connotations, it is little wonder that music of the Western classical tradition still bears the imprint of the Christian culture from which it sprang. More than that: the tradition of relating art with the sacral context manifests itself through centuries of continuous usage of theological concepts and metaphors in art-related discourses.[41] In this respect, our times can also be seen as a natural continuation. Even nowadays more than one study dealing with performance practice begins with a metaphor similar to this: "This book is about a musical trinity – the composer, the performer, and the listener."[42] Actors of the musical world are still treated as something 'sacred', and the concept of the *medium*, constantly applied to the performer, retains the 'holy' roots which it inherited from the Romanticist tradition. (In that tradition, the composer, too, is considered a *medium*, but one of a higher order, who mediates between the Holy Spirit and lesser mortals.)

The present study in general, and this chapter in particular, is an attempt at demonstrating a less 'sentimental' view on the music performance phenomenon. We may begin with raising some questions that naturally come to one's mind when encountering the above-mentioned discourses. What and how do the performers actually *mediate*? In which contemporary musical forums do they perform, and under what constraints – technological, industrial and otherwise? What possibilities, or maybe limitations, does the contemporary musicians' community offer them, with all the societal

[41] The historian Tim Blanning in *The Triumph of Music* offers a convincing history of music's sacralization – the process that was happening towards the end of the eighteenth century and by which, in his words, "culture lost its representational and recreational function and became an activity to be worshipped in its own right" (Blanning 2007: 96).

[42] This quotation is taken from page 1 of David Barnett's *The Performance of Music: A Study of Terms of the Pianoforte* (1972), although it is by no means a unique sentence to be found in the literature on performance practices.

mechanisms involved? Putting aside the varied and complex relationships that exist between the composer and the performer, this chapter focuses on performance practices as such, and on the various contexts or 'channels' in which they exist. The performer is presented as a self-sufficient figure of current musical life – at least, sufficient enough for talking about performance without appealing to the notion of the musical work for a while, and instead concentrating on the two last coordinates in the 'chain of communication', namely, the performer and the listener.

One must keep in mind, also, that there exist many other intermediaries in this chain nowadays, such as musical managers, producers, recording engineers, etc., and the interrelations between them and the performers vary to a great extent depending on specific personal, cultural, and economic circumstances. Thus, an emancipation of performance art from the paradigmatic concepts is possible by examining not only what constitutes the performer's semiotic self, or what meanings do the performers produce in their creative work, but also by focusing on current cultural constructs in which those meanings are communicated. Among such are various aspects of media and modes of performance, institutional embedding, and different forms of performer–listener communication processes, such as a live concert experience, sound recordings, or publicity instruments, among others.

2.1.2.2. Towards an 'Emancipation Paradigm'

In the Western cultural context, great works of art music are traditionally notated in the form of musical scores that can be passed down from one generation to the next, thus strengthening their status as 'sacred' texts that embody the ideals of the composer-creator. How, then, does one develop a performer-oriented approach towards the art of music, and how does one leave aside at least some of the thought clichés? For our purposes, and if we want to remain in the Western cultural sphere, it might be easier to begin with a look at performance practices that do not rely on notation. The most obvious and pervasive of these are popular music and jazz, i.e. forms of musical expression that lay emphasis on the performer rather than the composer.

In the study on performance in popular music (2010), Dario Martinelli introduces the concept of 'discourse currency'. In his theory, the main

'currency' when it comes to the field of popular music and musicians, is precisely that of *performance*. In describing the role of the performance within the context of popular music, Martinelli writes:

> The entire social discourse around the musical aspects of popular music revolves around general or specific performances related to the musical work (or performer) in question. And that applies to all the degrees of competence involved, from the non-musical-experts fans of a rock band to the most meticulous rock-musicologists. [...] The performance is the "currency" that the most diverse categories of people use in order to share/trade each other's encyclopaedia on popular music, when the actual focus is the music or the musician. (Martinelli 2010a: 55)

When it comes to jazz, as philosopher Roger Scruton notes, the jazz performer is, in a sense, also the composer, or one part of a corporate composer. But such description of free improvisation still assumes that composition is the paradigm case, and improvisation secondary. It would be truer to the history of music, and, as Scruton claims, truer to our deeper musical instincts, to see things the other way round: to view composition as born from the writing down of music; in this case, the scribe is 'transformed', from being a mere recorder, into the creator of the thing he writes (Scruton 1999: 439). That transformation was firmly cemented during the course of the nineteenth century, when *music as work* replaced *music as event*. Christopher Small goes even so far as to suggest that "Performance does not exist in order to present musical works, but rather, musical works exist in order to give performers something to perform" (Small 1998: 8). Such a perspective seems to be more of an ethnomusicological nature, however, other thinkers within the art music field take a similar view of music-making.

A performance-orientated approach towards music history might start trying to reflect upon the practices before the period that Lydia Goehr (1992), in her book *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, has called the "era of the work concept". Prior to that epoch, performance, i.e., *execution*, was considered the final stage in the overall process of making music. Recent attempts at such 'revisionist' history raise some hope that the autonomy of the performance (as instanced in Romantic virtuosity) may come to be valued just as much as the autonomy of the musical work.[43]

[43] Jim Samson has beautifully defined the "intervening history of text and act": "A space opens up between notational and acoustic forms; on the one side we have the

Giving pride of place to the phenomenon of musical performance clearly has the potential to emancipate musicologists and others from traditional, work-praising approaches to music history. As musicologist Jim Samson suggests,

> The so-called 'interpreting' is less about mediating performer and composer than about mediating performer and performance traditions; there is maybe a larger point behind that, where we might say that interpreting is really about finding a balance between a liberal realisation of the self and a contractual acknowledgement of collective norms and inherited knowledge; [...] Whereas in most cases the composer's idea is not even available to us, we might let ourselves to assume that the performers don't really uncover original meanings when they interpret; instead they create new ones. (Samson 2005)

Obviously, so far music history has been primarily dealing with the concept of the autonomous, isolated musical work. However, in some recent studies (Rink 2002; Gooley 2004; Cook 2013, etc.) the discourses about performance practices are provided with novel aspects that have never been attributed to this field before. It can be seen from them that the phenomenon of musical performance clearly has the potential to emancipate itself from the common work-praising approaches to music history, musicology, and cultural practices.

In what follows, a deeper exploration of the significations created by musical performance is commenced by having a glimpse at what kind of social meanings are produced within the performers' activity, and how we perceive the persona of music performer as a social figure.

2.1.3. Music Performer as a Social Figure

Music is more than the sum of its composers and performers. Its concert fixers and ticket sellers, its publishers and promoters, its agents and impresarios, its acousticians, accountants, sound engineers and interior decorators – yea, even unto the critic that pisseth upon the performance – all play a greater role, for better or worse,

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strengthening of a work concept by establishing the relative autonomy of the work (loosening the threads binding it to genre and social function). And on the other side we have the invention of the modern virtuoso, in whom the activity of performance gained its own measure of autonomy. We have in short a developing tension, then a dialectic, and ultimately a separation, between virtuosity and the musical work" (Samson 2005).

than has been publicly acknowledged. No musician ever made it on talent alone. (Lebrecht 1997: 4)

Like all other arts, music is not an entity confined to itself. Its development, and its history as such, was not solely determined by intrinsically musical phenomena, and sometimes it was not even *musical* history at all, at least in a strict sense. Why has music been developing and changing in certain ways? Why did vocal music prevail in certain periods, and the instrumental in others? Why was the formal purity of music favoured in certain times, while the emotional content was in others? Why did one period praise the performer's ability to improvise, another one worshiped the virtuosic show-off and passionate excessiveness, whereas yet another one put forward the austerity and fidelity to the score? Most often, we cannot provide purely musicological answers to these and many other questions, for the events and processes in the history of music are highly influenced by extra-musical causes.

Since, towards the end of the twentieth century, performance studies became an established part of the various branches of musicology, there appeared also several diverse articles, essays and books (not all of them of an academic nature) dealing with socio-cultural problems related to the art of music performers, and to various circumstances and peculiarities of their professional (as well as social) life – some written by musicologists, while others by sociologists, historians, or philosophers (see Loesser 1954; Chanan 1994; Lebrecht 1996; Cowen 1998; Weber 2004; Blanning 2008, to name but a few). It seems that by now there co-exist at least two ways of approaching the art of a music performer from a somewhat sociological perspective: according to one line of reasoning, a performer is perceived as a kind of ambassador of a composer, whereas the second perspective sees him/her as a separate cultural and social figure. If we browse among the studies in the latter domain, the topics tackled there are normally such as the role of a performer as a social figure, the economic factors related to this profession, the various causes for his/her behaviour, the importance of the performer as a communication medium between the composer and listener, the impact of professional specialization and competence on his/her activity, etc.[44]

[44] Summarizing the research on these topics, one might draw a conclusion that social communication takes place between the performers themselves; a performer and his/

Interestingly, in many of the mentioned studies the assumptions of the authors, or even prognoses they make for the art, vary a great deal: from the most catastrophist ones (as in Lebrecht's book *Who Killed Classical Music?*), to those which, on the contrary, see music and musicians as privileged members of society (such as Blanning's *The Triumph of Music*). Issues from the enormous 'exploitation' of musicians by their managers to the common perception of a musician as an elite figure, from the vicious circle of the dominating star-system on one side to the closing of music schools and orchestras on the other, or the ways that performers are trying to increase sales of their recordings, find their place in the sociologically oriented writings on the art of musical performance.

Many of the issues discussed in this study are in fact also closely related to socio-cultural matters, for a performer of music is seen here as a part of the cultural and economic society. That, too, is a question subject to numerous variations, depending on history and geography, and reaching far beyond (or aside) musically-inherent roles. One can provide endless examples. In Italy, two famous maestros – Arturo Toscanini (in 1949) and Claudio Abbado (in 2013) – were made senators for life by parliament; in China, Lang Lang is a *passepartout* ambassador for events that range from Unicef fundraising to carrying the Olympic torch[45]; Madonna has been a fashion leader for at least three generations, this role now being taken over by such pop stars as Rihanna, Lady Gaga and the others; shaman-musicians are at the very centre of their respective communities in nearly every place where shamanistic practices are still enacted, and so forth.[46]

One of the topics not to be missed, when dealing with the social practices of music-making (particularly in average western societies), is the issue of *capital vs. periphery*, an important aspect of the culture-consuming politics.

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her cultural environment; a performer and a musical work; a performer and a social community; the act of a performer, i.e., the performance, and the audience; a performer and a music critic; a performer and a manager, etc.

[45] The 2014 Olympic Winter Games in Sochi (Russia) were the latest up-to-date example of how artists, and classical musicians in particular (conductor Valery Gergiev, violist Yuri Bashmet, and pianist Denis Matsuev, among others) were invited to celebrate their country's ideological context (if not directly the political power) as part of the opening ceremony.

[46] On the other side, in some ancient civilizations, musicians were almost exclusively slaves or prostitutes.

To put it simply, a performer, even in the times of virtual communication, *has* to be where the 'action' takes place, that is, in big cities. This situation is by no means a new one: at all times musicians were striving to leave for the metropolis where they could find broader opportunities and earn higher pay. Legendary were the long, sometimes *life*-long, journeys that composers and performers embarked on in search of the most diverse goals, from wider exposure to technical improvement, from spiritual growth to the royal court's protection. Even though today the critical abilities and musical education of an average listener living in the periphery are much higher due to sound recordings, in a number of countries the concentration of musical activities and major cultural forces have reached their peak in the capital cities.

Under these circumstances of cultural centralization, such cities as London, New York, Paris, Tokyo, or Vienna assumed quite a monopolistic position. As Tyler Cowen (1998) rightly points out, a level of cultural centralization in a certain country is in large part determined by historical factors. In France, which has been for centuries a solid country with the royal court gathering all the activities in the capital, Paris became nearly the only French city having a rich and active cultural life. A similar situation could be observed in London, Vienna and Budapest – the former centres of a sparkling court life. On the contrary, Italy and Germany have had their central power only since the second half of the nineteenth century, which earlier was spread among plenty of bigger or smaller counties. A different historical development of these countries is thus reflected by a less centralized structure and, consequently, a more balanced distribution of musical activity throughout the country (cf. Cowen 1998: 108).

As for the smaller countries, Finland's cultural politics, for instance, is very much oriented towards the equal dissemination of cultural attractions among as many places as possible. Still, despite the many famous festivals taking place in peripheral towns and dozens of orchestras active there, the majority of Finnish star performers reside in Helsinki, and in most of the cases guest celebrities come to give concerts only to the capital of Finland. This is not to mention the fact that the capital city of any country usually acts as the main commercial anchor: it is here that the main concert agencies, publishers, recording companies, and other important institutions operate. In fact, it is quite intriguing that, all considered and despite the current dominance of the digital age (that could in principle allow long

distance communication and implementation of such activities), the dynamics of this phenomenon have remained very similar throughout the years, in a sort of eternal repetition of the "Tin Pan Alley" template, when nearly everybody in the music business, from songwriters to publishers, were strategically located in the very same 28th Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenue in Manhattan.

Another delicate issue for musical performance art relevant to the 'non-sentimental' nature of this study is the current imbalance between the supply and demand of performers. Nowadays, the number of professional musicians graduating from music academies greatly exceeds the needs of both listeners (potential addressees of this profession) and orchestras (potential workplaces for persons of this profession). As a consequence, the amount of performances in supply hugely impacts on the whole system of competitive stars that clearly dominates current musical life. This situation is accompanied by such necessary attributes of the commercialized reality as, for instance, the musicians' unions which are meant to protect performers from the possible exploitation. Thus the romantic conceptions of artists as 'divine beings' have all vanished from common thinking. Although still considered a calling, an art, or a life-style, the musical performer has become just one of the many professions. Or has it? In the next chapters of this dissertation, the intention is to elaborate on the various 'extensions' of musical performance within the most diverse contexts of social and cultural interaction: from research to entrepreneurship, from stardom to education (the latter being in fact another important aspect which has undergone significant transformations in the age of mechanical reproduction).

2.1.4. Musical Performance as Event and Contest

2.1.4.1. Significations of a Live Performance Experience

There exist various social practices, where music plays a central role. Among those, Roger Scruton distinguishes two phenomena of contemporary cultural life. The first one is a rock music concert, during which the audience is expressively and rhythmically moving; their eyes are directed towards the performers which are the final and ultimate object of attention, a live embodiment of music. Another phenomenon that Scruton describes is a

classical symphony concert, where, according to him, the (orchestra) performers as if hide behind their ritual dresses, and only the conductor (still with the ritual dress suit, his back to the audience) retains the charisma of the ritual, whereas the listeners are sitting still, totally silent, and concentrated not on the performers, but on the music. The silence of a concert hall, says Scruton, is the real silence that "breathes and lives with the music" (Scruton 1999: 440).

This section briefly considers some contemporary institutions by which the Western classical music tradition is disseminated, and in which music is performed and listened to. We begin with the most traditional of these – the concert hall. A possible way to demonstrate what kind of questions may arise of the performance art *per se*, and not just the performer's relation to the score, is examining any event of the Western musical culture, such as a piano recital, or a symphony concert, as they take place in any contemporary concert hall. If we try to reflect on the messages that are being sent and received here, we might learn not only the meanings of the musical works performed there, but also the implications of the event, i.e., the concert itself.[47]

To begin with, and in relation to the aforementioned remark by Scruton, it may be argued that there exist many more material signifiers which may be noticed during the classical music concert, and which carry some particular meanings perceived by the listeners/spectators who do not necessarily concentrate entirely on the sonic event (that is, the performed music). Some of these elements perhaps more belong to the issue of a performer's corporeality discussed in Chapter 2.2 of this thesis, however, even such an 'external' aspect as the performer's looks is of huge importance for significations of the performance itself, and so it has always been.

[47] Importantly, different types of concerts-events presuppose different performative (and receptive) strategies and attitudes. 'Summer concerts', festivals, solo recitals, occasional concerts (at embassies etc.) require different programmes and dressing codes. Performers often admit that, e.g., in a particular country (city, hall) they feel better, more understood or appreciated. When it comes to interpretation, one may say that it should not change depending on the place where it is delivered, yet it could perhaps be guessed that certain meanings or gestures become more emphasized on certain occasions. Obviously, sound projecting varies depending on the acoustic circumstances, as well as the tempo chosen may be different for the same reason (or, sometimes, for pure anxiety).

Moreover, musical performances of all kinds have long been events to which people go, at least in part, to see and be seen; that is clearly part of the meaning of the event. For instance, as put by Henrik Knif (1995), "One reason for going to the opera, according to the [eighteenth century essay periodical] *Tatler*, is to look at other spectators and to be admired yourself" (Knif 1995: 47). In fact, in some times and cultures, the meanings communicated by both the performers and the audiences have been somewhat interchangeable:

> Theatricality has come to be seen as something characterizing the baroque court and its many ceremonies. When the members of a typical court of the *ancien régime* lined themselves up in front if an opera stage, the correspondence between the order applying to the stage and the order applying to the audience could seem striking. The hierarchical order existing between the singers – defining for each of them a certain number of airs in a certain order, defining the costliness of the habits each of them could wear, their appropriate gestures, their entrées and sorties, as well as the order of precedence between voices in the high and the low register – can be regarded as an echo of the hierarchic ordering which defined the small society of the audience. The stage borrowed from its audience and the audience from its stage. (ibid.: 58)

As compared to the times Knif is referring to, the current institution of a concert has its own hierarchical structures and communication patterns. Among other changes, a much higher degree of separation and distancing is to be observed. In the modern Philharmonic Hall or Opera House socializing and listening are kept strictly separate, each receiving its designated space; for instance, the foyer, not the auditorium, is the place for socializing. Even there the 'separation' phenomenon continues, in the form of insiders and outsiders – the socializing behaviour of an interloper differs considerably from that of members of the foyer clique, who have come to think of that space as their 'own'.

Leaving the foyer, we enter the auditorium itself, which is constructed on the assumption that musical communication proceeds in one direction: from composer to listener through the medium of the performer(s). Hence, the stage is positioned as the centre of attention, and designed in such a way as to project to the listeners as strongly and as clearly as possible the sounds made by the performers (Small 1998: 26). Most auditoriums try to ensure such communication by blocking off contact with the external

world; commonly, there are no windows through which light or sounds might enter from the outside.[48] Paradoxically, the live event is often said as being able to bring the performers and spectators into a community. This view, in Philip Auslander's words, "Misunderstands the dynamic of performance, which is predicated on the distinction between performers and spectators" (Auslander 1999: 56). Here, certain norms of ritualized behaviour isolate performers and audience members from their everyday lives and also from each other.

Extending the isolation *desideratum* we often find concerts arranged in remote places, some of which are difficult to access; recitals are played at candlelight; the performers and audience members there cannot help but feel a sense of oneness, a common feeling of accomplishment. This brings us back to an observation made earlier about the religious connotations of musical practices. Of special value to the consumers and investigators of musical performance, seem to be traditional mystifications of the event, as opposed to the 'worldly' mediatized environment.[49] Eero Tarasti, in his *Existential Semiotics*, describes those religious connotations quite accurately:

> Religiosity has often meant a kind of isolation, denial of the world. Marginality has been raised into a method. Setting oneself outside has become a new idea in the present 'ecstasy' of communication. […] The new ideal of an artist, composer or performer is a person who avoids publicity and negates it. (Tarasti 2000: 93)

But paradoxically, as Tarasti observes, "It is precisely the negation of publicity which has become the source of a new kind of still greater publicity" (ibid.). As evidence of that claim we might mention a number of

[48] Where this is not done, as in the two main concert halls of Vilnius, one may easily understand why the windows *are* a problem. In the meanwhile, some other concert venues – e.g., the newly-built Helsinki Music Centre – despite their grand size provoke quite claustrophobic sensations, if darkened too much.

[49] The same is observed by Philip Auslander in his fine study *Liveness. Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (1999), where he expresses his impatience with the traditional, 'unreflective' assumptions about the live event being more 'real' than the mediatized one (the latter conceived as a somewhat artificial reproduction of the real). Talking about live theatre performance, Auslander quotes such commonly used clichés as 'aura', 'the magic of live theatre', the 'energy' supposedly existing between performers and the audience in a live event, and the 'community' that live performance is said to create among performers and audiences.

musical artists, composers and performers alike – such as Arvo Pärt, Glenn Gould, or Vladimir Horowitz, to list only a few – who became even more sought after following their withdrawal from the public eye.

Such 'reclusive' artists call attention to the fact that, as important as it is, the concert hall is by no means the only forum for performing music, and viewing it as such has sometimes drawn harsh criticism. Probably the best known opponent of the concert hall, and of public concert life in general, was the prominent Canadian pianist Glenn Gould. This artist, who literally had the world at his feet, gave up public concertizing in order to devote himself to recording LPs, and working in radio and television. He came to view public concerts as reminiscent of a gladiatorial contest in which the performers slug it out with the public. In one interview, Gould said he found live arts immoral because "One should not voyeuristically watch one's fellow human beings in testing situations that do not pragmatically need to be tested" (quoted from Page 1984: 452). Gould also used to say that he does not like to play live concerts, because one cannot repeat the performance there. According to him, more than once he wanted to stop playing and repeat everything from the beginning.[50] For Gould, the replacement was technology. He strongly – and as it turns out, correctly – believed that musical recordings would come to affect not only performers and concert impresarios, but everyone else involved in the field of art music, from composers and recording engineers to critics and historians, and most importantly for Gould, the listener to whom all of that activity is ultimately directed.

2.1.4.2. Performance Art as a Cultural Commodity

There is nothing we can do to oppose this commercial apparatus, because our entire life is permeated by advertising. But it is our call whether to follow it blindly or not. (Rubackytė, in Navickaitė-Martinelli 2010a: 396)

[50] In fact, Gould was not the only one who had such a wish. Musicologist Edmundas Baltrimas writes in his article "An Interpreter and the Record" that the famous Ukrainian early twentieth century pianist Vladimir de Pachmann used to do the following: if he did not like an episode, he would repeat it several times until he was finally satisfied (Baltrimas 1974: 142). How important the chance of repeating is for perceiving difficult music was understood yet by Hans von Bülow, who would perform Beethoven's Sonata Op. 106 *Hammerklavier* twice in a concert.

No doubt many other aspects of performance-as-event are worthy of consideration, however, some other areas of the performer-oriented analysis should also be mentioned to close this chapter. All these may be subsumed under the category of consumerism, the mechanisms of which surround the world of musical performance: contests and competitions for determining new 'stars', concert programmes, advertisements, criticism (especially that of influential reviewers), musicians' magazines, film documentaries (both biographical and pseudo-biographical), promotional tours (CD-signings and the like), reality shows – the list could go on. Clearly the 'secular' has intruded into the 'sacral': if one describes earlier contexts of performance and listening as bodying forth the 'sacred' in its rituals of separating both performers and audiences from the everyday world, then one cannot help notice that the 'carnal' has come to be just as important, if not more important, to the realm of today, in which artists of all stripes have to 'sell out', at least to some extent, simply in order to make contact with the public.

The persona of the interpreter is nowadays especially attractive for listeners. On the bills, the name of the performer is normally written in larger fonts than that of the composer. Concert tickets are sold primarily in relation to the greatness of interpreters, not of the music performed (which, in most of the cases, is something that has already been heard many times by the audiences). Certainly, there were other epochs in music history when performers of music were considered particularly significant figures of musical life: one only needs to remember the times of castrati, or of the Romantic supervirtuosos. But it seems that the 'mechanization of music'[51] (of which more in Chapter 2.5 of the present dissertation) helped the art of musical interpretation to gain a completely firm position in the hierarchy of musical activities. (Yet another step in this process was made by the stars of popular music, where a performer often means the music itself.)

One of the keywords, together with the aforementioned 'mediation', that is worthy of attention when it comes to the commonsensical discourses on musical performance, is 'recognition', or *stardom*, a phenomenon which in fact requires a separate study on its own. Several epochs in music history have indeed been highly supporting such concepts as 'star' and 'genius', as related to gifted composers or performers. In particular, the origins of the cult of genius can be traced from the Romantic era: ever since our percep-

[51] Borrowing the term by the German composer, musicologist and music critic Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt.

tion of a musician was affected by the Romantic conception of the artist as an ephemeral, elevated creature without any earthly needs. Such legendary personalities as Rossini, Paganini and Liszt especially helped create the myth of a musician as charismatic hero. In particular, it was Paganini who, as Tim Blanning puts it, "To the technical repertoire of the musician […] brought two characteristics that were eventually to become all-important: showmanship and sex appeal" (Blanning 2009: 50). The aura of mystery, danger, even diabolism that Paganini attracted and carefully cultivated was 'inherited' and brought to even higher realms by the super piano virtuoso Franz Liszt (whose promoted image was, however, of somewhat more sophisticated and cultured nature as compared to that of Paganini's). As Liszt's biographer Alan Walker wrote:

> Beethoven, by dint of his unique genius and his uncompromising nature, had forced the Viennese aristocracy at least to regard him as their equal. But it was left to Liszt to foster the view that an artist is a superior being, because divinely gifted, and the rest of mankind, of whatever social class, owed him respect and even homage. (Walker 1987: 287)

Following the cultural commentator Norman Lebrecht in his several sociological studies on music (e.g., 1991, 1996, and 2007), one may come to the conclusion that famous, or popular, is nearly contrary to being *talented* (and, in any case, everybody is exploited by *evil impresarios*). Realizing the provoking – and marketing-friendly on its own – style of Lebrecht's writings, one has to admit, however, that musical skills alone are indeed not enough for one to achieve some recognition. Even if we talk about the times that we tend to consider as more 'pure' than the ones we live in, according to the study of Dana Gooley *The Virtuoso Liszt* (2004), Franz Liszt, for example, was a supreme manipulator of the symbolic resources of his day: he was constantly watching his audiences, measuring out his prospects for success, and actively shaping his reputation in the press. As Gooley attests, not all of the multiple layers of Liszt's identity were rooted directly in his virtuoso performances. They also emerged from his social affiliations, personal behaviour, literary publications, concretizing strategies, and press publicity (Gooley 2004: 3). A 'star' in culture is in fact not just a celebrity, a personality, someone special who is adored by his or her fans, but also somebody who is adorned through promotion, literally and symbolically, by the various channels of publicity that sanctify his or her existence.

As mentioned above, up to now, the personas of the musical world are commonly seen as somewhat 'sacred', mysterious and unreachable to 'lesser mortals'. However, from the point of view of the market economy, the art of musical performance, as any other field of art, may be considered as a mere cultural commodity. Certain marketing mechanisms related to the arts are by no means anything new; however, nowadays the world of music performance is particularly surrounded by all kinds of consumer media and branding inventory. These tendencies are well analyzed by Cowen, who considers a performer a 'social product'. According to Cowen, a wish (or a need) for earning money makes a performer choose repertoire of dubious artistic value and perform as many concerts as possible. No doubt, these things affect one's relation with the music itself – it becomes difficult to maintain a special approach towards it. Artists admit they often spend more time organizing concerts than preparing the programme in artistic terms.[52] The acknowledgment of an artist is determined not only by his/her talent and artistic achievement, but also by the well-presented and desirable 'commodity' (Cowen 1998: 104). As Lebrecht puts it,

> The magic of stardom, like the aura of majesty once attached to royal personages, was dispelled by excessive familiarity – and everyone knows what familiarity breeds. In desperate bids to sell half-empty halls and please their promoters, the stars frittered what remained of their mystery in publicity tours and back-to-back interviews. Arts pages were stuffed weekly with the same handful of star faces flogging the same old story. (Lebrecht 1997: 6)

And this is the realm of the musicians' (self)representation (which is already a long way from a much more humble 'mediation'). It is extremely

[52] This, in fact, could be a topic for future lengthy research: the impact of what can be half-seriously called 'extra-curricular activities' on the musicianship as such, in the artistic sense. There is no doubt that any artist who can fully concentrate on his/her art, without particular worries for anything that revolves around it, is bound to be more prolific and qualitatively stronger than those who also have to maintain a website, organize their own concerts, take care personally of PR, marketing and promotion, etc. A pianist needs to train several hours per day, while, during a conversation with one of these *factotum* musicians the phrase was uttered: "I have time to train only on Saturdays." It is therefore inevitable to wonder: are all these activities beneficial for art as such? And, on the other hand: do modern artists have a choice? Did we enter a vicious circle where artists, in order to survive, need to do things than make them *worse* artists?

interesting and important to investigate how do performers nowadays communicate with their potential or actual audiences; how do performers present themselves, and to whom do they actually address their messages? What impressions and/or insights of the musicians' personality do we get, for instance, from the websites of classical music performers, and how do they correspond with how the artists themselves want to portray their identities? (To answer these and similar questions, the whole Part 4 of the present thesis is devoted.)

A particularly interesting phenomenon is the marketability of certain performers. Obviously, some artists possess more personal charisma than the others, and again the dissemination mechanisms come to help them demonstrate their qualities (or *help* audiences *notice* them). For instance, Joseph Horowitz shows in his influential book *Understanding Toscanini* (1987) how radio led the record industry in making Toscanini a household name in the United States, much as television later did for Leonard Bernstein; the similarly telegenic Herbert von Karajan became a real cult figure in the 1960s. Nowadays, it would be impossible to list all the media appearances of Lang Lang, the quintessential superstar of the current piano world.

It must be added that the personality of an artist is in itself already rather marketing-friendly. Such exploitation of the persona of an artist perhaps began in its most explicit way with Beethoven – the perfect embodiment of a suffering hero, and, as shown above, was highlighted particularly by the Romantics. However, also in our days, seemingly far from the Romanticist aesthetics, films and books are created where musical artists – composers or performers alike – are portrayed in rather exaggerated ways. All of them, whether real or fictional characters, are commonly immersed into complex inner or outer dramas and collisions, they often suffer from various mental disorders, exhibit aggressive behaviour, etc. Among others, an outstanding example of a 'well-selling' artist is a wonderful film by Scott Hicks *Shine* (1996) about the pianist who experienced a difficult childhood and suffered from a nervous breakdown, David Helfgott; the latter, as well as his interpretation of "Rach 3" became famous worldwide only *after* the success of the movie. Among some other examples, the movie *Taking sides* (2004) by István Szabó about Wilhelm Furtwängler (who is said to have collaborated with the Nazi regime, hence the enormous inner drama and the condemnation of the public opinion), as well as Franco Zeffirelli's

Callas Forever (2002) on Maria Callas – abandoned, aging and choosing the tragic end – can be mentioned.[53]

Thus, there are a number of factors that determine the career of a contemporary performer. As has already been mentioned repeatedly (and as is shown in more detail in Part 4 of this thesis), the process of finding, creating and promoting a new star has found a whole new world of media and communication, that goes well beyond the traditional tools such as live concerts, competitions or journalism. As Philip Auslander puts it, "It is absolutely clear that our current cultural formation is saturated with, and dominated by, various mass media representations" (Auslander 1999: 1). Yet, in a somewhat 'conservative' way, certain patterns have remained very similar for several decades already. The real starting point of the pianist's career is still considered the 'New York debut', while the 'real' value of his or her art is suggested by the CDs issued by the best companies. In the contemporary competitive musical world, it is still necessary to be a winner of one or more international competitions, as well as to find a hard-working manager, to have firm financial support, and a good contract with the recording company.

2.1.5. Concluding Remarks

Much of what has been discussed in the present chapter is closely related to the overall re-contextualization of musical practices and its impact on the perception of music and its performance. An opportunity of selecting one's playlist on the iPod shuffle; listening to 'top hits' on the radio while driving a car or doing sports at a gym; hearing the *muzak* unstoppably played at the shopping centres; or watching a solo recital broadcasted on *Mezzo* TV channel; being exposed to traditional folk music, forever captured and fixed in sound recordings… Already for a while, presenting and/or performing (as well as perceiving) music is not anymore a question of a mere interpretation of musical pieces, but rather the interrelations and contexts of those pieces or their fragments. Even more so relevant to the aforementioned performer-oriented approach is discussing the various media through and in which the Western classical music tradition is being communicated and

[53] In addition to the art music geniuses, another type of an artist – still highly egocentric, eccentric and unpredictable – occurs in cinematic works where a current pop music star is portrayed.

received today, as well as those contexts where a music performer is seen as a part of cultural and economic society. In other words, this is all the external environment where the performer's internal, subjective qualities are being demonstrated to the wider audience, all the *Soi* mechanisms that are interdependent with the *Moi* side of musical performance art.

It would be difficult to exhaust all the social topics and meanings of the event of musical performance and all the components that contribute to it in one or another way. A musical performance is a much richer and more complicated affair than is assumed by those who attend exclusively to the musical work and its effects on the listener. If we widen the circle of our attention to take in the entire set of relationships that constitutes a performance, we see that its primary meanings encompass much more than just the piece that is being played. Today performers transmit meanings through an increasingly wide variety of media – some of which are more or less socially directed, whereas other media appeal to the listeners' sense of individualism and their craving for internal, personalized engagements with musical sounds. This and the subsequent chapters of the present dissertation aim at demonstrating that all of these meanings should not be separated from the meaning of the sounds, as well as from the understanding of the overall activity of performing or consuming music.

2.2. The Body Is the Message: On Performance and Corporeality

2.2.1. Introduction

So far in this dissertation, mostly the so-to-say 'outer' part of the world of musical performance has been discussed, that is, the phenomena and processes that happen somewhere *around* the performers of music, but not *in* them. Of no lesser importance, however, is a somewhat more contiguous dimension, i.e. the meanings that are conveyed directly through the performers *themselves*.

As mentioned earlier in this study, 'sacralized' attitudes are commonly applied to nearly any aspect related to the act of music performance. It will be of no surprise then if it is pointed out that there is an evident tendency in Western culture to regard art music as a kind of mental, 'abstract' type of human creative activity. Even in the field of music performance, which is intrinsically related to one's technical, or physical, qualities and abilities, the values most commonly referred to are spirituality, *musicality*, or intellectuality, among others. In the mind-body relation, the latter is generally thought of as a mere adjunct to the 'higher' realm of the former. However, a semiotic theory (drawing a lot from theatre studies, and the other way round) has the advantage of not forcing any unwarranted separation between the spiritual and the physical, nor limiting itself only to the cerebral side of musical performance. One of the possible ways to analyze musical performance in semiotic terms, as shown in Barthes 1972, Clarke 1998, or Cumming 2000, is to pay attention to the relation of mind and body in performing music and to acknowledge that a significant part of the performer's identity stems precisely from his/her bodily signs. Particularly in Part 4 it shall be demonstrated how music performers pay a great deal of attention to what and how their bodily postures communicate, when it comes to their visual (self-) representation and publicity tools. In the following sections, a few aspects of the corporeal identity of a performer as important carriers of the meanings of the performance itself will be discussed more specifically.

Even though the general musicological discourses on music performance, as mentioned above, are dominated by a clearly 'intellectualist' ap-

proach, there exist several studies from the fields of cognitive neuroscience of music (Gaser and Schlaug 2003; Krings et al. 2000; Koeneke et al. 2004), empirical musicology (Cook 1998; Clarke and Cook 2004), and, even more specifically, performance science (Williamon 2004; Williamon et al. 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013) dealing with various psychosomatic aspects of a performer's work, with physical and psychological elements pertinent to musical performance and relative as well as causal interrelations of these two aspects. Some of them tackle explicitly the visual component of performance, acknowledging that "performance is not only a sonic event" (Clarke 2004: 92), and judging the expressive properties of various performances on the basis of visual and aural stimuli experienced through live observation and/or video data (e.g. Davidson 1993, 1994; Thompson et al. 2005; Schutz 2008) of concrete performances. Some others (that are of a less interest to our current purposes) concentrate more on the ways for enhancing performance and are more applicable to and/or interested in the learning of music and teaching processes. There have been various attempts to classify or otherwise analyze the gestural language of a performer during the performance – both through the process of rehearsing and at a public performance event (Delalande 1988; Wanderley 1999; Elsdon 2006; Virtanen 2007, among others). Scholars in the fields of feminist theory and new musicology have obviously theorized how a gendered body of a performer functions as a channel for expressing corporeal meanings of music and the musician (e.g. Butler 1990; McClary 1991; Kopelson 1996; Mitchell 2000, not to mention a vast literature in theatre studies). Here, an attempt is made to once again emphasize the richness of potential significations that a musical performance is capable of communicating. To begin with, the corporeal identity of a performer – the outwardly visual and inner somatic elements of music performance art – shall be discussed in relation to the semiotic square of performer's subjectivity (cf. Figure 1.2 in Chapter 1.3).[54]

[54] The first draft of Section 2.2.2 was prepared as a congress paper read at the Ninth International Congress on Musical Signification in Rome, September 2006, and later published in its proceedings (cf. Navickaitė-Martinelli 2008a). The congress itself was entitled *Music, Senses, Body*, and as such promoted the idea of the 'bodily roots of the musical mind', including such themes as the significance of gesture, body as musical medium, etc. My thanks go to the organizers of the congress (Gino Stefani and Dario Martinelli, in particular) for drawing my attention to the importance of

2.2.2. A Performer's Corporeal Identity

[...] I was watching the Bach Concerto for Two Violins on television. I would not have wanted to miss the smile exchanged by the soloists before each of their shared reprises. (Nattiez 1990: 45)

As Naomi Cumming points out, although a listener's attention, when playing a CD, may not be directed to bodily actions, the impression of a 'personality' can be gained subliminally through the markers in sound of what seem to be the performer's characteristic physical responses (Cumming 2000: 22). These characteristic bodily responses of a performer shall be discussed below as determined by several factors: the capabilities and limitations of the performer's individual body as such, and also by the sort of 'behavioural codes', the sets of norms and standards that exist in the interpretation schools and concert practices of Western musical performance, and that have a strong impact on them. Reflections on these matters shall be illustrated within the scheme following the semiotic square of performer's subjectivity as presented in Chapter 1.3, only with the four modalities adapted to our current purpose (see Figure 2.1).

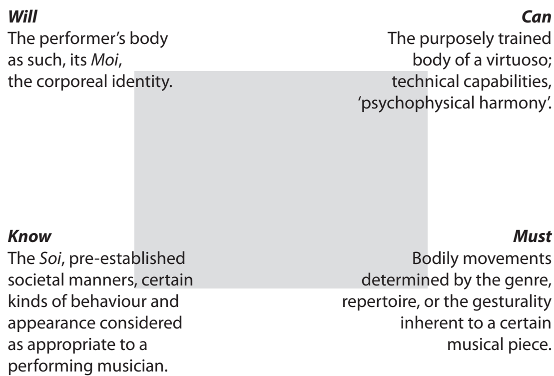

Figure 2.1. The corporeal identity of a performer, after the semiotic square of performer's subjectivity

this topic and to my colleagues from the International Project on Musical Signification for their numerous inspiring talks on the subject.

In this case, the model can be described in the following manner:

1) the Greimassian modality of 'Will' denotes a performer's bodily nature as such, it's *Moi*, the corporeal identity;
2) 'Can' is a purposefully trained body of a virtuoso who is seeking to master a certain musical instrument; a performer's technical capabilities, 'psychophysical harmony';
3) 'Know', or the *Soi* of a performer, consists of pre-established societal manners, certain kinds of physical behaviour that are commonly accepted as pertinent to the performing musician; and, finally,
4) 'Must' means the bodily movements that are determined by the genre, repertoire, by the gesturality inherent to a certain musical piece.

With this in mind, it is important to realize that the corporeal identity of any performing musician encompasses all four quadrants of the square, only some features are more distinct than the others in individual cases. Thus, while attributing any of these qualities to particular artists, these should be understood as merely the most revealing instances, instead of suggesting that some artists possess only one distinctive feature and not the others. Let us start a more detailed discussion from the modality of 'Will'.

To begin with, my assumption is that not only certain messages are conveyed through the performer's body, in this way communicating to the listener or spectator, but also the body itself *is* a message. Many times we might have noticed that there is often just a slight nuance which is able to distinguish a performance with optimal lightness and grace, or, with concentration and deepness, from one acceptably competent and yet somehow ordinary, which apparently lacks nothing and yet is not entirely convincing. In terms of physicality, it might be just a slight difference of shaping one's gestures, and this slight difference brings a huge difference in how this performance communicates and affects the whole process of listening and perceiving. In other words, the apparently insignificant transformations that a certain performer brings to a piece of music by using his bodily gestures as a means of conveying the message provide this piece with the important qualitative changes. Often, performers even intentionally 'act' while playing in order to convey to a listener as clearly as possible, with

the help of their facial expressions or other bodily movements, the musical significance.[55]

At a very perceptual level, it is a performer's body as such that creates the identity and charisma of an artist, or as Vladimir Jankélévitch (2003) calls it, the primary *charme*. How else, if not in terms of their personal identity could we define the all-body motion, the singing and conducting of Glenn Gould, the flat and elastic fingers of Vladimir Horowitz, the large hands of Sergei Rachmaninov or Ivo Pogorelich, the singing and standing up of Keith Jarrett, the generally still posture of Radu Lupu, or the purposefully (so it seems) hypnotizing looks at the audience by such artists as Gidon Kremer or Yo-Yo Ma? It is absolutely improbable that, after once having seen the gestures and facial expressions of Lang Lang, it would be possible to dissociate one's listening to this artist without having in mind this corporeal side of his performances.

Obviously, and that would be emphasized by many a practicing musician, certain performative movements depend simply on the physical requirements of the act of performance itself: e.g. the weight must be delivered to the hand from the spine or the belly[56]; one has to achieve a completely relaxed and yet concentrated wrist, etc. Still, these movements usually differ as related to the particularities of a given body. One performer has larger hands, therefore, s/he is shaping his or her gestures accordingly; another is able to produce a deeper, more rotund sound because of the bigger weight of the arm and hand, and so on.

Moreover, as the instrument is for a performer some kind of extension of his or her body, it could be suggested that the bodily relation with the instrument is discussed in terms of the *Moi* as well. Performance encompasses a physical relationship of the artist and his/her instrument: a great deal of sensory perception is involved in the act of musicianship, and achieving a good 'relationship' with one's instrument is a crucially important aspect. It is much easier to do this for the string players, but it seems that some

[55] Recent research in performance science and related disciplines has shown how important the facial expressions and bodily movements of musicians are in communicating emotions in music (cf. Thompson et al. 2008 and Livingstone et al. 2009, among others).

[56] Observing rehearsals or master classes by Ivo Pogorelich, a pianist whose tone range is perhaps one of the most remarkable features of his pianism, one sees how many hours may be spent for only achieving the right way to produce (and to *make it last*) one single sound.

of the piano geniuses, who could afford possessing their personal pianos, knew that as well. Therefore, Josef Hofmann would demand a narrower keyboard; Vladimir Horowitz – a very shallow keyboard that would allow him to play with flat fingers thus achieving a fantastically light pianissimo; Glenn Gould needed to feel the illusion of a vibration while playing – for that reason, one of his own pianos, where the keys were made more distant from each other than usual, was taken on tour with him. All of these peculiarities were determined, surely, by the corporeal characteristics of the individual players: what is good for one would be not acceptable for the other. As the Lithuanian pianist Petras Geniušas attests, he cannot imagine that he himself would ever need to feel the physical illusion of vibration, but it seems only natural to him that somebody else (such as Gould) might have needed it. To sum up the importance of the tactile experience, Geniušas' praise of piano as a very *complete* instrument is telling:

> [A piano] is superior to an organ because of its connectedness to the human body. It takes a human body to produce all *crescendi* and *diminuendi*, and the immediate contact with the instrument means worlds. The strings are also related to the human body, there is always that moment of touch, of dynamics, but they are only equipped to produce one, at most two or three sounds at a time. The piano offers the totality of a full score. What a wonder is the piano pedal: it allows you endless possibilities of overtone play, all the riches within it, the bottomless possibilities of mixing and of diluting sounds – the entire alchemy of the piano. (Geniušas, in Navickaitė-Martinelli 2010a: 96)

To continue with the issue of the instrument, we enter the realm of the 'Can' modality. Each of them having their individual bodily nature, performers have been taught since the early days of professional training the specific elements of mastering their instrument. Countless scales and exercises are meant for this purpose, not to forget the more difficult tasks of the pedagogical system – to teach one the ways of using the natural weight of arm, the proper way of sitting that would help the body to relax, and so on. Thus, one can say that the body of a performer has to get accustomed to the chosen profession. Surely, some professions are more demanding than the others – a singer is a supreme case, where the body and the instrument are one and the same, the vehicle through which all the visual and sonic significations appear. However, through the constant repetitions of the same movements, also instrumentalists experience rather significant

changes of their physical qualities in the course of their careers. Certain learned gestures or movements are repeated over and over again under the same circumstances and in a manner as similar as possible. No doubt, this leads to some kind of 'adopting' these gestures, to making oneself master of them as if they were the performer's own and, in the successful cases, reaching a sort of 'psychophysical harmony'. Watching the great piano masters such as Horowitz or György Cziffra, or their younger virtuoso followers, perform what fascinates most at a visual level of perception is the apparent ease with which even the extremely difficult pieces are played.[57]

Certainly, not only the virtuosic side of the performance, but also, for instance, producing 'a beautiful tone', through a well-balanced physical adjustment to the instrument, is central to creating the impression of musical personality. The 'sonic self', borrowing the term of Naomi Cumming, is thus conceived (Cumming 2000: 22–23). However, what counts as the 'beautiful', or 'natural' character, Cumming says, is determined by the performance tradition. The performer's body is entrained, or habituated, to produce a certain kind of sound, according to the tradition they follow (ibid.: 29) – this aspect of musicianship, in fact, may well be discussed within the analysis of performance schools.

Whereas the two aforementioned aspects ('Will' and 'Can') were related to the inner identity, the *Moi* of a performer, the other two are from the outer field. As already mentioned above, the *Soi* part of the dichotomy of the semiotic self consists of pre-established societal manners, certain kinds of behaviour that are accepted as appropriate to the performing musician. Alan P. Merriam writes in his *Anthropology of Music*:

> As there are specific kinds of physical behavior concerned with the manipulation of voice and instruments, there also seem to be characteristic bodily

[57] Despite the fact that some of the aforementioned ease may indeed look 'artificial', it is very interesting how, commonly, the portrayal of the performing musicians in cinema ends up as a failure. Anybody familiar with the process would perhaps agree that performers while playing, first of all, are doing their job and *listening* what is being conveyed through their bodies. When watching the recording of, say, Wilhelm Kempff playing the *Moonlight* sonata (EMI Classics DVD B0001AW052), what strikes first and foremost from the corporeal side is a very still posture and evident listening to himself. In other words, the performer knows what s/he wants to do, and then tries to achieve it physically. In all the movies on musicians, on the contrary, a portrayal of the 'feeling', as intense as possible, is attempted.

> attitudes, postures, and tensions, and it is possible that such bodily characteristics can be correlated with other behavioral elements to reveal significant facts about music making. (Merriam 1964: 108)

What significant facts can be revealed by the behavioural elements? First of all, we can learn to which culture the performer belongs. As is well known, in some cultures the faces of musicians must remain perfectly impassive, while in Western concert practices we can much more often observe at least some slight expression changes in performers' eyebrows or other parts of the face; in gospel singing, the chorus is moving in response to the beat, while in the Western art choir music the members of the choir more often remain perfectly stable; not to mention hugely different character of bodily motion in popular versus art music culture. Video footage from the La Nit festival at Montjurich Castle in Barcelona (October 8, 1988)[58] of three singles for the album "Barcelona" where Freddie Mercury and Montserrat Caballe sing together, remain one of the charming examples of how the two areas merge in terms of physicality, appearance and behavioural codes (from voice formation to dressing to facial expressions) of performers, how does one style follow another, borrow and/or benefit from it, what liberties or restrictions are abandoned in each case, etc.

It would be nearly a truism to state that a musician specializing in Western art music plays a rather specific role in our society. According to the constraints of this role and his/her rather special status s/he must follow certain consensually accepted codes of what should be the proper behaviour for the musician. Again quoting Merriam, "Musicians behave socially in certain well-defined ways, because they are musicians, and their behavior is shaped both by their own self-image and by the expectations and stereotypes of the musicianly role as seen by society at large." (Merriam 1964: 123). In addition to some sort of 'elitist' manners pre-defined by the art-music musician status, there are also purely professional aspects of the matter. Since the early days of professional training, the future musician knows what the characteristic performance postures are (starting with the very practical aspects of the playing itself and heading towards the more socially

[58] See, e.g. "The golden boy", at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPizyP4x30I (last retrieved: April 2014). The impression is only reinforced by the early demo of the song featuring Mercury's voice only, where he also sings the later-operatic part of Caballe (cf. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08qGc43xS10, last retrieved: April 2014).

defined ones) and he or she is taught how to confine oneself to them. There are specific learned ways of how a musician walks onto the stage, how s/he looks at the audience, takes a bow, sits down at the piano or shakes hands to the orchestra musicians.[59] However, even though some of those gestures are rational, cognitive messages, they may affect on a quite different level than expected.

A short observation should be made on what might be called a sort of *misbehaviour*. As has been stated above, there is a tendency in Western culture to regard art music, as well as its performance, as a more mental type of human activity. Paradoxically enough, quite an important impact on the listeners' reactions in a concert hall is the bodily behaviour of a performer. "Why do we buy concert tickets when the same sounds can be heard more cheaply and comfortably within our own homes? Why do popular music concerts often include elaborate lighting and staging effects for what is ostensibly an auditory event? Why can't orchestral musicians wear t-shirts and flip-flops?" – asks Michael Schutz (2008: 83), later answering to these rhetorical questions with the emphasis on the importance of visual information on shaping the musical experience and its communicative powers in a seemingly sonic event such as musical performance. Undeniably, the visual aspect of the performance is important to how we perceive the whole act of musicianship. Even taking into account the possible variety of media to experience the performance, once a listener/member of an audience has seen a particular performer onstage, it is hard to believe that this image will be completely absent while listening later to recorded performances of the same artist. There is more than one instance to be exposed concerning the prejudices of listeners towards performers, judging solely by their apparent 'misbehaviour'. In a Lithuanian context, perhaps the most famous illustration of this statement that comes to mind is the highly controversial reception of the winner of the M. K. Čiurlionis International Piano Competition in 1999, a Polish pianist Jan Krzysztof Broja, which suggests that a performer risks having a highly controversial reception only because of his seemingly arrogant posture on stage. This talented pianist was received with open controversy based not as much on his interpretations (which

[59] It is often revealing how one is seen and interpreted from outside, in this case – what is the image of an art music concert ritual in popular culture. *The Cat Concerto* cartoon from 1947 (with the cat Tom, a piano virtuoso, giving a piano recital) is a telling parody of the behavioural clichés and the existing codes of on-stage music making.

earned him first prize in the competition) but on his on-stage manners: too 'arrogant' entrance (indeed slightly reminiscent of Ivo Pogorelich during the famous Chopin competition), movements and looks not appropriate to a classical musician.[60] Such reactions to performers' 'misbehaviour' may perhaps be ascribed to the Peircean *firstness* – a person is judged in terms of an immediate impulse; what remains in the receiver's mind of a person, as Tarasti puts it in his *Existential Semiotics*, may be "some striking gesture, perfume, expression, some quality beyond the 'official' image of his personality" (Tarasti 2000: 9), yet one may clearly trace here also rational socially pre-determined expectations. A different case from Broja's, however followed with a similarly aggressive reaction, is that of a Bulgarian pianist Evgeni Bozhanov at the XVI International Chopin Competition in Warsaw in 2010. Bozhanov's onstage facial expressions provoked heated online discussions, and, at times, even openly mocking attitudes towards his playing. This only once again proves that the performers must, in most of the cases, accord with the certain prescribed behavioural patterns, and this links us well to the last of the modalities, namely, that of 'Must'.

This modality shows itself on several levels of music performance art. To start with, this is the level of gesturality as determined by a particular piece of music, the 'composed gestures' (as discussed in Virtanen 2007, also cf. Hatten 2004). Apparently, a performer still has some freedom within certain limits, for instance, in choosing the tempo or the degree of stress in playing a passage, but, as Cumming writes, "To suggest that a performer may decide freely on what melodic patterns are to have 'gestural' connotation is, however, to underestimate the information that may be derived by looking at patterning in scores, or the constraints of style" (Cumming 2000: 136).

Proceeding with the 'Must', we also reach the level of a particular style of music, a certain epoch with its stylistic requirements. For instance, some patterns in Bach or in Classicist music require a particular manner of stress and release; also, romanticized performance is widely spread in performance practices, which tends to overemphasize a great deal of musical elements, thus denying the stylistic demands of the previous epochs.

[60] Unbelievable as it may seem, but this situation, Broja's behaviour in particular, was even discussed on a TV-programme after the competition, where his colleagues (and former contestants) pianists were sharing their opinions on the matter.

No less than the aforementioned reasons, the boundaries of genre and repertoire determine bodily movements of a performer. As already discussed at the 'General codes' level of Gino Stefani's model (Chapter 1.4), the great jazz pianist Keith Jarrett is known for acting in a rather free manner while playing: that is, humming himself or producing some kind of screams, constantly moving his head and the whole body, and even standing up while still with his hands on the keyboard. Evidently, when one is playing a Bach prelude or a Beethoven sonata, one is behaving according to the constraints of the appropriate behavioural codes. Although even here some deviations are possible: on some occasions, the bodily movements also reveal the interests of a performer. For instance, after being involved into a few jazz projects and after being given some bodily-related improvisation lessons[61], Petras Geniušas started using evidently jazzy, swingy movements of the head and body while playing classical music recitals.

Thus, as it has been demonstrated, the variables that determine bodily movements of a performer are of very different types – from the difficulty of a piece, the size of the performer's hands to the cultural codes. No doubt, certain elements cannot be strictly located, that is, some kind of 'grey areas' exist here as well – if we tried to combine the physical side of a performance with the emotional one, certain expressions of the same emotion would definitely belong at the same time to the several quadrants of the aforementioned square. Despite the recently-growing number of studies in the field, the semiotics of a performer's corporeality as one of the important aspects of performance practices still calls for interesting research directions.

In what follows, an attempt is made to put the reflections on a performer's corporeal identity within a semiotic framework by using semiotic models by Charles Sanders Peirce and Roman Jakobson.

2.3.3. Semiotic Models for Analyzing a Performer's Corporeality

In the present section, the author's contribution to the already-existing discussion on performers' gestures combines two very famous and celebrated semiotic models: the Peircean icon-index-symbol classification of sign relations, and the equally-known model on the functions of language formulated by the Russian linguist Roman Jakobson. This particular theory

[61] From personal communication with the pianist, Geniušas 2008.

by Peirce was already mentioned in relation to Cumming's book on the performer's subjectivity; it is also employed in Eric Clarke's study on the semiotics of expression in musical performance (cf. Clarke 1998); here, the intention is to demonstrate that this model is useful in the field of corporeality, in that it helps us distinguish between the different ways a performer's physical gesture may refer to the actual 'text' that is being performed.

1) An **icon**, which is a relation of physical resemblance, may appear whenever the performer *translates* (often synaesthetically) a physical quality of the opus into a bodily gesture. Raising up with one's body (or perhaps with the neck only) when high notes are being played; parodying an angry expression in correspondence of forte dynamics and/or march tempos; getting closer to the keyboard as if to hear better when the dynamics is *pianissimo*… all these are gestures of an iconic type, in that they are forms of 'portrayal' (and adaptation to ordinary, non-musical life) of the musical events.

2) An **index**, a relation of physical contiguity, is by far the relation mostly rooted in the biology of any semiosis, because the representamen is simply the natural 'consequence' of its object, such as in the ever-employed example of smoke and fire. In our case, the music does not only *suggest/inspire* gestures to the performer, but it can actually *drive/force* him or her to move in a certain manner. A *fortissimo* dynamics, for instance, requires a certain muscular tension that produces a particularly rigid, as if *nervous*, posture; passages that require an inverted position of right and left hands require certain torsion in the body, and so forth. Obviously (and it happens rather often), the performer may decide to emphasize such gestures (e.g., a longer-than-necessary run-up of the hands towards the keyboard before the final cadenza), for the sake of a bit of extra-spectacle, or perhaps to feel him/herself more engaged in the performance, but in general this kind of relation represents the most natural one in Peirce's whole categorization. For this reason, and for the purposes of the present classification, we may here welcome a proposal that was formulated in the field of zoosemiotics:

> Despite the fact that, in the Peircean system, the icon is the sign-object relation connected to firstness (i.e., the mode of being of what is without reference to any subject or object), the analysis [should] start from indexes […]. The […] logocentric nature [in human communication] predictably manifests a greater interest in symbols and icons. In a sense, one may go as far as

> to say that one of the main side-effects of the production of an artificial and/or cultural sign system is exactly its emancipation from indexicality, in favour of iconicity and (most of all) symbolicness. (Martinelli 2010b: 69–70)

Although coming from a completely different field, this statement holds true for musical performance as well, in that indexical gestures are the only ones that are not mediated by any cultural/conventional choice of the performer (save the mentioned spectacularizations, which are anyway mere forms of emphasis, not deception, as compared to the real effort), but simply stem from his/her biology and anatomy, in relation to the physical demands of a musical piece.

3) Finally, **symbols**, relations of conventional/cultural type, appear every time a performer displays a gesture that has been codified by some sort of social agreement, or rule, and that anyway bears no apparent similarity with the object. As pointed out above while talking about behavioural codes: performers (at least, most of them) may for instance keep a rather erect position while sitting at the piano, because that is the requirement of the etiquette of décor and elegance in a concert hall. Hands might be left suspended in the air for a few seconds at the end of a piece to convey the long-codified message that the audience should not applaud yet, etc.

In what follows, Peirce's model is combined with Roman Jakobson's model on language functions. The goal is allowing sign relations and sign functions to interact in the author's classification of performance gestures. On the one hand, the interest here is an understanding of *how* a given gesture refers to the music performed (which is what Peirce provides); on the other, it is equally important to have an idea of *what* these gestures are *for*. In this case, the gesture *may* address the musical work itself, but not necessarily: it could be the performer, it could be the audience, it could be another type of context, and this context might even not be present there and then. The result of this combination shall be summarized and explained in a specific table (see Table 2.1). First, however, some information on Jakobson's model is pertinent.

As widely known, Jakobson (1960: 353–357) identifies six main functions within a communication system, and each of them is in turn related to a particular element of semiosis: the **expressive** function refers to the sender, the **conative** refers to the receiver, the **phatic** refers to the establish-

ment of contact between sender and receiver, the **referential** refers to the context of the message, the **metalinguistic** refers to the code employed in a given communicative instance, and the **poetic** refers to the formal structure of the message. These functions are far from being isolated from each other or mutually exclusive: in normal conditions, a message is the intersection between two or more functions, even if one of them is often dominant and more evident. In detail, and in relation to the art of musical performance, these could be exemplified as follows:

1) The **expressive** function concerns that use of communication in which the most relevant part is the display of the emotional state and the identity of the sender. Certainly most, if not all, messages imply an expressive component, but clearly emotional elements can be more evident in certain cases than in others. The performer who closes the eyes and gently rocks the head to a particularly melodic and dreamy passage, is certainly putting a particular accent on the emotional dimension of his/her corporeality.

2) The **conative** function concerns that use of communication in which the sender uses the message in order to make the receiver have a certain reaction and act consequently. The receiver, in our case, is anybody who is exposed to the performance, for instance, the audience of a concert hall or (although the interaction in this case is indirect and artificially mediated) the listeners to a recording. The degree of communication between performers and audience (which shall be explored more specifically when talking about phatic signs) may vary depending mostly on the performer, and the history of piano playing has offered a whole catalogue of types, ranging from the nearly autistic performances of Grigory Sokolov or Radu Lupu (with almost no interaction with the audience), to the histrionic quality of Lang Lang's concerts (not to mention other musical idioms, such as rock, where the practical absence of a codified etiquette of behaviour and restrictions allow performers all sorts of interaction with the audience, including the infamous practice of stage-diving). And, on the other hand, the concept of spectatorship, the behaviour of concert attendants and their interaction with performers (more of which in Chapter 2.1) have been subject of investigation for several scholars, among whom, besides Small 1998, Pitts 2005 should at least be mentioned. At any rate, and going back to performers, there are bodily signs and gestures that are 'institutionally' conative, so to speak, meaning that they are part of a codified set of rules

in which the performer solicits a certain reaction (or lack thereof) from the audience. One example, already mentioned, is the 'suspended hands' signal that requires additional seconds of silence after the piece is over. Additional gestures include a prolonged time of preparation, on the part of the performer, *before* the performance, if the audience is not yet completely attentive and silent (prolongation normally manifested by removing the hands from the keyboard, to clearly show that the performer will *not* start playing unless everybody keeps quiet); the occasional interruption of a performance if the audience's 'coughing level' exceeds an acceptable threshold (interruption that, in a couple of cases, may be implemented with a severe spoken reproach to the audience, for example, András Schiff's exhibition at Helsinki Festival mentioned in the Introduction); and others.

3) The **phatic** function refers to the use of communication mainly aimed at establishing and/or keeping the contact between sender(s) and receiver(s). That goes from the simple act of greeting each other, to the most complex activities aimed at cementing an interpersonal or group relationship. To this extent, not surprisingly, it is in the nature of performance itself to create a phatic communication: after all a performance is exactly the act of displaying the ideas and the effort of a composer (not yet conveyed to anybody except him/herself) for the consumption of other subjects. That is: the performer is the very figure who establishes *a contact* between musical work and listeners, who allows an actual communication between the two parties. Less generally, we can also think of the various gestures that the performer does in order to activate and/or reinforce the bond with the audience, starting from the fact itself of bowing in front of it, before and after the performance, up to those musicians who are particularly eager to have eye-contact with the audience, or to add additional non-verbal language to entertain and/or please them. Of course, a distinction should be made between gestures that are explicitly aimed at the audience, and gestures that are simply enacted for the performer's own sake (concentration, emotional engagement, or something else): however, to an extent, the distinction is irrelevant, because, in order for a phatic function to be defined as such (or any other of Jakobson's functions), there is no need for the sign to be *intentionally* aimed at establishing/reinforcing the contact between sender and receiver.[62] The unusual catalogue of movements that a pianist such as

[62] That of intentionality in semiosis (communication, in particular) is by far one of the most critical questions, and a great matter of contention among semioticians,

Olli Mustonen displays during his concerts may certainly be the result of his own needs (some would say neuroses), but that does not exclude the impact that these movements have on the crowd, from surprise to amusement, up to sheer annoyance. In addition, it must be also said that the amount and quality of contact between performers and audiences is also heavily affected by the context. On the one hand, as mentioned already, a difference in musical context may mean a great deal, and there is no need to repeat that a rock pianist, as compared to a classical one, can take as many liberties as s/he wishes, when it comes to interacting with his/her fans. But even remaining within art music, there is a great difference between performing in Carnegie Hall or in one of those educational concerts for children, where a lot of comedy routine is not only allowed, but in fact encouraged. Not to mention contemporary and experimental music, which have often used interaction with the audience as one prominent artistic feature. Finally, although a decision was made to focus the examples in this and the previous category (conative signs) on the performer-audience interaction, it is perhaps useful to remark that this is not the only possible communicational bond. For instance, in contexts where the pianist is performing with other musicians, there is also a great deal of contact with the colleagues, starting from the fact itself of synchronizing the beginning of a performance (normally executed with facial expressions and eye-contact), up to the final hand-shaking moments.

4) The **referential** function describes that kind of situation where signs refer to a *context*, whatever that context may be (surrounding environment, subjects, time units, etc.). Sentences such as "Johann Sebastian Bach was born in 1685", or "The Metropolitan Opera's auditorium is one of the largest in the world, seating over 4,000 people" are all of referential type, as is – for instance – any musical work's title with descriptive features ("The Four Seasons", "Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune", etc.). Obviously, music itself is much more referential than some old school musicologist would like to think (including entire genres or compositional techniques that were explicitly born with a referential intention, such as the canon or the saltarello). In the specific case of performance, referentiality may appear

particularly those interested in the establishment of the so-called 'semiotic threshold'. There is no intention to participate in the debate, here, but simply pointing out that, intentionally or not, performers and audiences are connected by several instances of signification.

in many different gestures, aimed at different contexts: the work itself, the concert hall, other musicians, etc. To an extent, every musical work offers the performer an opportunity to describe it through his/her corporeality: the body often goes along with temporal units, melodic passages, technically challenging passages, etc. Some works are of course more prototypical than others, in that their musical properties are already descriptive *in se*, so it is more natural for the performer to accord with them rather than more abstract pieces. Evidently, something such as Saint-Saëns' "Carnival of Animals" offers more referential opportunities than many others.

5) The fifth type of communication function is called **metalinguistic**, and it is probably the most complex to describe in relation to a performer's corporeality. It occurs when signs are used to refer to other signs, rather than straight away to objects, creating an additional layer of semiosis, and therefore requiring additional interpretive effort. Metalinguistic communication typically occurs in instances of playing, deception, art and ritualization. A metalinguistic quality is for instance instrumental in order to create those elements of ambiguity that Umberto Eco considers a crucial ingredient in artistic communication (the famous notion of "Open work", cf. Eco 1989). That applies to music as well, but, of course, corporeality in musical performance is not such an obvious application of the concept. Yet, examples can be found. Glenn Gould's already mentioned habit of *conducting* his performances with one arm is a good case, because it is a form of gesticulation that is not proper for a pianist, but of another key-figure of musical performance, namely the conductor: a sign, thus, that refers to another sign, before addressing a specific object (i.e. regulating/pacing the musical flow). Also, whenever a gesture/act *addresses* any form of code, or even ritual, within the environment of performance, rather than simply *following* that code, chances for metalinguistic semiosis are high. Such convention-challenging performers as Ivo Pogorelich may have made, in the famous case of the Chopin competition, an anti-traditionalist statement by dressing in a very informal, inelegant, way. The sign (dressing informally) in such a case refers to another sign (the dressing code) to convey a message that in fact concerns the pianist's skills as a performer, not his opinions on fashion (that is, challenging the traditional dressing code because of challenging also the traditional way of playing).

6) Finally, a **poetic** function in communication focuses on the message itself, elaborating on its representation and form, rather than its contents.

This is probably the most conventional bodily sign detectable in performers, along with expressive ones. Poetic are all those gestures that embellish or emphasize the normal movements required for playing. A hand approaching the keyboard, or leaving a certain area of it to reach for another, or lifted up before descending again on the keys… all these are gestures that a performer may execute in a rather straight, economic, manner. Yet, many pianists like to embellish those movements, by making them more harmonic, perhaps a bit slower, sometimes even tracing imaginary doodles in the air. The same applies for any other movement of any other body part (head and facial expressions being very typical cases).

2.2.4. Concluding Remarks

Having explained in general terms how these particular theories by Peirce and Jakobson work within the field of performers' corporeality, the intention, as anticipated, is to suggest a combination of the two, for the purposes of encompassing the topic into a single model. The reasons for this decision lie in the fact that the two theories are perfectly compatible, both methodologically and, as far as it concerns the present research, empirically. Indeed, on the one hand Jakobson, through his classification, answers to the most obvious, yet unavoidable, question: what are these gestures for? What kind of role do they have in a performer's ethology? On the other hand, Peirce aims to illustrate how signs *refer* to their objects, that is, what kind of configuration their relation takes. We need this, because we are trying to analyze the intrinsic semiotic nature of these gestures, and the relation sign-object is the most important one in any process of semiosis (to the extent that losing sight of it might actually imply that the topic does not have any semiotic relevance at all). It is my claim that by combining the two theories one shall be able to encapsulate different forms of analysis of performers' corporeality, including the existing ones that were mentioned in the literature review above.

In Table 2.1, Peirce's triad is placed on the top row, and Jakobson's functions go on the first column, so that their combination produces eighteen possible sign typologies. To take just a couple of examples, the above-mentioned act of emphasizing the natural gestures of performance is a typology that, in normal conditions, occupies the intersection between the poetic function and the indexical relation; a pianist lifting his neck or looking up

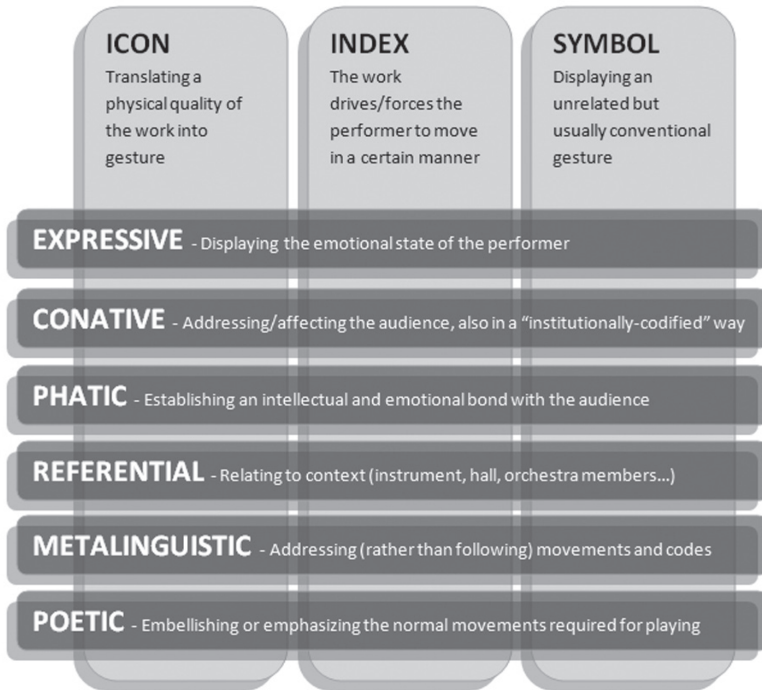

Table 2.1. Possible sign typologies of a performer's gesturality

with his/her eyes in correspondence of high notes is, in normal conditions, a combination of the expressive function and iconic relation; and so forth. It is to be emphasized 'in normal conditions' because with categorizations of this type there is always the risk of sounding too schematic and ignoring the several grey areas that exist across categories. This aspect shall not be overlooked, but it is certainly hoped that some direction to an indistinct aggregation of apparently ambiguous or insignificant signs has been provided.

2.3. 'Creative Lying' and Other Ways to Signify: On Music Performance as a Creative Process

2.3.1. Introduction

I don't think any interpretive artist is a genius;
just creative artists can be. (Previn 1971: 98)

In discourses of musical culture, the concept of a 'creator' is commonly applied to the composer, the author of a musical work. If the centrality of the 'opus', and of authorship in general, in music aesthetics, analysis and even mythology (the myth of musical 'genius') is not the primary consequence of this perception, it is certainly connected to it. Within this framework, the conceptual transition – which also happens to be a chronological one – from authorship to performance becomes synonymous with a transition from a creative process to *something else*. The interpretation of music by performers should certainly be skillful and competent, but ideally also emotional and inspiring. However, creativity is not a quality that seems to play a prominent role. In fact, the creative process is said to be that which happens *before* the performance.

Nevertheless, can it really be said that the interpreter of music is a mere technician who reads a certain text and presents it to the audience without any personal explication? The 'consumers' of music, i.e., the listeners, are often fascinated at a superficial level by a performer's virtuosity, mastery of an instrument, ability to perform by heart, etc. However, the essence of the performer's work lies behind these important yet manageable basics: it is a creative process. The notes, as a relatively vague source of information, serve primarily as a plan which needs to be carefully read and understood, but which gains a particular value only after being creatively assembled. It is precisely the creative effort of unfolding the variety of possibilities dormant in written music that is emphasized by so many practicing musicians and pedagogues. The performer's role in the musical process is definitely not a passive one; even the term 'mediation', so often (ab)used to describe performance, provides an incomplete picture of the real and intimately creative nature of the performer's hermeneutics of a musical work. In other words, the metaphor of the performer as vicar

(which cunningly implies the status of a god for the author) is hardly an accurate, let alone fair.[63]

After the musical work is written, and before it reaches the listener, a many-sided and complex series of endeavours has to be undertaken by the performer-interpreter. Interpretation of music reaches far beyond being mere reproduction or mechanical re-creation; rather, it is to be treated as a distinctive type of creation, through which the creative ideas, insights and convictions of a performer are conveyed. After having listened to several different interpretations of the same piece, it seems evident that each of them provides the musical work with significantly new nuances of sonority, style and meaning. The score, as has been stated repeatedly, is merely an abstract structure, which does not convey an acoustic reality of a musical piece. It is thus only natural that any musical performance presupposes an interpretation, an individual modification of this notated system into a different medium.

These and other issues concerning the performer's creative impulses, his/her relationship with the musical work and its author have been the subject of reflections by musicologists and philosophers of various times and backgrounds, from Lev Barenboim (1969), Gisèle Brelet (1951) and Roman Ingarden (1966) to Nicholas Cook (esp. 2007, 2013), Naomi Cumming (2000) and Peter Kivy (1993), not to mention the latest rise of the topic to prominence, fuelled by the recent trends of the British musicological environment.[64] In the following section of this study, the attitudes of two classical music pianists concerning their creative roles in interpreting music are taken as case studies for the present investigation and, at the same time, as a departure point for more general reflections on performer's creativity.[65]

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63 More reflections on the concept of 'mediation' as applied to performer's work appear in Navickaitė-Martinelli 2008b, as well as in Chapter 2.1 of this dissertation.

64 Here, Nicholas Cook remains one of the important authors, as well as the other scholars of the AHRC Research Centre for Musical Performance as Creative Practice (CMPCP) launched in 2009. The other leading researchers of the programme (which, as the title itself suggests, focuses on the various aspects of performance as creative enterprise) include Eric Clarke, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, Tina K. Ramnarine and John Rink.

65 The first draft of Chapter 2.3 has been presented by the author as part of a conference paper "'Creative Lying' and Other Ways to Signify: On Music Performance as a Creative Process" at the International Conference on the Embodiment of Authority (Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, September 2010), which is now available in the form of a publication, see Navickaitė-Martinelli 2011.

2.3.2. Artists' Views on Creativity in Performance: Two Case Studies

Even when dealing with contextual matters surrounding the art of musical performance, as suggested in the semiotic model discussed in Chapter 1.5, much of that also depends on and/or requires a generous amount of creativity on the performer's side. The choice of repertoire, the programming of the recital, marketing strategies (at least in those cases where a public relations expert is not available or affordable), and many more socio-cultural issues reveal a great deal about the creative personality of a performing artist. With this in mind, the present section concentrates on the creative aspect of the performer's attitude towards the composer's text. This means discussing the elements of musical performance art that might be ascribed to two explicitly performance-related angles of the Greimassian square: Performance–Work and Performance–Non-Work. An important underlying question here is: How much of what we hear or see in a performance belongs to or depends on a performer's creative persona?

As already suggested in Chapter 1.3, the semiosis of musical performance is being constantly influenced by a variety of cultural, social, and individual factors. The musician's personality, artistic and social choices are conditioned by various circumstances that encompass elements from one's cultural environment to corporeal identity. In this light, it is interesting to investigate how performers from different times, artistic and personal backgrounds and profiles express their individual identity and subjectivity as vehicles in interpreting the musical works they choose to perform.

It must be said that in conducting such an investigation the focus is not so much on the 'character' or on the 'sincerity' of a performer – whether or not it is the 'real' him/her in what s/he tries to communicate to the audience or to critics (an important issue for Naomi Cumming in her significant study on performer's individuality; cf. Cumming 2000). This dissertation is interested rather in the semiotic self of a performer – a much broader concept, which, together with contextual circumstances, may also encompass "creative lying", to borrow the title of a famous book on Glenn Gould.

In what follows, the methodology of employing a direct 'performer's discourse' on creativity is adopted. For discussing the creative role of a performer, the viewpoints of two classical music pianists shall be presented, with the explicit choice to combine the two artists of very different

backgrounds yet, in many respects, sharing similar attitudes. From the many available remarks by world-known authorities on piano performance, the writings of Glenn Gould (1932–1982) himself (e.g. as put in Page 1984), together with the study on his art by Kevin Bazzana *Glenn Gould: The Performer in the Work* (1997), were studied. The performer interviewed for this purpose was the Lithuanian pianist Petras Geniušas (b. 1961)[66], who kindly agreed to share some secrets of his artistic 'cuisine'. Thus, the aim here is not to discuss the creative process of 'a performer'; rather, the following reflections are based explicitly on an analysis of musicianship and the verbal communication of these two pianists. Two main issues are considered: 1) the role of a performer in the process of interpretation, and 2) the performer's relation to the composer and/or work.

2.3.2.1. The Role of a Performer

For Gould, as one might easily guess, the performer's role was a creative one. In his own words: "I refuse to conceive of the recreative act as being essentially different from the creative act" (Gould, quoted in Bazzana 1997: 39). Gould treated a performance as one possible variation on the work, seen explicitly from the performer's point of view. By extension, as Bazzana states, the pianist felt that the susceptibility of works to variant interpretations extended well beyond the truism that no two interpretations are alike (ibid.). The same applies to Geniušas, who apparently perceives the role of the performer as first and foremost a creative one: "If a composer treats a performer as a robot who is supposed to realize his conscious intellectual intentions the result might be negative. When a performer stifles his personality, when he attempts to act mechanically, both the performer and the interpretation will suffer." (Geniušas, in Navickaitė-Martinelli 2010a: 99).

One of his most recurrent terms while talking about performing music is *išgyvenimas*, *Erlebnis* (Geniušas 2008[67]), an adequate word for which, in semiotic terminology, would perhaps be engagement, *embrayage*. In this case, it means the performer's most personal and intense feeling of and for a musical work. When Geniušas starts working on a musical piece, the point of departure for him is not formal or structural, but rather the inner truth

[66] For the biographical note of the pianist, cf. Appendix 4.

[67] Here and elsewhere in the text, this refers to the author's personal communication with the pianist, October 2008.

that engages or draws one into the work; once found, it suggests adequate interpretative decisions. Most often, this inner feeling comes for the pianist through the visual imagery, a kind of 'internal cinema', which accompanies the piece. Lights, images, perspectives, surroundings, a person/protagonist with emotions and feelings – all the elements of this 'inner film' are encoded by the performer into the sonorous texture, from which listeners will in turn decode them and create their own 'cinema'. The pianist does not mind if listeners' significations differ from his own; what is more important to him is that the performer creates a catalogue of images, which in his mind are organized according to a certain narrative. The crucial action here is the creation of the *catalogue*, not the creation of the narrative; the latter will eventually be organized in an autonomous way by the listener (similar to Gould's concept of the "well-tempered listener", who is consciously and actively engaged in the creative process). What matters is the existence and richness of the significations in this encoded message; its actual manifestation, or appearance, is not really relevant. (To his students, he says: "Imagine *something*", and, in Geniušas' opinion, even when a performer finds something that is relevant only to himself or herself, the meanings of the musical work normally open up much easier.)

Unlike Geniušas, Gould's main approach to a musical work was through its structure rather than its emotional qualities; but as concerns the roles of composer, performer, and listener, he very much acknowledged the continuity of the semiotic process at every stage (which recalls Barthes' view of the reader as writer). In Gould's thinking, every interpreter can become a creator, as can every receiver; the interpreter can form a new 'composition' from the composer's work, but also the interpreter's product can in turn become a 'composition' in relation to which the listener can act as an 'interpreter' (Bazzana 1997: 83). In the work of Jean-Jacques Nattiez (as Bazzana himself comments, ibid.: 41), we find a translation of Gould's ideas into orthodox semiological terminology: "In the chain from the composer to the listener, there is no communication, strictly speaking, but a series of constructions" (Nattiez 1996: 29). The *esthesic* (or receptive) process and the *poietic* (or creative) process are far from being the same (that is, from representing the same *object*, the work, with the same configuration), but although this is a matter-of-fact that applies to all music, it seems that Gould wants something more out of it. He wants creative freedom for the performer, he wants pure poiesis, and in that sense he almost goes in the

opposite direction of claiming that, after all, the performer should pursue a 'correct', 'true' interpretation of the work.

2.3.2.2. The Performer's Relation to the Composer/Work

In a 1962 interview, Gould was asked whether the performer was responsible to the composer or to himself, to which he replied:

> There are a few performers in the happy position of feeling that the way they feel the music is the way the composer felt the music. But sometimes I wonder why we fuss so much about fidelity to a tradition of the composer's generation, and not the performer's – for instance, trying to play Beethoven as Beethoven is supposed to have played it. (Gould, quoted in Bazzana 1997: 59)

Some years later, when asked by an interviewer if he felt that Beethoven would approve of his interpretations of his music, Gould's response was: "I don't really know, nor do I very much care" (ibid.).[68]

Geniušas' attitude towards his relation to the composer is far less 'radical', since he in principle approaches the issue from a different perspective. As most of performers would agree, he admits that, being a classical musician, he *is* mediating the composer. He takes care to study Beethoven's style, the composer's biography, the instruments he played, the illnesses he had, and so on. As Geniušas puts it, "It is a scholarly attitude that dominates in the musical world nowadays, and I do not ignore it" (Geniušas 2008). Much more important to him, however, is a kind of spiritual relation to the composer. To his mind, the composer, while writing the piece, knew certain things – a certain idea he wanted to convey, a certain form that he wanted to retain, or a certain emotion to express – but this is not all. Because *why* this idea came and *where from* – in other words, what is 'before' and what is 'after' this music – these are not things, in Geniušas' opinion, that the composer is fully aware of. In the pianist's words:

[68] In a very similar manner, a Hungarian pianist Ervin Nyiregyházi considered the performer's first duty to be not to the composer but to his own life and personality, his own thoughts and feelings. He repeatedly confessed that he heard things in pieces that their composers could not have intended, and played them as though he had composed them himself: "I have confidence in my own instincts and I don't worry about the purists" (Bazzana 2007: 289).

> An experienced performer sometimes is more efficient at digging to the subconscious intents of the composer than he himself. Otherwise this world would not even need performers. It is one thing to compose a piece built on a conscious idea, and it is different when this intent emerges from the depth impenetrable even to himself. Performers are sometimes capable of professionally reaching into this deeper level and rendering the intents not consciously perceived by the composer. (Geniušas, in Navickaitė-Martinelli 2010a: 99)

Thus, believing in the existence of this subconscious level in both the composer's and the performer's activity, he does not consider it blasphemy from the performer's side to rely on his own intuition about the work's signification. Similarly to Gould, who thought that the performer should impose his own values and prejudices onto the work – should, in a sense, create his own new work based on the existing score – Geniušas observes that the composer is usually very 'good in structure', but he points out the need for a performer to fill in that structure with individual meanings (Geniušas 2008).

Nevertheless, in making interpretative choices one should not deny certain stylistic requirements. While dealing with Beethoven, Geniušas says, one should first of all strive for the utmost intensity. This composer is for him, "The miraculous concentration of everything – feeling, intellect, engagement – at superhuman heights"; thus, any performer can only attempt at getting as close as possible to such intensity. And in doing this it is important to perceive the music played as something unique and new.[69] But in Geniušas' understanding, it additionally supports his deliberately unorthodox and sometimes ahistorical attitude towards the music played. For instance, he considers 'classical' and 'romantic' being more inner categories rather than historical ones. Thus, instead of classifying Beethoven

[69] This is actually the point that many performers emphasize: that it is important to keep a 'fresh' attitude towards the music played. As the pianist Alexander Toradze confesses: "The fact that I have played it [Second Concerto by Prokofiev] so many times does matter, but… I want it to be interesting. Otherwise I will not be able to progress across two bars, I will stop immediately. While in order to engage myself, I need to constantly remove the old scum, to polish the mildewed surface and create a new layer, in short, – I have to work. The overall concept of rendition of a piece maybe is not changing so much, or just slightly, but inside it involves abundant detail, chords, colour combinations, and other things. And it is necessary to play the way as if it were the first time: if I cannot achieve that, I lose interest. And when it is not interesting, I cannot play." (Toradze, in Navickaitė-Martinelli 2010a: 352).

as a Classicist or Romanticist composer, it is more important that he perceives that music as something just written, something modern, new and unique, not yet classified; exactly as the composer might have perceived it when he wrote it. In addition, a kind of 'spiritual' communication, an emotional 'resonance' with the implied composer's intentions, is more significant for him than is literal obedience to the author's indications in the score (ibid.).

Again, on a more radical level, for Gould, faithfulness to the score was not a given. Believing that a musical work exists apart from performance, he considered such aspects as contrapuntal balance, rhythmic nuances, dynamic levels, articulation, tone colour, and instrumentation – even where specified by the composer – to be subject to the performer's will, yet without compromise as to the identity or status of the work (Bazzana 1997: 36). Among the few performers of the mid-twentieth century who considered fidelity to the author's text to be almost a negative pursuit, Gould expressed what was perhaps an extreme reaction to the prevalent tendency of the time, which limited the interpreter's creative insights and suggested focusing one's efforts towards rendering the work as 'neutrally' as possible.

2.3.3. Concluding Remarks

It is of course possible (however, it is not the aim of the present study) to go to much greater lengths in discussing the creative process of a performer, with all the possibilities for signifying the music and the self, while making interpretative decisions. Since Performance Studies took its first steps back in the 1970s, this has been one of the major focuses of its scholars, and not only in relation to music. While a general agreement on the details of the performer-creativity relation is far from having been achieved, it seems clear that such a relation exists, and it is far from being secondary.

It is precisely because of the creative role of a performer that some studies claim there is no substantial difference between *performance* and *interpretation*. In any process of performing, no matter how much the performer would try to be faithful to the musical text, to merely 're-create' the musical work, there is necessarily an element of interpretation, a subjective modification of the performance's source. The score is merely an abstract structure, a sign system through which the composer communicates artistic ideas. A performance might thus be considered a transition from the mental artistic

contents (the composer's idea) and a non-artistic material scheme (the score) to another material but already artistic system (the sounds). That is why a performance, an individual version of the text's meaning(s), is not merely a mechanical act of reproduction, but an original type of creation, a complex and productive act.

At any rate, instead of pursuing a topic whose thorough discussion would go far beyond the scopes of this study, it could be summed up by remarking that the performer who seeks to disappear into the work performed is nowadays frequently complimented. Although one would be tempted to interpret this state of things as a collective attempt to underrate the input of a performer, as if s/he really has to be not more than a *vicar*, the truth may well have more to do with the other party involved. Indeed, it is probably yet another confirmation of the centrality of 'authorship' in the general perception of a musical work. Following the *scripta manent* principle, the idea persists that the original output of the composer is *the truth*, and as such it has to be treated with fidelity and respectful devotion. The good performer is the one who does not *lie* about the work, but offers it to the audience in a formulation that does its composer due justice.

Having said that, it remains difficult to fault those performers who choose to follow the opposite route, if their choice is consciously motivated. The case studies above were deliberately selected in order to discuss two pianists whose viewpoints are rather similar when it comes to signifying one's self in performance instead of humbly complying with the directives of the score. At the same time, one may mention other contemporary pianists, such as Valery Afanassiev, Ivo Pogorelich, or Piotr Anderszewski, who in creating their interpretations first and foremost draw a creative and distinctively individual musical picture. It would undoubtedly be possible to present totally opposite views as legitimate as the ones discussed here. Be that as it may, the important research task in semiotically-oriented performance studies is to be able to approach musical interpretation as a multifaceted and multi-directional phenomenon in which the most varied significations are operating.

Here, again, communicating with performers, along with the study of their interpretations, seems to be significant. During the author's interviews conducted with prominent musicians of various specialties, such as Vladimir Ashkenazy, Monica Groop, Steven Isserlis, Gidon Kremer, Alexander Toradze, and Violeta Urmana, the creative nature of a performer's

work was discussed more than once. It is evident from their verbal statements that performers tend to emphasize emotion, feeling, intensity, *Erlebnis*, and imagination as the necessary elements that make their art a creative one. The notes in the score are normally referred to as 'hieroglyphs', 'mere symbols', 'Morse code', etc., while the content, the atmosphere, the spiritual, emotional, meaningful world is added only by a performer; thus again the creative role is attributed to the interpreter of those notes. Also, the pleasure their profession gives them is frequently referred to as a 'creative joy'. The discourse on performer's creativity may be concluded here by quoting the cellist David Geringas, whose thoughts well summarize what has been written above:

> I think that a performer has at least to try to *newly create* the piece that is being played. What is written in the score are only signs that help re-create the music, but the music starts its existence only in performance. It is very important, while the music sounds, to experience and feel it as intensely as possible, as if to create it anew. I think this is the main goal of a performer: only if one manages to do this, the interpretation will be adequate. (Geringas, in Navickaitė-Martinelli 2010a: 407)

If nothing else, statements such as this (plus the many other similar ones collected in the interviews) prove that most performers have a very clear idea of how they see their art and duty. Performers, and perhaps rightly so, claim their right of possessing a way to music that constitutes a pure language. This language is different from the composer's way into music, for the same, simple reason why an act of performance is intimately different from an act of composition: both may be, and are, creative actions, but the dynamics, the articulation, and the actual spirit that animates them are different. What composers and performers share is a text, and this text – once *handed* from the former to the latter – has to be translated. A good translator is not the one who simply addresses the work of translation in terms of 'fidelity' to the text. The primary task is to make that text as efficient in its new form as it was in the original, now that the language has changed. That may imply clear-cut, even radical, re-articulation of words, sentences and expressions which may happen *not to work* in the new language, if translated literally.

2.4. From *Werktreue* to 'High Fidelity': On *Authentic* Performance

2.4.1. Introduction

The highest praise one can bestow nowadays
on a musical performance, in many influential circles,
is to say that it was "authentic". (Kivy 1995: 1)

Among the discourses on the art of music performance, both in the verbal communication of performers as well as in the analyses and critical evaluations of their art, a recurrent concept is that of an 'authentic performance'. Functioning in musical contexts in several interrelated senses, this concept and the ideology behind it can undoubtedly be considered an influential current, which, by the end of the twentieth century, had had a significant impact on the whole industry of classical music in its broadest sense. Hence, it deserves to be introduced as a distinctive type of performance-related issues and analyzed as such. Provided the abundance of literature on the history and most significant aspects of the modern early-music revival or the so-called Historically Informed Performance (HIP) movement (e.g. Dolmetsch 1915; Dart 1954; Haskell 1988; Donington 1989/1963; Haynes 2007; Davidson 2008; Kelly 2011), it seems to be not too pertinent within the pages of this very dissertation to indulge once again in re-telling that history and its effects on contemporary piano performances. It is perhaps suffice to mention that the most heated debate on the matter reached its climax around twenty years ago, and since then the controversy around the issue has been turning into a more productive scholarly and artistic dialogue. As much as it concerns our purposes, below in Part 3, Beethoven interpretations as influenced by the authenticity ideal shall be shortly discussed. In the meantime, the purpose of the present chapter is a brief outline of the discourses on authentic performance (including, surely, also those related to HIP) and some theoretical reflections concerning the issue of authenticity, shedding a particular light on two semiotic viewpoints on the matter. We shall start from the concept itself and its employment in musical contexts.

2.4.2. 'Authenticity': The Concept and Its Usage

As related to music, the term 'authenticity' has been used in a polysemous manner. However, since the last decades of the twentieth century, the most common use refers to the type of performance that synonymously is termed 'historically informed' or 'historically aware'. An important aspect of such a performance, besides studying treatises and manuscripts of the period, is also employing 'period', 'original', or, indeed, 'authentic' instruments and playing techniques from the times when the interpreted music was first performed. As discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 2.7 of the present study, the twentieth century is known for the domination of music of the past in the concert repertoires. Many of the performance styles and trends throughout the century and beyond were still situated within the so-called 'mainstream' performance practice. However, a concern with historical performing practices that stems from nineteenth-century historicism, also found room in performers' and scholars' routines.

As many a researcher has witnessed, such historically-oriented interest began with critical and *Urtext* editions, with Mendelssohn's performances of earlier music, with the restoration of plainchant by the monks of Solesmes, and in the activities of Arnold Dolmetsch (1858–1940) – a practicing musician, brilliant scholar, and instrument-maker. All of these factors had preceded a modern early music revival, which, by the 1970s, had become an influential practice that offered a wide range of possibilities for new ways of performing, listening to, and thinking about music. Naturally, some performers have altogether ignored the ideas presented by the new movement; however, many ensembles and solo musicians have found in them an extraordinary source of inspiration, as well as a successful repertoire niche. Initially applied to Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque music, the authenticity movement has of late come to encompass Classical, Romantic and even early-twentieth-century repertoires as well. Mutual benefits that this new way of presenting old music and the recording industry have experienced should also be mentioned. However, things did not always go very smoothly, especially in the early stages of the movement.[70] Thorough studies

[70] Even the historically-informed performers themselves admit that the practice has gone through the phases of dilettantism and pedantry. Especially the latter has often been criticized, for its supposed oppression of performers' 'natural' emotions. As the Finnish mezzo-soprano Monica Groop puts it when talking about the initial stages

have been devoted to (or tackling it not so much at length as in depth, as in the case of Rosen) the issue (cf. Kerman 1985; Kenyon 1988; Kivy 1995; Taruskin 1995; Sherman 1997; Rosen 2000; or Leech-Wilkinson 2002, to name but a few), where, along with the arguments and motives in favour of the *authentic* performance, a great deal of criticism has been levelled against it. What, then, lies behind the concept of being 'authentic'?

As one of the active figures in the field, musicologist and cellist John Butt, summarizes in his 'Authenticity' entry for the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, an 'authentic' performance may refer to one or any combination of the following approaches:

- use of instruments from the composer's own era;
- use of performing techniques documented in the composer's era;
- performance based on the implications of the original sources for a particular work;
- fidelity to the composer's intentions for performance or to the type of performance a composer desired or achieved;
- an attempt to re-create the context of the original performance;
- and an attempt to re-create the musical experience of the original audience. (Butt 2001)

However, things are not at all clear and simple. Many musicologists and music critics have been questioning the aims and ideals of the historical performance movement, and particularly the term 'authenticity' as such has been ardently criticized. To one of its harshest (and wittiest) critics at the time, Richard Taruskin, for instance, 'authenticity' suggested a form of cultural elitism which can imply that any other type of performance is 'inauthentic', as if a forgery or an act of almost purposeful deceit: "There it is […] in all its purloined majesty, this word that simply cannot be rid of its moral and ethical overtones (and which always carries its invidious antonym in tow), being used to privilege one philosophy of performance over all others." (Taruskin 1995: 90). Stating that "at its worst, authenticity is just another name for purism" (ibid.: 76), Taruskin also writes:

of the authenticity movement: "At some point everything became very 'vegetarian': everything was very straight, no *crescendi* allowed at all, all very restrained, almost clinical. […] Now we got back a little bit, now we are freer and more relaxed about Bach…" (Groop, in Navickaitė-Martinelli 2010a: 207).

> […] whereas I realize (and try to show) that "responsible performers" have important virtues (one being the way they give reflection to salient aspects of our contemporary culture and bring them to consciousness), in the end I hope to foster alternative models of authentic performance, which I would prefer not to call "irresponsible" but "postauthoritarian," […]. (ibid.: 47)

As seen in the epigraph of the present chapter, a philosopher Peter Kivy also somewhat ironically notices that nowadays, in many influential circles, the highest acclaim one can attribute to a musical performance is to label it as being 'authentic'. "'Authentic'," Kivy says, "has become or is close to becoming a synonym for 'good', while seeming to confer upon a performance some magical property that it did not have before." (Kivy 1995: 1). This is similar to Dario Martinelli's comment on the apparently ethically-oriented qualities that are normally associated with authenticity: "Authentic music is perceived as honest, real, uncorrupted, even 'loyal' towards the audience. The fear is inauthenticity: the kitsch, the fake, the too artefact, too commercial, too technological." (Martinelli 2010a: 12). It must be said that without even venturing into the ethical issues, the usage itself of the term 'authentic' raises continuous discussions – also among musical performers, many of whom have doubts concerning the possibility as well as the need of such a concept as applied to their work.[71]

As it is common in similar cases, consulting a dictionary may be of some help. This kind of approach is supported by many a researcher on

[71] One of the examples would be how one of the leading Lithuanian historical performance figures, viola da gamba player Darius Stabinskas, comments on the term 'authenticity': "I myself do not like this word, it doesn't mean anything to me, or means not what we are actually talking about. It is impossible to perform music 'authentically'. We perhaps may call 'authentic' the folklorists who, say, wear the authentic costumes of the early twentieth century. While the live music performance has not survived – it is a fact. Historical information only helps achieving the result that *may have been* there. I would name being closer to *authentic* such performance practice where, during various master classes or festivals, similarly-minded people gather and they enrich each other with their knowledge, they make music together, and in this way help each other retain live music performance according to all the requirements of the time, including improvisation. Once you have learned certain things, you feel yourself freely in such a practice, as if playing jazz (indeed, it is very reminiscent of playing jazz standards!). However, one needs to know very deeply the very beginning, the basics. Otherwise, as any wonderful orchestra musician who comes to play in a jazz band, you won't be in your own element." (Stabinskas, in Navickaitė-Martinelli 2010a: 178).

the matter, as well as by Kivy in his *Authenticities*, the five meanings for 'authentic' there being cited from the *Oxford English Dictionary*:

1. Of authority, authoritative. (Possessing original or inherent authority.)
2. Original, firsthand, prototypical. (Opposed to copied.)
3. Really proceeding from its reputed source or author: of undisputed origin, genuine. (Opposed to counterfeit, forged.)
4. Belonging to himself, own, proper.
5. Acting of itself, self-originated, automatic. (The spontaneous or authentic motions of a clockwork.) (Kivy 1995: 3)

A general semiotic remark can already be made, at this point. If the meanings 2, 4 and 5 seem to encompass rather literal (to an extent, predictable) definitions of 'authentic', the other two oscillate between a denotative and a connotative dimension, with nuances of a moral statement. The first one in particular, "authoritative, possessing original or inherent authority", adds an important quality ('authority') that the word 'authentic' as such does not necessarily imply (yet, as shown above, it is regularly implied by the adepts of the *authenticity movement*). According to Kivy, in fact, this specific meaning is suitable for qualifying three distinctive typologies of performance that can be heralded as 'historically authentic', as they adhere

> […] faithfully to the composer's performance intentions, conforming to the performance practice of the composer's historical period, producing sounds very similar or identical to those produced in a performance during the composer's lifetime. For each of these "authenticities" might seem, at least on first reflection, to possess some kind of authority and to be reaching back to an original source. (ibid.: 4)

The second meaning on the list moves the focus towards the whereabouts of musical authenticity as a strategy to conform to, or reproduce, "The *way* music was performed in the composer's lifetime or the way it *sounded*" (ibid.). This, of course, raises the question of *how many* authentic performances can there be, given that a single opus, especially when it was particularly popular in its period, must have been performed so many times that a unique 'authentic' is hardly identifiable, therefore practically contradicting the essence of this second meaning of the word (how can

we, for instance, talk about a *proto*type?). Moreover, it brings us to another problem – that of *how* did the music really sound during the composer's time. Charles Rosen, one of the authors often in contradiction with the authenticity current, did admit that the movement was very useful in certain aspects, however, in Rosen's own words,

> […] what was wrong with that is that to believe that during the composer's life the music sounded one way is a fallacy. Take a simple example: the *Well-Tempered Clavier* was written for harpsichord, clavichord, organ or early piano. Indifferently: 'Clavier' means keyboard, it could be anything. Which is actually one problem with Bach: many of his compositions are for home-performance anyway, so there was no 'control' on the actual instrument that was going to be used. The Goldberg Variations are clearer, because he actually wrote them for double harpsichord. But nobody knows if, say, the Trio Sonatas are for organ or harpsichord: they are for two 'claviers' and pedal, and that's all it says." (Rosen, in Navickaitė-Martinelli 2010a: 320–321)

The third meaning is the one that we can more clearly connect to the mythical *composer's intentions*, which is – commonsensically speaking – what most musical audiences may expect from a concept such as 'musical authenticity'. As a text that is "really proceeding from its reputed source or author", an item of musical authenticity could therefore be the original copy of a score. However, as Kivy remarks, that particular type of performance, "Can also be authentic or inauthentic in this sense. A performance of a musical work is correctly called authentic if it follows the intentions, wishes, and instructions with regard to the performance of that work that the composer has made known to us – and it is inauthentic, if it doesn't" (Kivy 1995: 5).

Now, interestingly enough, the last two definitions of the Oxford Dictionary refer to exactly the kind of performance that the orthodox of the historical performance movement would criticize. That is the 'mainstream' performance practice – all those performers, from Vladimir Horowitz, Glenn Gould to Nikolai Petrov, who, while constantly violating the rules of 'historical authenticity', have in turn been criticizing the movement for trying to oppress the 'natural rights' of a performer. In this sense, for instance, Grigory Sokolov's performance of a Chopin prelude is authentic as long as it is uniquely *his* interpretation. The last definition is also similar, even though the Dictionary provides such a mechanical example. The emphasis here is on *autonomy*, *honesty*, *originality*, creating in fact a significant gap

with the type of performance that strives for nothing else than *reproducing* the original (thus, *renouncing* its own originality as such).

Summarizing,

> There are at least four notions of authenticity meaningfully applicable to musical performance practice. These are the notions of (1) faithfulness to the composer's performance intentions; (2) faithfulness to the performance practice of the composer's lifetime; (3) faithfulness to the sound of a performance during the composer's lifetime; and (4) faithfulness to the performer's own self, original, not derivative or an aping of someone else's way of playing. (ibid.: 6–7)

Of these, the first three are evident instances of what musical environments would call a *historical* authenticity.

The purpose of the following sections, however, reaches beyond discussing authenticity as applied in historical performance practice. What is of particular interest here is how semioticians have been tackling the issue, and what is their input into the theoretical discussion on the problem of authenticity in musical performance.

2.4.3. Semiotic Contributions to the Issue of Authenticity in Musical Performance

The issue of authenticity in musical performance may particularly benefit from the semiotic approach for at least two reasons. First, because, along with such fields as existentialism, aesthetics or psychology, semiotics has been in the frontline of the theoretical problematization of 'authenticity' in principle (via classic analyses such as Greimas-Courtés 1979 and Eco 1987); and second, because, within the specific applications of the concept to the field of musical analysis, performance has been paid particular attention. Among the latter studies, two sources will mainly be relied on here, i.e. Eero Tarasti's *Existential Semiotics* (2000) and Dario Martinelli's *Authenticity, Performance and Other Double-Edged Words* (2010), which are at the same time part of a continuum (Martinelli initiates his reflections from Tarasti, and both are referring to Greimas and Eco), and displays of different conclusions (starting from the fact that Tarasti is, generally speaking, *defending* the concept, while Martinelli shows signs of scepticism towards a certain abuse of the idea).

2.4.3.1. Eero Tarasti's Semiotic Theory of Musical Authenticity

Tarasti's analysis, aimed at the formulation of a semiotic theory of musical authenticity, is implemented as part of his paradigm of existential semiotics. He begins by noticing that, regardless of any intention to circumscribe the notion to a specific field of art (music, in his case), the problem of authenticity remains intimately multifaceted, due to the contamination ("a kind of infiltration", as he calls it) coming from other arts:

> Authentic musical interpretation takes place in an intertextual field; thus, the performer of music should also become acquainted with the philosophy, painting, literature, and other arts of the time. It is claimed that interartistic competence increases the authenticity of interpretation. Yet exactly how such competence does so remains a mystery. (Tarasti 2000: 112)

The latter comment may also be understood as a cautious attitude towards the attempts of some historically informed performers to re-create, as much as possible, the contexts of the original performance. It is comparable, in this view, with Rosen's remark on the impossibility, and – more to the point – to the unnecessity of learning and reawakening everything of the 'authentic' past: "Paradoxically, in so far as the purpose of a performance of a Mozart concerto is reconstruction of eighteenth-century practice rather than pleasure or dramatic effect, just so far does it differ from an actual performance by Mozart" (Rosen 1995: 72). It is not, however, the idea of authenticity in itself, nor the quest for it, that troubles Tarasti.

The semioticization of the concept, in Tarasti's work, begins by juxtaposing the opposition authentic/inauthentic with the semiotic concepts of signifier/signified or manifest/immanent. 'Authenticity', he writes, is the signified: it refers to an entity that has meaning and contents. Conversely, 'inauthenticity' is the lack of contents, something which "moves merely on the surface of reality" (Tarasti 2000: 113). Moreover, and in accordance with Eco (1987: 9), the element of temporality is crucial:

> The term "authentic" contains a temporal shifter, in as much as one considers authentic to be something pre-existent or prior, as if it were more original. Usually the authenticity of a "later" object (token) or phenomenon is tested by comparing it with the supposedly "original" model (type) or occurrence. (Tarasti 2000: 113)

Tarasti denounces that, in the majority of cases, what is offered to society (arts being a relevant manifestation of it, of course), is a number of 'fakes', vaguely reminiscent of an 'original' object, but in fact something that simply 'appears' or 'seems' to be so, without the authentic condition of 'being' (or, rather, 'having been', as in several cases of authentic objects having been *replaced* by inauthentic ones). A typical Greimassian opposition (*to appear/to be*), this dichotomy generates the prototypical square of truth, falsehood, secret and lie that the Lithuanian semiotician had repeatedly used to exemplify his most famous model. Tarasti's stand is thus clearly ethical: the question of authenticity and inauthenticity is, in his writings, basically a confrontation between truth and falsehood.

Temporality is, however, not the only parameter at stake. A more 'objective' one (as it is based on time and on a certain *empirical* opposition between 'original' and 'forged' objects), temporality could be implemented by a clearly Heideggerian, subjective category:

> There is also such a thing like authentic subjectivity or subjective authenticity, which can characterize one's activities at any time and in any place. When one acts, feels, and thinks in a certain way, one's behavior is authentic; that is, it follows one's essence. Otherwise that person must be considered alienated, representing *falsches Bewusstsein*, or false consciousness. Is one way of living more authentic than another? This was the question asked by Leo Tolstoy, Henry Thoreau, John Ruskin, and other thinkers, and it has maintained its currency. It still makes people search for their "roots" – in their birthplaces, in the countryside, or wherever else. As far as such a "return to authenticity" takes place via memories, diaries, or correspondence, it constitutes a discourse of its own. (ibid.: 116)

This process, Tarasti continues, can be named "authentic auto-communication", and it is opposed to its inauthentic counterpart whenever the communication becomes "external", affected by other subjects, or society as such, and thus creating, to different degrees, a form of alienation from the "fundamental ego" (ibid.: 117).

The deriving model, which becomes Tarasti's main assertion on the whole idea of authenticity, consists therefore of this interaction between objective (mostly temporal) categories on one side and subjective ones on the other. Still Greimassian in nature, the model thus presents the subjective aspect of 'actoriality', and the general time/space context. Subject, time and place are in turn exposed to opposite forces, which make a text move

in the inner or outer space: a centrifugal one (Greimas' *débrayage*, or disengagement) and a centripetal one (*embrayage*, or engagement).

The perfect state of authenticity is realized hence "When complete engagement prevails in all three dimensions: (1) the temporal – 'now' (*nunc*); (2) the spatial – 'here' (*hic*); (3) and the actorial – 'I' (*ego*). Such a state has been often considered the ideal; it is the utopia of philosophers" (ibid.: 118).

Applying the model to the case of musical authenticity, Tarasti shows a specific interest in interpretation/performance. On the one hand, indeed, one has the state of *being*, that is "the inner properties of a musical work" (ibid.: 125), on the other we find the *seeming*, or "the qualities of its interpretation or performance" (ibid.), both aspects co-existing in symbiotic fashion, and not necessarily (or not so obviously) reflecting that ethical 'true-false' dichotomy that would lead (and has led, at least in traditional musicology) to dismiss performances as nothing other than 'forgeries':

> Musical authenticity is also related to performance specifically. Certain schools of interpretation owe their existence to the transmission of certain "authentic" oral traditions from artist to pupil, to the pupil's pupil, and so on. This is one of the last cases of oral tradition in modern music culture, which is otherwise completely dominated by electronic communication. Since the teaching of music is still a tactile activity that takes place in direct contact between teacher and pupil, a certain feeling of "authenticity" has survived there. At the École Normale de Musique in Paris, Professor Jules Gentil claimed that his method of piano teaching was directly inherited from Madame Boissier, who took notes at piano lessons with Franz Liszt as to the position of hands; the principle of *la main morte* (relaxed hand) was one example in her notes. The Pole Jan Hoffman could add to the authenticity of Paderewski editions of Chopin's works certain fingerings used by Chopin himself (such as the gliding of the little finger from one key to the next, against conventional rules, in order to produce a particular sonority). It is thus understandable why musicians and other artists think it important to situate themselves in a certain professional genealogy: appeals to their artistic inheritance guarantee performers the "authenticity" of their interpretations. (ibid.: 126)

Taking all these variables into account, the issue of authenticity becomes even more complicated and intangible. We can take as an example a musical performer – say, Ivo Pogorelich – who for decades proved to be very loyal to his own, highly subjective, feeling and understanding of the music performed; and who, moreover, belongs to a very 'authentic' line of music

teaching that stems straight from Liszt; yet his performances are regularly identified as 'deconstructive' or even 'damaging' rather than 'authentic'. Or, as a Lithuanian pianist Andrius Žlabys answers to the question on the authenticity movement:

> I am excited by a rendition, not by the instruments. No doubt every style has its boundaries which probably should be observed, yet we should not compress them for the sake of historical or ethnographic reasons. There is no parameter in terms of which Gould's rendition could qualify as authentic, but the very spirit of his playing is authentic. His understanding of music is authentic, yet his very concept of authenticity is unconventional. (Žlabys, in Navickaitė-Martinelli 2010a: 268)

Tarasti himself is very clear in pointing out that the quest for authenticity, particularly in performance, does not mean a search for one mythical 'correct interpretation'. Quoting the famous harpsichordist Wanda Landowska, "An interpreter must penetrate all the composer's ideas in order to feel and be able to convey the fire of expression and all the refinements of detail. There are a thousand different ways of interpreting a piece without getting away from its character" (Landowska, in Tarasti 2000: 127). The definition of a compositional style, the 'evidence' of the score, and similar supposedly fixed points of reference must be anyway counterbalanced with the many "significations that are enacted in live performance via various modalizations of a musical piece" (ibid.: 128). Achieving an *authentic performance*, especially through the direct canalization offered by the score, is certainly a prohibitive task. There is much more: instrument, context, concert hall… and on top of these, the performer's and the listener's perception/imagination/knowledge on what this *authenticity* is.

On that basis, the phenomenon of misunderstanding in situations of musical communication and signification is also likely (as Tarasti himself discussed in 2002). As he states, misunderstanding may occur at the level of interpretation and expression (*Ausdruck*). When the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra performs Sibelius' symphonies, a Finnish listener may experience a kind of cross-cultural clash (Tarasti 2002: 18). Tarasti adds that this kind of clash is not a negative phenomenon, moreover, new types of interpretation emerge in this way, and if they are artistically convincing, the better. It is, however, exactly the element of 'authenticity' that makes the Finnish audience (or, for instance, the Lithuanian one, when it comes

to Čiurlionis) experience this 'misunderstanding' or, rather, a form of reluctance towards an 'inauthentic', different, interpretation.

2.4.3.2. Dario Martinelli's Categorization of 'Authenticity' in Music

Martinelli's treatise (2010), in turn, is set on similar premises but rather different goals. To begin with, the author is interested in dissecting that 'objective dimension' remarked by Tarasti into distinguished, 'countable' categories:

1) Geography: "The birthplace of a given type (form/tradition/genre/opus etc.), i.e., in most cases, the place where the given element was first found" (Martinelli 2010a: 15).
2) Temporality, in all its possible expressions: past/present, original/remake, before/after, early/late (ibid.: 15–16).
3) Style/Genre, again expressed in terms of different oppositions: acoustic/electronic, period/modern instruments, simple/elaborated, etc., up to the intrinsic authenticity or inauthenticity perceived in the very nature of given styles (e.g., blues on the one hand, synth-pop on the other) (ibid.: 16–17).
4) Society and economy, or "The impact of music on people in terms of social phenomenon and (when it is the case) financial business" (ibid.: 18). Examples, here, include the opposition between alternative/underground music and the music produced and distributed on a mass scale, or between small independent labels and the so-called "majors" (ibid.).

To these, a fifth case is produced as an illustration of the other dimension suggested by Tarasti, the subjective one, and that of course is mostly focused on performance as such:

> The given way to perform a work can be perceived as more authentic than another (and, here, criteria are legion: spontaneity, faithfulness to the composer's intention, a certain tendency not to "over-play", etc.). In popular music, this is also the case of live performances, as opposed to studio recording, or to musicians that are perceived as not really "playing" their music, like DJs. (ibid.).

Martinelli then proceeds by comparing the various articulations of the authenticity ideal in popular music with those of architecture and heritage

management (ibid.: 21–25). By departing from a Greimassian scheme of the four elements involved in Tarasti's analysis (authenticity, inauthenticity, engagement, disengagement, see Figure 2.2), he develops four cases:

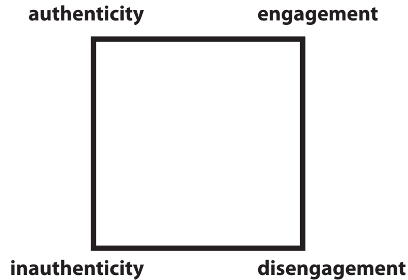

Figure 2.2. The dimensions of (in)authenticity and (dis)engagement, as framed in a Greimassian square and appearing in Martinelli 2010a: 21

1) First, there is *preservation*, where a conscious attempt is made to maintain the integrity of the original heritage, renouncing any 'new' intervention and trying to keep the heritage in life (e.g., by not over-exploiting it, and by keeping it more as a museum piece);
2) In the exactly opposite way, a process of *corruption* may take place, with the addition in time of elements/techniques/details belonging to the contemporaneity (a common practice in Baroque, for instance, or in the currently fashionable *fusion* style in interior design);
3) *Restoration* is of course possible as well: we may accept the practical unfeasibility of a total preservation, so we may instead discretely intervene so that our work is as respectful as possible to the original heritage, but to do so we may need modern materials, technologies, etc. Frescos in churches tend to be revitalized in this particular way: the original portrait is restored, but modern paints are used instead of old 'egg tempera' and the likes;
4) Finally, one can opt for *redefinition*. The heritage is accepted in its present condition (e.g., a half-destroyed monastery), but gets re-conceptualized so that it becomes something *else* (let us say, a museum): the action, thus, is that of creating a 'new' authentic, and the heritage is a *meta*-heritage.

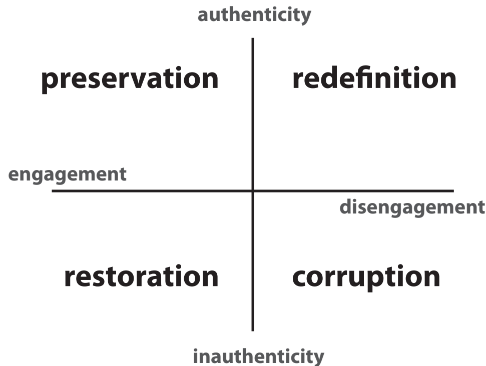

Figure 2.3. Semantic relations between the dimensions
of authenticity/inauthenticity and engagement/disengagement,
as presented in Martinelli 2010a: 22

Such a comparison (which is summarized in Figure 2.3) can be perhaps transferred to art music performance, and Martinelli himself mentions my reflections in this respect (ibid.: 24). In the next section, I propose some elaboration on what had already been stated back in 2010.

2.4.3.3. Elaboration on Martinelli's Categories within Art Music Performance

The case of *preservation* is naturally exemplified, in a quintessential manner, by the authenticity movement and their 'historically-informed' performances. Within this approach, performers employ the state-of-the-art knowledge of any formal, aesthetic, technical and technological characteristic of the very period in which a given work was composed. No significant 'adaptation' of the work normally occurs, and in fact the most evident aspects of HIP come to the fore exactly when a *conflict* occurs between old and new criteria (imperfect pitch, obsolete tuning systems, different materials of the instrument, etc.). To some extent, the audience goes through a form of re-training of their aural (and visual) experience of a work and its performance. They see unusual instruments, strange ways of handling them, they hear odd sounds: without wanting to diminish the importance and achievements of the trend, paradoxically, the experience can even be slightly alienating.

Restoration, in turn, is certainly the most visible of cases, in modern performance practices, exactly as it is in any other art, when it has to deal with the 'past': cultural heritage can be treated in many different ways, as we have seen, but the fact is that, more often than not, it gets 'restored', re-built, that is, with modern techniques but in a manner that is (visually, most of all) more or less faithful to the original (or what is perceived as the original). In art music performance, too, what is done on a rather regular basis, particularly in classic and romantic repertoires, is to try and have a fairly objective approach to the original work, even though – say – the pianist will not be 'historically informed', and will be sitting at the most modern of *Steinway* pianos to perform music that such musicians as Mozart were composing and performing on a *Stein* fortepiano.

To an extent, both *preservation* and *restoration* (that is, the two cases that tend towards the 'engagement' side of the scheme) require, or at least imply, a certain restraint from 'personal' involvement on the side of the performer. An 'objective' performance is, to some degree, an impersonal one. We can see that very clearly in the opposition between the personal, subjective conducting style of Wilhelm Furtwängler, with its various 'freedoms' in rhythm, tempo, sound (in apparent contradiction with the indications of the score), and the impersonal, objective (in other words, devoted) style of Arturo Toscanini.

Corruption is another very common practice in musical performance, as it is for instance embodied by various forms of modernization and/or romanticization of classical repertoires. In this sense, despite its negative-sounding ring, a *corrupted* performance may also result in the most personal, *Moi*-oriented of the whole lot. 'Romanticize' a piece certainly responds to a trend in musical performance, bearing its own patterns and conventions (a more dramatic emphasis on dynamics, to mention the most obvious one), but it is also the result of very individual choices operated by the single performer, who *feels* that a given passage is 'better expressed', 'more effective', 'truer to his/her emotions' when performed in a particular manner that was evidently not hinted by the score, or by the common performance practices of that piece. Occasionally, the performer may even feel that, by doing so, s/he is being more faithful to the actual composer in an effort to interpret the latter's *real* intentions and *real* feelings. As Taruskin puts it, "performers are essentially corrupters – deviants, in fact." (Taruskin 1995: 13).

Finally, the category of *redefinition* addresses, as we have seen, a meta-process of new authenticity, that is, the creation of a new entity, based on (or, rather, filtered through) an original point of reference. Typically, such action is embodied by the various radical remakes of old material, for better or (perhaps more often) for worse. 'Redefinition' is, for instance, making a disco hit out of the Fifth symphony (such as the intentionally kitsch release by the fictional artist P.D.Q. Bach), as well as the digitalized performance of a piece previously composed for analogical instruments. Having said that, the occurrence of redefinition is not necessarily only a postmodern affair. Transcribing for, say, a guitar a piece written for, say, a piano can be redefinition too, if the composer originally meant that piece to exist only for piano (or for any other instrument that was *not* guitar). However, such practice cannot be called thus if, instead, the composer (Bach being a typical case, as Rosen's quote above affirms) programmatically implied that his/her piece could be performed by any instrument, even if originally written *on* (but not *for*) one.

2.4.4. Concluding Remarks

From all that has been said above, it is proposed that there exist the following types of authenticity in musical performance, all of which, in one way or another, are tackled within the pages of this dissertation (although not necessarily with a clear emphasis on *authenticity*):

- 'Historically informed' performances. All those performances as described in the present chapter that take into account, while preparing musical works, the historical evidence: scholarly treatises, historically 'accurate' concert environments, period instruments, etc. Towards such type of authenticity tend, for instance, the renditions of *The Tempest* sonata as played on the period instruments by Paul Badura-Skoda and Malcolm Bilson and discussed in Part 3.
- A performance seeking the *Werktreue*, or rather, *Texttreue*[72], ideal. Not being of a strictly 'historically-informed', this type of performance

[72] The term *Werktreue* (of which more in Chapter 3.3) is used in German musicology as denoting the performer's fidelity to the composer's intentions, while the close to it *Texttreue* means the devotion to the work's text, i.e. the score. These German terms are also commonly employed in the Anglo-saxon musicological environments.

aims at the utmost precision and fidelity to the composer's requirements as indicated in the score, while at the same time using modern instruments and techniques. This type of ideal raises many problems in that the score, as often pointed out, does not present nor *ensure* the exact sounding result of the musical piece.

- Certain 'authoritative' lineage of a 'school', or performance tradition. There are many instances where certain performers emphasize their *authentic* ways of playing 'inherited' through a remarkably authoritative lineage of teachers. One of those is the already-mentioned case of Ivo Pogorelich whose source of inspiration and playing techniques derive, in the pianist's own words (expressed on many occasions), from Liszt's teaching.
- Culturally and geographically determined 'authenticity'. Besides the certain genres being born in a concrete place, and hence being 'authentic' to that very region (e.g. Neapolitan opera buffa), one type of 'authenticity' is often ascribed to local cultural environment, or mentality, of the artists belonging to the same geographical space. According to such line of thought, it is only the 'Russian soul' that is able to properly interpret Mussorgsky or Rachmaninov, also it is only the melancholic Čiurlionis from the lakes and valleys near his native Druskininkai (in Southern Lithuania) that speaks, through the interpretations of (only) Lithuanian pianists, in the most *authentic* language.
- Musical work as performed for the first time. The premiere performance of Gintaras Sodeika's Piano Concerto commissioned for the Vilnius Festival 2014 and performed by the young Lithuanian pianist Gryta Tatorytė should thus be considered as the authentic one for that very work. An additional remark may be made that, in the case of contemporary music (due to its marginal status in musical life), the first performance often remains the most 'authentic' by simply remaining the *only* performance of the piece.
- The composer performing his own works. Often, but not necessarily (if the composer does not master the instrument), this type of authenticity and authoritativeness may be related to the 'first performance'. Beethoven himself, obviously, would be the case, as also the status of the most *authentic* renditions of Rachmaninov's Piano concertos should perhaps be ascribed to his own recordings of the works. However, music history provides many examples of composers preferring performances

by the others, including Rachmaninov himself liking Horowitz's interpretation of his Sonata more than his own.

- Live concert communication versus recorded, 'technologically-polluted' performance. As discussed in Chapter 2.5, in spite of the century-long history of recorded performances, the yardstick of a 'real', authentic performance in art music remains the live concert experience. However, there is much to say about the particular type of 'authenticity' achieved in the technically-perfect recordings of nowadays – how much of the performer's art the technologies are capable of capturing and mediating to the listener. This is precisely where the concept of 'high-fidelity' comes to the scene, and its effects on current performance practices should by no means be understated.
- A performance that is very true to the interpreter's own subjectivity. This rather philosophical way of approaching the issue of authenticity, which is mostly applicable to the type of creative artists discussed in Chapter 2.3, occurs where the utmost engagement, sincerity, emotion are achieved, and the 'sonic self' of the performer is manifested.

2.5. 'Mechanization of Music': On Recorded Performance

2.5.1. Introduction

A new kind of listening – listening in private to a performer recorded far away and years ago – so completely severs music from its social context, that one may reasonably doubt that the experience of music has remained the same since the invention of the gramophone. (Scruton 1999: 438)

From whichever perspective one wishes to analyze and discuss the various issues related to musical performance, one cannot avoid mentioning the sound recording technologies that emerged in the early twentieth century. The invention of music recording, which was initially conceived as having an archival value and meant to preserve such rarities as, for instance, the singing of the last castrato[73], in the course of time has profoundly changed the whole art of music performance. Many features of present performance practices are closely related to sound recordings. One can mention, among others, the detachment from reactions of the listeners, the assimilation of the sound of the instruments (several other things have also contributed to this, such as large concert halls that 'swallow' the penumbras of sound as well as the standardized musical instruments, such as *Steinway* pianos), and the need to re-create the entirety of the whole musical cycles. Also, the maximum fidelity to the author's text is pursued in a large part because of the possibility to repeat a certain performance many times, this way examining its 'authenticity'.[74]

As many theorizing and practicing musicians have repeatedly observed, new and important aesthetic effects emanated from the physical separation of listening from performing. On the one hand, the performance became disembodied and transportable, thus altering significantly the ways of listening. On the other hand, musicians were able for the first time to hear themselves as others hear them, which in turn contributed to great changes

[73] One of the first documentary discs recorded by Deutsche Grammophon in the first years of the twentieth century offer, among other records, an invaluable documentation of the singing of 'the last castrato', the director of the Sistine Chapel Choir, Alessandro Moreschi.

[74] In more than one respect, indeed, the issue of authenticity is closely related to that of a recorded musical performance.

in the nature of interpretation. In fact, for some performers, it became one of the main arguments in favour of making recordings. In Vladimir Ashkenazy's words, "I like recording, because I like listening to myself from outside and learn, what I have to do in order to improve my playing. The recording process is to me very interesting, appealing and, often, very revealing." (in Navickaitė-Martinelli 2010a: 45).

The balance between live music-making and recording has changed radically over the last century, both for musicians and for audiences. Most people today obtain a large part of their experience of music from recordings as opposed to attending live concerts. By the same token, professional musicians are long accustomed to the necessity of making CDs, and, throughout the second half of the twentieth century, the reputation of the most famous of them rested heavily on their recordings (cf. Philip 2004: 47). (Currently, the situation is again changing due to the internet, where one can find – and download for their private use – virtually anything.) Although, as we shall see later in this chapter, in the realm of classical music the live concert still remains the *authentic* measure of one's talent and success, there is no question by now that live performance and mediatized forms compete for audiences in the cultural marketplace, and that latter forms have gained a clear advantage in this competition (Auslander 1999: 6). All this considered, even more puzzling is the fact that musicology still relatively rarely addresses both the sound recordings as such, and the performances there recorded. The situation is well summarized by Nicholas Cook:

> It is a simple statistical fact that, for most people across the world, music means performance, whether live or recorded, and not scores. Given that, and the fact that records are the primary documents of music as performance, it might be thought of as strange that there is such an imbalance in musicological research training between score- and recording-based source criticism. Indeed to many musicologists it might not be immediately obvious what recording-based source criticism might mean. (Cook 2009: 775)

As in the field of analyzing musical performance as such, the main problems with the study of musical recordings remain the same: first of all, the methodological one, and, in addition, the issue of long-lasting musicological attitudes towards the performance (and its record) as a phenomenon and analytical material of only secondary interest. Whereas the quote above comes from the year 2009, things, of course, have been

slightly changing of late, and not without the impact of the institution led by the author of the quoted passage. Established as a joint initiative of three British universities, the AHRC Research Centre for the History and Analysis of Recorded Music (CHARM) was, in the years of its funded activity (2004–2009), devoted precisely to conducting research into musical performance as a record, encompassing a number of interrelated topics. Within the outcomes of the project, a number of brilliant publications appeared (in addition to CHARM's major discographical project), which discuss various issues related to the recorded performance from the point of view of listening to and perceiving it (Clarke 2005 and 2007; Timmers 2007), approaches to the study of recorded musical performances (Cook 2009a; Leech-Wilkinson 2009a), changes of performance styles as related to the recording technologies (Leech-Wilkinson 2009b), recordings as a medium (Cook 2009b), etc.

Considering also the older studies, such as Philip 1992 and 2004; Chanan 1995; Badal 1996; Auslander 1999; and Day 2000, there is no need to commence in this dissertation into the recording history and how the styles of musical performance have been changing as affected by musical recording practices. Instead, some semiotic aspects of recording technologies and their impact on the art of musical performance shall be tackled in the present chapter.

2.5.2. Sound Recording as Communication: The Performers' Attitudes and the Listeners' Experiences

The approaches towards the new technologies demonstrated by the performers themselves varied from the very beginning. Being accustomed to live music-making, some musicians received the new forms of performance and its consumption with scepticism. However, with time, more and more artists started favouring recording practices and seriously reflected upon their preferences over the concert experience. For some of performers the recording medium became particularly important. The famous case of Glenn Gould was already mentioned while discussing the phenomenon of a live concert. More importantly for the current purposes, Gould not only withdrew himself from public concert life to immerse himself in the recording studio, but his work with the recording technologies was particularly innovative when

it comes to the classical music environment.[75] However, due to psychological reasons studio work was not acceptable for every artist either (the main objection being a lack of control over the listeners' reactions). In the course of the twentieth century, the performers thus naturally ended up splitting into two groups: some of them gave more concerts, while the others tended to produce huge discographies.

There is perhaps no big necessity for the music lover to know about how the music is actually recorded. Nevertheless, when taken seriously, recordings can provide us with serious clues on how to judge the music performances that are on them. Being a complex technological, musical and social phenomenon, sound recordings are a matter of great relevance to the ways in which the art of musical performance is both being practised and perceived.

If, as argued above in Chapter 2.1, the concert hall is already a rather unpropitious environment when it comes to human relationships, then sound recording is even more so. The latter is a kind of non-existent, virtual space, an artificially created medium that selects from a musical performance only certain signs (sounds), while leaving out others. For example: recordings do not include concert intermissions, pauses between movements have been standardized, and such sounds as the performer's breathing, coughing or turning pages have either been removed or so carefully doctored that they do not appear in the final 'mix'[76]; even more artificiality is added by the possibilities of manipulating the recording itself – the making of separate episodes, voices, etc. As Robert Philip observes, "The illusion has become more complete as sound-reproduction has improved, but illusion was always the point." (Philip 2004: 26).

[75] Bruno Monsaingeon's film *Glenn Gould: The Alchemist* (1974, EMI) is a compelling documentary on Gould's recording work, the mixing and editing that the pianist would employ. It is rather unique to find such footages in the world of classical music (whereas it would indeed be much more common in the field of popular music): classical music performers are not eager to admit any editing in their work, while Gould was particularly fascinated with the possibilities that the recordings had provided him with, and was very open about that.

[76] Eric Clarke notes that art music recordings, in particular, seek to minimize or altogether eliminate the audibility of the body. The well known exceptions which he mentions – pianists Glenn Gould and Keith Jarrett, who can be heard "singing/groaning along on their recordings", and the conductor John Barbirolli, who "can be heard grunting on his" – only prove the rule that generally the aim is "a kind of abstracted and disembodied quality" (Clarke 2007: 58).

Contrary to the excited attitudes of such artists as Gould, these illusory improvements, an intrinsic part of the contemporary recording process, are considered mere *forgeries* by those for whom a live performance, even after a hundred years of recording history, remains the yardstick and who are inclined to perceive any performance as an uninterrupted, continuous, inspired act of embodying music *hic et nunc*. Both among the listeners and performers there exist those who hold such opinion, e.g. Nikolai Petrov:

> The contemporary technology makes it possible for every vagabond to make an ideal recording. It is done by superimposition, by cutting, computer processing, which allows the simple removal of some false notes by the computer – like before *Welte-Mignon* would simply cover up a hole in the roll with a false note with glue and pierce another, thus correcting mistakes. However, live recordings are more interesting. How often we happen to listen to a CD of a sterile, perfectly cleaned recording knowing that this musician has never played this way on stage – it is essential distorting the facts. (Petrov, in Navickaitė-Martinelli 2010a: 218)

The 'isolationism' encouraged by the concert hall reaches its extremes in the kind of virtual world provided by recordings. A very evident type of 'virtual retreat' can be found in the usage of an iPod[77]: with the earphones channelling the music directly into their ears, listeners can isolate themselves from their surroundings. Such technologies enable listeners to enjoy private rituals by staying home and listening to the music there. Gould, when speaking about the 'well-tempered listener', saw this as the future of musical practice: listeners creating the meanings they want by technically manipulating any and all parameters of the music they listen to. The pianist's vision has not yet been fully realized, but current, 'privatized' rituals of listening indicate that its realization might not be so far off. Interestingly enough, most of what Gould dreamt about has actually become the routine reality of popular culture (and not art music, onto which the imagination of the artist was projected)[78], but some aspects of his visions might

[77] How nowadays not only the data of exact sciences, but also the texts of humanities are dating with an incredible speed is well illustrated by the fact that this passage, as compared with its earlier versions since the present research was conducted, has been changing from the Walkman to MP3 player until was 'upgraded' to the iPod.

[78] The same can be said about the process of the recording itself. As Clarke observes, "While classical music recording was (and still is) dominated by the principle of fidelity, of trying to create as realistic an impression of a musical performance as possible

indeed be noticed also in the rituals of listening to classical music sound recordings.

The just-described technologies, and many more like them, prompted a crucial mutation in the communication between the performer and the listener. The communication always involves interpretation, thus, not only the sender is important, but also the receiver, in our case the listener. And it is very clear that the final result of music perception is influenced by various factors that depend on the concrete circumstances of listening to music. During the centuries, the only way to perceive music was an audiovisual one, i.e. listening to music in a concert hall, being able to hear live sounds, to see the performers and their instruments. After the emergence of sound recording technologies, however, it became possible to compare the results of psychological perception of music depending on the way of listening.

It has been stated by many researchers that the impression made by music is highly influenced by the appearance and attitudes of performers. Admittedly, our musical experience becomes in this type of listening predominantly what Pierre Schaeffer called *acousmatic*. In this kind of disembodied listening, one hears the sounds, but without seeing their source (Chanan 1995: 18). However, the need to see the performers is closely related to the type of music in question. It is true that, say, an organist or a choir in a church were never too visible to the listeners and neither is this visibility a necessity to some musical genres. If, say, the colourful, effective, 'rhetoric' art of an instrumentalist virtuoso or an opera singer might indeed be enriched by the visual means of expression, then certain types of more austere music, especially the intimate chamber genres, are rather sufficient with purely acoustic effect. As it was discussed in Chapter 2.2, seeing the musician might in fact even disturb the listening, if his or her movements, posture and overall behaviour do not seem to be functional in accordance to the music performed.

Besides the matter of visibility, another crucial mutation of communication between the performer and the listener was embodied by the technologies. The pursuit of technical perfection meant the loss of authentic interaction. If one finds composer-to-listener communication sufficient, then sound recordings seem to be the best solution: there it is only you and the music. However, such communication loses something, by cutting

[…], pop music soon discovered the potential of the studio as a place to make music rather than just to record it (Clarke 2007: 54).

out the human contact involved in live performance. The latter produces the 'vibrations' mentioned by many artists, 'a type of collective emotion' that one cannot experience by listening to a recording (ibid.: 128). Taking into account this psychological element, and also remembering the other aspects of the Performance–Non-Work realm of the semiotic model (such as, e.g., 'performer's theatre'), one is left to wonder whether it is not those 'old-fashioned' concert rituals that carry most of the mysterious charms of musical performance art. This aspect may be aptly brought to a close with the words of Dmitry Bashkirov:

> If a concert performance is more or less a success, the result as a rule is a livelier and more interesting rendition than that of a recording. Though there have been exceptions, when I was aware that the recording was so good […] that I would never be able to repeat this rendition… Things do happen. Yet most often when somebody tells me of a musician I do not know and suggests listening to his or her recordings, I always prefer listening to a live performance. Even if something fails, I want to feel the person. Recording is a great thing, but it seldom communicates an adequate image of the artist. I think that recordings cannot recreate this all-surround impression, the atmosphere which embraces the creation of the artist on the stage. (Bashkirov, in Navickaitė-Martinelli 2010a: 418)

2.5.3. The Impact of Recording Technologies on the Art of Musical Performance: A Semiotic Perspective

In this following section, the intention is to summarize the issues mentioned above and discuss the increasing professionalism and rationalization of performance art, which were among the most evident musical processes during the course of the twentieth century. It is claimed that much of this development was strongly affected by recording technologies. Again, the semiotic model of performer's subjectivity is called for, only in this case the original scheme (cf. Figure 1.2 in Chapter 1.3) is applied to the changes that the activity of the performer-interpreter underwent in the age of mechanical reproduction, cultural globalization, and mass marketing.[79]

Let us begin with the modality of 'Will'. One aspect of how the *Moi* of a performer is 'exploited' in today's musical world shall be discussed

[79] The latter remark is related to the fact that, once recorded, musical performance altogether too obviously becomes one of the cultural commodities, moreover, accessible all around the globe.

below in Chapter 4.1. Namely, it concerns the marketability of an artist, employing one's charisma as a commodity and using a number of possible means for this purpose, which include visual and verbal communication, the services of image-making companies, etc. Charismatic artists, obviously, existed long before the twentieth century. What has mostly changed perhaps are the dimensions of the commercial side of their activity, which have increased with time.

However, when talking about an average performer of the twentieth century and later, it is more characteristic to mention the loss of the artist's individuality as determined by the common wish to accomplish internationally increasing professional standards. Through the course of the twentieth century, there was an evident shift in the styles of music performance: from the Romanticist, clearly subjective approach predominant in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century, to the Neo-Classicist, more objective approach that came onto scene in the forties and, with some variations, still prevails. The artists of late Romanticism witnessed the demise of their art in the face of changing values. This is how, in 1927, Eugen d'Albert lamented the loss of individuality and portended the automation of classical music:

> In former times one placed the most value on individuality and on spiritual depth of playing, today these things are of less and less concern. The emphasis [today] is on an immaculate, pearly style and a clean, smooth technique. We are coming closer and closer to the playing style of a Pianola, and just as everything mechanical continually makes progress, I predict we will soon have only Pianola concerts, which are already common in England and America. We will become unaccustomed to being spiritually animated by a sweating artist, and will prefer, in undisturbed placidity of spirit, to hear a perfect but inarticulate machine, producing a transitory, shallow pleasure, without any excitement. The future will certainly bring forth surprising developments in this area. We will thus become further and further removed from the intellectual and spiritual work which we all know cannot be mechanically reproduced. (quoted from Hill 1994: 50)

The 'clean and smooth technique' that d'Albert mentions in his above-mentioned passage leads us to the Greimassian modality of 'Can'. Even though the 'catastrophist' prognoses by such performing artists as d'Albert have obviously not become true, yet indeed by the beginning of the twenty-first century, musicians and audiences have become so used to hearing

perfect performances created by editing that the general standards in the concert hall are also much higher than they ever used to be. In the early recordings of the twentieth century, we can here the authentic charm of the old interpretations, however, as Philip says, early recordings also make it clear that standards of accuracy, tuning, clarity and precision were generally lower in the early twentieth century than they are today, and there is no reason to suppose that they were higher through the nineteenth century (Philip 2004: 13). The higher professionalism of performers and the increased importance of performance technique were partly influenced by technically more perfect musical instruments and, mostly, this was yet another effect of the growing dominance of recordings. The change in attitudes and evaluating criteria, besides other social or cultural factors, is well reflected by the demand for technically perfect recordings. Performance, the art that has always been the most ephemeral by its nature, is put on the shelf together with other media representations, once recorded. In addition, musicians were now aware of their own sound and style as they had not been a hundred years ago, and thus became highly self-critical about details. Seeking precision and clarity while making a recording has become a habit, so that, in the concert hall too, musicians aim above all for technical perfection. A live performance tends to sound thus like its own record. As Eric Clarke puts it:

> The relative permanence of recordings already gives them a spatial and object-like character, but the development of detailed editing, made possible by the introduction of magnetic tape towards the end of the Second World War, hugely emphasized the constructed quality of studio recordings. Repeatability and semi-permanence mean that the slips and risks that either go unnoticed in live performance, or are quickly forgotten, have been regarded (rightly or wrongly) as unacceptable in a recording. And so the drive towards technical perfection begins: fidelity of the medium and fidelity to the score. (Clarke 2007: 53)

As the modality of 'Know' consists of pre-established social and cultural codes and stereotypes, one might say that precisely this, the *Soi* side of the performer's work, started being dominant when reproduction technologies gained more importance. This is, however, a double-edged issue. On the one hand, more at a global level, the activity of the performer-interpreter has indeed experienced an increasing rationalization, which is illustrated

by the standardization of interpretations (i.e. their becoming certain commonly accepted formulas of playing). One must be especially 'standardized' in competitions of performers in order to satisfy the taste of as many jury members as possible. Quite an important aspect in this process is the influence of the leaders of music performance art on the styles of performance, which is disseminated by the very same recordings and other media. On the other hand, as shall be discussed below in Chapter 2.6, the clear boundaries between various local traditions started vanishing in the course of time. Progressively growing opportunities of communication make it possible for young artists to absorb enormous amounts of information, which in turn gives them a chance to adopt various styles and mix them according to their taste or wish. More often than not, these are similar, faceless interpretations that are supposed to please 'everyone'.

And, finally, the modality of 'Must' brings us to one particular phenomenon of today's musical world, which was born as early as E.T.A. Hoffmann's idea of being true, or faithful, to the work of music, a concept that later came to be called *Werktreue* (and which is discussed in this dissertation in Chapter 3.3). Being neglected by the performers-romantics, *Werktreue*, fidelity, the more objective approach to the score as compared to subjective emotions or intuition by the performer, became a significant quality of the performers of later generations, and reached its peak in the authenticity movement in the 1960s. This movement attempted at restoring not only the immanent modalities of the musical works, but also their social and cultural contexts.

It is indeed possible to claim that essential problems when interpreting classical music arise because the skills of modern pianists were formed in an environment crucially different from that of, say, Beethoven. As opposed to spontaneity and liveliness so valued in Beethoven's time, many of them now prefer depth and precision of performance. The change in attitudes is also reflected by the demand for technically perfect recordings. Recorded performances become themselves 'texts' – they gain stability which contradicts the former spontaneity. The possibility of making sound recordings was indeed one of the significant factors, which have influenced the evolution of the *Werktreue* ideal to the extreme 'authenticity' (i.e. perfection of the rendition of the musical work). After gaining their central role in the twentieth century, recordings helped in formulating the idea that a performer is a mere reproducer and not a creator.

2.5.4. Concluding Remarks

As discussed in the present chapter, certain features of musical performance art changed during the twentieth century under the direct or non-direct influence of recording technologies. To summarize, these changes are here represented by the four quadrants of the semiotic square (see Figure 2.4) in the following way:

1) The importance of charisma, of the artist's 'marketability' increases; at the level of interpretations, on the contrary, the loss of artistic individuality is experienced.
2) Considerably higher standards of accuracy, tuning, clarity and precision; importance of technical perfection.
3) Increasing rationalization and standardization of interpretations, especially when it comes to musical competitions; vanishing boundaries of local traditions.
4) 'Fidelity to the work' is valued; an objective approach to the score rather than subjective emotions or a performer's intuition becomes a significant quality of the interpreter.

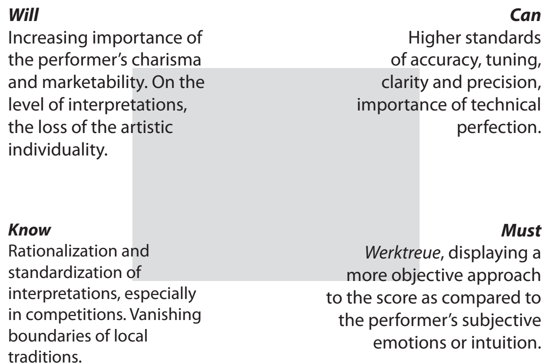

Figure 2.4. Transformations of musical performance art in the age of mechanical reproduction

To this, adding all the "perceptual consequences of regarding recordings either as medium or as object" (Clarke 2007: 48) as well as "the influence

of recording on the continuum between social and solitary listening practices" (ibid.), we may conclude by stating that the phenomenon of a recorded performance is to be considered among the most significant factors that have influenced the practice, perception and research of the art of musical performance.

2.6. Frontiers of Style: On Schools of Performance as Markers of Cultural Identities

2.6.1. Introduction

My subjective judgments only repeat the "automatisms" of a culture. In order to be able to estimate the degree of subjectivity and freedom of my existential choice, I have to know in which context and according to which norms it was done. I must be conscious of the limits of my choice and act, what I could and could not have done, departing from my own conditions. Especially if I am judging the individuality of an artist, his voice in the choir of texts and discourses, I must know to what extent he knew and followed the "grammar" or *langue* of his time. (Tarasti 2000: 5–6)

The object of the present chapter – a 'school' as the marker of cultural identity of an artist – is the belonging of musicians to an artistic tradition determined by their environment. The discussion focuses on the tradition and continuity as experienced and perceived by contemporary artists. It is argued here that, in addition to the artist's own *time*, which Tarasti distinguishes in the citation above and which is of a crucial importance, the spatial element of *place* is equally significant to one's individual voice within a certain culture. Living in a certain place and being affected by a certain culture, an artist is hardly able to avoid that experience, the *place-connection*. As Norbert Elias attests, certain concepts are intrinsically clear to the members of a given community/family/nation, as they arise on the basis of common experiences. They grow and change together with the group they express, they reflect its situation and history. And they mean little, or sometimes nothing, to those outside the group who have never experienced the same, who in their discourses are not referring to the same tradition and the same situation (Elias 1995: 9).[80]

In Lotman's semiotic theory (2000/1990), national memory is basic to the way in which a culture is distinguished or differs from other cultures or *semiospheres* (e.g., cultural time and place). One of the central concepts,

[80] The original is Elias, Norbert (1989/1939). *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation. Soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen. Erster Band: Wandlungen des Verhaltens in den weltlichen Oberschichten des Abendlandes*. 1–7 and 43–50. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp. Here, the reference is to the Lithuanian translation by Lina Kliaugaitė (Elias 1995).

here, is that of *boundaries*. For instance, in Finnish culture the boundaries of the Finnish semiosphere seem to be rather clear up-to-date; according to Tarasti, those would be the geographical solitude, the language(s) and the types of people (Tarasti 1990: 197, quoted in Kukkonen 1993: 288). The boundaries of a certain culture may be related to its political system, in the frames of which it is considered to function (e.g., the 'state') or with the 'natural' language or language group that is used for expressing that culture (Kavolis 1995: 236). The symbols of the national culture are of course also manifested in arts. It is common for people to use these to identify themselves: in that lie the effect and the function of these symbols in a given culture.[81]

Cultural studies in general and cultural semiotics in particular, while focusing on historical, semiotic, and intellectual human behaviour, have often been dealing with the issues of one's self-awareness as shaped by the culture we belong to, as something that consists of a socially determined, constructed identity plus an in-born identity. There have been many attempts to show how individual interpretations, whether artistic or scientific, or merely personal, depend on history, on a particular tradition, and the surrounding culture (cf. Mead 1912; Lotman and Uspenskij 1971; Lotman et al. 1975; Hall and Gay 1996; Lotman 2000, to name but a few). In this chapter of the dissertation, the concept and practice of a 'school' as applied to the art of music performance shall be examined, with a particular focus on the idea of a national school and the quest for the Lithuanian tradition of piano performance art.

At the risk of stating the obvious, let us begin with the hypothesis that in every field, the notion and influence of the school, or tradition, and its impact on the individual have changed over the course of time, and in particular these concepts are vanishing today due to increasing standardization and cultural globalization. Can we still make any reasonable distinctions between individual or even collective styles in this context, where national and cultural diversities tend to interrelate and overlap? Especially relevant here is the gradual assimilation of individual styles and identities in musical performance, which started with the invention of the gramophone. It is certainly more difficult to talk about the notion of a 'school' when access to

[81] Pirjo Kukkonen points out that precisely when the people cease identifying themselves with such national/cultural symbols that their function and value disappears (Kukkonen 1993: 288).

every kind of information has so significantly increased as compared with the times when the only means of absorbing someone else's knowledge, or getting acquainted with a certain tradition, was through live interaction.

Several factors have contributed to the increased standardization of performance practices, one of the most important being the significant penetration of the media into musical life, which helps create the stereotypes in the minds of listeners and potential performers. Nowadays, favourable conditions for the unification of musical performance art are provided by sound recordings and by many other types of information (as discussed previously in Chapter 2.5). However, the assimilation of performance styles has not only been influenced by the media. An important role in the field of musical interpretation goes to a *school* in its broadest sense. A brief excursion into the development of musical education is pertinent here.

2.6.2. Specialization and Standardization of Music Teaching

Western music teaching, with its roots related to the institution of the Church, has a long line of development. In the Middle Ages, professional music teaching was provided by church schools, in the Renaissance by secular aristocratic patronage. During the subsequent centuries many different ways co-existed on how to become a professional musician. However, the general trend was a gradual moving towards liberation from ecclesiastical dominance and a continuously growing variety of ways for professional preparation.

In the course of time, the development of secular teaching opened new ways for the state-supported conservatories, dance schools and private teachers, which started providing specialized musical education. In most of the cases, this was not yet a systematic activity: the recruitment was usually based on occasional findings, and the education of novices was rather complementary teaching while already working as an organist or chapel-musician. The conservatory teachers also used to pursue more than one occupation: for instance, they could be both composers and performance teachers. However, the establishment of the state-financed conservatories and the development of their activities eventually produced various results that were crucial to musical education. Citing Jack B. Kamerman and Rosanne Martorella (1983: 23), these can be categorized as: (1) consistent, systematic teaching; (2) dividing the arts, especially music and dance, into

narrower specialities; (3) systematic and early discovery of young talents; and (4) a specific and precise system of education. All these processes were accompanied by the growth of private teaching not only at a professional level, but also of middle-class amateurs. Secular, non-state education was developing: independent conservatories and private music schools started being established in the course of the nineteenth century.

In the twentieth century, standardized higher education became dominant, as well as the general trend for encompassing and unifying all the arts and specialities. The result of such a systematic and standardized music teaching was both a much higher mastery of the performers and more objective, universal criteria for evaluating their art. Professional standards of performance art had risen to such a level compared to the late nineteenth century that music that was earlier considered 'unplayable', as well as the elements of 'unique' virtuosity have become common to rather many well-prepared virtuosos.[82]

Evidently, the quest (or, even, necessity) for such results requires long and systematic work. If, say, Josef Hofmann used to play a certain musical piece only once to his teacher Anton Rubinstein, then nowadays a pupil is taught the same piece for a long period, even on a daily basis, if needed. According to Eugenijus Ignatonis, who has reflected much about the education of twentieth-century pianists, it is precisely by means of such consistent work and various highly advanced and effective methodologies of teaching that one can make graduates of higher schools, concert performers and laureates of competitions out of very ordinary students (cf. Ignatonis 1997). On the other hand, the pedagogical *achievements* of the late twentieth century also have their negative outcomes. Together with the increasing communication opportunities, they tend to assimilate national and cultural idiosyncrasies of different performance styles and make growing talents sound uniform.

The features intrinsically characteristic to the twentieth (also, the twenty-first) century cultural life, such as careful planning and the turning of individual and collective actions into conscious, systemically counted rules and procedures have most clearly manifested themselves in the processes of rationalizing musical education. In a sense being a product (of late, openly

[82] Such a situation is not exclusive to the arts. To compare, one may think of the high-level sports contests and their results that are constantly growing due to new technologies, ways of training, and other factors.

labelled as such, while students become *clients*) of specific organizations – such as schools, conservatories, academies, or universities – musical education conforms to the official, 'centralized' regulation. This means that there exist standard rules of examinations, teaching programmes, degrees (bachelor, master, doctor of arts, etc.), certificates and course credits that are assigned after having passed certain exams or attended courses. Today, only by conforming to this rational and standard process one can qualify as a 'professional', while the schools may maintain their status of the forge of music specialists.[83] At least at the European level, every year more steps are being made towards more unification and standardization of professional music training through the likes of the Erasmus Network for Music "Polifonia" and other systematized attempts to enhance musicians' education.[84] Moreover, by dividing performance technique into its separate elements and by seeking the perfection of each of them, the development of specialization is systemically planned. In any field of performance certain sub-specialities arise with their specific ways of teaching, specific certifications, techniques and career directions (cf. Kamerman and Martorella 1983: 34).[85]

83 For instance, every European conservatory or music academy has to go through the process of international institutional expertise every few years, in order to receive the confirmation (and accreditation to its further activity) as to whether it conforms to the standards of a European higher musical education institution.

84 In 1999, the European ministers in charge of higher education convened in Bologna to sign a Declaration with the intention to create a 'European Higher Education Area' by the year 2010. Professional music training, which had gradually been integrated into the national higher education systems during previous decades, is also strongly influenced by these developments. Several thematic networks for enhancing higher musical education have been created, the largest up to date being the Erasmus Network for Music "Polifonia", which, during the years of its activities (2004–2014), worked on various issues related to professional music training, most of which are precisely meant for matters of unifying the curricula, assessment, accreditation, etc. (for more information cf. http://www.polifonia-tn.org website).

85 Thus, yet another outcome of the institutionalization of arts was the rise of professional teachers of narrower specializations. As Martorella argues, those teachers, due to their preference for teaching activities, have the opportunity to dissociate themselves from the problems of a live professional performance in front of an audience that pays money for it. For them, a musical work is more a theoretical problem that has to be solved in an academic journal, conservatory classroom or as an exercise. Performance is not perceived as a whole: critical and intellectual layers of the work, its style and/or tradition are being analyzed. The interpretation of each of those

2.6.3. Boundaries of National Schools in Music Performance Art

One of the most controversial topics when discussing the schools of musical performance is the validity of the notion of a *national school* in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Terms such as 'global', 'international', or 'transnational', nowadays permeate political, economic, and cultural discourses.[86] In the field of music performance, meanwhile, the pressing questions are, can we still observe differences between performance styles and traditions? And, in particular, what tools can be used to analyze them? Finally, is it reasonable to categorize artists according to the national or cultural heritage that they supposedly represent?[87]

2.6.3.1. The Definition of a 'School'

From this point onwards, when talking about schools as the markers of national and cultural identities, the theoretical frame of reference shall be the definition by the Lithuanian violist and musicologist Donatas Katkus, according to whom:

- the first constituent of a school is "A master, a concrete person possessing his or her knowledge and abilities, taste and aesthetic views as a certain whole which keeps on being repeated when teaching every individual student";

aspects means a solution to a certain interpretative or creative issue (Kamerman and Martorella 1983: 25).

86 Among others, a very fine essay on the issues of cultural globalization is: Constance DeVereaux and Martin Griffin, *International, global, transnational: Just a matter of words?* A paper delivered in Vienna at the 4th International Conference on Cultural Policy Research, iccpr 2006, 12–16 July. Published online at www.eurozine.com on 11.10.2006 (last assessed: March 2014).

87 Eero Tarasti, for instance, when writing about the national voice types, suggests that, at least at the sociosemiotic level, we can still speak of national identities (Tarasti 2002: 167). On the contrary (and from a musical point of view, rather than that of social significations), Rupert Christiansen, in his analysis of vocal performance art, holds to a very skeptical opinion as concerns the detection of national characteristics, which, according to him, "even at the most generalizing level, rarely amounts to more than a parlour game. We like to think that we can find some common denominator which infallibly distinguishes a Brazilian from an Argentinian, but a glaring specific exception invariably pops up to disprove it." (Christiansen 1985: 269). Such contradictory opinions indeed abound.

- the second – "A school as a system where not one but many people draw on similar principles, standards, aesthetic norms, tastes and fashions";
- and the third constituent would define "tastes or aesthetic norms of the period, or, speaking in terms of current practices, it would be a commercial image of music-making, i.e., a popular cliché." (Katkus 1997: 176)

Similar to this, although more institutionally-oriented, is the systematization by the musicologist Algirdas Jonas Ambrazas (2007), which was originally meant to define the essence and structure of a 'school' concept as applied to the Lithuanian composition school, and later fruitfully used by researchers into performance schools. The general, most important components of any creative school, whatever particularities it may encompass, which Ambrazas distinguishes are the following:

- the whole methods and principles of embodying the knowledge and skills of a certain field – a concrete programme (*what* is being taught, educated at school);
- a teacher (single person or a collective), who transmits this programme to his environment (*who* is teaching);
- pupils, who take the contents of the school programme and the teacher's experience over (*to whom* the knowledge is transmitted); and
- the transmission of the teaching contents, i.e. the tradition that ensures the stability and continuity of the school (*how* does the teaching take place, how its results and the school itself are established). (Ambrazas 2007: 73–74)

In sum, and taking into account reflections by other authors and artists (Bowen 1993 and 2003; Lowenthal/Uszler 1998; Barenboim 2002, among others) on the matter, the concept of 'school' roughly denotes a type of standardization related to the style and type of playing technique and the gaining of experience. In this way it becomes a somewhat unifying factor in the pluralistic panorama of the several past ages of performance art and a handy conceptual tool in an attempt at outlining certain trends in performance history. However, in view of the increasing globalization of culture, the concept of school becomes not only a unifying factor, but one that helps preserve the cultural identity of a certain country or community.

For instance, investigating performance practices of the peripheral traditions as opposed to the established cultures can perhaps help answer the question whether and how it is possible for musicians to absorb many different influences from the great neighbour musical cultures and yet retain some intrinsic qualities of their own musical identity. In any case, affiliation with a certain school embraces the *Soi*, the socially determined identity of an artist, which among other things consists of pre-established social codes and stereotypes of a given performance tradition (school). What was the evolution of this important notion through the twentieth century?

2.6.3.2. National Schools of Piano Playing in the Twentieth Century

As already mentioned, both the idea and the influence of a 'school' have gone through significant changes during the last century. Many researchers observe that schools of playing were very much a feature of early twentieth-century playing. Due to the comparative isolation of both musicians and audiences as compared with today, styles in different countries were quite distinct and diverse, and we can still hear those differences in recordings of the performers of the different countries from the 1920s and 1930s. Ways of playing in different countries, and according to different traditions or schools, used to be strongly contrasted with each other.

Today, however, when recordings are available across the world, and musicians of all nationalities study and work far from where they were born, styles and approaches have become, to a large extent, globalized, and this has changed the musical world a great deal. The diversity became even less tangible after getting into the second half of the twentieth century, and is now very narrow indeed except among outstandingly individual players (Philip 2004: 23). One of the most active scholars in the field, Robert Philip notices that one of the reasons why this informality and diversity was welcomed a hundred years ago is that people then did not have the perfection of edited recordings as a yardstick. But it was also the case that each concert was a unique and unrepeatable event. In Philip's words: "They looked different, they walked differently to the platform, turned to the audience differently – Kreisler greeting them like their favourite uncle, Rachmaninoff scowling as if the last thing he wanted to do was to play the piano." (ibid.: 22). On the early recordings we can indeed hear something of how diverse they were in the days before the globalization and homogenization of styles.

Although the issue of the school is by its nature rather complicated, the distinction between schools had become still vaguer by the 1940s. Younger generations still learned valuable things from distinguished teachers, but with their tendency to listen to as many diversely recorded performances as possible the element of any traditional method or style became weaker and weaker with every successive generation.

Let us take as an example the French school of piano playing (that, according to wide-spread opinion, together with the Russian school – more of which in Chapter 3.5, – remains more or less tangible today). Paris was undoubtedly the center of pianistic activity in Europe in the first half of the nineteenth century. The early piano was perfected there, and virtually every great performer of the time played, lived, or taught there. Thus it comes as no surprise that a distinctive style of piano playing was cultivated in France from about 1810, and that it centered around the Paris Conservatory. Nor is it surprising, given the nature of French musical education (as Charles Timbrell attests), that this style continued more or less intact until the 1960s (Timbrell 1999: 13). It has been often remarked that the French manner differed from German, Viennese, Russian, English, and other styles of piano playing, however, it has to be mentioned (as in most of other cases) that there have been diverse schools also within the so-called *French school*. In any case, for what is considered to be the French style – refinement and intellect, clarity, delicacy and precision, the famous *jeu perlé* – the ground was laid back then, and these features are still among those that listeners, music critics and music performers list as the distinctive and lasting qualities of the French pianism.

Hence, as mentioned above, it is commonly believed that only two national schools of piano playing, Russian and French, have retained their distinctive features (even though Russian pedagogues, of late, in particular are migrating, working abroad and transmitting their experience and knowledge to international students). Many performing musicians give concerts, live and work in various countries (often more than one) and belong to various, even contradictory in their nature, schools: e.g. the Argentinian-born Martha Argerich or Daniel Barenboim have studied and lived in Europe, and can be considered a mixture of various traditions; a Pole Piotr Anderszewski, one of today's unconventional artists, tends to emphasize his Polish-Hungarian roots, while he studied in France and United States, and, according to some sources (cf. Ignatonis 2010: 106), has not even been

included into a Polish encyclopedia of pianists. A Croatian Ivo Pogorelich, a rather closed and solitary artist, has studied at the Moscow conservatory and currently lives in Switzerland; even though many consider him as not exactly representing the Russian piano school, judging from his interviews, personal circumstances and performances (and taking into account his unique individuality and highly idiosyncratic interpretations), the impact of the Russian school in Pogorelich's creative path is undeniable.

A Lithuanian Mūza Rubackytė comments on the (im)possibility to detect the artist's 'musical identity' as depending on a certain locus in the following way:

> It is possible to recognize musicians [on the basis of their interpretations], but that is more a matter of individuality. However, many things depend on the repertoire. Let us take French music. I think in that case we can tell whether the performer is French or not. I am oversimplifying, but there are some clues like the detail, line, hue and the manner of operating the pedal – which give you hints that either this musician studied with the French or is French. It is also possible to speak of English pianism, characterized by a certain refinement, distinct construction of form, a kind of gentlemanly manner. […]
>
> I think that *my* Shostakovich has an identity. Čiurlionis in our renditions has the air of Druskininkai. Yet all these things are a matter of an individual talent, it would be difficult to generalize. The world is a melting pot these days, and Korean musicians do not necessarily study in Korea (which, thank God, is finally true of us too). However, we all have some kind of roots and it would be a shame to lose them. First of all it is our Eastern European school, built on the platform of the Russian pianist tradition. There are certain elements typical of the region or the school, and we should feel sorry to lose this foundation, from which each individual performer can evolve into one or another direction depending on one's talent. (Rubackytė, in Navickaitė-Martinelli 2010a: 392–393)

In any case, it is perhaps still somewhat easier to discuss the national-cultural identities of artists who belong to any of the great traditions, such as Russian, German, or French, when speaking about schools of piano playing. But what kind of national identity can be constructed in a so called marginal, or peripheral, culture, on what socio-cultural ground do performers in the small countries build their artistic personalities? Lithuanian piano performance art shall serve as a case study for illustrating these reflections.

2.6.4. Mapping the School: Is There a 'Lithuanian Tradition'?

It is often said that small cultures and nations do not directly participate in great social processes (or at least cannot end up in their avant-garde), thus they do not possess that special sociopsychic, political, and cultural experience from which knowledge and its paradigms are born. The philosopher Leonidas Donskis expresses interesting thoughts in relation to the exile of great Lithuanians, who, after having left (often compulsorily) their homeland, succeeded in developing important ideas. According to him, certain cross-cultural sensitivity and refinement are awakened not only by the nation's mentality or some deeply immanent to that culture code. For them to flourish an adequate intellectual context is needed, as well as a conceptual and analytical framework; moreover, certain sociocultural tensions and clashes of different cultures that are only possible in a big country and its multicultural space (Donskis 1995: 57). As we shall see below in this chapter, as well as in Part 4, young Lithuanian performers, who had the opportunity to study in the metropolises of today, indeed had the chance of absorbing multiple cultural influences and cross-cultural tendencies. On the other hand, and this is important in the framework of the 'school' concept, the *brand*, the identity is stronger of those who have been if not concentrating on, then at least directing their attention, mostly to one culture.

To begin with, a short introduction would be relevant into what 'Lithuanian pianism' actually is. The geographical situation of Lithuania has always been strongly influenced by constant political changes and the dependence of the country on the lifestyle of West or East. Being a kind of a cultural periphery and only having a strong tradition of folk music practice, Lithuania has eventually started to absorb the 'imported' European classical music, its interpretational and pedagogical trends. Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, Lithuania's musical culture was under Western influence that would reach the country through Poland. In the middle of the century, the influence of Russia gained in strength. Professional art in Lithuania was strongly influenced by the late Russian Romanticism until the very first decades of the twentieth century. However, piano performance art in Lithuania became again more 'Western' in the 1920s and 1940s: almost all gifted pianists studied at that time in Leipzig, Berlin, or Paris. The only distinctive representative of the Russian piano school at that time was Vladimir Ruzicki (1891–ca. 1967), a pupil of the famous

Russian pianist Konstantin Igumnov. Hence, one can see that, without having its own immanent traditions, the Lithuanian piano school has become very open to any influences.[88]

Since the year 1944, Lithuanian pianists only had an access to the strong and influential Russian piano school (the same can be said about almost any other speciality in performance). The most talented pianists of that time studied at the conservatories of Leningrad and Moscow, and one could hardly mention any name of the professors at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre nowadays who were not graduates of these Russian conservatories, or pupils of their graduates. However, during the last twenty years or so, radical changes in the musical life of Lithuania have become evident. Opportunities to participate at the international competitions and master-classes, the chance for studying abroad, and an intensive concert life have provided younger generations of Lithuanian pianists with completely new approaches to the interpretation of music. Thus, probably the most distinctive feature of the young generation is a crossing between the two, Western and Eastern, traditions.[89] One the one side, the influence of Lithuanian professors who are the representatives of the Russian tradition is still strong, and, on the other hand, the opportunity to study in the West provides an access to some other insights and stylistic devices.

However, despite of the 'school', each performer, in his/her art, manifests the artistic individuality and those characteristic semantic features that distinguish his or her interpretations from others. To conclude the present analysis, four Lithuanian pianists shall be presented in the light of what has been discussed above. As the art of piano performance is in Part 3 of the present dissertation situated within the European musical canon, i.e. piano works by Ludwig van Beethoven, here, the choice was made to analyze and

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88 For more details on the Lithuanian piano art, pedagogical tendencies, and the place of piano in the country's cultural life, see the studies by Mariam Azizbekova, 1998 and 1999.

89 This, in essence, describes perhaps the most wide-spread tendency to define and to brand the Lithuanian cultural identity as the junction between various foreign influences and characterizations. This tendency is obvious both at a local level, i.e. how do the Lithuanians see themselves, and at an international – how Lithuanian music or its interpretations are judged by the foreign critics. One of the many descriptions goes as follows: "Lithuania is a corridor of stylistic and aesthetic transgressions and rejections at the cross-roads, on the one hand, between the Russian soul and monumentalism, Polish salon brilliance and avant-garde ordnance, and on the other hand, between northerly Baltic-Scandinavian mournfulness and restraint, and the musicality characteristic of the southern Slavs." (M. Anderson [?], quoted in Goštautienė 2005: 168).

discuss the art of the Lithuanian pianists in relation to Beethoven's music as well. In conducting the analysis, an attempt was made, among other elements, to pick the most specific parameters of musical enunciation that might be determined by a performer's belonging to one school of pianism or another.[90] Considering the choice of renouncing, throughout this chapter, any in-depth analysis of the performances' score-based parameters, a more descriptive method of research was adopted in search for the aspects that would allow defining the artists' belonging to a certain tradition.

To begin with, let us discuss the art of the pianists whose artistic individualities have been acknowledged already for decades, and whose interpretative and pedagogical insights have inspired many younger musicians in Lithuania and elsewhere.

2.6.4.1. The Path of the Romantic Individualists

Mūza Rubackytė and Petras Geniušas belong to the generation of the 1950s and 1960s.[91] Both of them were born into musical families[92], both studied at the main Lithuanian 'providers' of music performers, namely, Čiurlionis College of the Arts[93] in Vilnius and the Lithuanian State Conservatory[94], and both are graduates of the Moscow Conservatory. While both pianists are now teaching at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, they are (Rubackytė in particular) very much associated with their international careers. When Lithuania gained Independence (1991), Rubackytė moved to Paris, where she has been living and teaching since then; Geniušas' career

[90] Surely, the art of these four pianists (and, especially, their performances of certain Beethoven sonatas) was chosen only as a representative sample. The performances of other works by Beethoven as played by the same performers, as well as the art and interpretative attitudes of other Lithuanian pianists were taken into a consideration before drawing any conclusions.

[91] For the biographical notes of the pianists discussed as case studies throughout this dissertation, cf. Appendix 4.

[92] Another recurrent discourse when it comes to the artists born into musical families is that of 'dynasty', a concept meant to emphasize the continuation of a musical tradition, especially if the predecessors were also mastering the same instrument. Obviously and naturally, in most such cases this also meant an early home-based training and sharing of knowledge, experience, and artistic views. This may also be interpreted as a need to identify oneself with a tradition as the marker with the connotation of 'quality'.

[93] At present the National M. K. Čiurlionis School of Art.

[94] At present the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre.

as a teacher, at certain moments of his professional path, included such engagements as Yamaha Primary Music School in Tokyo and Osaka, and the Royal Academy of Music in London. However, there are several factors that make one label them above all as the representatives of the Russian school.

The first point, of course, is the pure fact of studying in Moscow and continuing the tradition through the personalities of their teachers.[95] To illustrate this, two charts that represent the direct influence of the Russian piano school on the Lithuanian pianists have been devised.[96] The first 'genealogical chain' in Figure 2.5 demonstrates the school the pioneer of which was Anton Rubinstein. Rubinstein's piano performance school, having developed and flourished through his prominent student Heinrich Neuhaus, was very important and influential in Lithuania.[97]

Together with Geniušas, who joins this chain through his prominent professor at the Moscow Conservatory, Vera Gornostayeva, we find also another Lithuanian representative of the 'Neuhaus' school', Prof. Olga Šteinbergaitė. Having worked at the Lithuanian Conservatory (later Academy of Music and Theatre) for many years and having raised several generations of Lithuanian pianists, she is definitely to be considered one of the most important figures in Lithuania's piano pedagogy system.

A branch of the Russian piano school deriving directly from Franz Liszt is also quite important in Lithuania: Konstantin Igumnov, who was a student of Liszt's pupil Paul Pabst, taught, among others, the Lithuanian-based pianist of the first half of the century, Vladimir Ruzicki, and the great Russian concert pianist (specializing mostly in Romantic music) and pedagogue Yakov Flier (see Figure 2.6). A student of the latter was the

[95] Remembering Katkus' definition – "A master, a concrete person possessing his or her knowledge and abilities, taste and aesthetic views as a certain whole which keeps on being repeated when teaching every individual student."

[96] Having studied the art of performers of the twentieth century in the light of repertoire, several chains were drawn by the author, some kind of 'genealogical trees', or schools of performing Beethoven stemming from the composer himself through his pupil Carl Czerny to contemporary pianists. Even the names of the youngest Lithuanian pianists were included into these chains, because some of them fit quite organically into the famous schools of pianism through their teachers. Here, some abridged versions of those chains are presented in order to demonstrate the schools that have had some important impact on Lithuanian pianists. Various biographical studies, performers' websites and online encyclopaedias were consulted for this work.

[97] More elaborated schemes of the 'genealogy' of the Russian piano performance art shall be presented in Chapter 3.5.

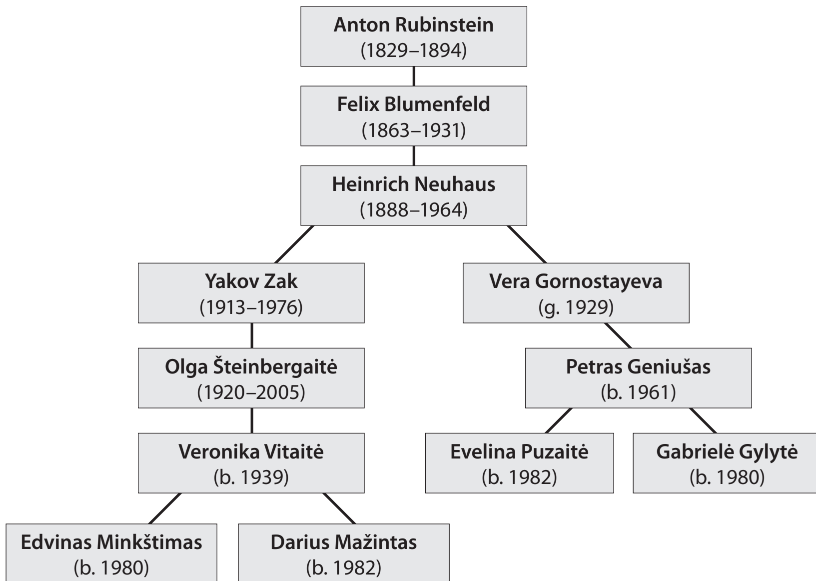

Figure 2.5. Lithuanian piano performance school
with origins in Rubinstein's tradition

Lithuanian pianist Mūza Rubackytė (who, besides Flier, also studied in Moscow with Bella Davidovich and Mikhail Voskressensky).[98]

However, apart from the studies, the supposed dependence of a musician on the Russian piano tradition must be analyzed in somewhat more

98 Rubackytė's musical upbringing, although clearly pointing at the Russian school roots (often emphasized while internationally presenting the pianist), are, however, of a rather varied nature. As the pianist herself comments: "Our formation took place in that direction – first of all our teachers came from that [Russian] school, and such was their formation. But I have been blessed with slightly unconventional studies: I learned music at home, with my mother and aunt. We never arrived at any agreement – especially because they were very different, one said this, and the other – that. But it was very lucky for me – the absence of a single solution fostered my creativity. Both of them studied with the Germans and Polish during war years, thus I have acquired a rather varied foundation which also integrated elements of the Russian school. However, I do not think that I am a typical exponent of this tradition. In terms of tastes and perception of music, I tend towards international potpourri; also, since very old times I have practiced self-education. I keep revisiting and transforming things that I have already done." (Rubackytė, in Navickaitė-Martinelli 2010a: 393–394).

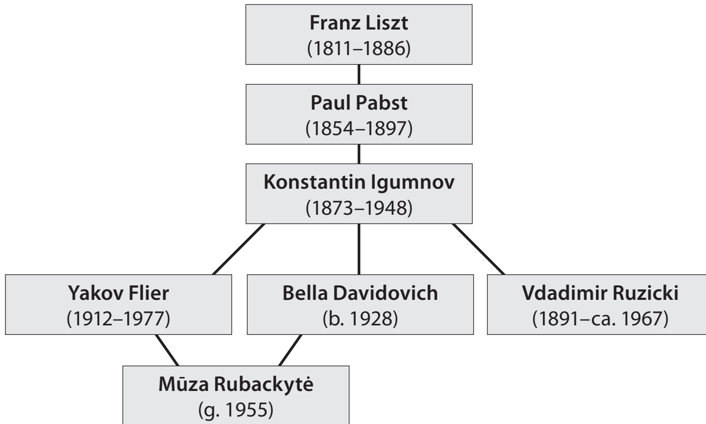

Figure 2.6. The origins of Mūza Rubackytė's Russian piano school through Yakov Flier and Bella Davidovich

musical terms. Several performative clichés of the Russian piano school shall be named below in Chapter 3.5. Speaking, however, about the Lithuanian pianists under discussion, one should firstly point out that both Rubackytė and Geniušas are very charismatic artists, identified above all with the Romanticist tradition. If a subjective expressivity, impressive artistic effects, freedom of personal individuality and idiosyncrasy against any arbitrariness and standards may be considered as a Russified mode of playing, then both Rubackytė and Geniušas correlate perfectly to that tradition.

As mentioned above, only some very few and specific interpretative aspects shall be discussed in this section while presenting the art of the individual pianists. In the playing of Petras Geniušas, one can emphasize the importance of the aspect of phenomenal qualities among all the other parameters of musical enunciation.[99] One distinctive feature of Geniušas' interpretations, together with other means achieved by using particular kind of sound, or touch, is the intense level of intimacy. This is not a

[99] As discussed in Chapter 1.2, in his semiotic analysis of the song by Gabriel Fauré, Eero Tarasti suggests eight parameters of analysis of the musical enunciation: tempo; instrumentality/speechlikeness of the voice; the use of vibrato; respiration or phrasing; dynamic change; glissandi as a means of expression; phenomenal qualities; and the construction of the global form (Tarasti 1994: 205–208).

quiet intimacy, as we shall later see in another Lithuanian pianist, Andrius Žlabys, but rather a complete removal of the distance between subject and object in the process of musical signification. His passionate, deep sound creates a sense of 'nearness', indicating the importance of the interpreter's energy for the process of musical performance. Such are the main attributes of Geniušas' musical communication.

In addition to the stylistic devices mentioned above, such as the primacy of subjectivity and expressivity, fluctuations of tempo and dynamics are very typical of the Romanticist tradition. This links in well with the interpretations of Mūza Rubackytė. Analysis of tempo in musical enunciations shows alternations of general tempos among interpretations by different performers. In this case, I have also in mind such temporal strategies as retardations and accelerations within a basic tempo, as well as changes among dynamic levels. Dynamic, rhythmic, and tempo changes create a certain sense of 'creative disorder', which is rather characteristic of Rubackytė's interpretations, usually very interesting and idiosyncratic. These features, together with an emphasis on virtuosity, a broad dynamic spectrum, well represent the Russian style. It is important to point out, however, that Rubackytė's stylistic devices encompass also a wide range of subtle, impressionistic colours, which, although not necessarily being the main features of interpretations belonging to the Russian school, do represent the pianist's particular attention to the quality of sound.[100]

2.6.4.2. The Many Ways of the New Generation

It is relevant, at this point, to proceed with discussing the generation of Lithuanian pianists who were born in the 1970s. Again, the two pianists chosen for the sample share rather similar biographies. Gabrielius Alekna and Andrius Žlabys studied at the Čiurlionis College of the Arts in Vilnius, and they both left for the USA in the 1990s. Žlabys entered the Curtis Institute of Music in 1995 as a student of Seymour Lipkin, and later he

[100] Although more performances by Rubackytė and Geniušas were analyzed for the purposes of this dissertation (in particular, Sonata in E-flat major, Op. 7 No. 1 played by Rubackytė, and Sonatas in C minor, Op. 13 *Pathétique* and D minor, Op. 31 No. 2 *The Tempest* played by Geniušas), the most direct relation to what is being said about their style of playing is with Beethoven's Sonata in F minor, Op. 57 *Appassionata*. Live recordings of the work played by Rubackytė (1986) and Geniušas (1996) are available at the archives of Lithuanian Radio.

received a Master's degree at the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he studied with Sergey Babayan. Alekna was invited to attend the Juilliard School in 1996, where he received a doctoral degree in music with Jerome Lowenthal. Both of them still live in the USA, however, they have not lost their professional and artistic bonds with their homeland.[101]

Several other names of Lithuanian pianists may be added here, such as Daumantas Kirilauskas, who studied at the Salzburg Mozarteum with Karl-Heinz Kämmerling; Ieva Jokūbavičiūtė, who earned degrees from the Curtis Institute of Music and from Mannes College of Music, her principal teachers having been Seymour Lipkin and Richard Goode; Vita Panomariovaitė, Indrė Petrauskaitė, and Evelina Puzaitė, all having studied and pursuing their careers in London; or Edvinas Minkštimas, whose professor at the New York Julliard School was also Jerome Lowenthal. These and many other pianists have left for Western Europe or the USA after graduating from colleges in Lithuania. It was for this generation a desirable new world of the Western tradition, becoming accessible only in the last decades. Now, it would surely be impossible to try to define some clearly identifiable features of any 'Western' piano playing tradition – it obviously is an entity too broad, open and multifaceted. Instead, let us take a look at a few specific instances.

An intellectual, perfectionist and well-balanced type of playing lets the listener distinguish Gabrielius Alekna from other Lithuanian pianists of his generation. It is probably a significant fact that before leaving for the USA, Alekna had been studying for a long time with Liucija Drąsutienė, one of the few of today's Lithuanian professors, belonging to the Austro-German-oriented school of interpretation.[102] While it is definitely not the purpose of this section to discuss Jerome Lowenthal's teaching style, his educational roots are an interesting and refined mixture of German and French traditions. In line with focusing on a specific repertoire, it should perhaps be mentioned what a big impact a master class given by the prominent pianist

[101] As of Spring 2014, Alekna works as an Associate Professor at the Kaunas Vytautas Magnus University Music Academy, and Žlabys is a Guest Professor at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre.

[102] Personal communication (2009) with Prof. Drąsutienė allows claiming that she acknowledges this professional orientation and influence, and is eager to link her (after her Professor Balys Dvarionas, as seen in Figure 2.7) pianistic roots to Franz Liszt.

Daniel Barenboim in June 2003[103] had on Alekna's Beethoven-interpretations. Be that as it may, if one should categorize Alekna's playing according to national styles, his interpretational means definitely remind the listener most of all of the German-Austrian tradition: his articulation and sound are very clear, as well as his enunciation of rhythmical structures. The pianist also pays great attention to the coherency of the work's structural elements, and the rational constructing of a global form.[104]

One more genealogical chart is to be introduced here (see Figure 2.7). One of the most distinctive pianists of the late nineteenth century was the Italian Ferruccio Busoni, and the chain of interpreters linking Busoni with the Lithuanian school of piano performance is illustrating as well. Busoni's pupil was a German-born pianist Egon Petri, with whom a Lithuanian pianist and composer Balys Dvarionas (Dvarionas was also a graduate of Leipzig's conservatory, Robert Teichmüller's piano class) studied. Dvarionas' student was Liucija Drąsutienė, and her well-known students in Lithuania are Petras Geniušas, Daumantas Kirilauskas, and Gabrielius Alekna, among others.[105] It is rather reasonable to define this chain of interpreters (except Geniušas) as tending towards a 'Germanic' style of interpretation, however, it is beyond any doubt that Alekna, for instance, would not be eager to acknowledge any ethnic – Lithuanian, American, or German – influences

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[103] Paradoxically, the reaction of some Lithuanian music critics was rather sceptical towards Alekna's Beethoven interpretations delivered in the period of Barenboim's workshop. For instance, after Alekna's recital in summer 2003, where he performed Beethoven's Sonata in E flat major, Op. 27 No. 1, it was claimed that this work should be interpreted as tending already to the Schubertian style and not to the Classicist, as Alekna had played (see Gedgaudas 2003). Nevertheless, the Beethovenian skills by this pianist were highly evaluated in the year 2005, when Alekna won second prize in the 12th International Beethoven Piano Competition in Vienna.

[104] My thanks go to Gabrielius Alekna for allowing to analyze his non-commercial recordings of Beethoven's works. The recordings available for the purposes of this study were the following: a live recording of the Sonata in E-flat major, Op. 27 No. 1 and Concerto No. 1 in C major, Op. 15 with Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra, conductor Bertrand de Billy, both from the Beethoven-competition 2005, and studio recordings of the Sonata in A major, Op. 2 No. 2, Sonata in C minor, Op. 111, Fantasie in B major, Op. 77, and 24 Variations on an Arietta by Righini, WoO 65.

[105] As a matter of fact, the three last links of this pedagogical chain represent one more school arising from Liszt's contemporary and promoter of Beethoven's works, Ignaz Moscheles: Moscheles – Carl Reinecke – Robert Teichmüller – Balys Dvarionas – Liucija Drąsutienė – Petras Geniušas/Daumantas Kirilauskas/Gabrielius Alekna.

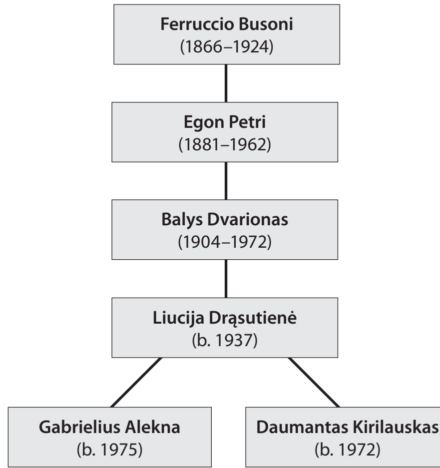

Figure 2.7. The 'German school' in Lithuania after Ferruccio Busoni

on his art.[106] Here, in addition, we face the problem of how to define 'the school' and what is to be considered as 'studying' with one professor or another. Obviously, Busoni's interpretative insights and orientation were deeply influenced by Liszt, although the former never actually studied with the latter. The same occurs in the second chart (as seen in Figure 2.5): Blumenfeld was probably not a 'real' student by Rubinstein, but was undoubtedly affected by his influence.[107]

Another remarkable young Lithuanian pianist of the 1970s generation is Andrius Žlabys. It is interesting to observe that the interpretations by Žlabys are characteristic of combining various elements that belong to different, sometimes contradictory, traditions (such as Classicist and Romantic elements of music performance art, among other aspects). Without leaving aside the aspect of the performer's individuality, one of the reasons

[106] The pianist has repeatedly expressed (both in published interviews and personal communication) his attitudes on the matter that allow making this comment.

[107] Ambrazas, too, suggests in his writings on 'school' that not only the direct institutional students are to be considered as someone's pupils, but rather the followers, who have inherited the aesthetic insights and creative principles, who are continuing and developing their traditions (Ambrazas 2007: 74).

for this might be a tendency by young musicians to listen to many recordings that help absorb various interpretative ideas. While listening to Žlabys, however, one can feel that the performer tends intuitively to favour the old recordings (such as played by Arthur Schnabel, Alfred Cortot and others).

Žlabys' interpretation of Beethoven's Sonata in D minor, Op. 31 No. 2 *The Tempest* is analyzed more in detail in Chapter 3.4. Here it perhaps suffice to mention that, paradoxically, while Žlabys' interpretations might be considered as the most 'free' from any national tradition, it is possible to situate him in, so to say, the most 'honourable' genealogical tree, a chart that shows the German school of interpreting Beethoven starting with the composer himself through his pupil Carl Czerny. We can see in Figure 2.8 the most distinguished names of the German-Austrian tradition of pianism, and Andrius Žlabys can be put in this chart in only the fifth generation of pianists since Beethoven.

2.6.4.3. Concluding Remarks

It was, as mentioned previously, not the purpose of this chapter to discuss more internal parameters and aspects of various performances that would help us decide whether one or another performer clearly belongs to a certain 'school'. It is important to point out that a tradition encompasses many elements, not only textual, which should be analyzed from the perspective of the composition. According to the pianist Robert D. Levin in his fine review of *Performing Beethoven* (Stowell 1994), especially because of Beethoven's central position in the repertoire, the questions of tempo, rhythm, dynamics, articulation, expressive markings, rhetoric, phrasing, etc. belong to the axiomatic conventions of the modern-day performance and thus require little explication, thereby leaving room for the consideration of more rarefied topics (Levin 1998: 237). In addition, as Eero Tarasti puts it, "We may perhaps be able to complete the global view of each interpreter and his/her interpretation by drawing on extra-semiotic knowledge, for example, about the artist's life, style influence or school, and even sometimes about aesthetic, verbally conveyed thoughts." (Tarasti 1994: 208). Among other means of musical interpretation, of great importance, for instance, are the aesthetic tastes, or the representation of performers. Creating of an image in the world of performers constitutes a rather significant means of communication. Geniušas and Rubackytė, especially, have always

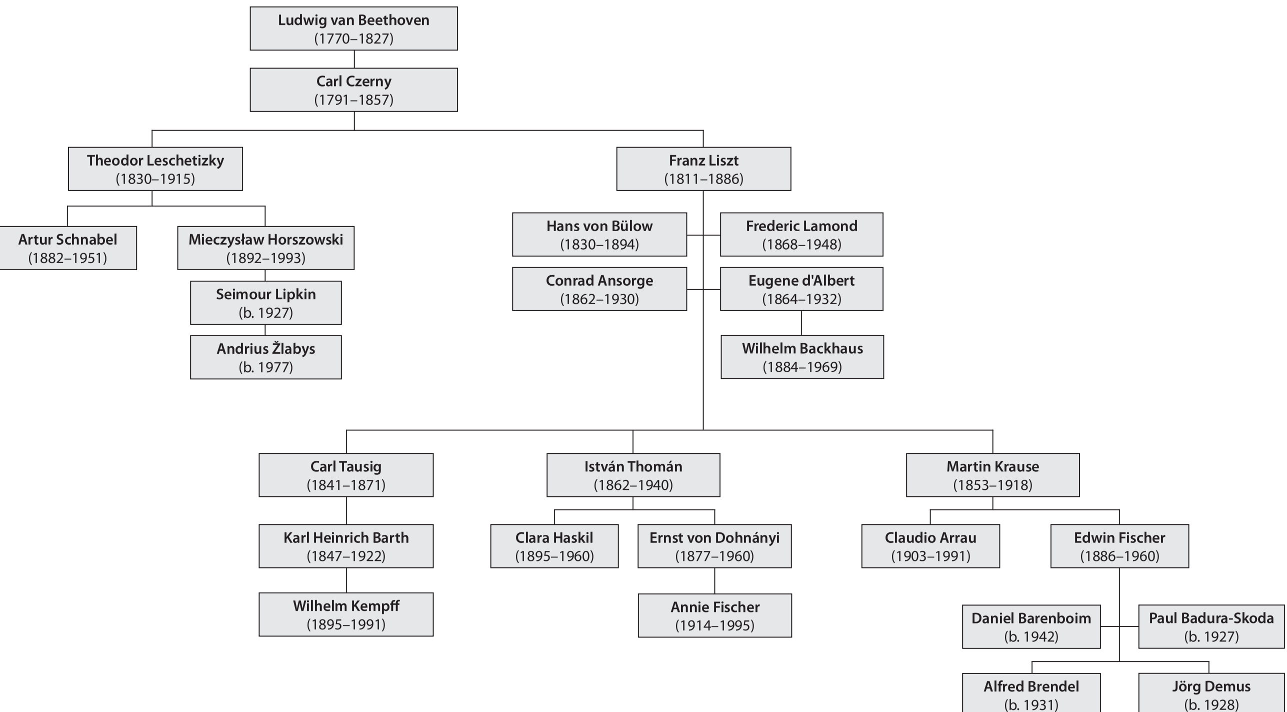

Figure 2.8. German school of pianism since Ludwig van Beethoven

been known in Lithuania as artists highly concerned about their creative images. And this concern stems rather directly from the mentality of the charismatic Russian Romanticists, who have had a strong influence on the formation of these two Lithuanian pianists. The ways this care for self-representation differs from the virtual image-making of the current new generation (where both Alekna and Žlabys become much more conscious) shall be demonstrated in Part 4 of this study.

What was important in the frames of this chapter was showing that the identification with *the school* is much stronger in the cases of Geniušas and Rubackytė than of those pianists of later generations. An almost mysterious connection with the teachers in their artistic life was embodied not only through the professional standards, but rather through the inner need of strong identification, whereas for, say, Alekna and Žlabys this inheritance was the tradition constructed in advance – they could only choose the elements they wanted and needed from it.[108]

As for the *Lithuanian piano performance school*, it seems that the pianistic trend that is the dearest to Lithuanian audiences and critics is still the Romanticist tradition. The common features especially valued in Lithuanian performance practice are the predominance of the philosophical insights, dramatic collisions, meditation, the importance of silence and profound reflections as opposed to effective and colourful sounds, extrovert brilliance (although some pianists, such as Petras Geniušas, actually, harmoniously unite both sides). The features that do not fit to this kind of musical understanding, such as a somewhat 'dryer' intellectualism or a mannerist type of playing, are more often received with scepticism (if not from the audience's side, then from the music critics' tribune). Thus, although it would surely

[108] Tradition is sometimes regarded as authority, i.e. as something opposite to reason and freedom, something that exists and evolves naturally, on its own, without any particular efforts of the mind. It also is thought of as being the opposite of the free choice, something that is accepted without questioning. Gadamer, however, argues that tradition and reason are not opposites. For him, no tradition may be conveyed inertly: it has to be consciously accepted and taken over (cf. Sverdiolas 2003: 207). Hence, belonging to a tradition or historicity of one's existence are not assumptions that we could refer to as something obvious and ready-made. This sense of commonness we create ourselves inasmuch as we understand that we are participating in the development of the tradition, that we continue it. In modern culture, there is no unquestioned, self-understandable unity between a person and a tradition, as it used to be in traditionalist, immediately inherited culture. Today, we do not receive our thinking and acting presumptions directly from the tradition (ibid.: 215).

be a dangerous path to say that there exist some distinctively 'Lithuanian' features that are not found in other piano schools, it seems that what might be called a Lithuanian tradition of performing and listening to the music is still closely related to the romantic tradition of music's perception and interpretation. Subjective, highly spiritual signs, through which some of performers tend to communicate with their audience, seem to be much closer to the listeners who obviously prefer the illusion of the romantic mystique surrounding the art of musical performance.

On a larger scale, the conclusion is that the general globalization of performance through recordings and other means of standardizing culture have borne controversial fruit. On the one hand, professional standards across the world have risen to an extraordinary extent over the last several decades. On the other hand, there is great pressure for musicians who wish to succeed in the international market to model themselves on these international, generally-acknowledged standards. Nowadays, nobody wants to be successful only locally, and therefore local traditions gradually become eroded. It has to be mentioned, however, that those performers who can situate themselves in a certain distinctive professional genealogy are usually very eager to emphasize the importance of this aspect of their artistic practice. And, even amid the general twentieth-century trend towards uniformity of style and 'absence of any tendencies and traditions', the term 'school' is still regularly used, especially in the case of old, prominent performance traditions, such as the Russian, the French, the German, or the Italian schools.

2.7. Inside and Outside the Canon: On Performers' Repertoire Choices

2.7.1. Introduction

Canonicity in music, interestingly, started being reflected only when its criticism emerged. For a long time, the Western musical culture canon has existed as a set of non-written and self-understandable rules. Standard teaching programmes, standard classical repertoire and rather stable tastes of the audiences have existed as if naturally approved by common cultural viewpoints. It was only in the 1980s that representatives from various fields of musico-cultural studies (mostly, the so-called *new musicology*) started seriously questioning the concept of the 'classics'. To begin with, 'classics' was renamed into a 'canon' – an exemplary model of a closed, authoritarian structure that represents the 'highest quality' and embodies a certain moral and ethical power. As such, it has an enormous impact on how the art of musical performance functions and evolves.

It is for this reason that the focus of the present chapter is the performers' repertoire choices as determined by a number of factors, from socio-cultural to artistic and purely personal ones. Commenting on the very title of it – by the choices made without taking into consideration the 'canon' any kind of 'deviation' from the mainstream performance practices and trends is meant, such as early and new music, various cross-over genres, national/local repertoires, etc. However, before starting to discuss what is 'outside', one should define what it is that constitutes the performative 'canon'. It is proposed, in this respect, to view the concept of the canon from various angles, such as *repertoire canon*, *education canon*, *canonic performing styles*, standardized and *canonized musical instruments*[109], and even performers'

[109] The issue of 'canonized musical instruments' is interesting in this context mostly for its socio-cultural connotations. For instance, the sole choice of the instrument to play may reveal certain things about the future performer's personality and background. Besides purely physical qualities which determine that a particular child may be directed to choose the most suitable instrument, there are also other types of choices. Somebody might want to play the accordion, because s/he heard her grandfather playing that instrument; another child will choose the violin because at the age of 4 s/he saw a violinist playing a beautiful tune on the TV; parents might suggest the piano, because they already have that instrument at home, or the flute, because they prefer its sound to a much louder trumpet… Finally, later on, one might realize

behavioural canons[110] (the list obviously not being a definitive one). They are all, as this dissertation attempts at demonstrating, intertwined in tight and interesting ways.

As for canonical performing styles, it is to be noted that not only compositional, but also performative styles have had an impact on how music history has evolved. Any interpretation nowadays is deeply affected by multiple layers of previous interpretations that have reached us either through oral traditions, or, later and even more significantly, through sound recordings, with recording artists becoming trend-setters for the following generations. A creative output of any composer is surrounded by an orbit of certain prevailing stylistic requirements, standardized performances, and performance clichés. As has already been suggested in Chapter 1.5, anyone nowadays approaching a Beethoven sonata cannot completely distance him/herself from the passionate-dramatic cliché of its previous performances, whether heard live or recorded. In addition to that, performing Beethoven in the twenty-first century encompasses performing Liszt, Debussy and Ligeti. That means that any performer's personal encyclopaedia is expanded, accumulated and enriched with those works by later composers, thus creating some sort of 'layered' performance manners. It is as it were a retrospective history, as opposed to Ligeti as a composer encompassing his musical experiences of Debussy, Liszt and Beethoven.

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that some instruments – such as the piano, violin or cello – are treated as somewhat more 'important' in Western art music culture: they possess a much wider repertoire, and their representatives normally attain more noticeable careers than, say, oboe or organ players. In addition to this, it is rather interesting to see how such an aspect of performance as the artist's preference to, or even an exclusive usage of, a particular type of instruments may signify certain hierarchies within the field, or even belonging to a group – elitist "*Steinway* artists" being just one example of the kind. As the ad on the *Steinway & Sons* website claims, 97% of piano soloists chose the *Steinway* piano during the 2011/2012 concert season. And, as the poetic line on the same site continues, "[…] together, the artist and piano create music – such beautiful music that most professional pianists choose to perform only on Steinway pianos." (http://www.steinway.com/artists, last assessed April 4, 2014).

[110] As discussed earlier in Chapter 2.2, this aspect is related to the question of performer's corporeality, but also to certain 'behavioural codes', the sets of norms and pre-established societal manners. Depending on a given culture or its particular genre (be it early music, the classical repertoire or the various paths and happenings of new music), certain kinds of physical behaviour and appearance are commonly accepted as being appropriate to a performing musician.

Returning to the performative canon, it must be again (as in Chapter 2.5) summarized that through the course of the twentieth century, the shift of the musical performance styles could be observed from the Romanticist, subjective approach that was still dominant in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century, to the more objective (possibly Neo-Classicist) approach that, with some variations, has lasted till our days. Having been subject, through the course of the twentieth century, to an ever-increasing rationalization and standardization (mostly, through the means of media and education) the art of musical performance experienced the double-edged process of increased standards and, on the other hand, the loss of individuality. 'Canonical' rules of how to accord to the newly established standards of professionalism were globally communicated through various media and other means of dissemination. Such rules also became the basis for the standard education of musicians, and that is what is meant by the 'canon of education' (this was discussed more in Chapter 2.6).

Such canonical, traditional and conservative teaching is particularly problematic for those who would like to choose their specialization outside of the canon, that is, people with an inclination to either the early pre-Baroque repertoire, or to the new music. Since their early days future musicians are taught the nuances of mastering their instruments on the basis of the standard repertoire, which requires completely different skills than, say, most contemporary music. It is no wonder then that the majority of performers develop some degree of reluctance towards new music, which, in most cases, has a very complicated or at least unusual notation, requires a new and vast arsenal of professional tools, and 'throws' the performer from his accustomed sonorities. The same applies to the repertoire of early music: standard musical education is not capable of providing musicians with the knowledge and tools to decipher and master its peculiarities.

The focus of the present chapter, however, is the canon of repertoire as seen from three various perspectives: the standard 'pantheon of bestsellers', the problems and benefits in performing new music, and the repertoire canons of various countries, Lithuania again being the central example.

2.7.2. Performance Art and the Imaginary Museum of Musical Works

Compared to the earlier centuries, concert repertoires of both the twentieth and the current century have been dominated by the music of the past.

Repeated performing of the works of departed composers has become a standard phenomenon now. This fact is rather unique: it was not until the twentieth century that the music of the past would sound so often and, moreover, constitute the core of the repertoire. As we read in Tyler Cowen's study on culture's commercialization (1998), this resurrection of past styles was supported by the increasing diversity of the nineteenth century music market. Although most concertgoers would still denigrate the notion that the greatest music may be the music from the past, it was Mendelssohn and Zelter who staged a revival of Bach's St. Matthew Passion in 1829, and Franz Liszt started a trend for pianists to include 'historical pieces' in concert programmes in the 1830s. By the 1850s, Cowen writes, audiences had grown accustomed to the idea that contemporary music did not necessarily dominate the music of the past (Cowen 1998: 143). However, as Joseph Horowitz points out, it was not until the year 1870 that orchestras consolidated a "museum identity as showcases for dead masters". The repertoire of the Gewandhaus Orchestra shows percentages of the works by dead composers that were performed between 1781 and 1870: 13 % between 1781–85; 23 % between 1820–25; 39 % between 1828–34; 48 % between 1837–47; 61 % between 1850–55; 76 % between 1865–70 (Horowitz, quoted from Goehr 1992: 246).[111]

However, never has there been such a gap between the musical avant-garde and the common music lovers as occured in the twentieth century (interestingly so, because the level of audiences' education and knowledge has considerably increased of late). Analysis of the tastes and attitudes of today's society on the basis of the current concert life reveals hardly any impact of contemporary music. Thousands of concert halls and opera theatres are filled every evening with music lovers, and most of those musical events nevertheless leave aside not just the music of today, but also such twentieth century classics as Boulez, Berio, Stockhausen, or Xenakis. Certain changes have been noticeable lately, as compared to the situation of couple decades ago, yet, to generalize, the majority of both performers and listeners give priority to the music of the past instead of works by the composers that live and create for the present. Most performing stars stand as an example

[111] Cowen, as one of the reasons for the increased popularity of departed composers' works, suggests the fact that the composers of the time (say, 1850–1855), such as Brahms or Wagner, used to write music playable only for professional musicians (Cowen 1998: 144). Naturally, amateurs would seek their repertoires elsewhere.

of this; pianists that play the same works by Chopin in all the major concert halls year after year; singers whose whole repertoire consists of Rossini, Donizetti, or Verdi; conductors that rarely choose anything beyond the Classics; or violinists whose repertoire only comprises a few standard concertos.[112] There are several reasons for this, and their nature varies from music market requirements to more philosophical issues. The latter ones, together with their outcomes, were beautifully presented by Lydia Goehr:

> Reintroducing early music into the modern repertoire as 'timeless masterpieces' gave to early composers and their music what they had never had in their lifetimes – precise notations, multiple performances, and eternal fame. It also provided for the musical world a constant, standard, and significantly enlarged repertoire of musical masterpieces. Constancy and standardization overtook the museum of musical works at a rapid speed. The repertoire of the Classics or 'War Horses' became so standardized, in fact, that it took on, as someone once said of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, the familiarity of a breakfast cereal. (Goehr 1992: 247)

What was provided by the reproduction technologies in the twentieth century was yet a further significant step in the direction of such familiarity and standardization. As Adorno put it, famous people are not the only stars in the culture industry. One may guess that the fatal circle began with the wish of early recording producers to provide the listeners with the most familiar pieces, i.e. works by the well-known Classicist or Romantic composers. The possibility of constant repetition of those pieces resulted in the most familiar turning into the most successful and therefore played over and over again, hence made still more familiar. Works of music thus acquire the same role as famous people, and a pantheon of bestsellers builds up (Adorno 1991: 31–32).

One of the reasons why so many artists ignore contemporary music or pay only a sporadic tribute to it is the fact that they are too busy to learn new pieces. This rule can be applied at least to those pursuing a successful international career. Everett Helm illustrates the situation with one representative piano virtuoso, who performs Brahms Piano Concerto (most likely the Second…) this Friday in New York and the coming Saturday

[112] For more on this issue, see Helm 1970, esp. 90. The steadiness of classical music scene is proved by the fact that at the time of writing these lines, i.e. four decades later as compared to Helm, little has changed. The Western concert canon still consists of the same "few concertos".

in Vienna and has little time to intermit his journey for giving a recital in London consisting of the works by Chopin, Beethoven, and Debussy. He certainly does not have the time and, most often, a stimulus for learning, say, the Piano Concerto by Elliott Carter. Moreover, he knows the Brahms Concerto too well: he learned it in the conservatory and has played it many times since. What is more, Carter's work is difficult and, possibly, the performer does not even like it. And even if he does, 'his' audience wants to hear 'his' Brahms, Chopin, or Beethoven (Helm 1970: 91). Surely, the author of the book *Composer Performer Public* presents this example in a slightly ironical manner. He immediately adds that there is no evidence that the admirers of the virtuoso-star would protest against the music he plays or would ignore his performances (as his managers are possibly trying to persuade him). In Helm's opinion, the star-cult is nowadays so strong that those people 'who made it' could use their popularity for educational purposes – to introduce new music to the listeners and eventually make them like it (one of the best examples here could be the violinist Gidon Kremer, who has bravely built up 'his own' repertoire clearly reflecting his rather idiosyncratic artistic preferences[113]). However, one may doubt that only by means of the charismatic features of several famous performers it is possible to change the traditions and tastes that are so firmly rooted in society. A peculiar case, among pianists, was that of Glenn Gould who chose to play a very distinctive repertoire, practically refusing all romantic piano music. There are quite a few examples of early music and twentieth century pieces among the works he recorded. However, the admiration that Gould received was clearly not due to contemporary music, but rather due to the

[113] It must be said, however, that Kremer's aesthetic preferences in contemporary music, even though clearly being outside the typical canonical repertoire, cannot be called a musical avant-garde either. I label this type of repertoire 'new communicativity' (in most cases, it is just the same postmodern music, which brought back to performers part of the lost romanticist stylistics). Here, the performer again – as in the 'good old times' – becomes the core of a concert, and the most important goal of the composer is communication with the listener, moving and affecting him/her, and arousing emotions. It may be music of a very different stylistic nature, however, its musical language most often retains clearly traceable melodies, the concepts of theme, functional harmony, and narrativity. It is not by chance that such music is eagerly chosen to be played by even the most traditional performers. One can name among its creators (the list being far from definitive) such composers as Giya Kancheli, Leonid Desyatnikov, Arvo Pärt, Astor Piazzolla, Alberto Ginastera, Einojuhani Rautavaara, and in general the majority of the representatives of the 'new spirituality' and neo-romanticism.

'standard' works by Bach or Beethoven. On the other hand, the advocates of the 'educational' point of view may argue that the rest of his recordings were and indeed remain the listeners' choice (although most likely, not too often) – if not for the music itself, then at least because it is performed by Glenn Gould.

Many a performer emphasizes that the choice of the standard repertoire is by all means justifiable, as those 'standard' pieces allow the performers to reveal their performative qualities much better. They claim that most, say, contemporary piano music is of interest only because of its experimental elements, novel techniques, or different approach to the instrument (which, in turn, might not be acceptable to many pianists), but not for its aesthetic features. As Petras Geniušas puts it:

> It [the choice of playing the 'standards'] is determined by the simple fact that the two and a half centuries were the golden time of piano music. There is not much we can do about it. It is a great pleasure to play good pieces by contemporary composers, for example, the Australian Carl Vine Sonata, but a large number of modern composers do not trust this instrument. And they write it unwillingly, so we perform it unwillingly… (Geniušas, in Navickaitė-Martinelli 2010a: 103)

It is of note that the choices of repertoire in musicians' lives tend to change considerably with their age. Let us take some more pianistic examples. The particularly popular 'war horses', such as the First Piano Concerto by Pyotr Tchaikovsky or Concerto No. 2 by Sergei Rachmaninov, are most often and most eagerly performed by young pianists (knowing how many of them have actually conquered the world of music with such kind of pieces, one could hardly condemn them for this). In competitions, such a repertoire is in most cases also one of the guarantees of a win. Precisely for this reason, in some of them, the requirements are being set in such a way that competitors would be encouraged to get acquainted with some local (or otherwise thematically related) music[114], however, the general trends,

[114] For instance, in all the three main piano competitions in Lithuania – Balys Dvarionas, Stasys Vainiūnas, and M. K. Čiurlionis – the compulsory pieces by the 'title' composers of each competition respectively are included; in the Čiurlionis' competition, every time, also a new piece (both for piano and organ sections of the competition) specifically composed for the contest by a Lithuanian composer is obligatory for the contestants. As it often happens, precisely this requirement prevents some musicians from coming to the competition, as they do not think they will be ever able to 'recy-

even though significantly improving with time, show the inclination for a rather narrow repertoire.

When analyzing the repertoire of the pianists of the twentieth century, it is worthwhile mentioning not only the problem of canonical vs. contemporary music (more of which, anyway, in the following section), but also the issues within the mainstream repertoire. In the course of the century, there were always new accents being laid on the hierarchy of classical authors and their works. Vitalij Gritsevich in his book *History of Style in Piano Performance* (2000) summarizes the consistent patterns in the programmes of solo piano concerts from the early twentieth century to our day as follows:

1) Approximately until the 1950s, the works by Mozart, Haydn and J. S. Bach were performed in the concerts more as an exception, for 'warming up'. The author also points out that music by Haydn has not received until now worthy attention in the solo programmes of pianists.
2) In the early twentieth century the paraphrases and transcriptions by Liszt were more popular than his original works. On the contrary, since the middle of the century paraphrases by Liszt and other authors, such as Saint-Saëns, Busoni, Tausig, and Reger, have nearly completely disappeared from the concert life.[115]
3) After the First World War, pianists as a rule did not perform the salon-pieces, such as the *Melody* by Rubinstein, *Sentimental waltz* by Tchaikovsky, or *Minuet* by Paderewski.
4) After the Second World War, the attention of pianists towards music by Chopin, Schumann and Liszt slightly decreased, while the interest for the sonatas by Brahms, Rachmaninov or Schubert significantly increased.
5) After World War II, works by Debussy, Ravel, Bartók, and Prokofiev have been constantly included into the repertoires of all the great pianists. (Gritsevich 2000: 31)

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cle' this newly-learned repertoire in their next competitions or concert programmes. In other words, the effort does not 'pay off'.

115 Some of the 'new Horowitzes', such as Arcadi Volodos, Lang Lang or Denis Matsuev, as well as many younger pianists, still like to perform the transcriptions of their own or other authors. However, together with the admiration of a certain part of the audience these pianists are often criticized for being superficial because of this artistic choice, and any more 'arty' programme-selection of theirs is welcomed as a sign of increased artistic maturity.

A decline in performing the works that demonstrate brilliant pianism can be explained by the fact that most of such pieces do not stand out for their profound artistic content. Meanwhile, in recent decades it has come to be considered a sign of good form to perform only 'serious' works. Taking as an instance works by one of the most popular piano music authors Franz Liszt, it is evident that the recent trends favour his late output, experimental and creative, while his virtuosic show pieces are more often received sceptically. In this respect, the attitudes towards Franz Schubert's works also have significantly changed: the earlier trend for his *Moments musicaux*, impromptus and songs paraphrased by Liszt has shifted in favour of his original works, especially the (late) sonatas.

An increasing attention to philosophy, religion and spirituality contributed to the formation of the cult of Johann Sebastian Bach. Contemplation, thoughtfulness, and a quest for the *meaning* became the trademarks of quite a lot of musicians. In addition, logic and order become noticeable in the concert programmes. A tendency to present musical pieces in systemic cycles signifies the intellectuality of musical performance art. Nowadays, pianists perhaps only for an encore would perform the *Träumerei* by Schumann – in concert, they would rather play the whole of *Kinderszenen* or *Waldszenen*, or all Études by Chopin, Preludes by Debussy or cycles by Brahms, Ravel or Scriabin. The same is true of recording practices: as contemporary performers normally have huge repertoires, they tend to record the cycles that would take up the time of several live concerts. The origins of such 'marathons' were sensational 'historical' concert cycles of the likes of Anton Rubinstein, Alfred Cortot, or Artur Schnabel, which are now easily surpassed even by rather young musicians, who more and more often tend to indulge into performing huge Beethoven, Chopin or Rachmaninov cycles during one or more recitals.[116]

2.7.3. The Pros and Cons of Performing New Music

I am indifferent to the contemporary aleatoric, dodecaphonic music, to all Cages, Xenakises and similar. I admit that it may be very professional and correct, but I am absolutely indifferent to such music. I am definitely not going to waste my time on

[116] In Lithuania, only in recent years, such endeavours were most ambitiously taken by the young Lukas Geniušas (b. 1990), who, in his solo recitals or with orchestras, has performed Hindemith's *Ludus Tonalis*, all Beethoven's Piano concertos, Rachmaninov's 24 Preludes, Chopin's 24 Études and 3 Sonatas.

> learning a piece by Stockhausen, which requires employing one's elbows and knees and involves whistling, groaning and doing God-knows-what at the piano. I feel sufficiently good and cosy in the company of Beethoven, Schubert, Haydn, or Mozart. (Petrov, in Navickaitė-Martinelli 2010a: 218–219)

As has been already stated in Chapter 2.3, musical performance is considered in this dissertation as one type of creation, something that allows the performers not only mediate the composers' thoughts, but also convey their own creative ideas, insights and convictions, as well as reflect the society in which they live. Such considerations are perhaps more commonly applied to the interpretation of music from the past: in that case, a performer is the only living authority, and only his/her personal attitudes and professional ethics, along with the commonsensical viewpoints of the present culture, determine how much creativity and flexibility shall be employed while performing a certain piece of music. Things change when it comes to performing new music, where a living composer has a chance to express his own ideas as to how the work of music should sound, and, at least in some cases, is able to exercise his authority on the process of interpretation. What, then, along with the obvious fact of its marginalization in culture are the main problems in performing new music?

To begin with, it has to be made clear that *contemporary music* is not a single unified entity. The music(s) of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries encompass a particular variety of styles, and throughout the period even radically different aesthetic viewpoints and conceptions have been coexisting close to one another, which all had different relations with the performance of that music. Especially towards the end of the twentieth century, musical culture encompassed contrasting approaches to the essence of musical performance. Among the composers of that period, there were those who wanted to control every performative detail, but also those who did not think that the conventional understanding of music interpretation as a mere conveying of composers' ideas is of any relevance anymore.

When it comes to performing new music, even though perceiving it as a particularly varied and manifold phenomenon, the statement still remains the same: this music is not very popular among performers. Different styles and genres are, of course, accepted differently by musicians of various fields (or instruments), however, the dominating repertoire tendencies, as discussed in the previous section of this dissertation, are not in favour of

contemporary music. This, in fact, may be exactly one of the reasons why the latter receives controversial evaluations. Newly written music has been presenting difficulties to its first listeners at all times: they had to get accustomed to new artistic solutions, unusual musical language, etc. However, in all the times before ours musical life featured nearly *only* contemporary music, i.e. the one composed by the authors of those days. The historicism of the nineteenth century produced new circumstances in this respect: since then, both the music of earlier times and the one currently being written have had to coexist in concert repertoires. It is only understandable that new music, not yet approved by time nor polished by its repeated interpretations, has encountered a serious challenge.

In particular, the performers who were educated through a prism of the Romanticist aesthetics began seeing contemporary music controversially. Even on the eve of the twenty-first century, some of them have openly declared their fidelity to the music based on emotions, intuition and subjectivity of performance, thus largely renouncing modern works that are often indeed based on intellect, calculation and reason. Even if the voices of those who like and promote contemporary music are more well-founded nowadays, the mainstream musical performance environment is still mainly based on those conservative attitudes.

It is, of course, only natural that some part of the new music (which is now being 'consumed' and appreciated without any historical selection that would only be possible after a certain time passes) is more interesting in its experimental features or its search for new techniques and novel approaches towards musical instruments, rather than for its aesthetic qualities. Exactly this search – for sound novelty, new performance techniques and non-traditional notations – is not acceptable for some performers who prefer choosing timeless masterpieces. It is this aspect of time-filter that the famous Russian pianist Nikolai Petrov emphasizes in his otherwise utterly sceptical comment[117]:

[117] Throughout this section, alongside the author's own reflections on the matter, the first-hand thoughts of performers on the matter of contemporary music – the role of the performer in playing new music, the relationship with living composers and other aspects – shall be presented. No musicological analysis could better reveal the status of affairs than performers' statements, often as contradictory as the issue under discussion itself.

> Do you know what the biggest trouble with contemporary music is? That it very often is applied music. Let's say the paintings by Van Gogh, by Renoir, by Repin – it is big art, isn't it? But there are also pictures that simply match the colour of the walls… New music similarly fits very well in a sci-fi movie about Cosmos or the depths of the ocean – it is just perfect for that. But they all want to be on a par with Mozart and Schubert, yet find that impossible. There were dozens of composers next to Mozart or Schubert, and, by the way, they were held in much higher esteem at the time. It suffices to recall Salieri, 'the only and the unsurpassable', and somewhere, on the fringes of his shadow, was Mozart… But time separates wheat from chaff. (Petrov, in Navickaitė-Martinelli 2010a: 219)

And yet, there are some performers, also among the very famous ones, who choose to focus their attention explicitly on new music. What may be the main driving force behind such a specialization?

The elements particularly emphasized by the musicians of that kind are one's artistic openness[118], large field of interests and curiosity in many things, not wanting to close oneself within the traditional framework commonly attributed to a mainstream performer. A very important aspect while trying to get attuned to the unaccustomed music is also one's willingness for collaboration with the composers. Indeed, among other 'unusual', non-canonical things, the performance of new music is inconvenienced (on the other hand – enormously enriched) by the fact that, while preparing a new piece, the performer has a chance to consult its author. A living composer can express his or her will, criticize, or advise as to what are the new codes for deciphering his/her creative output. Some performers do perceive this opportunity of communicating with the author as an undeniable advantage and privilege, while to others it may also present some problems. As often happens, the opinion of the composer does not always coincide with

[118] Such artistic openness is appealing even to those who normally construct their repertoires from the canonical works of the 'golden fund'. Say, Mūza Rubackytė remembers very warmly her artistic impressions from the contemporary art environment: "[…] sometimes life offers interesting motives or situations when you put aside all the stereotypes, all categorizing of music into good and bad, understandable and strange, beautiful and unappealing. Three years ago I was blessed with the experience of living at the artists' Residency of La Prée Abbey where we interacted with sculptors, writers, graphic artists, creators of installations. There were also composers, and we played their music at our local festival. It was really exciting to live in such an atmosphere and open up to contemporary music. You live next to this person, drink tea with him and play his music… You open up to everything, and all artistic barriers disappear." (Rubackytė, in ibid.: 399).

how the performer *feels* a certain piece, on how s/he would like to *interpret* the work. Not all the composers want interpretive solutions to be suggested by the performers – they would like to hear things exactly as they want them to be. Petras Geniušas comments on the opportunity of consulting the author of the music in the following manner:

> I do enjoy the interaction with contemporary composers yet sometimes they should not be allowed to rehearsals. (*Laughs.*) I remember cases when the presence of the author made me feel restrained. […] Freedom and restraint are both necessary. […] It is necessary for the two worlds to collaborate. Most composers are aware of it, beneficially to the outcome. (Geniušas, in ibid.: 99)

It is interesting to observe that one's interest in contemporary music may largely depend on the performer's speciality. Perhaps the most sceptical attitudes towards new music may be noticed from the side of pianists and singers. The latter ones often reproach composers for their 'cruel treatment' of the human voice, for not husbanding it properly, for the 'ignorant' writing for voice. In the meantime, pianists in contemporary music have to experience the loss of the crown of 'king of instruments'.

It is indeed true that contemporary composers do not show particular affinity to piano music. Just one of the examples, presented by the pianist Charles Rosen (in Dubal 1997: 278): Elliot Carter[119] wrote a piano sonata in 1946, and his next work for this instrument, *Night Fantasies*, came only in 1980. A part of the problem comes from the fact that, due to the increased specialization of musical professions (cf. Chapter 2.6), very few contemporary composers are also capable pianists. However, that is only one side of a coin. Say, one of the significant musicians of the twentieth century, a Hungarian Béla Bartók, was a very good pianist, however, it is commonly believed that while composing for the instrument he did not think *pianistically*. And, because percussive timbre effects do not particularly inspire pianists, this allows them claim that the composers after Debussy were not inspired by the piano (Rosen, in Dubal 1997: 278). Not by chance thus of all the twentieth century composers[120], the ones that are

[119] Carter's name is perhaps most often mentioned in the American context of contemporary repertoires, hence repeatedly referred to also in this study.

[120] Sergei Rachmaninov would perhaps be unsurpassed in this respect, however, due to his primarily Romantic idiom, it remains difficult to list him among the 'twentieth-century composers'.

played most often by contemporary pianists, remain Debussy and Ravel. The musical language and its expressive means of their music, their pianistic inventiveness, the utmost use of the instrument's potential, remain in the centre of pianists' attention. One may add to the French twentieth century grand figures also the names of Prokofiev, Berg (a single work, the Sonata), Messiaen, Stravinsky, Hindemith, and the same Bartók, whose music – piano concertos in particular – is still regularly included in the pianistic repertoires. On the contrary, say, Schönberg or Webern, not to mention later composers, are not so often encountered in mainstream concert programmes.

Petras Geniušas' views on the 'non-pianisticness' of contemporary music for piano were cited above in Section 2.7.2. This is how another Lithuanian pianist Mūza Rubackytė echoes his opinion:

> Even this 'standard' repertoire is so immense that no life is enough for it. Contemporary music represents a special menu and takes a special appetite, and above all, tolerance. First of all, the instrument is not employed in the way we have been educated to use it. It is not always singing, not always musical – the absence of just these two parameters is a significant lack. It is also not always virtuoso… where will you show yourself? It may also be minimalist: three notes here, a fourth there. Then you start wondering, what was all this practicing for? The reward – yes, I take part in a very interesting installation or a performance. But in it I do not feel much of a pianist, but rather some kind of a tool, I perform bits and pieces, or fill in percussion's role and similar. Such scant employment of this instrument-orchestra is really disappointing. […] I have played quite a few contemporary chamber music pieces. Why mainly chamber music? Because even solo piano contemporary pieces treat the instrument only as an element, it does not receive sufficient weight. Chamber repertoire fixes all this: there you feel really needed. (Rubackytė, in Navickaitė-Martinelli 2010a: 399–400)

Another important problem when performing contemporary music (or, rather, when avoiding it) is the traditionalism and conservatism of musical education (see the thoughts on 'education canon' at the beginning of this chapter). Rarely do pedagogues encourage their students to choose anything beyond the traditional repertoire, moreover many of them do not have the necessary competences in performing this music to convey to their students. It is obvious that any musician who wants to master the instrument of his choice needs to get the basics of the classical school, to acquire a solid technical basis, yet the path may (and should) go further

and be more varied. Jens McManama from the famous *Ensemble Inter-Contemporain* shares his experience in teaching contemporary music at the Paris Conservatory:

> The problem with contemporary music, obviously, for any musician who has played the music is that it is technically very difficult. And many times you are asked to do things that are opposed to a traditional manner of playing. The playing level of musicians in general today is much higher than it was 20 years ago, much higher than 40 years ago, etc. It is getting better and better: the instruments are getting better, the models are getting better, the standards are getting better. In a technical sense they are getting stronger and stronger. However, the problem is that they bring the traditional technique and they have to adapt that for contemporary music, otherwise it sounds like you are playing Bach on a modern piano. And, in order to adapt the technique, they need an open mind. So, what we can say when we talk about and teach contemporary music is why it is necessary to do this, how to patiently wait for its codes to unlock as self-understandable. Sometimes it takes a rather long time to find the alternative ways to solve some technical problem, often one needs to seek compromises with composers, but most of all it is important to employ one's reason, intelligence, and you can always come out with a solution. (McManama, in ibid.: 377)

Curiously, there exist at least two most recurrent aspects of performing contemporary music, where the attitudes of those who do perform it and those who do not are radically different: these are the questions of the usage of instruments and techniques and the impact of the performer-interpreter on the new music. As far as techniques are concerned, the mainstream performers simply complain that this was not what for they have spent all those years in learning how to master their instruments (as the quoted passage from Rubackytė's interview already demonstrated), while new music performers blame the standard education for not providing them with appropriate tools for new techniques.

Concerning interpretation, the attitudes are even more differentiated: while some performers claim that they do not perform contemporary music because there is no room for one's interpretation, others emphasize how much new music depends on the interpreter, how emotionally charged it is, and what professional and personal satisfaction they receive by being able to play it properly.

Nikolai Petrov, on one side, says:

> In general, any music becomes music worth existing if it is a vehicle for emotions. This applies especially to contemporary music, the quality of which is determined based on one criterion only, whether it involves emotion. Emotions are present when we can identify that this is Stravinsky, though everything is written in the same dodecaphonic technique. Or it is Schnittke, or Penderecki. One must have his own face – just writing according to a system is not enough. (Petrov, in ibid.: 219)

While Anthony de Mare – an American pianist who specializes in contemporary music – does agree on the primacy and necessity of emotion in music, he and his colleagues are eager (and capable, provided the intensity of de Mare's own concerts) to find the emotion in newly written music:

> We often hear playing Schönberg or Boulez very technically. While I see the creative output of Schönberg as one of the warmest, most tender musics written in the twentieth century – it is Brahms in another language. I love playing his early opuses filled with colours, textures, and deep emotions, such as *Drei Klavierstücke* Op. 11 and *Sechs Kleine Klavierstücke* Op. 19.
>
> Whatever I play, I try to find a certain communicative, emotive response. It was trendy in the seventies to play exceptionally intellectualist piano music. Modernism was at its peak at the time, and performers sought so much to be first and foremost technically precise that they would forget the sense of what one or another piece *speaks* about. Webern, Babbitt, serialism – there are magical moments everywhere. Sometimes one really needs time to get used to something, because it is a different, alien language that one needs to learn to understand and communicate to the listener. But works by some composers, even though very much oriented to the details, are at the same time exceptionally musical. (de Mare, in ibid.: 294)

In addition to this, some other performers actually believe that with contemporary music they can 'conquer' their audiences even easier than with the classics. The cellist David Geringas strongly advocates the immediacy, emotional power and significance of contemporary music:

> I am absolutely certain that contemporary music is much closer to the people than the classical one in that the emotiveness of our own times reaches the listeners in a very direct manner. […] It is only important to present that music properly. […] One always needs time to get close to a musical piece, whether it is from the classical or contemporary repertoire, and, surely, new music requires more time. But it is really worth the effort: when you play the work of a contemporary composer well, it immediately has a very strong effect – not only because of the particular effort invested, but also for its immanent emotions. (Geringas, in ibid.: 408–409)

An interesting element appears in the discussion when seeing a performer as a cultural figure. Superficially, it looks as if contemporary music performers, even soloists, are slightly more 'modest' as compared to the mainstream divas – to begin with, the display of one's 'artistry' is not so evident, among other nuances. On the other hand, much higher responsibility rests on their shoulders: this music sounds for the first time, and its reception and future mainly depend on the performer (you perhaps cannot do too much harm to Chopin anymore, but you still can harm Thomas Adès). Thus another aspect that new music performers tend to emphasize is the ethical side of their choice: they feel a moral responsibility to promote the culture that is being born today, to give a chance for the composers to be heard. This is particularly true when we speak of famous performers, such as the above mentioned Gidon Kremer, or Arditti Quartet and the likes, who regularly receive hundreds of new pieces to be tried and perhaps publicly performed, and it is on their willingness and interpretations that the future of that music largely depends.

To conclude, an important sociocultural factor that may and does affect the performers' attitudes towards choosing to play new music is the fact that, in the general context of music consumption, contemporary music is far less popular than the standard repertoire. Many a musician emphasizes that, after they got interested in contemporary programmes, they would often feel at the margins of mainstream cultural life. Indeed, for a long time in the twentieth century a mutual intolerance or ignorance was evident: the vast majority of concert-goers, professional musicians or amateurs, as well as programme-makers, patrons and managers completely ignored contemporary music. And, at the same time, in the 'ghettos' of contemporary music one would feel equally intolerant attitudes towards any music written earlier, let alone the standard Classicist-Romanticist repertoire. Under such circumstances, performers would naturally have doubts concerning their choice of playing new music. It is something that would require a lot of extra effort, which later does not 'pay off'. The situation is currently changing, however, up to date the majority of contemporary programmes during the concert season of any country or city are concentrated within the specialized new music festivals.

2.7.4. Local Musical Canons

What does represent certain culture to itself and to the others? Such representative emblems that usually have a concrete, easily tangible and visualized character, they exist not in history but in collective memory: some building that can exist only in that very culture (like the 'onion' of a Russian orthodox church), a political figure, like John F. Kennedy, that could have been born only in that culture; a bodily posture, such as Indian way of putting the hands. (Kavolis 1995: 238)

To end the chapter on performers' repertoire choices, the thesis of the present section is that repertoire canons are born and established not only on a global, but also on a local, or national, scale. As has already been mentioned, the inevitable globalization of performance art through recordings and other means of standardizing culture have had a controversial impact on art. Willing to accord to the highly increased international standards and, often, not being content with merely local careers, young musicians may want to renounce altogether their national identities. Current international criteria set a great variety of requirements for the interpreter, certainly in relation to the repertoire among other things. A successful contemporary performer is expected to be eclectic and regularly prepare large, diverse and conceptual programmes. Hence, in addition to the above-discussed problem of mainstream vs. contemporary music, the issue of 'local musical canons' becomes an interesting one.

Where could we place, in such a globally-oriented context, a performer's wish to emphasize one's cultural and national identity, personal background, and are there traces of such a practice in the present musical culture? One way is to emphasize one's belonging to a certain performance tradition, or school. But in terms of repertoire, is it possible to argue that one's national identity may be reinforced by choosing to play the works written by composers from the same country? At the first glance, such a statement seems to be altogether too simplistic. However, particularly in the cases of smaller cultures, the tendency is that of performers' attempts at introducing their 'native' music to a wider audience, whenever possible.

Obviously, some *local* musical canons (see Figure 2.9) coincide with the *global* ones. The German national canon features the greatest ones, such as Bach or Beethoven; Austrians proudly present Mozart; depending on the genre, some other cultures also have their universally respected figures:

Poland (with Chopin) in piano music, while in opera – no need to say, Italy, with its worldwide-acknowledged pantheon of operatic composers. Some of them occupy a sort of 'middle' position in the hierarchy of musical canons – say, French, Russian, or Hungarian music. In such cases, surely, for a performer there might be no particular need to 'prove' anything, because this music is already universally acknowledged, it sounds in the concerts halls worldwide. (And yet there exist some views that only Germans can interpret Beethoven really well, or that it is only Russians who can properly understand and reveal the emotiveness of Tchaikovsky or Rachmaninov.) But then there exist the national *canons* that are clearly situated at the margins of the global musical map, such as Scandinavian local musical heroes (Edward Grieg or Jean Sibelius), Czech composers (Bedřich Smetana, Leoš Janáček) or the Lithuanian national 'canon' with its main representative, composer and painter Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis (1875–1911).

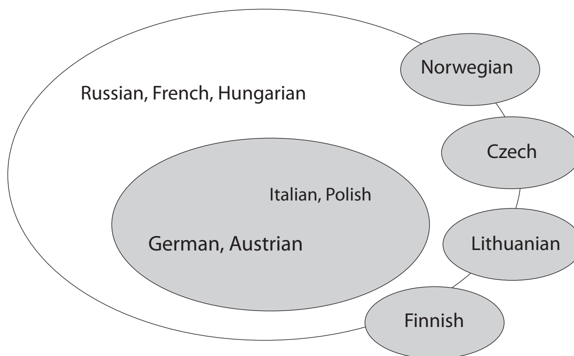

Figure 2.9. Examples of local/national canons within Western art music

What do these local canons mean to the performers, and in what sense can they be treated as 'canons'? Nowadays, nobody wants to be acknowledged only locally, and music performers of course tend to choose to play music that is universally known, loved and valued. However, most of them feel a duty (often also an inner need) to bring to the wider scene their composer-compatriots, if not for genuinely admiring their music, then at least as exotic embellishments. The Lithuanian diva Violeta Urmana often sings as an encore Juozas Gruodis' song "Ulijona"; our pianists, even those

who specialize explicitly in the mainstream repertoire and – interestingly – who rarely play, for instance, Čiurlionis' music in concerts in Lithuania, eagerly perform his pieces abroad.[121] Several Lithuanian pianists, mostly from the younger generations, have willingly engaged in the Lithuanian Music Information Center's series of CDs introducing Lithuanian classics, and – from personal communication – they saw performing works by Lithuanian expatriate composers Jeronimas Kačinskas, Vladas Jakubėnas, Vytautas Bacevičius and others as their 'mission'. Gabrielius Alekna defended his DMA dissertation on Bacevičius' piano music for receiving the degree in Juilliard school: the fact that it was awarded as the best dissertation of the year, besides proving the pianist's research skills, may be understood as a telling example on how one's choice for emphasizing one's cultural identity 'pays off', as well as perhaps as a certain trend of exoticism in research topics.

However, as for the *real* national canon, Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis has no competition in Lithuania. Even taking into consideration the reluctance of the Soviet authorities towards the founding figure of Lithuanian art music, the amount of printed music, scholarly studies, an international piano and organ competition of his name, annual Čiurlionis Festival in his hometown Druskininkai, and other celebrations of his name, show that Čiurlionis is perhaps the only Lithuanian composer who has so far received decent attention from both individual and institutional bodies. The latest important homage in honour of the centenary of his death was the international scientific conference *Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis: His Time and Our Time* (2011) and, on its basis, a collection of studies and scientific articles (Daunoravičienė and Povilionienė 2013; a volume of nearly 700 pages does not feature, however, a single article on Čiurlionis' performances). The number of CDs devoted to his music, even though they

[121] A distinctive case in the Lithuanian piano scene is the pianist Birutė Vainiūnaitė, whose devoted work in performing Lithuanian composers manifests itself, among other things, in several CDs of Lithuanian piano music. Such a choice, besides the pianist's personal inclinations, may well be driven by the fact that she is a daughter of the famous Lithuanian pianist and composer Stasys Vainiūnas, who, in 1933, became a laureate of the International Piano Competition in Vienna, thus becoming the first Lithuanian pianist winning the prize at an international competition. Vainiūnaitė, naturally, besides the works by other Lithuanian composers, has recorded her father's creative output for piano (solo and with orchestra).

always leave us expecting more renditions, is rather satisfactory (and, in any case, far superior to that of any other Lithuanian composer) as well.[122]

Whereas most other local composers in small countries, or contemporary music in general (provided that we can still call 'contemporary' music coming from the early twentieth century), receive only sporadic performances and, in most of the cases, singular recordings, the available interpretations of Čiurlionis' piano pieces even suggest that there exist certain stylistic tendencies on how this composer has been approached by today's pianists. Rather categorically, and clearly subjectively, Eugenijus Ignatonis makes an attempt to classify the available Čiurlionis' interpretations. A hundred-year interpretation history, according to a Lithuanian piano music expert, allows the distinguishing of five currents and the presentation of one performer as representing each of them:

1) Lithuanian simplicity and sincerity, noble respect to the composer is related to the interpreter's improvisational freedom (the most typical example being Balys Dvarionas, himself a noted composer, one of the 'grounding-fathers' of Lithuanian romantic music);
2) The performance is based on consistent studies of the composer's creative and artistic personality, intellect and invulnerable logic (these qualities are attributed by Ignatonis to Vytautas Landsbergis, a distinctive Čiurlionis' scholar and interpreter);
3) An attempt to exploit all the expressive means of the instrument, by continuing and developing the interpretive traditions of the great nineteenth century Romanticists (Mūza Rubackytė);
4) Spiritualizing and poeticizing the worldviews of Čiurlionis' contemporaries – Rachmaninov, Medtner, among others – coupled with the brilliant creative individuality of the pianist (Petras Geniušas);

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122 Rokas Zubovas alone has recorded an impressive 6-CDs set of Čiurlionis' piano works (2011) plus a couple of other, conceptually narrower discs. In addition, there are 2 CDs recorded by Mūza Rubackytė (1993), 2 by Vytautas Landsbergis (1998 and 2009), 1 by Birutė Vainiūnaitė (2011) and another by Aleksandra Juozapėnaitė-Eesmaa (2000), and a very interesting CD from 1982 – several Lithuanian performers playing Čiurlionis' piano miniatures. The insightful "The Complete Piano Music" CD cycle played by a German pianist Nikolaus Lahusen (and completed by Rokas Zubovas after the premature death of his colleague) for "Celestial Harmonies" in 2010 has received particular attention. Čiurlionis' symphonic, chamber, organ and choir music has also been recorded by various Lithuanian and foreign performers.

5) A professional viewpoint of a stranger, based on the attempt to encompass the whole creative output of Čiurlionis, trying to find the connections between the pieces from his youth (not always mature) and his most famous opuses (Nikolaus Lahusen). (Ignatonis 2010: 102)

Ignatonis sums up, however, that if the question were raised, whether the interpretation of Čiurlionis' music can be *Lithuanian*, the answer would be 'yes and no'. "Yes, because his own creative output and personality were formed by the native landscape, the silent reality of Druskininkai; no, because the art of music interpretation is constantly taking over the international experience, merges romantic and postromantic features and many other things." (ibid.: 107).

Without having a purpose to present here any broader analysis of Čiurlionis' interpretations, it would be interesting to point out two special cases in this context. Among other pianists in Lithuania and abroad, who have devoted significant parts of their careers to interpreting or otherwise studying Čiurlionis' music, the pianist Rokas Zubovas, great-grandson of the composer, must be mentioned. His devotion to the creative output of Čiurlionis deserves particular attention as yet another example of how a performer's performative choices may depend on variety of reasons, including one's personal background. In Zubovas' own words, it is difficult to speak of any 'genetically-determined' understanding of the composer. The pianist claims knowing Čiurlionis' works through constant studies, not through his relationship. However, he admits, "The fact of being Čiurlionis' great-grandson has undoubtedly had a direct impact both on my choice to become a musician, and a wish to deepen my knowledge of his works" (Zubovas, in Navickaitė-Martinelli 2010a: 182). This knowledge, curiously, by now has manifested itself not only in Zubovas' recordings, his research work, creating and maintaining a website on Čiurlionis, but also in him acting in the main role as the composer in Robert Mullan's movie "Letters to Sofija" (2013).

Hence, Zubovas' interest in Čiurlionis has an individual angle, while another Lithuanian pianist whose activities combine a special devotion to Čiurlionis with the often manifested love of the homeland, is Mūza Rubackytė. Among Lithuanian performers, Rubackytė is perhaps the one most explicitly declaring her 'Lithuanianness' – for instance, in the "Lithuania" section of her personal website, which is the subject of closer

scrutiny in Section 4.3.9. Particular attention there is paid, again, to introduce Čiurlionis to visitors:

> How do I begin without mentioning Čiurlionis? I began my studies at the institute, which bears his name. Although I adore Liszt, Chopin, various Russian composers, Debussy, Ravel, as well as Hersant and Dusapin, the founding father of classical Lithuanian music, M. K. Čiurlionis, holds a special place in my heart. For many, he was not only a man of art; he embodied the soul of the Lithuanian resistance against the Soviet regime. (Rubackytė, in www.rubackyte.eu/lithuania)

Rubackytė's renditions of Čiurlionis are in fact not the most canonical (if by 'canonical' we would mean the line of interpreting Čiurlionis according, say, to his main scholar and interpreter, an icon on his own Vytautas Landsbergis): they abound in romantic, impressionistic tones, they may be playful or dramatic, and have little of the usual 'melancholically Lithuanian' features that one would expect from this music. These interpretations confute the dominant opinion that Čiurlionis is not a particularly 'pianistic' composer, and provoke many other questions concerning how one approaches the national 'statues' – the authors with whose music one has been raised since the times of attending a music school. Telling in this respect are Rokas Zubovas' words, with which the present section may be well closed:

> It seems to me that, at a certain level, the reaction to Čiurlionis' music and art is very similar everywhere I happened to present it. In Lithuania, certainly, you present Čiurlionis to people who treat him as a sort of legendary figure. Say, the tradition to bring children to Kaunas, to Čiurlionis Museum, is still alive (even though not so actively maintained as twenty years ago). But one may feel here also another extremity: Lithuanians feel as if they are 'fed up' with Čiurlionis, although all they know in fact is his name and a few prints of his paintings. I am trying to claim with my activity that Čiurlionis' works are good enough to be heard and seen not only on the jubilee occasions; that a real encounter with Čiurlionis – it's an attempt to attentively listen to his music, to truly see his paintings, to carefully read his texts; that Čiurlionis is not a star to be admired from a distance, but a very intimate and close creator of a very open soul, and that his temple has to be approached also with an open heart… (Zubovas, in Navickaitė-Martinelli 2010a: 182–183)

2.7.5. Concluding Remarks

The choice of repertoire constitutes a significant part of the performer's discourse, in that it helps, among other elements, in situating oneself within the current miscellaneous panorama of musical performance art. Not only the main 'specialization' of a musician, but also programming, say, one's recital belongs to the area of performer's creative expression, reveals his/her artistic tastes and the sense (or absence of it) of the current repertoire tendencies and trends. The criteria for this may be many. This closing chapter of Part 2 views musical performance and its development from a more historiographic, rather than semiotic, point of view, and same shall be the methodological perspective of Part 3 which features as a special focus the most canonic of the Western music composers, Ludwig van Beethoven, and his status in the pianists' repertoires.

The rise of the musical canon has coincided with the institution of public concerts, and was mainly determined by economic factors. Economic reasons, at large, are also behind maintaining this canon till our days. The market for experimental music is too little to ever outshine the classics, thus it is the conservative standard repertoires that both concert institutions and performers are interested in holding to.

Attempts have been made many times to classify the art of the twentieth century pianists according to its most typical features. Decades ago, a Russian pianist and musicologist Grigory Kogan pointed at three pianists of the century – Sviatoslav Richter, Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli and Glenn Gould, and his choice is of interest here because the classification was made not on the basis that "they play better than the others", but because, in Kogan's opinion, they represent best the main features of the period, especially in terms of repertoire choice. They all played a great variety of music (Richter in particular), but in the centre of their programmes was not anymore Beethoven, as it would have been for Anton Rubinstein or Hans von Bülow, and not Chopin or Liszt, as many of the pianists before the First World War would have chosen, but music from the eighteenth century (Bach, Mozart, Scarlatti) and the twentieth century classics: Prokofiev, Debussy, Hindemith, Berg (Kogan 1968: 80).

In the meanwhile, Harold C. Schonberg mentions two other names which, in his view, perfectly reflect the objective, precise and impersonal

style of modern piano art. Those are Alfred Brendel and Maurizio Pollini, sharing, according to the great music critic, many traits:

> Both are constantly being described as "intellectual" musicians. Both have completely discarded the entertainment aspects from their recitals. In romantic pianism, entertainment played a fairly large role; programs almost always contained flashy pieces that were calculated to stun the public. These kinds of programs were not for Brendel and Pollini. Where the big virtuosos of the past paid little, if any, attention to contemporary music, here was Pollini playing the Piano Sonata No. 2 by Boulez, or the complete piano music by Schoenberg, or works by Stockhausen, Webern and Berio. In 1985 his program, which he played all over Europe and America, consisted only of Book I of The Well-Tempered Clavier. Not even Rudolf Serkin, the exponent of pure classicism, had ever done that. […] Brendel also had Schoenberg solo works in his repertoire, as well as the piano concertos by Schoenberg and Bartók. Such atypical behaviour alone made them heroes to what Virgil Thomson used to describe as "the intellectual audience." Top pianists normally never touch such repertoire. (Schonberg 2006: 482–483)

Hence, in analyzing the twentieth century piano performance practices from the perspective of the repertoire several important aspects have to be taken into account, from the problem of contemporary music to more subtle questions of the hierarchy and changes in 'standard' choices. The view of interpreters to the music played, new criteria for its selection and particular affinity to the music of the past are in any case among the significant aspects of the changes in musical performance art during the twentieth century.

PART 3
(Re)Interpreting Musical Canon: On Beethoven Reception and Performance

3.1. Introduction

When one theorizes about phenomena related to music performance, the question arises as to what extent those theoretical reflections – as well as historical, cultural, ideological issues and circumstances – influence the art of musical performance. Here, anthropological, cultural, and semiotic insights again prove to be helpful. Using these, the continuous dialogue between the performer's subjective individuality and his or her surrounding environment has already been demonstrated in Part 2 of this study. The main assumption of the present part is that no art is born *ex-nihilo*, even if the artist has no conscious interest in scientific studies or political proclamations. Social and cultural backgrounds strongly influence both personal and artistic identities, and help form the viewpoints and interpretative choices of a musician.

It was the aim of the previous chapters of this dissertation to demonstrate that it is possible to examine the performer's art by leaving aside the score, or the composer, as the primary cause and condition of the performer's very existence. However, it would be impossible to completely overlook the importance of the opus in the study, the purpose of which is to present an all-encompassing perspective on the art of musical performance. Moreover, in order to fully cover all the logical relations of the semiotic square proposed in Chapter 1.5 (cf. Figure 1.4), one also has to address the matters of Work–Performance and Work–Non-Performance. Questions of repertoire, as already shown in Chapter 2.7, are of enormous importance in each performer's work, as they reveal a great deal of the artist's individuality as well as of his/her social identity. In Part 3, the performers' art is positioned within the Western musical canon. Because of its essentiality to current performance practices, the canonic repertoire, it is suggested, provides the best tools and insights into the study of musical performance.

One of the most fundamental transformations in Western art music culture, since the nineteenth century, has been the rise of a canon of great works from the past. Performing works by the prominent Classicist and Romantic composers has become a deep-rooted phenomenon in contemporary musical life. The majority of musicians, as also attested by the pianists interviewed by the author, consider the standard canonical repertoire

for piano as being varied and large enough. However, when searching for the case study that would link this research on musical performance art primarily to the levels of Works and Social Practices from Gino Stefani's theory of musical competence, few would be as pertinent a choice as the one which was selected. It is surely Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827), who, through multiple cultural, social, and ideological manifestations, is one of the most canonical composers of Western art music.

From a musicological point of view, it is relevant that the tradition of listening to and performing Beethoven's works has been developing without interruption from generation to generation. Thus, examining Beethoven interpretations as played by pianists of various cultural and historical backgrounds provides significant research tools for tracing general trends of the piano performance practices of the twentieth century and later (which are at the core of the present research); for analyzing the impact of such significant ideologies as 'school' and historicism, among others, on individual musicians; as well as looking into their contextual, e.g. political, discourses related to musical performance art.

On a broader interdisciplinary level, it is to be mentioned that the nineteenth century was the golden age of idolizing the Artist, so it is little wonder that Beethoven underwent a canonization that made him "a heroic token" (cf. Burnham 1995) of his time and of all music history. The familiar image of Beethoven from that time – proud, severe, and untidy – became not only his 'official' iconography, but the regular outfitting of a genius as such. Many people outside the world of art music know this image of Beethoven, and at least some of his famous works or passages therefrom. If the Beethoven myth[123] is fading somewhat in academic circles, it hangs on tenaciously in popular culture, where films and novels about him continue to appear (e.g., Agnieszka Holland's *Copying Beethoven* from 2006). Beethoven's musical genius is unquestionable, an exemplar par excellence of Western culture. Yet, to investigate how Beethoven's reputation was established, and continues to endure, transcends the bounds of musicology alone. Beethoven reception history, even though already subject to numerous analyses by such authors as Adorno (1993), Eggebrecht (1972),

[123] 'Myth' here, obviously, is understood not as a false rendition based on fairytales and images, but as a popular belief that becomes associated with a person, or institution, and that helps illustrate and celebrate a certain cultural ideal.

Dahlhaus (1991), Burnham (1995), De Nora (1995), or Dennis (1996), among others, still calls for an extensive interdisciplinary study.

The chapters that follow are intended to tackle some of the issues relevant to Beethoven reception history, and of how this history has influenced the art of piano performance practitioners until our days. Referring to the semiotic model for analyzing musical performance (cf. Chapter 1.5), what follows in this study shall encompass the Performance–Work, Work–Non-Performance, and Non-Work–Non-Performance quadrants of the semiotic square, hence demonstrating the various interrelations of cultural, social, contextual, and musical elements that all had their contribution in performing and perceiving Beethoven's music.

In Chapter 3.2, several interrelated issues are presented, namely those of the composer belonging to the musical (hence also performance) canon; historicism and interpretation; Beethoven myth as raised by the Romanticist thought; and ideological reception of his music. Chapter 3.3 addresses the changes and transformations of Beethoven interpretations during the twentieth century, with an overview of the greatest interpreters of Beethoven's piano music; seeing to the impact of the 'schools' or 'movements' on the development of Beethoven interpretation; and investigating the importance of the authenticity current and the historical approach to the interpretations of Beethoven's creative output. The musical case study selected for Chapter 3.4 is Beethoven's Sonata Op. 31 No. 2, *The Tempest*: a comparative analysis of 22 interpretations of the Sonata is conducted from several perspectives. To conclude Part 3, the issues of standards and subjectivity within the art of musical performance as applied to twentieth century Russian pianists interpreting the music by Ludwig van Beethoven shall be demonstrated.

These different, intertwining 'stories' – the cultural or musicological ones, the myths related to a particular work or its author, and the ones 'narrated' by the performers interpreting this music – are shown to constitute a single historical-musical-performative narrative.

3.2. Ludwig van Beethoven as a Heroic Token of Piano Performance Art

3.2.1. A Composer and the Canon

As already discussed in Chapter 2.7, in the twentieth century (and so far, the twenty-first) as opposed to earlier ones, music from the past dominated concert repertoires. In no previous time has music of the past been played so often nor constituted the mainstream, 'canonical' repertoire.

By exploring this phenomenon, one gains important insight into various aspects of performance practices of the period under discussion. The works of Beethoven, perhaps the central composer of the European canon, have profoundly influenced performance practices in chamber music, symphonic works, and piano. It would be safe to claim that no pianist of the twentieth century could avoid playing his works, and nor does this tendency seem to be about to change in the near future. Hence a look at performances of some of his most representative works – the piano sonatas – might reveal not only the changes and transformations of Beethoven interpretations as such, but also general trends in performance practice of the twentieth century. Before entering into aspects of Beethoven reception and interpretation, let us briefly see how the concepts of *repertoire* and *canon* function in cultural discourse.

Thirty years ago Joseph Kerman (1983; cf. also Kramer 1994), in his landmark article "A Few Canonic Variations", pointed out the huge difference between music that is performed and listened to (the repertoire, formed by performers), and music that is studied (the canon, formed by scholars). This aspect of Kerman's canonicity theory, although correct to a large extent, drew criticism. For example, William Weber (1989) argued that the musical canon was not formed primarily by artistic trends, like Romanticism, as commonly claimed; rather, it arose from a complex of various ideas and social rituals that developed in musical culture. Weber emphasizes that the formation of the canon was not solely a musicological process. The musical canon has roots also in literary and aesthetic trends, from which certain musical traditions and cultural roles developed (cf. Weber 1989: 6). From this we can distinguish two stages in the development of the musical canon. First, older, traditional works developed into a regu-

larly performed repertoire. Second, they were no longer considered to be a mere repertoire, but were elevated to become 'the canon'.

One should though treat with caution the adoration of a certain composer right after his death, which most often would not lead to the longer-lasting canonization. Besides, the circumstances due to which certain old pieces would remain in the performing practice were rather variant in different cases, they were determined by various social and/or ideological factors, thus it is very difficult to draw any conclusions about the reasons of early canonicity. Not by chance does most research on the western musical canon focus on the junction of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries: this was the period when the cultural institutions came about that encouraged the formation of the standard repertoire and, later, the musical canon.[124]

Beethoven's music was written in the same time period, and, importantly, this music meets the requirements of both 'repertoire' and 'canon', as the terms are used by Kerman. In the general perception of Western music history, Beethoven is viewed as *the* composer and very often the 'best' one (except for the occasional preference for Mozart or J. S. Bach). It is not just the greatness of his music that makes him so central to Western history: it is also his symbolic weight. Beethoven stood in the transition between eras. On one side was 'early music', whose composers were almost forgotten, and have only been rediscovered recently; on the other side, a more modern age, whose composers and performers, in contrast, have been since their lifetimes much more carefully documented and celebrated. In a sense, Beethoven can be considered a 'contemporary composer', in view of how his music still prevails in concert repertoires. His masterpieces were not appreciated then left behind; that is why the history of Beethoven performances can be regarded as crucial to the general development of Western musical performance practices.

In this respect, Beethoven stands also as a synecdoche for a whole age or style. Titles like Gerald Abraham's *The Age of Beethoven* (1982) and

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124 The functioning of these institutions today is based on the same standard, canonized repertoire, as discussed in Chapter 2.7. The general tastes of the listeners are very important here, because they mostly determine what will be performed. Conversely, the canon itself helps manipulate public tastes. A vicious circle, from offer to demand and vice versa, secures for those who *sell* music that their products will always be in demand.

William Newman's *The Sonata since Beethoven* (1969) potentially make musicological books more marketable than those failing to suggest this association. Beethoven sells well. He and his works are 'consumer commodities', as some put it, and little can be done about it, even by postmodern scholars who are trying hard to downplay him and other geniuses by explaining them according to an appropriate social context.[125]

In dealing with performances of Beethoven's music, as in the present study, an anthropological concept of 'cultural unit', applied in semiotics by Umberto Eco, also comes to mind. Similar to the widespread 'Beethoven myth', to call Beethoven a 'cultural unit' denotes a phenomenon that is accepted in our culture, a given entity, calling for little reflection. When we regularly hear and perform this music, its significations, both immanent and contextual, become altogether self-evident. However, are there no secrets left for interpreting Beethoven? Constant encounters with the same pieces raise the question of how their interpretations are influenced by historical change, new artistic movements, and so on. The next section details the historical circumstances of Beethoven reception that had, and continue to have, an impact on the perception and interpretation of his piano music.

3.2.2. Interpretation and Historicism

With every new generation, the historically changing perception of a musical work combines two lines: one stemming from past world-views, and the other reflecting the present one. Every era in music history has to a certain extent changed, 're-intoned', given a new sense to the music of the past. The image of Bach, Mozart, or Beethoven, created in a certain epoch, reflects more the face of the epoch than it does the composer. This new face of the past, through the complex web of relations between the different times, places and conditions, reflects, in addition, both the persona of

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[125] One reason why postmodern musicology ardently opposes the treating of artists as mythical heroes and geniuses, is that composers, along with other agents of musical culture, are social beings, and their work is highly influenced by the surrounding culture, attitudes, and evaluations of society. Hence musical meanings produced by composers cannot be considered universal, but are always bound to the place and time in which they arose. The same can be said of the reception and later interpretations of their works.

an individual interpreter and the historical period to which the current interpreter belongs.[126]

Performance styles also change along with the tastes and inclinations of a period, such styles having to meet the requirements of new audiences. Musical performance, on the one hand, is a rather 'stable' art, resting heavily on long-acknowledged norms, ideals and criteria, as well as on the traditional repertoire. On the other hand, it is precisely the performer who has an intimate relation with listeners, and who must react sensitively to trends in how society perceives the arts; in so doing, he or she shapes society's views and attitudes towards culture.

Hermeneutic philosophers, such as Friedrich Schleiermacher, as a predecessor, and later Wilhelm Dilthey, were searching for ways on how to overcome the historical distance between the interpreter and the cultural phenomenon that is being interpreted.[127] It was Hans-Georg Gadamer, in the twentieth century, who solved the problem by claiming that, on the contrary, in order for the work of art or cultural phenomenon to be understood, the historical distance between it and its interpreter not only cannot but in fact should not be overcome. In his view (shared by many

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126 See, among others, Hans-Georg Gadamer's *Truth and Method (Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*, 1960), where he, from the perspective of the twentieth-century philosophical hermeneutics, criticizes both the views of Enlightenment and the Romanticist thought as concerns our situatedness within tradition and history; also the famous debate between Gadamer and Jürgen Habermas over the possibility of transcending history and culture in order to find a truly objective position.

127 Until Schleiermacher expanded the concept of hermeneutics, by declaring it the universal basis for historical human sciences, the text was conceived as immediately understandable. Schleiermacher claimed that a text normally means not what we think of it immediately. Such a change of perspective gave a theoretical meaning to the experience of culture's historical changeability and interrelations of different cultures. Schleiermacher drew attention to the fact that, while the historical distance between the author of the text and its interpreter grows larger, the concepts, attitudes, and assumptions are changing, and misunderstanding of the text is inevitable. Schleiermacher's hermeneutics was based on the assumption that the real meaning of a text is the expression of the author's intentions. Hence understanding of the meaning of a historical text is as it were repeating of a creative act that can be achieved by the interpreter through 'living' the historical epoch, through 'feeling' the author's intentions. A 'congenial' interpreter, the one who feels his part particularly well, is able to transgress the historical and cultural distance which separates him from the work, he feels the epoch, and the author's intentions, and thus understands the work 'from within' (Sverdiolas 2002: 14).

a contemporary thinker), it is exactly this distance, the difference between the epochs of the interpreter and the interpreted that ensures the proper understanding. Historical distance, Gadamer says, is not a void. It is filled by tradition, which forms our conscious and subconscious understanding of the past and the present, hence the creation of a 'real' meaning of a work can never finish (cf., among others, Sverdiolas 2003: 198–228).

In music history, one can locate certain transmission points, where the meanings of the works of art received distinctively new senses and new points of reference were sought. (The approach to tradition as continuity, transmission of knowledge from generation to generation has somewhat changed in the twentieth century – not because there is no traditionalism anymore, but because of the complex circumstances of such a miscellaneous cultural development.) In the opinion of the Russian cultural scholar Alexander Mikhailov, such critical points, since Beethoven up to the twentieth century, took place at the juncture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and again in the middle of the nineteenth century (Mikhailov 1998: 9–10).

It was at the turn of the nineteenth century that the concept of musical work gained its ultimate autonomy. For the first time, music required a specific aesthetic regard, a purposeful hearing, a habit of listening to music from 'inside' a musical work. Music started to emancipate itself from its established social dependence. Since then, every individual work of music has had to 'justify' itself internally as a thought and signification. Aesthetic theories of the time held individuality to be a crucial quality of musical works that were to outlive their historical period.

The marketing and valuation of musical works began to resemble that of visual arts, by treating musical works as *permanent* creations. There were limitations, of course. Its temporal character and dependence on performing action, unlike a painting or a sculpture, meant that music could not be exhibited in a museum (Goehr 1992: 174). The result was the attempt to ascribe to music the same qualities and conditions of visual arts, but in compromise with the mentioned limits. Beethoven, Chopin and the others would still be exhibited in a 'museum', as Leonardo and Rembrandt, but in a metaphorical one, as Lydia Goehr titles her book, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*.[128] A historical and artistic cult of the past, often revolving

[128] Goehr's *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (1992) remains one of the most significant studies on the issue of the canonical

around the notion of 'masterpiece', would keep this museum alive: works will be repeatedly performed, published, recorded, studied, and discussed.

Earlier music, too, was rescued by this process. Its timeless masterpieces became a full part of musicians' repertoires. This gave composers public exposure, and (allegedly) performance of their works more musical accuracy, as had never been the case in their lifetimes. At the same time, 'standards', in performance and scholarly interpretation, were also created. It is from that period on that Beethoven's music and myth reaches us.

Mikhailov (in the line of Gadamer, Ricoeur and other thinkers of philosophical hermeneutics) believes that the present – because of the accumulation of historical experience – can come even closer to this music than, say, the 1890s or 1920s did. Moreover, many researchers claim that the *interpretation* itself has a lot to do with historical distance. To *interpret* – to offer an original version of a text's meaning – one can do only if the text is in some way 'mysterious'. Thus, one factor that determines a conversion of performance to interpretation is the historical distance between the work and the performer.

Here is how the Russian scholar presents the historical process of a musical work's perception, which in my view is also applicable to the art of performance:

1) Initially, a work of music or a phenomenon is perceived and experienced as 'own', familiar, inseparable from 'our' environment, 'our' language of art.
2) Inertly, an art phenomenon is still perceived as organically belonging to 'our' world of art and, as such, participates in the changes of 'our' language or art experiences; gradually, it is filtered into the present stage of art development and separated from those phenomena of the past that are no longer considered as organically belonging to 'our' culture. Such a phenomenon is imperceptibly 'modernized'.
3) A phenomenon begins to disappear, to plunge into history. Its relation with the present is no longer direct; what takes priority are its relations

repertoire in Western music culture. The author's usage of the term 'imaginary' points to the status of the 'museum' that embodies the normative codes for the post-1800 production of musical works. It refers to the fact that the existence of musical works is based on composers' activities, their scores and the performances as a result of this process.

> with previous phenomena, the growth and development of its 'language' and structure. (Mikhailov 1998: 14)

As Beethoven stems from the first epoch of crisis as suggested by Mikhailov, his works, as well as those by other Classicist composers we hear today, have gone through the many cultural crises and metamorphoses of performance history. The scheme above reveals that Beethoven, as an artistic phenomenon, has been caught in a time-warp, that is to say, too long perceived as an immediate musical expression, while at the same time sinking into the past. The following section discusses what kind of aesthetics has mostly contributed to this type of reception and interpretation.

3.2.3. Beethoven Myth and Romanticism

The influence of Romanticist aesthetics on current performance practices cannot be overstated. Romantic views towards music can be considered the code of current Western music performance, the basis for its standards and criteria, the unified system that determines the interpretations of both early and new music. At the same time, paradoxically, Romanticist aesthetics and nineteenth century performance practices receive much criticism today. It was then that many of the negative performance clichés (such as 'romanticizing' music of Classicist composers) came into being, and these had a strong impact on the further development of musical interpretation.

Many important changes occurred during the nineteenth century. The performer's role as interpreter came to be highlighted (for the first time in history, instrumentalists); public concert life in its modern sense was formed; and the traditional, canonical repertoire was gradually established. Today, the fact that performative expression was valued more than fidelity to the composer's work is considered a negative, Romanticist feature. It was indeed the early nineteenth century especially characterized by artistic freedom in interpreting musical texts, such that the interpreter's individuality was considered more important than the author's intentions. This environment gave rise to a new generation of performers-virtuosi, which allowed itself huge freedom in performance.

As writings by his early critics, as well as the documentary evidence, attest, Beethoven's music enjoyed an almost immediate appeal, and its popularity has never waned. In addition, as a result of a propitious contiguity

between the evocativeness of his music and specific events in his life, the mythicization of Beethoven's figure proceeded steadily and unobstructed into the twentieth century. The myth was augmented by posthumous discoveries. The Heiligenstadt Testament, written in 1802, poured forth the composer's despair over his increasing deafness – for a musician, the most poignant combination of tragedy and genius. The infamous letter to the "Immortal Beloved" contains the quintessential, almost stereotypical features of the 'true Romantic'[129]: the artist who feels marginalized and alienated from society, with an overwhelming desire for an idealized love, and having the supreme gift for shaping such privations into unparalleled music.

Important changes in interpreting music by Classicist composers were taking place during the period between the Romanticism of the early nineteenth century and the 'poetic realism' that characterizes the second half of the century. This period, Biedermeier (1815–1848), can be best defined by its tendency to portray the arts, as well as artists, in an idealized manner. Typical examples of the Biedermeier style are the letters of Bettina Brentano von Arnim, from which we learn a lot about Beethoven. They represent the standard posture of the times towards biographical writing: real facts are of somewhat less importance than high-sounding psychological 'truth' and verisimilitude. It was mainly due to this aesthetic trend that Beethoven's real life was often seen and evaluated as a 'plot' for his own music. For a long time afterwards, Beethoven reception was highly influenced by the Biedermeier perspective of interpreting art.

Romantics accentuated above all those characteristics of Beethoven which most appealed to their poetic and philosophical tastes. In his book *Das Romantische Beethoven Bild* (1978), Arnold Schmitz argues that "the true Beethoven is not represented in the Romantic portrait"; instead, it describes "the typical Romantic artist":

[129] Repertoire- and genre-wise, Beethoven should be treated as a culmination of the Classicist era: most of the forms that he used were already established by his predecessors (e.g. in musical bibliography *Répertoire international de la littérature musicale* he is situated in the section Classicism, while Schubert, who died only a year later – in Romanticism). However, Beethoven's bonds with Romanticism are very strong. Starting with E.T.A. Hoffmann, many considered him an original and archetypical Romanticist, and his music, with its subjective intense emotions and struggles, as an embodiment of the Romanticist spirit.

> Painted with colours which stem from the palette of Romantic philosophy – Rousseau's natural good, the magical idealism of Novalis, Schelling's world-poetry – this image does not correspond to historical reality: all of this is merely mirrored in the Romantic conception of Beethoven and projected upon Beethoven's historical form. (Schmitz, quoted in Dennis 1996: 10)

All these ideas may be found in Brentano's writings. Many historians have questioned the authenticity of the letters that Beethoven supposedly wrote to her. Nevertheless, for a long time they strongly impacted on how Beethoven was perceived politically. For instance, one such letter contains the so-called 'Incident at Teplitz', between Goethe and Beethoven. One of the most popular legends about Beethoven's political views, the incident in fact never happened, according to demythologizing studies of the late twentieth century.

Particularly since the period of Biedermeier, the then emergent Romantic literary tradition began right away to frame Beethoven into fashionable conceptions of the creative artist, often coupled with metaphors of sanctity or martyrdom. Bettina Brentano would compare Beethoven's creativity to the marvels of electricity, which Galvani and Volta were experimenting with in those days; E.T.A. Hoffmann would locate Beethoven in the "infinite realm of the spirit", the embodiment of the artist as suffering outsider and brave hero (Burnham 2001: 110–111). In France, Luigi Cherubini, François Joseph Fétis, and Hector Berlioz wrote about Beethoven, as well as Alfred de Vigny, Alphonse de Lamartine, and Victor Hugo, who praised Beethoven as the creator of a "new morality". French Romanticist thought about Beethoven culminated in writings by Romain Rolland, who in his biography of 1903 defines Beethoven as an embodiment of freedom and heroism.

As shown by Peter Schnaus (1977), the Romantic style of music interpretation was mostly initiated by the writer and composer E.T.A. Hoffmann. Hoffmann was also one of the first to positively evaluate Beethoven's music. In defending Beethoven's compositions from accusations by more conservative colleagues, Hoffmann initiated the individualist method of 'elucidation' of these works, which opened the way for their later ideologization. Early articles by Hoffmann laid the ground for music analysis as known today, by concentrating on technical details, thematic structure and so on, however, gradually in his reviews he developed a style of so-called 'poetic interpretation'. In music, Hoffmann sought inspiration for

his own writings, and his reviews became artistic literature in themselves. Hoffmann found Beethoven particularly inspiring. “Beethoven’s music”, he wrote, “sets in motion the lever of fear, of horror, of terror, of grief, and awakens that endless longing which is the essence of Romanticism. He is consequently a purely Romantic composer.” (Hoffmann, quoted in Dennis 1996: 9). Hoffmann was among the first to claim that listeners must engage with this music, seek for a direct relationship with it, instead of being passively entertained by it.

Among musicians, the one who contributed most to the nineteenth century music ideology and reception was Richard Wagner. Wagner, who highly valued Beethoven, provided audiences with probably the best interpretations of Beethoven’s symphonies for those times, and had the greatest influence on how Beethoven’s music was received and ideologized. Even into the twentieth century Classicist composers were viewed through the Wagnerian music-drama, music-psychology prism. According to Mikhailov, viewed from this perspective, many of Mozart’s works and nearly all by Haydn, though constantly performed, were ‘misunderstood’ (Mikhailov 1998: 45). The Leipzig Mendelssohn school, which interpreted Beethoven in a lighter, more Classicist manner, was completely overshadowed by Wagnerian interpretative ideas.

Seen from a Wagnerian perspective, Beethoven’s music came to be treated as a basis for nineteenth-century individualist subjectivity. Interpreted in this way, works by Beethoven lost their ‘mystery’ to the nineteenth century listener, and started being perceived as something ‘owned’ and natural for the period. In performing this shift, Wagner had to dissociate Beethoven and his compositions from their original context; this required a jump from the essentially anti-romanticist, anti-subjectivist Austrian Classicism with its rational constructions, to romantic psychologism, individualism, and subjectivism. As Mikhailov sees it, Wagner connected two profoundly different traditions, and in so doing gave German music what it needed, but the one who ‘paid the price’ for this was Beethoven (ibid). Another process for which Beethoven had to ‘pay’ was the political ideologization of his music.

3.2.4. Music and Ideology: Beethoven's Political Reception

The reception of art, and the discourses surrounding it, are inevitably woven into political and ideological contexts, at least to some extent. Yet, socio-political *appropriation* is not necessarily a compulsory step. It thus remains a charming experience to witness how the history of Beethoven reception abounds in episodes of this nature, related to both his music and his figure as a spiritual hero. The existential values attributed to Beethoven's music have, in the course of time, become important to the most diverse ideologies. As David B. Dennis observes, it was especially in 1870 that a confluence of events – the defeat of France, the founding of the Second Reich, and the one-hundredth anniversary of Beethoven's birth – inspired elevations of the composer that sealed the symbolic connection between his works and German politics (Dennis 1996: 5).

Beethoven's life was surely affected by the crucial and powerful changes of his society and his times, and all evidence suggests that he was far from indifferent to them. But that is a far cry from the numerous propagandist rewritings of his life and myths exercised in various times and places, as if Beethoven was in fact their precursor and virtual supporter of whatever cause they chose to exploit him for. German leaders, regardless of their political sympathies, have systematically exploited Beethoven's figure to support their actions and ideas. And, in principle, Beethoven's life itself has been constructed as that of a 'political man' who would often compose 'political music'.

One cannot omit mentioning Wagner also in this respect, as he had a great influence on Beethoven's politization. Klaus Kropfinger, in his book *Wagner und Beethoven* (1991), discusses how Wagner's writings claimed Beethoven's music symbolyzing, among other things, the chance for Germany's political renewal. In his essays, Wagner urged listeners to perceive Beethoven's music according to his own ideological criteria, thus establishing the aggressively-German interpretation of Beethoven that has dominated since then the right-wing Beethoven reception.

The early audiences of Beethoven's music were both fascinated and frightened by its *élan terrible*[130], which perhaps was precisely the element that encouraged them to start associating his works with social and political

[130] *Élan terrible*, as an expression, is recurrent in Beethoven reception, when defining the energy lying in his works.

changes. Ulrich Schmitt, in his *Revolution im Konzertsaal* (1990), speaks of conservatives who were disturbed by this *élan terrible* and disregarded Beethoven on that basis, but he does not mention that this feature, so important for the political left, was equally attractive also to those right-wing activists, who started relating it with militarism, authoritarianism, and even racism. As Dennis rightly points out, *élan* being the idea that all the political forces wanted to convey to their followers, Beethoven was suitable to politicians of all ideologies (Dennis 1996: 13).

This much is unmistakably demonstrated by the wide use of his works (symphonies, above all) at countless political events and celebrations, always with the implication, or open explanation, that such works carry distinctive, 'elevated', moral qualities – surely, the same ones that the event in question intends to convey.[131] In such cases, it is no surprise that mostly Beethoven's 'heroic' works were performed: the Third, Fifth, and Ninth Symphonies, in particular, became representative of monumentality and the Sublime, often as opposed to 'mere' lyrical beauty (paradoxically, for the nineteenth century Germans this meant the difference between German art and French or Italian traditions, meanwhile, as we shall see below in Chapter 3.5, the twentieth century Russians emphasized their own revolutionary values relying still on the very same musical works). During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as a means of propaganda, and as an inspirational model of German heroism, works by Beethoven (such as *Coriolan*, *Egmont*, *Leonore* overtures, symphonies, *Weihe des Hauses*, Op. 124, and others) were played relentlessly in German concert halls. Beethoven has also been exploited by modern politics: at a concert on 12 November 1989, commemorating the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Berlin Philharmonic (significantly, with Daniel Barenboim) performed the First Piano Concerto and the Seventh Symphony. It seems only natural that the European Union would approve the Finale of the Ninth Symphony, *An die Freude*, as its anthem.

The history of Beethoven reception in German politics reveals how music can relate to such a context. Such relations do not necessarily result from the composer's intentions but, rather, from listeners' reactions. Quite often the reception of certain music and its posthumous consumption provide

[131] Beethoven also wrote occasional music for political purposes; best known are *Wellingtons Sieg oder Die Schlacht bei Vittoria*, Op. 91 (1813) and *Der glorreiche Augenblick*, Op. 136 (1814), both performed at the Congress of Vienna in 1814.

music with 'extra-musical' meanings. Almost all attempts to explain the possible, but unproven, messages of musical works reveal the ideas and convictions of those who have formulated the hypotheses.[132] Dennis, for instance, separates a phenomenon such as "social history of musical life" from Adorno's "sociology of music". He quotes Beethoven's biographer Maynard Solomon: "The meanings of a completed work of art are in constant flux: 'A work of art, once created, is a structure that has become entirely separated from its creator, that has started to live its own life. Its value is now utterly independent of its originator's intentions'" (Solomon, quoted in Dennis 1996: 7). Carl Dahlhaus, similarly, insisted that the mythical figure cannot be easily "equated with the persona behind his works". He nevertheless agreed that some legends have had a powerful effect on how listeners have perceived Beethoven's music:

> It would be narrow-minded to call the myth-making process that began during Beethoven's own lifetime […] a mere falsification of history, as though it could be refuted by documents. […] This image can neither be supported not undercut by empirical biography, where myth simply does not belong […]. Still, this should not blind us to the fact that pseudo-biography is meant, not to explain "the way it really was", but rather to function as a language of cryptograms expressing insight into Beethoven's music. (Dahlhaus, quoted in Dennis 1996: 8)

Thus Dahlhaus agrees that it is necessary to study the influence of 'pseudo-biography' on the reception of Beethoven's music.

In addition to Beethoven-mythology studies, various twentieth century scholars, such as Peter Schnaus, Ulrich Schmitt, Arnold Schmitz, and Alessandra Comini, have combined aspects of Beethoven reception with issues of extra-musical interpretation and music criticism. Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht, for one, offers an interesting historiographical theory of Beethoven reception. Among the many tropes (*Begriffsfelder*) of reception that Eggebrecht proposes, he mentions the utility (*Benutzbarkeit*) of Beethoven myths in the contexts of ideology, politics, economy, apologetics, revolution, nationalism, internationalism, socialism, militarism,

[132] Art historian Alessandra Comini in her book *The Changing Image of Beethoven* (1987), even claims that Beethoven's physical appearance – in sculpture, painting, and graphic works – embodies the "self-reflections" of the artists that created them.

war, defeat, and more (Eggebrecht 1972: 41; also discussed in Dennis 1996: 17).[133]

One may conclude by saying that in evaluations by critics and audiences, from Beethoven's time till our days, the sound of his music is inevitably bound with details of his life. Even if the initial impulse to reflect upon the 'Idea' (as discussed below in Chapter 3.4) stems from Beethoven's music, evidently few listeners are interested in the mere technical details of his works. Especially in the context of his political reception, Beethoven's music has been continuously perceived not just as inspirational in itself, but as a stimulus to remember the life of its creator. It is Beethoven as a person that serves as the focus of attention for most ideological interpretations.

[133] Eggebrecht's work *Zur Geschichte der Beethoven-Rezeption* (1970) remains up to now the main one to discuss Beethoven reception. After having studied the literature on Beethoven produced during 150 years, the German musicologist suggests that the amount of motives employed in the various writings on Beethoven is limited and insistently recurrent. According to him, such different authors as Adolph Bernhard Marx, Hugo Riemann, Walter Riezler, Paul Bekker or Romain Rolland had written about music by using rather limited *topoi* of expression. The sensation that is common to most of these *topoi* is that of perceiving Beethoven's music as unveiling, in one way or another, the real human feelings and experiences. Eggebrecht mentions as such the recurrent concepts, *Einheit von Leben und Werk, Leidensnotwendigkeit*. By arranging these 'reception constants' into conceptual categories, Eggebrecht draws the archetypical narrative scheme-progression from 'suffering' through 'will' until the 'victory' (*Überwindung*) that is regularly applied to Beethoven. In Eggebrecht's view, the whole of Beethoven reception may be read as if written by one author, and its main theme is the importance of the 'human element' in Beethoven's music.

3.3. From Theory to Practice: Beethoven in Performance

3.3.1. Performing Beethoven: A Historical Overview

3.3.1.1. Introduction

The era of recordings of Beethoven's music started with interpretations by Artur Schnabel of the 32 sonatas[134] and other works, which became a standard for entire generations of pianists of the twentieth century. He was later followed by the likes of Edwin Fischer, Wilhelm Kempff, Wilhelm Backhaus, Alfred Brendel, in France – Yves Nat, in Russia – Maria Yudina, Maria Grinberg… Piano concertos were recorded by Arthur Rubinstein, Emil Gilels, Glenn Gould and others. It is, once again, possible to say that not a single twentieth century performer has avoided Beethoven's music.[135]

At all times, many a prominent pianist has chosen Beethoven's works for their debut concerts. For example, the first classical piano concerto publicly played by Vladimir Horowitz was Beethoven's Concerto No. 5, which he performed at the invitation of Arturo Toscanini in 1932.[136] Afterwards, Horowitz played this piece with many other conductors. Likewise, Glenn Gould chose Beethoven's Fifth Concerto for his debut in 1947 with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra directed by guest conductor Bernard Heinze. Once every four years pianists aged between 17 and 32 have the opportunity to participate in the International Beethoven Piano Competition in

[134] Most commonly, the number referred to in relation to Beethoven's piano sonatas is 32 – these are also the ones that contemporary pianists most likely record in their full Beethoven-sonatas' sets. However, before the ones 'officially counted' (the list begins with the three sonatas Op. 2), there still are three little *Kurfürstensonaten*, or so-called "Bonn Sonatas" WoO 47, which were written in 1782–83 for the Elector (Kurfürst) Maximilian Friedrich von Königsegg-Rothenfels; two movements of the Sonata in F major that Beethoven wrote between 1790 and 1792 for his friend Franz Gerhard Wegeler; and a fragment of the Sonata in C major, which is dated between 1797–98 and is dedicated to Eleonora von Breuning. The two latter fragments are simple pieces for amateur pianists that may be compared with the two sonatas Op. 49.

[135] Especially rich Beethoven-discographies are a distinctive feature of some distinguished twentieth century pianists, such as Wilhelm Backhaus, Wilhelm Kempff, Sviatoslav Richter, and Claudio Arrau, among others.

[136] The concert on 23 April 1932 was part of a cycle of Beethoven's concertos conducted by Toscanini with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra.

Vienna, which has been held since 1961. An annual Beethoven (Senior) Intercollegiate Piano Competition is run by the Beethoven Piano Society of Europe, which promotes Beethoven's piano music and hosts conferences, lectures and master classes (separate Beethoven societies with their local activities are also established in various European countries, e.g. Finland or Poland, as well as in the United States of America).

Based on different sources, one may suggest that Beethoven's music, without doubt, was the foundation of the programmes of European concert organizations and radio stations in the twentieth century. From this point of view, Lithuanian musical life, which can be considered peripheral in many aspects, is no exception. According to researchers of Lithuanian culture in the first half of the twentieth century, concerts that were part of musical life between 1919 and 1940 mostly featured classical music, and chamber events were dominated by the pieces of Beethoven, Liszt, Chopin and Mendelssohn, or in other words, works by authors who were able to contribute to "promoting among the masses the democratic art of music that they understand" (Jasinskas 1983: 10). Founded by violinist and conductor Izaokas Vildmanas-Zaidmanas in 1919, Lithuania's first symphony orchestra in its first concert (16 March, 1920), among other works, covered Beethoven's overture *Egmont* and the second movement of Symphony No. 2 (ibid.: 21). These symphonies were also a frequent choice of conductors such as Juozas Tallat-Kelpša, Juozas Gruodis, Stasys Šimkus, Emerikas Gailevičius, Jeronimas Kačinskas, Mykolas Bukša and others for their concerts. On 28 April 1930, Nikolai Malko closed the concert season with a concert of Beethoven's works, which included Symphony No. 1, Piano concerto E-flat major (the soloist being the French pianist Robert Casadesus) and songs. On 16 May 1934, the Lithuanian Philharmonic Society rounded up its last season with a solemn concert of Beethoven's pieces: Symphonies Nos. 4 and 9 were performed under the baton of Tallat-Kelpša. In the above referred to period (particularly in 1927, which marked the 100th anniversary of the composer's death) quite a few Beethoven's piano and chamber works were played by pianists Elena Stanek-Laumenskienė, Balys Dvarionas, Jurgis Karnavičius, and Stasys Vainiūnas. Pieces by this composer are also often a choice of current Lithuanian pianists, including Petras Geniušas, Mūza Rubackytė, Jurgis Karnavičius (jr.), Gabrielius Alekna, Daumantas Kirilauskas, and others. In 2000, Vilnius State Quartet

performed all Beethoven's string quartets, offering one of the most vivid chamber music programmes in Lithuania over the last decades.

Beethoven is probably the earliest composer whose works, of almost all genres he created in, were being regularly performed in public. His music was equally popular throughout the long period of interpreting it, and it seems to never have experienced any significant falls or heights, as it would happen to other composers. Over time, he has become so 'familiar' that some performers made attempts to defamiliarize this author by modernizing his music or, on the contrary, by adding historical features. A brief overview (which by no means aims at a definite exegesis of 'Beethoven-in-performance' – that would obviously require a study on its own) of how piano art developed in the twentieth century will help decide which great performers, and the ideas they came up with, have had the greatest impact on the interpretation of works by this composer to date.

3.3.1.2. Distinctive Interpreters of Beethoven's Piano Music

As already mentioned in Chapter 2.7, contemporary performers often choose to play cycles of all works by a single composer. Beethoven's piano sonatas are one of the most popular and oldest examples of this approach. Performances of Schubert's complete cycles are a relatively new phenomenon, while the first cycle of Mozart's concertos was played as late as in 1941 (performed by Ernst von Dohnányi).[137] Six recitals of Liszt's music performed by Busoni in 1911 in Berlin represented something that not a single pupil of Liszt himself had ever dared to do.

Artur Schnabel was the first to record all Beethoven's sonatas and to play them in cycles (this artist was also the first after Hans von Bülow to perform all 32 sonatas by heart). However, even before this pianist a long and rich tradition of performing Beethoven's works had already been formed. Sir Charles Hallé performed all Beethoven's sonatas as early as in 1861 followed by Liszt's pupil Marie Jaëll in 1873 (she was the first French pianist to do this), Eugen d'Albert and Édouard Risler[138] in the 1890s, and then

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[137] Since then pianists Géza Anda, Ingrid Haebler, Mitsuko Uchida, Murray Perahia, Daniel Barenboim and Vladimir Ashkenazy, among others, have recorded all 27 Mozart's piano concertos.

[138] Risler made at least a dozen performances of Beethoven's thirty-two sonatas as a cycle. Arthur Rubinstein wrote of his Beethoven playing: "To this day, I have never heard

after a while by José Vianna da Motta in Lisbon. Anton Rubinstein was the first great pianist to provide a panorama of 'the entire history of piano music' in seven piano recitals (1885–86). In terms of Beethoven's programme he even surpassed Bülow (who played Beethoven's last five sonatas in a single concert) by performing the entire Op. 27, Op. 31/2, Op. 53, Op. 57, Op. 101, 109 and 111 in one go.[139] In the twentieth century, Wilhelm Backhaus, Wilhelm Kempff, Claudio Arrau[140], Rudolf Serkin, Emil Gilels, Daniel Barenboim[141], Vladimir Ashkenazy, Richard Goode and others continued Schnabel's tradition.

As far as the evolution of performing Beethoven's works is concerned, one should also mention the principal pianists who contributed to making these works widely known. First of all, Carl Czerny – Beethoven's pupil, who gave a premiere performance of Concerto No. 5 for piano and left many comments on Beethoven's piano works. Ignaz Moscheles was another contemporary who used to mark the tempo of Beethoven's sonatas according to a metronome. The metronome indications made by these two pianists, although not always corresponding to the markings of Beethoven himself, are the only source of information on how the sonatas were played in the composer's times.

Franz Liszt introduced Beethoven's sonatas to the wide concert audience as none of Beethoven's sonatas are known to have been performed in a public concert before him. Clara Wieck Schumann played sonatas

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anybody play these sonatas as beautifully and movingly as Risler." (Rubinstein, in Timbrell 1999: 63).

139 Since World War II all Beethoven's sonatas have sometimes been performed in chronological order, which is a fairly pedantic practice. Listeners who are interested in the evolution of Beethoven's style can study it with the help of audio recordings. Whereas in a concert hall a more balanced contrast and diversity of each recital would perhaps be more preferable.

140 A complete cycle of Beethoven's sonatas was performed for the first time by Arrau in the 1930s in Mexico.

141 The fact that Beethoven's music is not disappearing from the modern concert programming of the greatest performers may be illustrated with the eight-recitals cycle of Daniel Barenboim at the New York Carnegie Hall, June 10–26, 2003. During the eight evenings, the pianist performed all 32 piano sonatas (*The Tempest*, which is discussed further in Chapter 3.4, was played together with the sonatas Nos. 2, 10 and 26, on June 12). During the same period, Barenboim's master class on Beethoven was held, where the Lithuanian pianist Gabrielius Alekna participated (performing the sonatas Nos. 2, 4 and 13).

Hammerklavier and Op. 111 quite early in her piano career.[142] However, Liszt's pupil Hans von Bülow was, in principle, a pianist of the generation following Liszt whose name became widely associated with Beethoven's music and whose editions Liszt used for his lessons.[143] The interpretations of Beethoven's music offered by this pianist were less extravagant than the early manner of Liszt. In the nineteenth century, Henry Krebheil characterized them as appealing to "those who wish to add intellectual enjoyment to the pleasures of imagination" whereas Clara Schumann viewed them as 'calculated', and James Huneker called the playing of Bülow 'pedantic' (quoted from Jones 1999: 50). And still, if the style of performance can be retrieved from Bülow's sonata editions, it seems that he played with greater freedom of tempo and dynamics than is characteristic of many interpretations recorded in later times.

Apart from the successors of the Austrian-German tradition of piano performance art, representatives from other countries also promoted Beethoven's works. Among these one should mention in particular the Russian Anton Rubinstein, who, although better known as an excellent interpreter of Chopin's music, was consistently introducing Beethoven's works to Russian, European, and American audiences.[144] When it comes to interpreting Beethoven's music by later generation of pianists, including Schnabel, Edwin Fischer, Edward Steuermann, Kempff and others, a major influence was that of Eugen d'Albert, who was one of the most distinctive pianists at the turn of the century in Central Europe. The most important years in the career of d'Albert counted from Liszt's death to the early years

[142] It should be noted that the performing tradition and compilation of programmes of that time were very different from those we have today. When young pianist Eugen d'Albert played four Beethoven's sonatas in one night, this was unacceptable to many pianists of the time, including Clara and Robert Schumann, or Mendelssohn. Berlin always stood out for exclusive concert programmes. Claudio Arrau tells about Teresa Carreño's concert that he heard in his childhood where she performed Beethoven's Third, Fourth, and Fifth Concertos for Piano in one night (Dubal 1997: 24). Ferruccio Busoni, d'Albert and Conrad Ansorge also liked to challenge the Berlin audience with programmes of this intensity.

[143] Whereas Bülow himself eventually chose the version of Liszt's other pupil Carl Klindworth, which was somewhat more practical in terms of fingering and tempos and possibly more authentic than Bülow's (Dubal 1997: 97).

[144] Beethoven was the artistic idol for this pianist and composer. The following words belong to Rubinstein: "Mankind does not deserve the finale of Beethoven's Sonata Op. 111." (quoted from Dubal 1990: 221).

into the twentieth century, about twenty years. He was considered not only the most prominent performer of Beethoven's music, but generally the best pianist of the time, and Liszt's follower. Epithets most frequently used by critics of that time and found in the recollections of contemporaries to characterize the talent of d'Albert include 'giant', 'titanic', 'strong', 'profound', which is also a perfect illustration of how Beethoven's music was supposed to be performed based on the criteria of that time. The pianists of those days who made a considerable contribution to promoting Beethoven's works also included Liszt's pupils Conrad Ansorge and Frederic Lamond, the latter preparing an important edition of Beethoven's sonatas.

Ferruccio Busoni was the first of the great pianists of those days followed immediately by Sergei Rachmaninov and Josef Hofmann. Busoni's view of Beethoven's music was many-folded: this pianist was cautious about Beethoven's early works and eventually restricted his repertoire to the late sonatas, which he performed in a particularly original style. In general, Busoni's repertoire was predominated by large-scale works, such as Beethoven's *Hammerklavier* sonata or Diabelli Variations.

Alfred Brendel has performed cycles of Beethoven's all 32 sonatas at different points of his pianistic career. This artist became the first pianist after Schnabel to earn particularly high authority in the interpretations of the same repertoire: Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert. Details of phrasing, tempo and dynamics of both of these pianists, and their overall approach to music are, indeed, similar in many ways. Brendel's first recording of Beethoven's all piano works released by *Vox-Turnabout* between 1958 and 1964 was not complete. The pianist first recorded all the sonatas in 1962. What is interesting is that Brendel tested Beethoven's Érard piano of 1803, stored in the Museum of Art History in Vienna, but he still chose a contemporary concert piano for his recordings.[145] His main argument was that only contemporary pianos can produce sound strong enough which, according to Brendel (as well as to many a contemporary pianist), is required by contemporary concert halls, orchestras (when performing pieces for piano with orchestra) and the habitual hearing of the audience. As many pianists of today, Brendel believes that a contemporary piano is more suitable when it comes to performing Beethoven's works than the pianoforte from Beethoven's time. It produces a more colourful sound which is more

145 The pianist addresses the reasons behind his choice in his book *On Music* (London: Robson Books, 2001).

orchestral and richer in contrasts – these characteristics were important for Beethoven, as may be seen from research into his orchestral and chamber music.

Nevertheless, many performers have set out to record Beethoven's pieces using the instruments of the historic period over the last twenty years. Paul Badura-Skoda used seven different claviers for his recording of Beethoven's sonatas, Jörg Demus chose Streicher and Graf fortepianos, while Alexei Lubimov chose a Broadwood instrument; Beethoven's piano concertos were performed on historical instruments by Melvyn Tan with Roger Norrington and *The London Classical Players* and Steven Lubin with Christopher Hogwood and *The Academy of Ancient Music* (more on Beethoven's 'authentic' performances below in Section 3.3.3).

What is interesting is that cycles of Beethoven's sonatas played a significant role even in the repertoire of pianists who were considered far from great authorities in performing music by this composer in the twentieth century. Among these cases one should note the debut of then fifteen-year-old Walter Gieseking (in 1910), who performed Beethoven's 32 sonatas in six recitals. On account of insufficient weight, lack of pathos and profoundness supposedly characteristic of his interpretations, Gieseking was never recognized as a distinctive Beethoven performer. The significant thing about this pianist is that he realized the importance of *piano* indications in Beethoven's works well. Being a true master of soft touch[146], Gieseking derived each sound from *piano*, using gradual c*rescendo* to prepare and shape *forte*, while his *diminuendi* are as if vanishing to nowhere. Unfortunately, the pianist's early death prevented the complete recording of Beethoven's sonatas (23 sonatas were recorded).

An interesting exponent of the French piano performance school, Yves Nat, was the first French pianist to record all 32 Beethoven sonatas. Charles Timbrell emphasizes, as Nat's *fortes* in Beethoven, his strong sense of architecture, dramatic sweeps in the outer movements, and contained eloquence (this being one of the French characteristics) in the slow ones (Timbrell 1999: 129).[147]

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[146] The prevalence of 'school'-related clichés may be illustrated with the fact that many people, when they think of French pianism, think of Gieseking, but he in fact was a German trained in Germany.

[147] The American pianist Roy Hamlin Johnson who studied with Nat in 1952–1953 recalls: "I remember that at my first lesson I played Beethoven's Sonata, Op. 81a, and

Referring to the great pianists who, in their own time, promoted Beethoven's works, the issue of women performers should be looked at. No broad research into this aspect of piano art has been found in the feminist musicology to date. When reading the famous book by Romain Rolland *Beethoven. Les grandes époques créatrices* (Paris: Editions du Sablier, 1928), one cannot miss the view which openly discriminates against female performers: "He [Beethoven] is the most male of all musicians. There is nothing […] feminine in him. […] I confess that (with the exception of only some of his pieces) I don't like to hear him being interpreted by women." (quoted from Rolanas 1959: 11). This attitude, which shows how little time has passed since women started integrating into professional musical life on more or less equal terms, nevertheless hardly has anything to do with the real practice of piano art in the nineteenth century. Famous female performers of those times, including Clara Schumann, Sophie Menter, Annette Essipoff, Teresa Carreño and Clotilde Kleeberg, gained very high appreciation from Liszt, Rubinstein, and the audiences of that time. The history of piano performance art of the twentieth century also includes female pianists such as Annie Fischer, Maria Grinberg or Maria Yudina, who recorded memorable cycles of all Beethoven's 32 sonatas.

What is interesting is that in the early twentieth century we already faced an opposite problem: the Classicist repertoire started to be treated as the exclusive privilege of women. No doubt, such attitudes could not have been supported by male pianists, who set out towards the said repertoire. For example, Artur Schnabel aimed to oppose the advice given in the 1894 book by Carl Reinecke *Briefe an eine Freundin* on how to play Beethoven's sonatas. According to Schnabel, all classical repertoire and the practice of performing it were suffering from prejudices on gender. At that time, this music was patronisingly considered a female sphere, as implied by the very title of Reinecke's book (Botstein 2001: 589).

Towards the twenty-first century, it becomes impossible to mention all the distinctive interpreters and their recordings of Beethoven's sonatas. After Backhaus, Brendel and Arrau, Daniel Barenboim, Louis Lortie, Anton Kuerti, Timoty Ehlen, Jenõ Jandó and many others came onto the scene with their renditions of the thirty-two sonatas; Richard Goode's complete set is one of the finest; Jean-Bernard Pommier, Éric Heidsieck,

Nat said, "It's too German!" This seemed an odd response, but I think that by that he meant "too academic." (quoted in Timbrell 1999: 129).

Théodore Paraskivesco, Pierre-Laurent Aimard (with concertos and other large-scale works) demonstrate the French school's affinity towards Beethoven; Paul Lewis', Fazil Say's renditions are among the most interesting modern interpretations of the sonatas; the latest (season 2013/2014/2015) all-Beethoven recital programme of Ivo Pogorelich without a doubt presents an original view on the pianistic canon. Without aiming at encompassing an inexhaustible list of all the newest Beethoven-interpretations, it is altogether obvious that, to this day, Beethoven steadily remains in the centre of contemporary concert programmes and pianists' repertoires.

In what follows, however, it is pertinent to make a short historical excursion to the origins of the current Beethoven-interpretations. One name, in a long history of performing Beethoven, deserves particular attention.

3.3.1.3. Artur Schnabel: 'The Man Who Invented Beethoven'[148]

Important developments in the interpretation and reception of Beethoven's piano music are associated with the name of Artur Schnabel (1882–1951). It can be suggested that Schnabel was the archetype of a German pianist of those days whose artistic activity responded to or, in some cases, initiated the most progressive cultural phenomena of the time at the turn of the century. One of the more distinct *fin de siècle* intellectual and aesthetic movements in Vienna was the revitalization of the Biedermeier style, especially in interior design and architecture. The aesthetic return to Biedermeier happened in parallel to the establishment of modernism and played a role in laying the foundation for the neoclassicism of the 1920s. Biedermeier's clear decor lines and simplicity in some way became historic analogies to the denial of the late romantic style. An equivalent phenomenon in music, Leon Botstein suggests, was the rebirth of Mozart and classicism praised by Schönberg, Schenker and Schnabel as a perfect model to follow for modern artists. This revitalization, just like the concert programmes of Mozart and Schubert performed by Schnabel, was primarily aimed at expressing concern about the cultural tastes of society: as mass audiences were becoming stronger, there arose a realistic risk of the trivialization of art, and beauty and of an inclination towards virtuosity and clichés of superficially playful

[148] "The Man Who Invented Beethoven" is the title of a chapter on Schnabel in Harold C. Schonberg's excellent volume *The Great Pianists From Mozart to the Present* (1963).

expression, which started surpassing the higher musical values on concert stages (Botstein 2001: 589).

Schnabel had an exclusive role to play in the history of performing art in the twentieth century. On account of his influence and views, he became a cult figure for pianists of later generations. Both during his active period of performing practice[149] and for many years to come this artist had a significant impact on the evaluation of pianists of the twentieth century, piano art and performance of historical repertoire. This school, whose roots and exclusivity are associated with the German-Austrian repertoire from Bach to Brahms, scrupulous performance, intelligence and solidity, is represented in the twentieth century by the pianists such as Wilhelm Backhaus, Rudolf Serkin, Wilhelm Kempff and others. Although he was a Leschetizky's pupil (between 1891 and 1897), Schnabel had every opportunity to continue the post-Liszt virtuoso tradition that was alive at the turn of the century while the pianist's musical intuition and taste called him to resist superficial technical structures and virtuosity – so much features of nineteenth century practices. Already in the early period of his career in the late nineteenth century, Schnabel expressed a firm stand in respect of a repertoire that could be considered a kind of anti-romanticism or even neoclassicism.[150]

The growing concert life in around 1900 eventually lead to the formation of an elite environment of music lovers and professionals who viewed Mozart's, Beethoven's and Schubert's works as majestic music that required exclusive attention. Ironically, it seems that virtuosos of the time, who were trained under Liszt's example, neither wanted nor could demonstrate duly focused performance and dedication.[151] What is interesting is that Schnabel earned recognition and a reputation for choosing a classical repertoire,

[149] In concert life Schnabel appeared as a child prodigy in the early 1890s and continued the intensive activity of a pianist until the beginning of the Nazi regime.

[150] 1927 was a turning point in Schnabel's career, which marked the anniversary of Beethoven's death when he first performed a cycle of sonatas by this composer in Berlin. A cycle of 32 sonatas was repeated in 1932 in London, in 1933 in Berlin and in 1963 in New York. Schnabel was the first to record all Beethoven's sonatas between 1931 and 1935.

[151] This is ironic as the great pianists of similar type – Liszt, Hans von Bülow and Anton Rubinstein – worshipped Beethoven in their own way. Bülow and Rubinstein were among the first to perform 'historical' concerts centered on Beethoven's 32 sonatas in the 1870s.

which, with the exception of Beethoven's music, was then considered insufficiently dramatic and impressive. This pianist was the predecessor of a specific approach to the texts of musical classics – he aimed at resisting improvisation, extrovert subjectivism and excessively romantic interpretations. Although there were plenty of recognized Beethoven-specialists in the early twentieth century (Backhaus or Serkin can be named as such), only Schnabel's name became almost a synonym of Beethoven in the minds of listeners when it came to promoting and interpreting the works of this composer.

Schnabel's interpretations, which became the cult of a few generations of pianists in the twentieth century, can be considered one of the doctrines at the beginning of the century. Based on this ideology, contemporary reproduction of great works constantly reminded the listener of the moral inadequacy and imperfection of an individual and cultural dissociation from a mythical past. A performer who ignored the supreme ideals implied by the texts of classical works was being condemned as a sinner who succumbed to the temptation of abbreviations, superficiality and entertaining nature of those texts. Hence, it is no wonder that Schnabel's recordings and interpretations were mythologized even for many decades after the death of this pianist.

Still, an analysis of his recordings and a more focused look, from a half-century perspective, at the editions of Beethoven's sonatas left by Schnabel[152] have called for a more critical or even sceptical view upon his achievements and ideology. Only a very small part of Schnabel's interpretative solutions and proposals could be considered authentic and historically justified. As a matter of fact, the idea of historical reconstruction proposed by one generation, from the perspective of another, becomes all but another artificial structure, no more justified than, say, Anton Rubinstein's obviously free interpretations of Beethoven's sonatas. A glimpse from a certain historic and critical distance shows that Schnabel's approach, especially in the hands of his successors, became an inflexible doctrine without any recognition of a compromise. It manifested itself in the special ambition to comprehend sacralized classical texts and to absorb their meanings. However, the method used by supporters of this ideology to formulate the truth lying behind those texts itself transformed them into a certain form of late

[152] In 1935, Schnabel's edition of Beethoven's 32 sonatas came out. Having profoundly studied Beethoven's manuscripts himself, in his edition Schnabel added quite a few additional performance indications on fingering, pedalling and phrasing.

Romanticism. When we listen to Schnabel's playing today, we can hear rather old-fashioned interpretations, although, as Botstein puts it, their primary goal and rebelling against the interpretative clichés and beliefs of the pianist generation represented by Teresa Carreño, Eugen d'Albert and Ernst von Dohnányi were the result of the wish to say the truth directed against unjustifiable subjectivity (Botstein 2001: 591). The theatricality and romantic extremity of tempos, expression and dynamics characteristic of Schnabel's performance resembled more the playing of Leschetizky's other pupils than Beethoven's later promoters – Alfred Brendel, Maurizzio Pollini, Steven Bishop-Kovacevich or Vladimir Ashkenazy. What is also true is that such features of playing could have also been related to new recording technologies, which forced pianists to still feel unsafe and therefore to express many elements of musical language in an outré way.

3.3.2. The Role of 'School' in Beethoven Performance

As already shown in Chapter 2.6, a school in its broadest sense has a significant role to play in the world of musical interpretation. Innovation and continued tradition, creativity and perfect mastering of the craft, the ambitions of artistic individuality and the general laws of musical performing have always been blended in the teaching of piano art.

There are various ways of how to analyze the art of performers from the point of view of the school to which they do or do not belong. One of the most distinctive features of the musical *school* is the repertoire which prevails in some particular generation of musicians. The music by Beethoven, when used as a yardstick, is perhaps the best example when one needs to find out someone's dependence on certain artistic trends or attitudes. Interpreting Beethoven as being either a Classicist or Romantic composer can already show well one's artistic approaches, and this of course is not the only important aspect of performing Beethoven. Examining and comparing different interpretations of his piano sonatas might help reveal not only the continuous transformations of the tendencies of playing Beethoven, but also the trends of interpreting the Western musical canon in general. This examination would also show which elements are important to musical signification (relation with text, tradition, style, and various other parameters), and in which periods they had been changing in performance practices through the course of the last few centuries. The chains of piano schools,

which are shown in Chapters 2.6 and 3.5, and which are (Figure 2.8 in particular) subject to consultation in relation to the present section, were deliberately conceived to dissociate them from another Romanticist tradition – the famous 'Chopinists' and representatives of Liszt's virtuoso trend, which also includes quite a few most distinct, although of a more romantic type, performers of the twentieth century. To proceed with the historical overview of the present chapter, what follows is a discussion in relation to what kind of impact the pedagogical descents had on which repertoire and which interpretative attitudes certain performers would choose in their creative practices.

When it comes to exploring which musicians chose Beethoven's piano music as basis for their repertoire and at what time they did so, one can trace a great influence of the 'school' arising from the mythical virtuoso of the nineteenth century, Franz Liszt. Being the most prominent Beethoven-interpreter in his epoch, and himself an immediate representative of Beethoven's 'school' (Liszt was taught by Beethoven's pupil Carl Czerny), this musician taught in turn a whole plethora of great piano masters, who promoted Beethoven's works through their artistic activity. The playing manner and aesthetic principles of this particularly broad school even today shape the trends and tastes and are the criteria for assessing one's talent. Ties arising from this artistic source – multi-sided but at the same time very realistic and easily tangible – connect a large part of the world's pianists.

In the second half of the nineteenth and in the first quarter of the twentieth century, the scene of piano performance art was dominated by the pupils of Liszt and Leschetizky (another trend at that time, less related to or totally dissociated from performing Beethoven's works, were the great Chopinists). Of Liszt's pupils one can mention celebrities such as Conrad Ansorge, Arthur Friedheim, Arthur de Greef, Alfred Reisenauer, Raffael Joseffy, Frederic Lamond, José Vianna da Motta, Moritz Rosenthal, Isaac Albéniz, Emil von Sauer, Alexander Siloti, Bernhard Stavenhagen, and Constantin von Sternberg. The list of Leschetizky's major pupils is no less impressive: Ignazy Jan Paderewski[153], Annete Essipoff [Anna Yesipova], Ignaz Friedman, Mieczyslaw Horszowski, Benno Moiseiwitsch, Artur Schnabel, Paul Wittgenstein, and others. Nearly all Liszt's and Leschetizky's successors were

153 Beethoven was not the *forte* of Paderewski, but on his 1891 tour of the USA this pianist performed Beethoven's five sonatas: *Waldstein*, *Appassionata* and the three last ones.

pianists of a romantic type (Schnabel and Horszowski being two important exceptions devoted to the classical repertoire and chamber music) who specialized in piano literature starting from Beethoven and later composers, they rarely played Mozart or Schubert and played Bach's music mostly in the form of Liszt's, Tausig's and d'Albert's transcriptions. The repertoire of Leschetizky himself was based on works by Beethoven, Schumann, Liszt and Brahms. Being Czerny's pupil, he was also closely related to Beethoven, whose music he played with a high interpretative freedom.

Liszt's most famous pupils whose repertoire was based on Beethoven's works include Hans von Bülow, Frederic Lamond[154], Conrad Ansorge, Eugen d'Albert and some other pianists. Probably the most distinguished line of the Beethoven-tradition comes from Liszt's pupil Martin Krause, who trained such great Beethovenists of the twentieth century as Claudio Arrau and Edwin Fischer, the school of the latter being represented by the twentieth century authorities of Beethoven interpretation: Paul Badura-Skoda, Daniel Barenboim, Jörg Demus and Alfred Brendel.

What is interesting is that Schnabel's name concludes the 'Beethovenists' belonging to one line of the Czerny-Leschetizky tradition. Being an undoubtedly cultish figure of the performing art of the twentieth century, this pianist had no direct successors of Beethoven-performance traditions among his pupils.[155] This, in a way, is compensated by the fact that Schnabel's influence is particularly distinct in the repertoire and aesthetic views of his many other successors, not necessarily his direct disciples.

3.3.3. Beethoven in the 'Authenticity' Current

As discussed in Chapter 2.4, the ever-changing attitudes towards the interpretations of the musical canon in the twentieth century were strongly influenced by the *authenticity movement*. The most modern of performance trends – historical performance practice – has turned to Beethoven's time, its cultural context, period instruments and exploration of their possibilities.

[154] A Beethoven specialist, Lamond was the last (and one of the most important) of Liszt's pupils who managed to leave a discography illustrating Beethoven's art until his death in 1948. These, as many early recordings, show that for pianists of that time imagination and the feeling of style were of greater value than technical perfection. Beethoven's *Moonlight* Sonata is one of the most distinguished recordings.

[155] Schnabel's students included pianists such as Clifford Curzon, Rudolf Firkušný, Claude Frank, Lili Kraus, Ursula Oppens, Leonard Shure and Leon Fleisher.

Changes of the cultural context (approach towards art, social environment, etc.) not only create historical distance between the present and the initial meanings of the music from the past, but also transform those meanings a great deal. Musical work, in the course of time, absorbs everything that has been said about it by researchers, and how it has been interpreted by performers. Their thoughts and attitudes, in the consciousness of a contemporary listener, is a sort of medium that enriches the very first meaningful version of the work. Such a stance would be criticized by the adepts of 'authenticity'. Richard Taruskin, famously a critic of the movement, puts it with irony, in reference to how the matters became to be seen towards the end of the twentieth century: "Uncritical acceptance of the past (coupled […] with an ultracritical reception of the present) is now the rule." (Taruskin 1995: 268).

Taken generally, not only the historical performance practice but also the whole aesthetics of performing musical Classics features the quest for 'authenticity', which is seen, at large, as fidelity to the musical work. The central concept, here, is an idealized musical work on which Lydia Goehr (1992) has extensively reflected: final, fixed in the score, and requiring protection. Such protection is precisely ensured by fidelity: scrupulous attention to the author's indications, which is manifested either directly through the following of the score, or, indirectly, by studying the conditions and circumstances of the time. The score becomes the centre of attention, and the function of the faithful performer (or scholar, editor, etc.) is to serve it.

In the early nineteenth century, E.T.A. Hoffmann wrote that composition, performance, reception and evaluation should not anymore depend on solely extra-musical reflections of religious, scientific, or social nature. On the contrary, the guidelines for all these should be musical works *per se*. With this, Hoffmann laid the ground for the idea of fidelity to the work that later became known as *Werktreue*. It was in his writings that this idea gained the importance it had never had in musical thought. By pursuing the *Werktreue* ideal, musical performance had to achieve an absolute transparency, which should allow a proper understanding the work. Such an idea lies, for instance, behind the remark of George Bernard Shaw in 1888, when he said that the pianist Sir Charles Hallé can be always certain about his audience, because he gives them "As little as possible of Hallé and as much as possible of Beethoven" (Shaw, quoted in Goehr 1992: 232).

The 'historicists' of the twentieth century, obviously, harshly criticized the romantic type of playing that had prevailed for a long time. It was often emphasized that the playing of many mainstream performers reflected not their lack of interest into classical composers' intentions or instruments, but rather the musical aesthetics that had changed a great deal during the nineteenth century. The current standards of fidelity to the text and precise performance, however, should not be left completely unquestioned. This system of values, *Werktreue*, had intertwined since Beethoven's time with other aesthetic trends of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For instance, already towards the end of the eighteenth century, a cult of performer started to be formed, which reached its peak in the nineteenth century. Personal and professional qualities of an interpreter were then valued much more than the musical pieces performed. A paradox arises that is illustrated by Taruskin with a fine example: in these times of authenticity, the image of a charismatic eighteenth-nineteenth century performer is best embodied by somebody like Vladimir Horowitz, whose playing is indeed far from the *Werktreue* ideals.

Having said that, in the practice both of some mainstream contemporary performers and the authenticity movement adepts there is a common tendency to try and trace the composer's intentions more as displayed in the score or in the empirical facts of the historical period rather than in the 'spirit' behind the notes or the performance effects.[156] And it was not only the authenticity movement that claimed fidelity to Beethoven's intentions: this was the ideal of nearly all of the great Beethoven-interpreters from Wagner and von Bülow to this day. Czerny, for instance, emphasizes in his study *Über den richtigen Vortrag der sämtlichen Beethoven'schen Sonaten für das Piano allein* (1842) the necessity of text-fidelity in playing Beethoven. According to him, no additions or abbreviations should be tolerated; he emphasizes the importance of choosing the right tempos, provides the metronome indications for the sonatas, and discusses such significance from the point of view of performance practice issues as pedalling and fingering,

[156] Such a stance contradicts the attitudes of the composer himself. Judging from the recollections of his pupils, the composer would rarely complain during the lessons of the missed notes (perhaps because he would miss them as well rather often while performing in public), but he would get enraged when the mistakes would concern expression, dynamics or the character of the piece. While the former mistakes are occasional, the latter ones are related to one's knowledge, feeling, and attention.

as well as interpretative nuances of *rubato* or the colour of the sound (Jones 1999: 47).[157]

However, even without thinking that a written note-text contains the highest value of a musical piece, fidelity to the text should not be perceived as a creative failure (not even the harshest critics as Taruskin or Rosen would). When this idea correlates with passion and devotion, the results may be indeed inspiring. Recordings made by such performers and conductors as Malcolm Bilson, Melvyn Tan, Paul Badura-Skoda, Alexei Lubimov, Paul Komen, John Eliot Gardiner, Roger Norrington or Christopher Page may be mentioned among the many particularly positive creative findings (not to mention that the ideal of text-fidelity is also close to many a mainstream performer).

Beethoven's symphonies were started to be recorded by the historical performers in the 1980s (the most famous being the interpretation by Roger Norrington and *London Classical Players* (EMI). All piano concertos were recorded by the pianist Robert Levin, conductor John Eliot Gardiner and *Orchestre révolutionnaire et romantique*. Interestingly, 'historical performers' rather tend to deny the mythologization of Beethoven as a person – their recordings rather distinctively differ from the mythical image of the composer and his music created by such interpreters as Toscanini or von Karajan.

One of the most important all-time cycles of piano works – the full series of Beethoven sonatas, for the first time recorded as played on the period instruments – was released in 1997 by *Claves Records* (Claves CD 50-9707/10). A 10-CD series was initiated and recorded by the pianist Malcolm Bilson, together with his students from the Cornell University.[158] It is important that besides the thirty two sonatas, commonly included in pianists' repertoires, the three early "Bonn-sonatas" were recorded. All the works were performed on different types of pianofortes, in an attempt to

[157] If Czerny can be considered the (main) representative of the performance tradition stemming from the composer himself, then the alternative virtuoso attitude is best reflected by the early career of Czerny's famous disciple Franz Liszt. According to the accounts of contemporaries, Liszt would distinctively convey the character of Beethoven's sonatas, but he would do that at the expense of a free treatment of the author's text, by sort of adapting it to his performative image. Much research notices also that, in his older age, Liszt would regret such frivolous early interpretations of his, and, in the long run, had turned into a path of text-fidelity.

[158] Together with Bilson, the CD was recorded by Tom Beghin, David Breitman, Ursula Dütschler, Zvi Meniker, Bart van Oort, and Andrew Willis.

demonstrate how the composer's style had been changing together with the use of the new instruments.[159] Nine instruments – restored originals or copies – were employed, which Beethoven has been using while composing his 35 sonatas during the period of about thirty years. The first sonata in the cycle was written for the five-octave Walter fortepiano, while the last five works – for the six and half octave Graf instrument.

In Bilson's view, especially Beethoven's music sounds best when performed on the type of instrument for which it was initially written. This composer, more than any other, was interested in keyboard instruments and their possibilities. For instance, a *sforzando* articulation, which is absent from the modern grand pianos (as compared to historical pianos, their *sforzandi* are merely loud notes) is very important in his works. Another particular feature of Beethoven's piano music is transparent figurations of bass – which, again, cannot be properly performed on a modern piano. Be that as it may, such pianists as Charles Rosen or Alfred Brendel, being in many respects the exemplary purists of the twentieth century, criticize the idea of performing Beethoven on historical pianos mostly for their short-lasting sound that is inappropriate to our contemporary perception and large concert halls.

To conclude, it is to be noted that the typical performance of our times is neither too romantic nor authentic. Playing by celebrated mid-to-late twentieth century Beethoven-specialists such as Géza Anda, Brendel, Maurizzio Pollini, Rudolf Serkin, Murray Perahia, and many others can be ascribed to such a 'golden middle'. Some Beethoven recordings of the mentioned performers indeed inspire aesthetic joy, some of them are really fascinating. At the same time, they present no controversy and no solutions characteristic at the extreme trends of the twentieth century. More attention is paid in these performances to the careful polishing of the details or searching for a beautiful sound rather than the development of a certain idea or ideology. Important as it was to the performance trends of the twentieth century, the authenticity movement, one may conclude, remained rather autonomous and did not exercise too much impact on the mainstream world of piano performance art.

[159] By the way, in the year 1996 Bilson recorded for the same company the four famous Beethoven sonatas: Nos. 1, 14, 17 and 28 (Claves CD 50-2104). On this disc, the works are played by Bilson on four different historical instruments, the sounding qualities and individual differences of which do undoubtedly provide the well-known sound of the sonatas as we know them with the new nuances.

3.4. Sonata in D minor Op. 31 No. 2: The Musical Canon as Narrated by Its Interpreters

3.4.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the reception and interpretations of one of the most popular works in Beethoven's piano oeuvre: the Sonata in D minor Op. 31 No. 2, *The Tempest*. The decision to analyze performances of this very sonata, which belongs to the period of 1801–1803, was based, besides the multiple challenges it raises to performers, to a large extent on historiographical considerations. The effectiveness of dividing Beethoven's life and work into its early, middle and late periods has been called into question in recent decades, however it is still generally accepted that the years 1801–03 were crucial to the composer's development. In the works written in 1802 (as *The Tempest*) and later, Beethoven expressed the processual character of the sonata form in such a way, which justified his statements of the time about his 'new path', or 'a whole new style'. The 'new path' that Beethoven decided to take was actually synonymous to the new idea of form-as-process, which is perhaps best reflected by the first movement of the Sonata in D minor.

According to Carl Dahlhaus, the works of the beginning of this 'second period' or 'new path' – the 'Eroica' symphony, Sonata Op. 31 No. 2, Variations Op. 34 and Op. 35 – are characterized by a change in the relationship between the exoteric and esoteric elements of a musical form: between the outwards expression and hidden structures. The 'heroic style', as it is called by Romain Rolland, Scott Burnham, Michael Broyles (1987), and other researchers, announced itself in the forms in which "The thematic material and its 'treatment' evince a new inclination towards the abstract, which looks odd beside the gesture of the composer's addressing to all mankind – but, as will emerge, the paradox is understandable looking outwards from within" (Dahlhaus 1991: 16). Special importance in this period went to the Sonata in D minor, which became a sort of 'canonical' work within the creative output of Beethoven.

In the course of time, nearly all of the critics and much research focused on the second Sonata of Opus 31. The reception of this work can be compared to that of Sonata Op. 27 No. 2 in C sharp minor, and in both cases

conflicting assessments as well as symptoms of deeper cultural values may be found. According to Robert Hatten, the sort of precedence of these sonatas over the others is related to the semiotic meanings of a minor key: "If minor correlates with a narrower range of meaning than major, then works in minor should tend to provoke more-specific expressive interpretations than works in major." "Indeed," he continues, "if one considers some of the early- and middle-period Beethoven piano sonatas, one finds that the minor mode movements [...] are the focus of much greater attention, and more specific expressive interpretation, than the major mode movements." (Hatten 1994: 36). It comes then as no surprise that the two minor sonatas[160] have, at various times, received an especially active and expressive critical response.

Of the older literature on Beethoven sonatas, where one of course finds comments also on Sonata Op. 31/2, one should mention the writings of Anton Felix Schindler (1840), Carl Czerny (1842), and Wilhelm von Lenz (1852); newer important literature includes the studies such as Edwin Fischer's *Ludwig van Beethovens Klaviersonaten* (1956), *Thematic Patterns in Sonatas of Beethoven* (1967) by Rudolph Réti, and Jürgen Uhde's *Beethovens 32 Klaviersonaten* (1970); analyses by Hugo Riemann (1918–19), Donald Francis Tovey (1931), Alan Tyson (1973–7, 1982), more recently Janet Schmalfeldt (1995) and Lawrence Kramer (1998) are also among the significant sources. When it comes to the interpretation of the sonatas, Newman 1971, Kaiser 1975, Stowell 1994, and Taub 2002 provide performative prescriptions (as Plantinga 1998 does for the concertos). In a sense, editions of Beethoven sonatas, for instance, as left by Hans von Bülow and Artur Schnabel should also be ascribed to the literature on the matter, as the remarks they contain well reflect the views of these influential artists.

Specifically on *The Tempest* Sonata, historical significance and reception of this work, as well as its structural qualities and semiosis, have been subject to analysis from different perspectives. Jones 1999, besides other details, provides exhaustive information on the first performances and editions of the Sonata (also Drabkin 1985 is a good condensed source on editions). The newest volume devoted explicitly to this work, its analysis and performance (Bergé 2009), is a rather distinctive practice when it comes to a single piano sonata: it features extensive studies of such authors

[160] Of the 32 Beethoven's sonatas, only 9 are written in minor key.

as Robert Hatten, James Hepokoski, William Kinderman and other Beethoven-authorities.[161]

An additional note is pertinent on the importance of editions. It is indeed possible to explore the evolution of the reception and interpretation of a certain composer by investigating the various editions of the works released at different times: these, no less than sound recordings or musicological texts, reflect the music's reception. Each generation of musicians is, perhaps unconsciously but very significantly, affected by the editions with which it grew up.

The Romanticist aesthetics, which has influenced many aspects of the current performance art, had an impact not only on performance practices as such. Documentary evidence of their times was left by the Romantics in their many musical editions. As the playing of the most of the late-nineteenth century performers, so also the publications of that era lacked careful approach to the score: each editor was processing it on their own. A number of famous editors, such as Liszt, Czerny, von Bülow, Camille Saint-Saëns and others, treated the great masterpieces with an apparent ease. Today, it is taken for granted that the author's text should be considered the basis for a serious and profound interpretation. Modern pianists, starting more of less with the generation of Alfred Brendel, are already accustomed to choosing the editions which treat the composer's text with respect. The use of *Urtext*[162] is seen as one of the key tools for accuracy and authenticity in classical music.

Despite the performative editions, comments and criticisms by contemporaries, many of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century performance details remain uncertain or completely unknown. A much more complete picture and material for investigation is provided from the time of the recording age, but, given the limited scope of this study, we face

[161] It is obvious that the existing studies, from which general information pertinent to the current research was obtained (even if they are not explicitly quoted within the pages of this study), abound; hence, in the author's opinion, the present dissertation would not benefit from repeating what has already been said about this work, its various significations and immanent modalities.

[162] Unfortunately, some of the *Urtext* editions do not accord to the demands of conscientious musicians. Quite often they contain errors, distortions and additions to the original. In addition to a published *Urtext*, hence, it is desirable – when possible – to study the composer's autograph or the very first versions of the piece released in the composer's time.

methodological difficulties due to the abundance of available Beethoven recordings.

To include this (and the previous) chapter into the dissertation, despite its admittedly lower relevance within the spectrum of the most recent studies in semiotics and performance, is nevertheless necessary, for at least two reasons: first, because in an attempt to encompass the media and the meanings of musical performance art, it is impossible to leave the aspect of a musical work out, and, second, because of the central position of Beethoven's piano sonatas (and *The Tempest* in particular) within contemporary pianists' repertoires. In any case, the musical work and its immanent modalities are treated here primarily as the 'material' for a performer, instead of focusing on them from within. In what follows, an attempt is made to present a comparative analysis of the Sonata's interpretations with the focus on several specific aspects. These are, strictly speaking: the interpretative trends of different generations, performers' tempo choices, pedalling, and programmatic interpretations. While discussing these, in addition, the players' attitudes towards the author's text and certain clichés of performance related to the broader musicological and cultural contexts are also tackled.

3.4.2. A Comparative Analysis of Interpretations

3.4.2.1. The Sample

The present analysis of the interpretations of Beethoven's Sonata in D minor is based on 22 recordings from the twentieth century[163] (for a full list of the sample, cf. Appendix 1). Given the vast panorama of existing Beethoven recordings and their current web-based availability, the necessity of limiting oneself is obvious.[164] Here, the choice of interpreters was

[163] Chronologically, the first recording in the sample is from the year 1926, the last one – from 2001. The latter one, obviously, can still be considered as reflecting performance practices of the last century. Two of the sample recordings were played by the same performers (Sviatoslav Richter and Clara Haskil), but on different occasions: this gives the opportunity of comparing how (or, if) the interpretative attitudes of the same performer towards the same piece changed with time.

[164] A note perhaps can be made that the author's personal collection of the recordings of *The Tempest* contains 32 sound recordings (plus a couple of DVDs with its interpretations) other than the ones in the sample, not to mention all the material available online – both in audio and video formats.

mainly due to their place in the history of performing Beethoven in the twentieth century, and a wish to present as broad as possible spectrum of the piano performance schools (German lineage dominating, however), including both distinctive superstars of the field and lesser-known pianists. Several of the performers in the sample, such as Frederic Lamond, Artur Schnabel, Wilhelm Backhaus, or Claudio Arrau, were acknowledged as distinguished Beethoven specialists in various periods of the twentieth century. Clara Haskil, Wilhelm Kempff, Annie Fischer, Paul Badura-Skoda, and Alfred Brendel are in addition representatives of the classical performance tradition, who pay great attention to the Austro-German Classicist and Romanticist repertoire. Although Sviatoslav Richter, despite his German origin, does not have such a natural bond with this tradition, this performer has been always particularly praised for his extraordinary skills in adopting various, even very different, styles of music; his special relation to Beethoven is discussed in Chapter 3.5 of this study. The vast majority of the works performed by the Canadian pianist Glenn Gould also belong to Austro-German composers: this artist recorded all piano concertos by Beethoven and most of the sonatas by this composer, which are worthy of attention for his idiosyncratic view. Music by Beethoven constituted a significant part in the repertoire by Walter Gieseking, Yves Nat, Emil Gilels, and Richard Goode. As throughout the pages of the present dissertation, here as well the art of Lithuanian pianists is presented; even though relatively young Lithuanian pianists, such as Indrė Petrauskaitė, Daumantas Kirilauskas, and Andrius Žlabys, are yet only forming their repertoires, one can observe in their recordings of *The Tempest* sonata some interesting interpretative decisions.

3.4.2.2. The Tendencies of Different Generations

The earliest recordings of *The Tempest* in this sample, played by Frederic Lamond (1927/8), Walter Gieseking (1931) and Artur Schnabel (1934), deserve particular attention. The performances of Lamond and Schnabel in particular are characteristic of the instability of tempo and rhythm, while Lamond's performance also manifests a rather free attitude towards the author's instructions. This fact is of a special interest, because the plastic, romantically free interpretation of Lamond is quite distinctively different in certain episodes from the edition of this sonata that the very same pianist

once made[165]: for instance, the pianist does not repeat the exposition of the first movement, and the episode of the recitative in the same movement is played by him without pedalling (in both cases, the edition suggests differently).

As already discussed in Chapter 3.3, a special role in the history of the recordings of Beethoven's sonatas goes to Artur Schnabel. In the first half of the twentieth century, Schnabel suggested interpretative ideas that were later followed by nearly all performers of Beethoven's music. However, certain pianistic qualities by this performer were evidently different from those of the succeeding Beethoven specialists, such as Brendel or Pollini, to name a couple from the sample. The recording of the Sonata in D minor allows one make an assumption that, even though carefully preserving the authorial indications of dynamics and articulation, the preferences of this pianist were for the romanticized interpretation of Beethoven (one should not forget that Schnabel was a representative of the Theodor Leschetizky piano school). It appears sometimes that Schnabel, when playing, identifies music too much with language – its pauses, commas and other storytelling features. The pianist takes great care of emphasizing the harmonic progressions, even in the passages of small notes he provides them with the impression of declamation – this creates a lack of an even and rhythmical flow. However, this lack is compensated by the wonderful quality of sound (that one is able to hear even in an old, low-quality recording), stylish and technically stable articulation (although there are many technical inaccuracies that would be alien to modern pianists), varied dynamics, and a very solid form of the piece. Another important feature of Schnabel's interpretation is the highlighted melodious tunes, which were criticized by Theodor W. Adorno for a seemingly inarticulate balance between the harmonic and melodic elements (Adorno 1998: 54).

As it is common for the early recordings of this work, Lamond, Gieseking and Heinrich Neuhaus (whose rendition also belongs to the early recordings of the Sonata) omit repeating the exposition of the first movement (besides the mentioned pianists later only Gould, Petrauskaitė and Kirilauskas

[165] In conducting the present analysis of the recordings, I rely on the following edition of the sonata: *Бетховен, Сонаты для фортепиано II. Редакция Ф. Лямонда. Москва: Музгиз*, 1946 (Lamond 1946).

chose the same strategy).[166] A special impression is left by the interpretation of Gieseking: it is temperamental, dynamic, but at the same time especially subtle. First of all, this performance is distinctive for its extremely fast and from the technical point of view very precisely executed tempos of the first and the third movements. Despite the low quality of the recording, one can still discern wonderful articulation and a soft, light sound. Relying on this and also on the other very old recordings, one perhaps might draw the conclusion that the interpretations of Beethoven's music of those times are distinctive for their richness of colour and expressive nuances.

The fast tempos of a somewhat different nature are also characteristic of the performance of Heinrich Neuhaus (1946). First, what strikes one is the incredibly fast tempos and sudden tempo changes, many *ritardandi*, uneven rhythmical patterns, and numerous arpeggiations. Neuhaus' interpretation may be seen as indeed projecting images of a tempest, together with some later performances such as those played by Clara Haskil and Annie Fischer (interestingly so, provided the difference in the background of the three artists). The recordings by these three pianists can be characterized as the most impulsive, chaotic, and romanticized, with dynamic and notional contrasts markedly emphasized. First of all, the attitudes of that generation towards rhythm and tempo differ significantly from current approaches. Thus, while evaluating their performances from today's perspective, one clearly and mostly feels the lack of rhythmical consistency. However, especially the one played by Neuhaus is indeed compelling from the pianistic point of view. What fascinates one about his interpretation is the subtle figurations of the phrases, and masterfully free manner of playing, which often evokes associations with the Russian pianist of a younger generation, Vladimir Horowitz.

General trends of the decades from the 1950s to the 1970s are represented in the sample with the recordings of Haskil, Fischer, Yves Nat, Wilhelm Backhaus, Claudio Arrau, and Wilhelm Kempff. One might say that the tendency of heroic romanticizing of Beethoven is quite evident in these performances. Haskil, Nat, Backhaus, Arrau, and Fischer play with rather fluctuating tempos and rhythms, numerous dynamical waves and distinctive dramaticism. A special feature of Backhaus' playing is a generous usage of arpeggiations (besides this pianist, also Lamond, Neuhaus,

166 For the durations of all the pianists' recorded interpretations of the Sonata's separate movements cf. Appendix 2.

and, later, Glenn Gould played in the same way). Pianism of a significantly lighter and softer nature is characteristic of Wilhelm Kempff. Instead of a 'heavy German', as one may expect, this pianist presents a rather graceful, intimate, and picturesque Beethoven. Quite an exceptional interpretation of this period is the one by Yves Nat (1955), which, to put it in Charles Timbrell's (1999: 129) words, "Receives a virile, nicely contrasted, and perfectly controlled performance".

Among the recordings of the 1960s and the 1970s, the interpretation by Glenn Gould is especially worthy of attention.[167] Gould's interpretations are usually considered as eccentric: particular clarity of phrasing, rhythmical dynamism, clear polyphonic voices, orchestral expressiveness of the registers of piano are combined in his interpretations with unconventional tempos, peculiar articulation and 'wrong' dynamic nuances. However, the interpretation of *The Tempest* by this pianist cannot be considered as particularly innovative. Despite original details one can claim that Gould did not create any special novelties while interpreting this piece. Be that as it may, a wonderful touché, original notional accents, distinctive polyphonic layers and consistency of the form allow one to consider this performance a very successful recording in the discography of this artist.

One can observe new trends in the recordings of the Sonata from the 70s and 80s. The sense of spontaneity was decreasing, and a total technical control is never sacrificed for expressive immediacy. These interpretations are the least controversial and, in a certain sense, the least interesting. It seems that the intensity of the most of those performances stems from the richness of a moment, and the expressive potential of separate details is subjugated to the revelation of a large-scale musical form. None of the recordings of this period has certain open idiosyncrasies that one could hear in the pre-war performances, such as Gieseking's tempo extremes, or

[167] The history of Gould recording the Sonata in D minor is a very complex one. The first trial attempt was made in July 1960. Then, after the pianist's demand, a second recording session was arranged (in September of the same year), during which the Adagio was re-recorded. However, Gould was not satisfied with that, and in January 1967 another four recording sessions took place. The final version of the Sonata was prepared on August 29, 1971. It is not known, however, if the final recording features the excerpts from the old 70s' tapes (which would be rather characteristic of Gould), hence perhaps the dates of all sessions should be indicated. Such indecisiveness, in general typical of the pianist, was mainly due to the harsh criticism towards the pianist's recordings of Beethoven's three last sonatas in 1956.

distinctive *rubato* or enforcing of registers by Lamond. The established specialists of the classicist repertoire, such as Sviatoslav Richter, Alfred Brendel, Emil Gilels, and Maurizio Pollini present especially orthodox interpretations. Their temper is always accompanied by the strictest technical precision and control.

Possibly because of the advances in recording technologies, or due to the norms of the prevailing aesthetics, most of the recordings of that time are distinguished by a high textural transparency. The pianists' usage of a sustained pedal is more discreet and careful, and the passages are executed to a minute detail. Gilels and Pollini are very successful in this: their technical virtuosity enhances the expressiveness of the performance and is effectively subordinated to the modal and topical dramas of music. The first movement of the sonata is an especially revealing example of Pollini's intensiveness, bright contrasts and sudden turnings. Both interpretations by Richter (in 1965 and 1980) are masterful and memorable: they retain the individuality of the best old recordings, and at the same time satisfy the modern criteria.

A remarkable interpretation of the sonata in D minor was presented by an American Richard Goode in the year 1993. This pianist seems to be a thinker, who treats the work as an undivided whole. His performance is distinct for a very intent, intense and soft touché, a professional differentiation of various textures and rich dynamic nuances.

A somewhat similar vision of the sonata to that one by Goode is presented by Andrius Žlabys. The young Lithuanian pianist's look at this Beethovenian drama (a true confession by the composer, as Romain Rolland saw it) suggests a non-ordinary interpretation of this work already since the opening motive *Es muss sein!*[168] and the trembles of an anxious soul that accompany it. Some of Žlabys' earlier performances have already proved that *piano* philosophy is especially important to this pianist in shaping the dramaturgy of Beethoven's works, as well as his most recent renditions of other composers' works (such as his remarkable yet in a sense extreme *pianissimo* in Chopin's Concerto No. 2 in F minor performed in November 2013 with the Lithuanian State Symphony Orchestra). In his

[168] Such an interpretation of the opening motif – the arpeggio chord – of the work appears in Rolland's book on Beethoven. According to him, this is an authoritative command "*Es muss sein!*", which will prevail in the whole tragedy (Rolanas 1959: 128).

interpretation of *The Tempest*[169], the introvert, silent expression of the performer, idiosyncratic details and original sonorities let the listener feel a particular unity of form and depths of the work's meaning. This unity is enhanced by the articulation used by the pianist: light, almost transparent touch, which creates the illusion of the distant, 'melting' vision. Beethoven writes *Semplice* in this work more than once. This feature, so much important to the work representing the inner confession is rather often ignored by many performers, but it is preserved carefully in the interpretation of Žlabys, avoiding any melodramatic effect.[170] And still, the energy of this performer is very important in the process of musical signification. Energy that is communicated through silence has an even stronger impact on the listener if used properly.

Perhaps the most controversial interpretations of Beethoven's sonata, from the perspective of the contemporary listener's aesthetic expectations, were provided by the representatives of the authenticity movement.[171] In general, their performances emphasize the extent to which Beethoven's music exploits the capabilities and limits of the available instruments. The stormiest passages can be played on the period fortepianos with the ferocious expression, which nowadays would sound exaggerated. However, the greatest advantage is provided by the authentic performance practice in those episodes that create the highest challenges and technical problems while performed on modern instruments; in particular, the subtle pedalling in the recitative episodes of the D minor Sonata's first movement. Be that as it may, the interpretation by Paul Badura-Skoda played on the fortepiano of Anton Walter makes one doubt that it is easier to perform certain agogics (for instance, bars 2–5 in the Sonata's first movement, the main subject's

169 For the dissertation sample, the recording of the live performance of the Sonata in D minor, Op. 31 No. 2 *The Tempest* as played by Andrius Žlabys at the Vilnius Festival in 2001 was used. Similar observations, however, could be made on the live recording of the Beethoven's Sonata in E major, Op. 109, available at the archives of Lithuanian Radio.

170 Žlabys' inclination to favour early recordings of the twentieth century masters was mentioned in Chapter 2.6. As compared to those, however, his performance preserves a higher sense of discipline, which is of course the feature of the contemporary concert scene.

171 In addition to the only rendition on period instruments within the sample, that of Badura-Skoda, performances of *The Tempest* by Malcolm Binns (1979), Melvyn Tan (1993), and Malcolm Bilson (1996) were also taken into consideration.

second segment Allegro and analogous episodes further on) on the period piano. In some places, it is not clear whether the playing of this very pianist is in general rather uneven, or is the keyboard of the instrument not comfortable, perhaps slightly heavy – the general impression is that of a chaotic resistance. The clavicembalo-like sound of the instrument is also not very convincing, as well as a narrow dynamic range, and too even, not balanced enough sound of the layers of polyphonic texture.

It may sound paradoxical, but the attempts to re-create and bring to current performing practices not only the period instruments, but also composer's performing style might not always answer the purpose. According to the accounts of his contemporaries (see in Kulak 1901, Newman 1988, Sonneck 1967, and Rosenblum 1988a, among others), Beethoven used to play with a more distinct finger legato and more powerfully than representatives of the earlier performance styles, but his passages were often rather relatively messy, he lacked grace and self-control – those being distinctive features of, say, Joseph Wölfl's and Johann Nepomuk Hummel's playing style. Beethoven's range of sound was broader, however, to the ears of contemporaries, it was rather brutal: regular accents and sharp dynamic changes were flamboyant. It may be suggested that such a practice does not sound well also when transferred by some pianists into modern concert halls (one might mention emphatic accentuation and harsh forte as played by Brendel, Pollini, or Petrauskaitė). As opposite to this, rich and solemn forte as produced by Goode, Gieseking, Kempff, Lamond, and Schnabel should be mentioned.

3.4.2.3. Choice of Tempo

All Beethoven researchers admit that, in interpreting the music of this composer, the minutest details may be of crucial importance, and some of them are very simple. In an attempt to play a certain piece or an episode in a simple manner, performers, first of all, seek that simplicity with the help of an absolute evenness of sound and rhythm. According to Alfred Brendel, many years may pass before a pianist will realize that "His vision of the desired effect has, paradoxically, closed his eyes to the best way of achieving it" (Brendel 2001: 41). The projection of simplicity can be, the pianist says, very complex. If one wants to avoid that the result of this quest for simplicity is mere emptiness and boredom, an exceptional reservoir of

nuances is necessary (even though some of them may remain unused), and a certain degree of sensibility and inner freedom. "Similarly, on the subject of musical time, a 'psychological' tempo is to be distinguished from the metronomic one: an interpreter who follows the flow of the music as naturally as possible […] will always give the 'psychological' listener the impression that he is 'staying in tempo'." (ibid.). It must be noted that the duration of the whole Sonata in D minor depends largely on the choice of tempo for the Finale: it is marked as Allegretto, however, it is often being played slower than Beethoven's contemporaries would have imagined it (Brendel, in Dubal 1997: 105).

The choice of tempo is one of the essential aspects of the interpretative strategies in musical performance. Estimating it is a constant source of doubts and opportunity for different perspectives for performers. This problem is normally solved by employing several emotional and intellectual factors, such as personal intuition and sense of music; rational analysis and understanding; and a wish to conform as faithfully as possible to the indications of the composer. Some performers tend to follow their own individual conceptions; others prefer the tempos indicated by the composer. No need to mention that in choosing the tempo, besides the emotional and intellectually conceptual side, a certain role is also played by the technical capabilities of a performer.

Superficially, it seems that most of the problems related to the notation and interpretation of tempo should be solved by following the indications of metronome. However, in practice, metronome markings provide more questions than the answers. The modern metronome was invented in 1816 by the German mechanic Johann Nepomuk Maelzel (1772–1838). Beethoven is known to have immediately been interested in the new invention, and started to indicate the tempo according to the metronome in his mature works, such as Hammerklavier Sonata Op. 106, or Symphony No. 9 Op. 125, as well as in many other pieces of smaller significance. However, none of the three last sonatas, and neither the last six string quartets possess metronome markings, which (together with the accounts of contemporaries) allows one to make the assumption that the composer had changed his opinion concerning the usefulness of the device that would indicate too absolute tempos for the whole movement of the work.

Even more difficulties arise from the fact that composer's contemporaries, who marked Beethoven's metronome indications, employed different

ways of doing that in different publications. In her article "Two sets of unexplored metronome marks for Beethoven's piano sonatas" (1988), Sandra P. Rosenblum provides the metronome indications by Tobias Haslinger and Beethoven's pupil Carl Czerny[172] (see Table 3.1) for the *Tempest* sonata.

It is important to take note of the fact that in Beethoven's time tempo was becoming less and less related to the traditional, usual criteria of the previous ages (such as categories of meter and tempo, also the note values), and more and more individualized, depending mostly on the character of a certain musical work.

Movts.		**a**	**b**	**c**	**d**
Largo	♪ =	88	88[173]		100[174]
Allegro	𝅗𝅥 =	112	104	104	108
Adagio	♪ =	92	92	84	92
Allegretto	♩. =	84	76	76	88

Table 3.1. Four sets of metronome indications for Beethoven's Sonata Op. 31/2 as they appear in Rosenblum 1988b: 68

Certain difficulties in choosing the tempo of Beethoven's works arise also because in different periods of performing these works the stability of the chosen tempo was approached very differently. Most of those writing about music of the end of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, recommended flexibility of tempo and rejected the idea that a piece of music should be performed in a stable tempo (Robert Philip mentions Hugo Riemann 1897, Arnold Dolmetsch 1916, and singer David Ffrangcon-Davies 1906, among others). The pianist Alfred Johnstone wrote in 1910 that slight changes of tempo in Beethoven's compositions

172 Haslinger provided the metronome indications twice – in two editions of Beethoven's works *Sämmtlische Werke von Ludw. van Beethoven*. Czerny's metronome markings are also available from two sources: his study *Pianoforte-Schule*, Op. 500 and Simrock's edition of Beethoven's sonatas. In Table 3.1, the indications are written as follows: a) Haslinger I (1828–ca. 1833 or 1837); b) Haslinger II (183?–?1842); c) Czerny *Pianoforte-Schule* (1846); d) Czerny, Simrock's edition of the sonatas (1856–68) (Rosenblum 1988b: 68).

173 Given as crotchet equals 88; corrected to a quaver in the second state (ibid.).

174 Given as crotchet equals 50 (ibid.).

are allowed "For the purpose of making clear the varied expressions of soul depicted in the music" (quoted in Philip 1992: 7). However, in general tempo flexibility was normally recommended for performing romantic, not classicist music.

It is possible to analyze the tempo flexibility characteristic to the performance practices of the early twentieth century referring to either the recordings of that time, or the editions of Beethoven's piano sonatas. Recommendations for tempo changes exist in at least some of the many editions of the sonatas. Detailed metronome markings by Hans von Bülow were published in Lebert's edition of 1902. In the introductory words of this edition, such changes are justified, at the same time warning that one should avoid "the exaggerations so popular in modern playing" (quoted in ibid.: 14). In the editions by Buonamici (1903) and Lamond (1923), most of Bülow's markings are left, while MacPherson's (1909–23) and Schnabel's (1935) editions provide suggestions that, even though not the same as Bülow's, but rather often indicate the same tempo spectrum.[175]

A more reserved approach is suggested by the British musicologist Eric Blom (1938). He argues that slowing of the tempo is more acceptable than its quickening: "The pace of any movement of his [Beethoven], slow or fast, can often be slightly spread out with advantage, whereas it can scarcely ever be tightened or hurried with anything but an untidy, scatter-brained effect." (Blom, quoted in ibid.: 15). As with most of the recordings of that time, Blom's warning concerning the speeding up is to be understood as a reference to the changing performance practice trends of the late 1930s. In general, written sources allow one to make the assumption that tempo changes within one movement were generally practiced and accepted by most of the performers and composers of the period. Some distinctive musicians, however, such as Weingartner, Toscanini, and Stravinsky, were against this commonly accepted tempo flexibility. From today's perspective, these artists might be considered as the pioneers of a more strict approach towards tempo, who laid the ground for and influenced later generations of performers.

However, a more realistic and much more accurate picture of the common practice of the early twentieth century is provided not by the reviews or editions, but by the early recordings. One can hear in them that at that

175 For the table of the tempo indications for two of Beethoven's sonatas (*Waldstein* and *Appassionata*) provided by these two editions cf. Philip 1992: 15.

time, it was common to emphasize the contrasts by changing the tempo: lyrical episodes are performed more slowly, energetic ones – faster. Elasticity was treated by the early twentieth century performers not only from the point of view of the general tempo, but also from the perspective of phrasing details and rhythmical freedom – *accelerando* and *rallentando*, *tenuto* and agogic accents, as well as melodic *rubato*.

Performances of the Sonata by Lamond, Gieseking and Neuhaus do indeed conform to most of the characteristic features commonly ascribed to the early twentieth century. All these interpretations feature sudden tempo changes, *tenuto* and uneven notes, a distinctive difference between the melody and accompanying voices. All the recordings by Schnabel, generally, display the pianist's habit of playing the groups of short notes faster. When this seems to be under control, such way of playing provides the phrasing rhythm with the effect of a strict relief. However, some recordings of Schnabel may appear to a contemporary listener as having no necessary control, because any hurry of short notes suggests also the lack of rhythmic order. While listening to such recordings, one may wonder, whether that was a feature of the whole generation. When comparing performances of other great pianists of Schnabel's generation, say, those of Cortot or Edwin Fischer, it seems to be obvious that the fast movements and, in general, fast pieces are played faster than most of the performers would do today, however, their interpretations of slow tempos vary a great deal. Cortot or Fischer never played extremely slowly, while Schnabel sought to play as slow as possible.[176] Be that as it may, the most controversial performance from the sample remains that of Claudio Arrau's (rec. 1965) particularly slow interpretation of the second movement.

A totally different approach to the stability of tempo and rhythm appears in the recordings from the 1970s and later decades of the twentieth century. As Eugenijus Ignatonis justly, and poetically, puts it, in the art of the pianists of the period there

> Appear graphicness, linearity, one rarely encounters the charm of immediate emotions. A particular, even the main, role is attributed to rhythm. Rhythm that is suggestive and strong-willed, vital and wilful, patient and capricious, the one that matches the extreme poles – electronic exactness and unre-

[176] Among the pianists of the second half of the twentieth century who preferred extremely slow tempos one can mention such pianists as Glenn Gould and Ivo Pogorelich.

> strained freedom; the monotony of our tense business; the principles of an atomic reactor, and categorical denial of any doctrines. (Ignatonis 1997: 8)

These ideas are best embodied by the rhythmically and otherwise in many aspects stable interpretations of Sonata in D minor by Brendel, Pollini, and Richter.

3.4.2.4. Use of the Pedal

Perhaps the most striking episode of the first movement (all full of contrasts) of the Sonata is the mysterious recitative (bars 143–8 and 153–8, see Example 3.1). There, as if a lonely voice speaks from the distance, and the music pours on the pedal-supported dissonances (Beethoven may have seen this pedal effect, although not yet the combination of the pedal and the recitative, in the late Sonata in C major of Haydn). These few bars are a critical passage, the caesura of the movement, its stretching or contraction, from whose interpretation the perception of the whole work depends. In addition to this episode, and the aesthetic aspects of interpretation of the whole piece, no fewer problems are caused to the pianists by such a technical performance parameter as pedalling. It can be said that there is no universal pedalling instructions except for the pedal indications that mark the colour of the entire parts of a musical work, the ones that indicate the pedal points, or those that require an exceptional, not customary way of pedalling – many of the few Beethoven's pedalling indications belong precisely to these mentioned categories. Schnabel believed that "Beethoven's rare pedalling instructions are without exception essential to the musical structure, and do not leave any liberty to the performer. […] In these passages (Op. 31, No. 2, I, recitatives […]), the bass note must be audible until the next bass note is played" (Schnabel, quoted in Brendel 2001: 395).

Example 3.1. Beethoven, Sonata in D minor (Op. 31 No. 2), 1st mvt., bars 143–8 (Lamond 1946: 29)

When, in his book on Beethoven performance, giving detailed advice on the interpretation of the Sonata in D minor, Carl Czerny indicates that, in the first movement, the pedal should be used through the *forte* bars starting with bar 21 and further (as well as in analogous episodes in the development and recapitulation); during the recitative, the dampers should be lifted in such a way that the single line should sound like 'a distant lament'; while in the last ten bars they should remain lifted throughout the long stretch of D minor harmony, so that the eighth notes in the bass would sound 'like distant thunder' (it seems that this advice was taken into account by Žlabys). Czerny also suggests that the pedal in the other two movements would be used freely, while only taking into account the harmonic changes (quoted in Jones 1999: 48).

One of the cases when Beethoven would leave pedal indications is the subtle 'veiled' episodes (Czerny speaks in these cases of an 'Aeolian harp'), such as the Largo of the Piano Concerto in C minor, or the aforementioned recitatives of the Sonata Op. 31/2, first movement. The recording by Badura-Skoda reveals the authentic impression of these episodes, which, by the way, is well achieved on a modern piano by Žlabys. An essential difference between these two performances is the sustained pedal of the recitatives, which, however, does not blend the sounds, but rather leaves the impression of a melting shadow, a translucent veil. If Badura-Skoda could have achieved this result with the help of the period piano, then Žlabys has employed a special dynamic effect – an extreme *pianissimo* (similarly, in a barely audible manner, the recitative is also played by Claudio Arrau).

Of the sample recordings, the first-movement recitative is played without the pedal (or, rather, with the connecting pedal) by eight pianists: Richter, Fischer, Nat, Backhaus, Gilels, Kempff, Gieseking, and Lamond); the others perform it with the sustained pedal, as indicated by the author. Alfred Brendel, who in his writings has repeatedly expressed an opinion that Beethoven's pedal markings should be treated according to the work's idea, and not 'literally', chooses in the analyzed recording (as also Neuhaus) a sort of 'golden middle': he changes the pedal throughout the recitative more or less every bar, with every culminating note.

3.4.3. Programmatic Interpretations: Three Stories of One Sonata

As he did in many other respects, Beethoven played an important if not crucial role in discourse about programme music. Many a musicologist would ask, Did he compose programme music? Viewed from the twentieth century, perhaps he did not. From the viewpoint of the early nineteenth century, however, this composer stood at the forefront of programmaticism (Jander, quoted in Goehr 1992: 214).

The following sections of this chapter address how the exogenic content (extra-musical meaning) that the composer might have conveyed through the score was interpreted by music theorists, and how performers have been translating the score into actual sound by creating their own meanings and stories. As above, Beethoven's Sonata in D minor Op. 31 No. 2 *The Tempest* serves as the focus of the discussion.

3.4.3.1. The Musicologist's Story: *The Idea*

Who is normally considered the narrator of a musical story? Musicology has traditionally dealt with this question by using the name of the composer to embody the presence of a narrator; Edward T. Cone's (1974) concept of 'musical persona' is an influential example of this practice. In the Romanticist perception, the subject of the enunciate has usually been confused with the subject of the enunciation; thus, we have certain themes in many musical works that are often (mis)interpreted as representations of composers' real-life acquaintances. Together with the likes of Berlioz and Tchaikovsky, Beethoven falls into this same stream of interpretations. Scott Burnham (1995), in his *Beethoven Hero*, shows convincingly how in the reception of the heroic style, Beethoven, the original teller of a heroic story, has become the protagonist, 'a romantic hero' of a very similar story. The tension, struggle, renewal, and apotheosis, so frequent in Beethoven's works, seem now to be *his* tension, *his* struggle, and so on.[177]

The image of Beethoven that survives in the mind of posterity is a kind of compilation of impressions emanating both from the music and from

[177] David B. Dennis offers a telling example of how dramatized Beethoven reception appears in a sculpture at the Berlin Zoo. It depicts the three Classical masters: Haydn with dancing maidens, Mozart with a young woman strewing flowers, and Beethoven as a titanic figure breaking free from a boulder (Dennis 1996: 19).

various biographical fragments that consist, to a great extent, of legends and anecdotes. As Carl Dahlhaus puts it, "The relationship between the works of Beethoven and his life appears all the closer if we place our faith in the revelatory power of anecdotes in which the truth is more symbolic than empirical, instead of relying on documentary testimony that stands up to historical criticism." (Dahlhaus 1991: 1).

Yet, even if one trusts the credibility of biographical anecdotes, there is no reason to assume that musical works must contain autobiographical elements in themselves. From the interpretative perspective, it is dangerous to rely on overly bold speculations on the apparent relationship between the circumstances of an author's life and his/her creative output. Particularly in our demythologizing times, such interpretations might seem altogether too simple. The critical trend towards de-contextualizing artworks and emphasizing their structural autonomy started gradually in the late nineteenth century. Several studies have shown, however, that in the early reception history of Beethoven's piano sonatas, critics engaged primarily with the music's poetic content (see, e.g., Burnham 1980 and 1995; Jones 1999; Wallace 1986). The subjectivity of their writings was emphasized by the imaginative extra-musical metaphors which they used to convey their critical insights.

From the very beginning, Beethoven's music seemed to demand a more serious and attentive manner of listening. E.T.A. Hoffmann, writing about Beethoven, noted that, as with the writing of Shakespeare, the music's underlying unity could easily elude those critics attuned to conventional surfaces. A.B. Marx, whose editorship of the *Berliner allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (1824–1831) was instrumental in promoting Beethoven's music, maintained that critics should learn to divine 'the Idea' that characterizes each of Beethoven's works. The Idea – a spiritual essence in the musical work – is what ensures the unity of a work, by representing both its totality and its individuality. This, in Marx's view, formed the core of Beethoven's works, and this was what critics must investigate. Since then, the recurrent motif of Beethoven studies has been the suggestion that his music exists for a higher purpose, that it is there to tell us something. Beethoven's music, in other words, is a 'secular scripture' that requires hermeneutic mediation (cf. Burnham 2001).

In his study on the early critics of Beethoven, Robin Wallace emphasizes the fact that the authors of the first critical writings about the composer found it crucial to establish a connection between analysis and extra-mu-

sical interpretation. Beethoven was not the only subject of such criticism; he was simply the *most* suitable composer for such contemplation (Wallace 1986: 144). Some views of these early critics would perhaps not be accepted today, such as those about expression and tone-painting in Beethoven's works. Early Beethoven biographers referred to certain 'poetic' or sometimes specifically literary inspirations, with reference to such authors as Marx, Schindler, Wegeler, Ries, and Czerny. The nineteenth-century critics attempted, in diverse ways, to define 'the Idea' in terms of an *inner secret*, hidden in certain compositional details. Tendencies such as these, which possibly culminated with Arnold Schering's programmatic treatments of Beethoven (1936), have survived or been resurrected throughout the twentieth century as well, and they clearly constitute one of the constants of Beethoven reception.

3.4.3.2. The Story of *The Tempest*: Beethoven's 'Shakespearianization'

In the Classical era, composers used certain musical signs, today called 'topics' (after Ratner 1985), which could be shifted from one context to another, in such a way that their functions were transformed from signals into symbols. When this practice was at its peak, any listener of the time could follow the 'plot' of a piece if it consisted of easily recognizable topics. Continuing in this vein, Romantic composers often associated their music with literary and poetic programmes, presenting them either as the title of the piece or as a quotation printed on the score.

Beethoven's sonatas with programmatic titles, written in the first years of the nineteenth century, have drawn the attention of researchers ever since. In examining the supposed extra-musical meanings of these works, it is important to establish the source of programmatic titles; for example, the *Moonlight* Sonata was not so-designated by the composer (possibly it was created by a poet Ludwig Rellstab). On the other hand, *The Tempest* Sonata Op. 31 No. 2 seems to have been titled by Beethoven himself. According to a famous anecdote, when Anton Schindler asked Beethoven how to decipher the meanings of the Sonatas Op. 31 No. 2 and Op. 57, the composer replied: "Just read Shakespeare's *Tempest*!" This answer has both intrigued and frustrated musicologists ever since it became known. (Famously, the title *The Tempest* was applied in the course of time only to the Sonata in D minor, because the Op. 57 had already been named *Appassionata* by the publisher.)

Later, these sobriquets were taken by some critics as hints to more elaborate extra-musical programmes, but twentieth century reactions to them generally have ranged "from amused tolerance to hostile reaction" (Jones 1999: 44). Hostility broke out on two sides. Formalist critics argued that, since the titles did not issue from the author's pen, they have nothing to do with the work's inner meanings, and should therefore not be taken into consideration. On the other side were those more eager to acknowledge a poetic dimension in music criticism; yet these too have doubted the usefulness of such poeticisms, viewing them as either too general or as only selectively appropriate. As Timothy Jones rightly notes, however, those titles are important, perhaps not as keys to interpreting the sonatas, but as to what they reveal about the work's reception (ibid.).

As regards reception, the parallels between the construction of Beethoven's posthumous reputation in Germany and that of Shakespeare provide a broader context for understanding the significance of the relation between *The Tempest* as a play and as Sonata Op. 31 No. 2. Starting in the early decades of the nineteenth century, German critics tended to compare Beethoven's genius to Shakespeare's. This is well illustrated by Robert Schumann's writing that, when it comes to Beethoven, German nationalists forget that they do not have art traditions; they imagine that the wars with Napoleon have ended in a different way; and they even dare to equate Beethoven to Shakespeare (cf. Dennis 1996: 5). Jones (1999: 45), as a most glaring example of the 'Shakespearianization' of Beethoven, offers the misappropriation of *Coriolan* as a Shakespearian work, when in fact the overture was written for a play by Heinrich von Collin. However, it seems that Beethoven himself triggered such a critical stance. His repeated references to Shakespearian programmes in his works were particularly useful for those critics and biographers who wished to compare his cultural authority to the supreme figure in the European literary pantheon. From this perspective, as Jones puts it, "Schindler's anecdote might be seen as forming part of the power play of cultural politics in the 1840s, whatever its significance as a problematically nebulous reference to a possible covert programme" (ibid.).[178]

[178] We know, however, that Shakespeare's *Tempest* is not about a storm at all. The storm that batters the ship into pieces in the first few pages of the play is just the condition for the characters to get to an enchanted land. The play is full of magic, music, humor, intrigue, and tenderness, with no depiction of a storm by the playwright.

3.4.3.3. The Performer's Story: A Rider in the Storm

The performer, writes theorist John Rink, "Determines the music's essential 'narrative' content by following indications in the score as to 'plot', and, as in the enactment of any 'plot archetype', by shaping the unfolding tale on the spur of the moment in an expressively appropriate manner" (Rink 2001: 218). He continues by quoting an earlier comment by William Rothstein, to the effect that the performer synthesizes a musical narrative "From all he or she knows and feels about the work; listeners, in turn, will construct their own narratives, guided by the performer" (Rothstein, quoted in ibid.). Both authors are referring to the musically constituted narrative: a time-dependent unfolding of successive musical events that are linked to produce a coherent 'statement' embodied in sound, which is the principal expressive medium available to an instrumentalist. Similarly, semiotic theory of musical narrativity views narrative as a structure inherent to music, as a specialized competence that manifests itself in the temporal ordering of events into a syntagmatic continuum, which has a beginning, development, and end. As conceptualized by Greimas, for instance, narrativity is a way of shaping the world in its temporal, spatial, and actorial course (cf. Tarasti 2002: 112–115).

One way to approach the problem, Tarasti suggests, is to view musical narrativity as a latent trait that only emerges through certain modalizations, that is, through certain ways of interpreting and performing a musical work. Some artists, for instance, are said to have a special ability to perform music in a *narrative* way, they seem to possess a *narrative* touch or sound. This possibility seems quite believable, since we generally have to distinguish between two conceptions of musical semantics. In the first, a musical utterance possesses an invariant semantic content; in the second, a musical utterance can be pronounced in a way that imbues it with semantic significance. In the view of Paris school of semiotics, narrativity should be investigated on the level of musical utterance (*énoncé musical*) as well as that of musical performance (*énonciation musicale*). There is consequently a type of narrativity that only emerges when the performer or listener connects an element from what Boris Asafiev calls the "intonational store" to a musical structure. This type of narrativity cannot be analyzed without accounting for the interaction between musical subject and object in the process of musical communication (Tarasti 2004: 23).

The term can be properly employed here in its simplest sense, however. That is to say, we can talk in a similar way about the *narratives*, or imaginary stories, certain visual associations, which some performers do indeed construct to guide their interpretations, even if the composer has left them unspecified.

It is unlikely that music has the capacity to *tell* particular stories; rather, listeners put their personal associations and meanings onto musical texts. Some theorists tend to concede authority to the perceiver's creative act. According to John Neubauer (1986), narrative is not something that goes *into*, but something that comes *out of*, the musical text. The listener emplots the text by filling its empty signifiers with personal representations. Neubauer conceives the narrative study of music as the collection and analysis of the images and scenarios that listeners spontaneously associate with music (Neubauer 1986: 268).

To understand and interpret music properly, must the performer and, in turn, the listener need to imagine extra-musical associations? The pianist Alfred Brendel argues that, even if the composer covered up the 'background' to his compositions and wished to leave no psychological clues, there enters occasionally a kind of musical coherence that is above all psychologically motivated (Brendel 2001: 69). One of the performer's most subtle tasks is to sense such motivations, even if they are not expressed verbally. But what could serve as an objective (not only an imaginary) basis for doing this?

What normally helps the performer create those associations are various indications left by the composer, which, in most cases, constitute a significant part of the musical text. For example, some tempo indications, while related to musical imagery, have gained over time a relatively objective meaning: *con fuoco*, *agitato*, *dolente* and similar. By designating the content, these terms can undoubtedly evoke certain creative associations for the performer. Genre tempo indications have similar function: *allegro*, *adagio*, *largo*, etc. Other tempo indications, say, in the works by Alexander Scriabin, display an even more subjective nature; e.g., *parfumé* or *volupteux, presque avec douleur*.

Michael Steinberg (1993) notes that, in his piano music more than in any other, Beethoven elaborates tempo directions with affective descriptions such as *appassionato*, *risoluto*, *espressivo*, *molto espressivo*, *con espressione*, *con molta espressione*, *con gran espressione*, *dolente*, *mesto*; and, in the

sonatas marked in German, *durchaus mit Empfindung und Ausdruck*, *mit der innigsten Empfindung*, *sehnsuchtsvoll*, *mit Entschlossenheit*. In such cases, Beethoven's own commanding presence can be felt vividly (Steinberg 1993: 7). It has also been noticed that especially Beethoven's late piano sonatas abound in verbal remarks. Some performers and researchers ascribe it to the loss of hearing which might have forced the composer to exaggerate in expressivity rather than trusting the mere sound (Feinberg 1968: 46); while others believe it was mostly due to the fact that the late sonatas of Beethoven step into the Romanticist aesthetics, thus naturally more inclined to the verbal expressions (see, among others, Korykhalova 2000).

Another type of verbal indication is the composer's explanations of the poetic idea that lies (or does not) in a certain piece. In the case of the Sonata in D minor, that would be the famous reply by Beethoven about Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Indeed, descriptions of this piece often refer to a clash of two powers or two images: the stormy outer movements, and the Adagio of angelic calm (which just might be a clichéd description of sonata-form movements). However, the Shakespearian analogies of this very work, as of the *Appassionata*, began to be met with doubt by both critics and performers as early as the mid-nineteenth century. Carl Czerny, who surely knew the Sonata well, speaks instead of the "tragic character" of this piece, and also notes "the romantic-picturesque quality of the entire tone-painting" (Czerny, quoted in Brendel 2001: 74). To Brendel, Czerny's story about the finale having been inspired by a horseman galloping past Beethoven's window seems much more revelatory than Schindler's notion of its affinity with Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, a supposed connection that Czerny ignores. For a performer of the piece, Brendel says, nothing could be more suggestive about rhythm and tempo than the "continuously passionate motion" – as Czerny puts it – of a horse and rider. Czerny's indication of the painted effect of the sonata also proves useful (ibid.).

If we assume that performers synthesize certain musical narratives from all they know about the work, can we in fact hear an embodiment of the aforementioned poetic images in their performances? Even more specifically, on which would they rely more eagerly – Schindler's account of the Sonata's relations with *The Tempest*? Or Czerny's witness of the horseman at Beethoven's window? In answering these questions, the aforementioned sample of 22 interpretations of the piece is referred to.

Example 3.2. Beethoven, Sonata in D minor (Op. 31 No. 2),
3rd mvt., beginning (Lamond 1946: 35)

According to associations with extra-musical narratives which the performances might evoke, one can very conditionally divide the sample pianists into two groups: those who seem to have accepted Czerny's image of a horseman, and those who interpret the Finale as a tempest. To the first group belongs Artur Schnabel, whose accentuation in the Finale is particularly idiosyncratic: he emphasizes very clearly the ostinato fifth in the bass at the beginning of the Allegretto (and in analogous further episodes, see Example 3.2), which determines a specific accent of the downbeat. The fifth receives even more emphasis in the recapitulation, where it appears as a constant. Moderate pedaling and clear accents in the Finale are also used by Sviatoslav Richter, Yves Nat, Richard Goode, Maurizio Pollini, and Emil Gilels. Contrarily, the Finale sounds as a continuous, tempestuous flow as interpreted by the pianists such as Frederic Lamond, Annie Fischer, Clara Haskil, Wilhelm Backhaus, Claudio Arrau, Wilhelm Kempff, Walter Gieseking, and Andrius Žlabys.

The fact that no other indication appears more often in Beethoven's piano works as *Semplice* is very important to the Finale of the Sonata in D minor.[179] It would indeed be wrong to interpret this movement of the piece as a virtuoso-like romantic *perpetuum mobile*, although such tendencies may be noticed in the interpretations of Fischer, Haskil, Neuhaus, and Pollini. More pertinent to the work seem to be the interpretations where more moderate dynamics and subtle articulation is chosen, such as played by Richter, Gieseking, Arrau, Kempff, or Žlabys. The untiringly running

[179] Romain Rolland quotes Beethoven's words of 1804 that are related to the composer's preferences at the time: "God knows why my piano music always gives me a very bad impression, especially when it is performed badly… *Immer simpler!* (quoted in Rolanas 1959: 150).

Finale, in their interpretations, as if rises above the keyboard and disappears into nowhere. It is important to notice, however, that the majority of pianists perform the Sonata as tending more towards the Classicist rather than the Romanticist aesthetics. Even the expressive passages by Clara Haskil, which possess some Romantic features, or quasi-improvisatory episodes as played by Glenn Gould may be seen not so much as a Romanticist expression but more a 'Mozartean' type of aesthetics.

3.5. When a Few Me-Tones Meet: Beethoven *à la russe*

3.5.1. Introduction

It is not an easy task, if one may borrow the title of the famous book, "defining Russia musically". This task becomes especially challenging if one wants to enter such a complex realm as trying to define Russia in terms of its piano performance art. However, below, an attempt is made at presenting some insights on what kind of ideological and aesthetic environment has been surrounding the roots of the mythical 'Russian piano school'; what has mostly influenced Russian artists in interpreting the Western musical canon; and, the question underlying, was (or is) there any intrinsically 'Russian' Beethoven.

It was reflected above in Chapter 3.2 upon what might have been considered in music history as the inner identity, the *Moi*, of Beethoven's music. Here, the focus is on how it was interpreted at various levels in Soviet Russia. Hence, this last chapter of Part 3 deals not only with the matters of performance-opus in general, and with Beethoven interpretations in particular, but it also serves as an illustration of how a musical performance can be affected by various socio-cultural factors and ideological influences. In addition, it is an example of how a specific author can be appropriated in a certain, apparently even remote, culture.

The semiotic model on the balance of individuality and standards in a performer's art, as presented in Chapter 1.3, is applied below to twentieth century Russian performers playing Beethoven's piano music. It is proposed here that three *Me-Tones* meet in this artistic encounter: the composer himself, the prominent Russian piano school (with the standards and requirements it has set for its practitioners), and the individual pianists. We begin with the inner identity, or *Moi*, of Beethoven's music, and how it was perceived in Soviet Russia.

3.5.2. The Composer: Fraternity, Equality, and Other *Appassionate*

Regular and intense appropriation of Beethoven as a man and a musician in the German political propaganda was discussed earlier in Chapter 3.2.

Paradoxically, the reception of Beethoven as a cultural and ideological figure was very similar in Soviet Russia, where art and politics were so intertwined and ideological viewpoints so dominant that to separate them was almost impossible.

In addition to the overwhelming romanticizing of his music, another interesting paradox concerning Beethoven reception came about. If political leaders of other times and contexts related Beethoven to their political discourses, the Soviet ideologues claimed that only they could truly appreciate the values of this composer. A passage from the year 1927 is revealing, which appeared in Moscow's main newspaper, *Pravda*:

> For the generation of the 20s and 30s of the last century, Beethoven was entirely too powerful. Only now, in the epoch of gigantic social changes, has the heroic voice of Beethoven received its due valuation. In commemorating him we emphasise how much he has to say to us in these days: the great musician and singer of heroism and civil achievements.[180]

How did Beethoven, the representative of, first, German nationalism and, second, the bourgeois era, function in a country that had just experienced such an enormous cultural and political shock? How was it possible that this composer was allowed to remain in the repertories of Soviet musicians, and was so much admired in this country?

In revolutionary Russia, it seemed at first inevitable that a workers' and peasants' government would be hostile to art institutions characteristic of the aristocracy and the *bourgeoisie*. And indeed, the relation of both revolutionary and Soviet Russia to any tradition (including their own, not only a foreign cultural heritage) was complex and manifold.

Fortunately for the Classics, Lenin proclaimed himself a philistine with respect to modern art movements. In an oft-quoted conversation with the German communist Clara Zetkin, he said:

> We must preserve the beautiful, take it as a model, use it as starting point, even if it's 'old'. Why must we turn away from the truly beautiful just because it is 'old'? Why must we bow low in front of the new, as if it were God, only because it's 'new'? (Lenin, quoted in Schwarz 1972: 42)

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180 Eugene Braudo, *Pravda* (March 27, 1927). Source: Beethoven Festivals in the USSR. *Weekly News Bulletin* Vol. 4, No. 15–16 (April 22, 1927): 4. Quoted from Bone 2000.

Moreover, the new Minister of Education (or the so-called People's Commissar of Education), Anatoly Lunacharsky, was a highly educated and cultured man, who played a crucial role in mediating between a mistrustful intelligentsia and Bolshevik leaders. Both Lunacharsky and Lenin acknowledged the need for cultural continuity and for preserving old, 'elitist' repertoires as firm foundations for a new, revolutionary art.

Fortunately for Beethoven, Russia's attitude towards him had been highly favourable ever since the nineteenth century, when Russian musicians immersed themselves in Beethoven studies. After the Revolution, a new element was added: the identification of Beethoven's personality and music with revolutionary ideals. Boris Schwarz observes the following in his key study of musical life in Soviet Russia: "The idolisation of Beethoven as a revolutionary hero became a Soviet obsession, stimulated by Lunacharsky, Asafiev, and many other authors." (Schwarz 1972: 93). And we can see from Lunacharsky's manifesto to working youth that Beethoven indeed found a place at the core of the cultural heritage that the Soviets accepted:

> Above all music is adopted to be the language of the revolution, for revolution as was said by the poet [Aleksandr] Blok is in its very essence musical. It is dissolving […] world-wide dissonance into harmony, into that which is acceptable to humanity, something definite about which can be said: there, it is attained. […]
>
> History [gave] humanity at the beginning of the 19th Century a great order – to reveal all storms of democracy organized for struggle. And humanity answered: "I have such an instrument. There is Ludwig von Beethoven." And it played [through] him […] a gigantic prelude to the coming revolutionary music, when the Great French Revolution [was] replaced by the Great Russian – and with it also the World – Revolution. This is why Beethoven is akin to us.[181]

Similarly to the composer's homeland, celebrating Beethoven's anniversaries was of no less importance also in Russia. The fact that these, as in the years 1927 or 1970 were even celebrated by the coining of occasional medals serves to illustrate how admiring and possessive the Russian approach to Beethoven was. In 1927 the fourth volume of the *History of Russian Music in Research and Materials* was published by the Moscow Institute, and was

[181] Address by the People's Commissar of Education at meeting of the working youth in Moscow. *Weekly News Bulletin* Vol. 4, No. 11–12 (March 25, 1927): 7–8. Quoted from Bone 2000.

called *The Russian Book on Beethoven*. Another important publication of that year was the so-called "Moscow Sketchbook" of Beethoven, which contains pencilled sketches for the String Quartets Op. 130 and Op. 132, commissioned by Prince Galitzin (cf. Schwarz 1972: 93).[182]

There is no need to discuss in this study all the subtle changes in the political and cultural circumstances during the Soviet era. It is perhaps enough to mention the most important aesthetic doctrine in the country after 1934: that of *Socialist realism*. Espousing revolutionary aims in the socio-political sphere, and yet adopting a conservative canon of aesthetic values, in musical terms this doctrine resulted in the favouring of such forms as the programme symphony, the dramatic cantata, and similar 'narrative' genres, whose topics ranged from private suffering to the reaffirmation of social values. Naturally, there arose connections with the Promethean works of Beethoven's middle period. "Naturally", because for a long time, and not only in Russia, the dispute over meaning in Beethoven's instrumental music had centered on a single issue: whether or not it has any 'extra-musical' significance.

In the course of time, as Scott Burnham argues, the original teller of a heroic story (Beethoven himself) became the *protagonist* of a similar story: 'the romantic hero'. Beethoven reception treated him as the subject of his heroic-style works, bringing him through a similar trajectory of struggle and renewal to a point of apotheosis. The understood meanings of the *Eroica* and the act of its creation merged, establishing a symbolic conjunction of work and artist (cf. Burnham 1995). Thus, it is no wonder that the meaning conferred on Beethoven's personality and his music in Soviet Russia was that of a revolutionary hero. In semiotic terms, it is possible to state that the features of Beethoven's music accepted by Russian music theorists and practitioners were entirely taken from what they imagined to be his *Moi*, overwhelmingly dominated by the Greimassian modality of 'Will', and scornful of anything related to societal norms, the *Soi*, that is to say, all the 'Know' and 'Must' that Beethoven had mastered so well.

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182 'Politicized' performances of Beethoven's works in Germany were also mentioned above. In Russia, such important events as Lenin's and Stalin's funerals featured Beethoven's music. As late as 2002, a concert in memory of the September 11 tragedy was held in the Grand Hall of Moscow Conservatory, at which event – it goes almost without saying – Beethoven's Ninth symphony was performed. The press announcements proclaimed, "Beethoven to battle terrorists". The composer of Resistance par excellence.

In the works of the most influential music critic and theorist of the post-revolutionary period, Boris Asafiev, another interesting point emerges, something particularly suitable for Bolshevik ideology. In one of his many articles, Asafiev argues that Beethoven was perhaps the first composer-individualist, composer-citizen, i.e. a composer who no longer depended on church or aristocratic patronage. Asafiev emphasizes that only the composer's individualism was able to elevate music to such "heights of its possibilities", to bring out such "psycho-realistic tone" and "engaging-pictorial potentials" – all terms that Asafiev used in reference to Beethoven's works. In other articles, he found the sense of "collectivism" and "patriotism" in music – especially in collective song, one of the most important genres at that time – to have its roots in Beethoven. He further claimed that the sources of inspiration for Beethoven's "masculine rhythmic images" and melodies were the songs and theatrical life of a revolutionary Paris (cf. Asafiev 1957).

According to David B. Dennis, by the early nineteenth-century both conservative and progressive listeners heard Beethoven's music as being 'revolutionary'. Towards the mid-century, the opinion that such works by Beethoven as the Third, Fifth and Ninth symphonies were transmitting the 'French' values of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, was openly spread in the pages of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* and in political discussion in general (Dennis 1996: 12). Hence in France he was also treated as a supporter of the French Revolution at the end of the nineteenth-century, which contributed to Beethoven being seen as a revolutionary figure before the revolution in Russia erupted. The French political reception and – again – ideological exploitation of Beethoven, extensively reported by Esteban Buch (2003/1999), could hardly not have had an influence on the Soviet authorities' thinking.[183]

This chapter, however, deals with two phenomena that were accomplished in the light of this passionately ideological atmosphere: it is not only the undying Russian political and theoretical admiration for Beethoven, but also the formation of a strong and distinctive Russian piano school during the course of the twentieth century. Of particular interest from a

[183] The author is indebted to Jean-Marie Jacono for drawing her attention to Buch's study, as well to other charming details from the French reception of Beethoven, e.g., a French writer Edgar Quinet naming Ode to Joy being the "Marseillaise of mankind".

semiotic point of view, is the impact of the strong ideological-aesthetic-pedagogical environment on the interpreter and the manifestations of the latter's individuality in interpreting the Western musical canon.

Below, an attempt is made to define the performance clichés or unifying features that allow for some generalizations in analyzing the art of Russian pianists.

3.5.3. The School: Russian Tradition of Piano Artistry

However vague the question of a national school might be nowadays (cf. Chapter 2.6), the idea of 'the Russian piano school' was not something coined for the sake of this study. The notion of the 'school' has changed over the course of time, as has its influence on individual pianists; yet, this term, especially in case of the Russian tradition, still enjoys wide use. Due to the country's comparative isolation for more than half of the last century, Russian pianists were following a tradition with roots in the Romantic era, thus forming a highly specific school as compared with the Western pianism of the same time.[184] Moreover, in Russia, for variety of reasons, the student-teacher bonds are generally much stronger than in many other environments. Unlike American piano students, for example, who are encouraged to add as many names of teachers as possible to their résumés, Russians rarely have more than two teachers, and sometimes – proudly – only one.

The concept of the 'Russian school' still serves perfectly as a commercial label, for instance, in the series of CDs issued by the Russian company *Melodiya*. International competitions of pianists – the most important and widely known among them being the International Tchaikovsky Competi-

[184] The French system, even though for other reasons, had been particularly closed and rigorous as well – unlike, say, the American schools, which were always a musical melting pot with the teachers from Germany, Russia, Poland, Italy, Israel and elsewhere. In France, as Charles Timbrell claims, even the teaching of such artists as Liszt, Anton Rubinstein, or Leschetizky had almost no impact because of the Conservatory's ingrown system, which guaranteed adherence to its own methods of teaching (Timbrell 2009: 253). The decline of the old French school dates from the postwar period, when new horizons were opened up through recordings, television, radio broadcasts, international competitions, and the increased ease and speed of travel and communication (ibid.: 254). Many prize-winning Soviet artists have affected the thinking of young French musicians, as well as some noted pedagogues from Russia and Germany/Austria.

tion[185] – held in Russia encourage further development and dissemination of the traditions of the Russian interpretative school. The initiative of the Tchaikovsky Moscow State Conservatory's Laboratory of Sound Recordings, which, in recent years, has been trying to restore into more up-to-date media the classical music collection of the original recordings made at the Moscow Conservatory and its concert halls, is also remarkable. This collection was originally seen as having an essentially pedagogical goal – that of providing musical examples and illustrations to the Conservatory's teachers and students – and it contains unique materials from the concert-recordings of the great Russian and foreign musicians from the twentieth century; 'pedagogical recordings' made by the great masters of the Conservatory who were obliged to proved the students with material for their professional development; recordings of 'open lessons' held in the classrooms of the Conservatory by the finest pedagogues; as well as 'pedagogical event' recordings – such as exams and faculty/class concerts.[186]

Institutionally, the bases for the Russian musical performance tradition were laid down in two conservatories: in St. Petersburg, founded by Anton Rubinstein in 1862, and in Moscow, placed under the directorship of Nikolai Rubinstein in 1866. The most prominent among the two conservatories' piano professors were Anton Rubinstein and Anna Yesipova; soon after, the first generation of graduates, such as Siloti, Safonov, Rachmaninov, and Goldenweiser, started their pianistic and teaching activities. Apart from the State conservatories, many private schools had been established in the two cities; some of them survived the post-Revolutionary exodus and the nationalization process, such as the school of the Gnesin sisters, which continued to produce many important virtuosos throughout the Soviet era.

In order to imagine better which personalities stand at the roots of the Russian piano performance tradition, some 'genealogical trees' are again rather helpful. Regarding Beethoven interpretation, one can distinguish at least four lines of descent:

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185 Famously (also for political reasons), the winner of the 1st International Tchaikovsky Competition in 1958 was the American pianist Van Cliburn. It is interesting to point out that Cliburn was also a representative of the Russian school since his professor in Julliard School was Rosina Lhévinne [Rozina Levina], who herself graduated from Moscow Conservatory and later brought up several generations of American pianists.

186 The data is retrieved from www.pugachpiano.com – a website on the Russian piano school by a pianist and pedagogue Yaroslav Pugach (last assessed: Fall 2011).

1) The rise of the Russian piano tradition stemming from its pioneer Anton Rubinstein, a distinctive propagator of Beethoven's music (see Figure 3.1). The influence of Rubinstein's piano school is prominent in the art of the Russian pianist Heinrich Neuhaus, who, having taught an entire constellation of the most famous Russian pianists, is considered the father of modern Russian piano performance school ('modern' in the sense that some of its representatives are still active pianists or teachers).

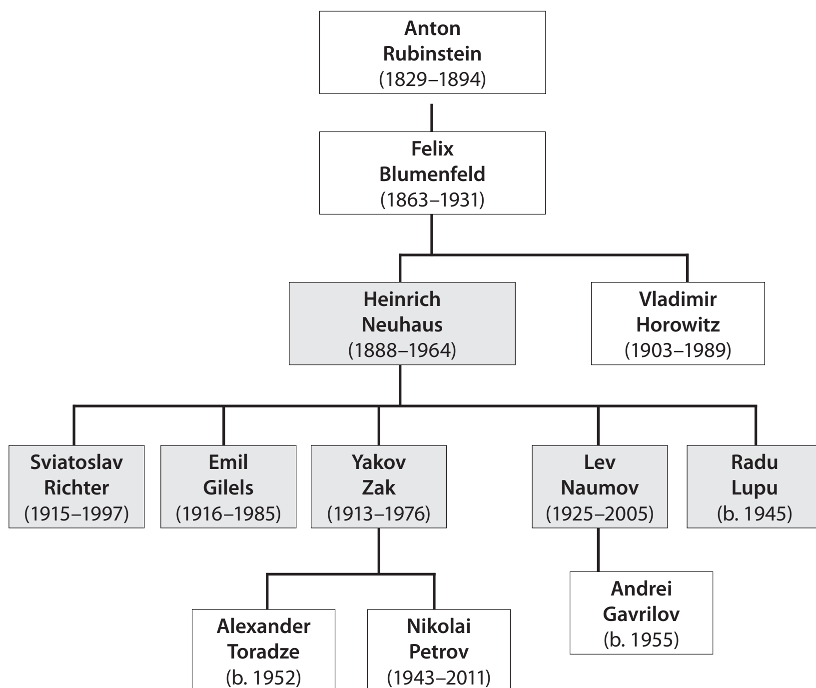

Figure 3.1. Russian piano school since Anton Rubinstein

2) The line that derives directly from Franz Liszt: Konstantin Igumnov, a student of Liszt's pupil Paul Pabst, taught such influential Beethoven-specialists as Lev Oborin and Maria Grinberg, as well as Yakov Flier and others (see Figure 3.2).

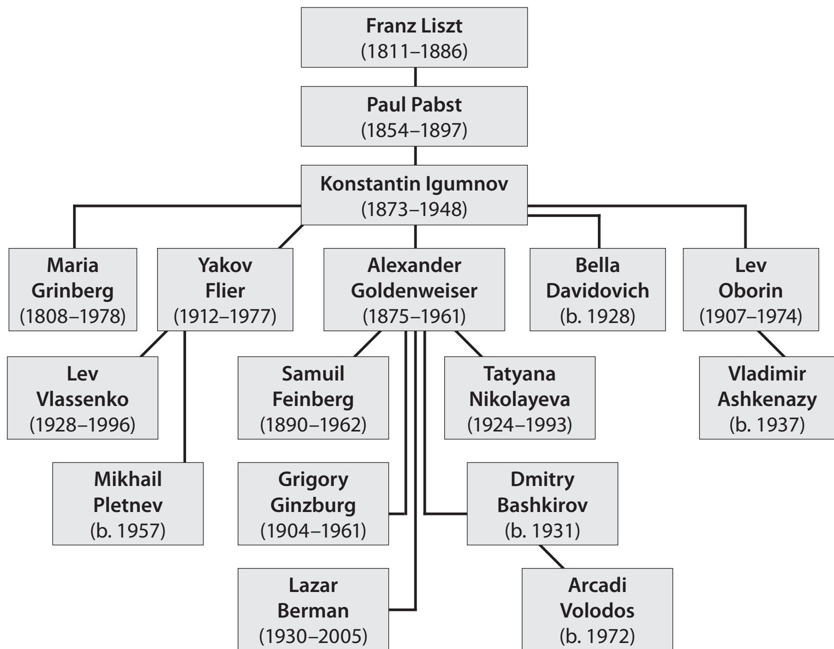

Figure 3.2. Russian piano school stemming from Franz Liszt

3) As an important branch of the Russian 'Liszt-school', we must mention the pedagogical line featuring the names of Alexander Siloti (another important pillar of the Russian tradition), Alexander Goldenweiser and other distinguished exponents (see Figure 3.3).

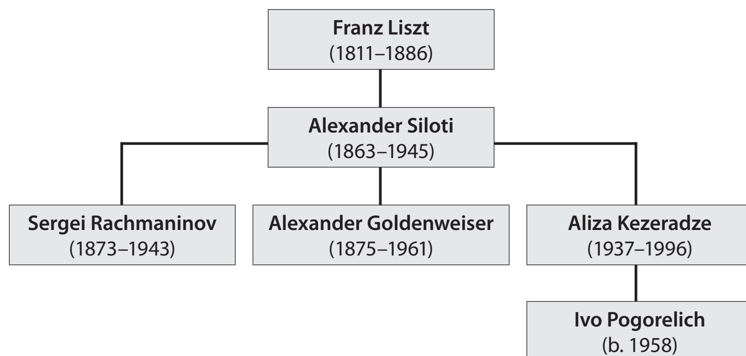

Figure 3.3. Liszt-Siloti school of playing piano

4) Finally, there is a significant branch in the line of Vassily Safonov's teaching, himself a pupil of Theodor Leschetizky and a director of the Moscow Conservatory. Names such as Scriabin and Medtner represent this school, as does Leonid Nikolayev, who in turn taught Vladimir Sofronitsky, Maria Yudina, and Dmitry Shostakovich, among others (see Figure 3.4).

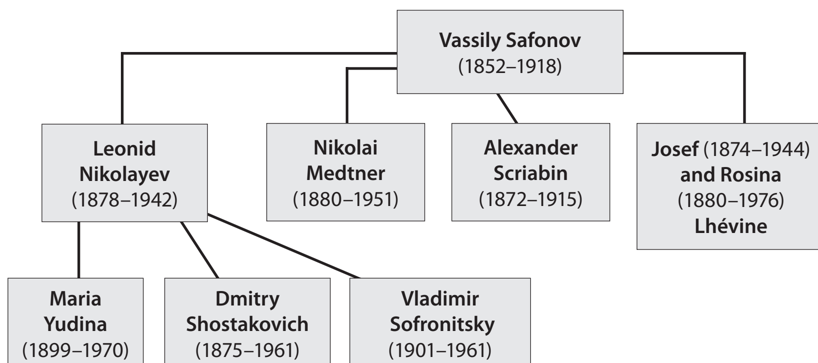

Figure 3.4. The 'school' of Vassily Safonov

An important note should be made on the distinction between the 'Russian school on Soviet territory' and a 'Russian school in Western Europe'. As Schwarz (1972: 20) notes, for a time in the mid-1920s, so many Russian composers worked abroad that professional critics distinguished between these two manifestations of the Russian musical tradition. The same applies to the Russian school of musical performance, both of those times and in our day, with the necessary extension of this definition from Western Europe to the United States. So many pedagogues belonging to the Russian school are working abroad nowadays (and more likely than not, they are the best ones, such as Dmitry Bashkirov, Anna Kantor, Alexander Toradze, or Lev Natochenny, to name just very few particularly desired piano teachers) that in some Western conservatories it becomes impossible to talk about any influential local tradition.

The pianist Dmitry Bashkirov (who himself was born in Georgia, studied in Russia, and is currently working in Spain), when asked in 2010 whether it still makes sense nowadays to use the concept of a national piano performance school – Russian in particular – and what would then be its main features, says:

> As such, it surely exists, but the interaction between individuals, countries and continents these days is much closer than it used to be a hundred or eighty years ago. Therefore some mutual exchange and cross-saturation takes place. What is the American school – half of their greatest pianists are from Russia, or the ones who learned under Russian teachers… The German school did indeed exist and had a purely German foundation, the same with the French school: they both are characterized by some unique nuances. When it comes to the school I know best – it has preserved some qualities, but has also lost something. How was it special, this Russian piano school? I would note the quality of sound, the expressiveness, the unique spiritual, emotional lavishness – it is possible that in this respect some things have already been lost. But it has acquired a certain culture, which was not typical for us, for instance, in performing old music, especially with regards to the precision of rendition classical pieces. (Bashkirov, in Navickaitė-Martinelli 2010a: 421)

A French-trained pianist Cyprien Katsaris similarly summed up the 'melting pot' situation and commented on the Russian-French aspect of it in a 1988 interview with Charles Timbrell:

> The Russian school of playing sometimes produces a hard sound, with emphasis on arm-weight and not enough refinement of the fingers, while the old French school had a lot of refinement, but sometimes too much emphasis on the fingers. The current combination of the French and Russian schools is a very important trend here in France. Although the old French school doesn't exist anymore, I think that France today has the highest rate of excellent pianists in Europe, in proportion to the population. (Katsaris, in Timbrell 1999: 258)

However, to define the *Me-Tone* of a certain school might be the most dubious undertaking of our research, and for several reasons. Most of all, because it is difficult to name fundamental features of an 'organism' that is quite heterogeneous and undergoing constant changes and development. Does the *Moi* of a 'school' depend on the mentality of people living in a certain geographical space, under certain specific social or cultural circumstances? Or is it located in their immanent physical qualities? If the answer to these questions is yes, we may assume the existence of several, specifically 'Russian' features that are immanently characteristic of pianists born, or, what is much more important – trained in this part of the world.[187]

What are the specific features of Russian piano art? The subjective penetration into the inner world of music, beauty of timbre, extraordinary melodiousness and extension of piano sound, a wide range of emotional and dynamic contrasts – all these features distinguish the Russian piano school. Also, even though a phenomenon of a somewhat mysterious 'Russian technique' is thought of as something real, and even if it is partly true, the artistic image, creative hearing and intonating, and embodiment of a certain idea in one's performance have always been more important to

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[187] Rupert Christiansen's quote, in Chapter 2.6, on the difficulties in tracing vocal schools may be continued in relation to this remark: "The central nineteenth-century tradition of vocal schooling neatly illustrates the confusion. What was widely known as the 'Italian' style had its most famous teacher in Manuel Garcia II, a Spaniard who lived in Paris and then London, whose most distinguished pupil was a Swede, Jenny Lind; and Garcia's chief disciple was the German-born Mathilde Marchesi, whose model product was the technique of Nellie Melba, herself an Australian of Scots descent. The conclusion to be drawn from this is that a singer is made more by how and for what she or he is trained than by climate or diet. Perhaps racial types of facial bone structure can make for certain effects of vocal resonance, but it is hard to take the idea of 'national endowments' further than that. If Slavonic sopranos are fierce and wobbly or English contraltos plummy and booming, that is because they have been taught particular means of tone formation, not because of some food or bad national fairy." (Christiansen 1985: 269).

Russian performances than their technical side. From a purely technical point of view, some elements of piano teaching, such as how to use the natural weight of one's arms and body in relaxed state so as to create the phrase, are extremely important in the Russian pedagogical system. And this is again perhaps something that makes Russian pianists sound unique.

The famous American pianist and pedagogue Jerome Lowenthal echoes Bashkirov on the present existence of the Russian school, emphasizing his awareness of it and the conviction of its continuation (even though in contact, and enriched by that, with other piano performance schools):

> What is it that the Russians do that is so wonderful (or not so wonderful, depending on your view?) I would say, they know how to bring out things. In particular, they know how to voice. […] The Russians know how to play the piano so that it sounds like an orchestra. I hear the harmonic accompaniment supporting the melody. And then I hear the basses, or lines coming out in the middle. Sometimes I hear these things so ingeniously that I wish for less of it. […] But I value this very much. […] The real tone-producing factors are the voicing and the line-shaping. And those are capable of infinite variations. Perhaps the Russian School *has* emphasized too exclusively a rounded, beautiful tone. (Lowenthal, in Uszler 1998: 28)

What is, then, the *Soi* of this school? Is it the surrounding ideology? A particular training? The traditional training of young Russian players has indeed proved to be highly beneficial and successful. The fact that each virtuoso there was expected, in turn, to devote part of his time to teaching insured the continuance of tradition. (Until very recently, the phenomenon of a 'posting' to a certain job was in practice in the former Soviet territory.) In addition to the aforementioned technical aspects, cultural context is extremely important for Russian teachers. Many examples from literature, art, and cinema are used in their lessons, which undoubtedly contribute to creating imaginative minds in future virtuosos. We should also not forget the impact of prominent theorists on the art of performers. Boris Asafiev's writings on 'Intonation' come to mind. Indeed, a very precise intoning, attention to every phrase, singing, 'vocal-expressive' style are among the features of the Russian school. Just as evident is the reception of Beethoven as 'powerful', 'enthusiastic', 'massive', 'gigantic', 'flying onwards', 'stormy', 'passionate', 'revolutionary', all terms used by Asafiev (1957) to describe Beethoven's music.

As we proceed, a certain semiotic framework would allow us see how the concepts borrowed from the existential semiotics theory can contribute

to the analysis of the 'school' aspect in the art of musical performance. The third *Me-Tone*, that of the individual performer, is discussed below through a semiotic approach to the performer's subjectivity.

3.5.4. The Performer: Beethoven as Played by Russian Pianists

3.5.4.1. A Semiotic Framework

In Chapter 1.3, a semiotic model was employed to illustrate the inner and outer influences, individuality and standards underlying the creative work of a performer. The scheme there, in Figure 1.2, by embracing the Greimassian modalities Will, Can, Know and Must, encompasses the performer's *Moi* and *Soi*, the inner and outer spheres and categories where the performer's art is communicated and perceived. Given the specific features of the Russian piano performance school and its relation to Beethoven's music as discussed above in this chapter, how can one apply the scheme of performer's subjectivity in relation to specific circumstances and tastes of Soviet times? I suggest, this time the scheme can be defined in the manner as seen in Figure 3.5.

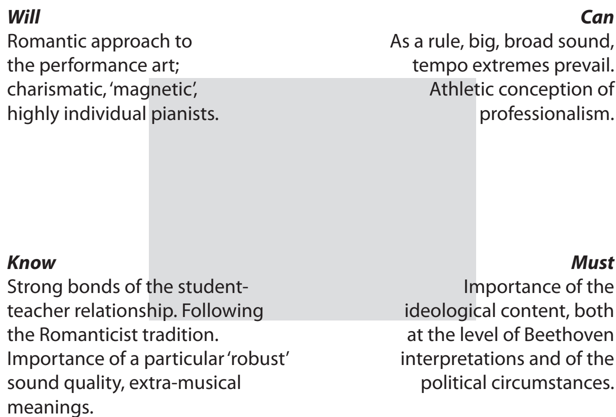

Figure 3.5. Individuality and standards in the art of an 'average' Russian performer

It is surely difficult to categorize general manifestations of the 'Will' modality; this seems possible as it relates to individual artists. Yet, this modality, and in principle the *Moi* side of a performer's art, are often considered to be fundamental to the Russian piano tradition. A highly Romantic approach to performance practice is characteristic of Russian pianists, and many of the best among them may be considered charismatic, 'magnetic' individualists. Further analysis of the first angle of the semiotic square would also consider the ethnic and ideological identities of Soviet performers.

The modality of 'Can', which embraces the performer's technical capabilities, also receives much emphasis in the Russian piano school. A rather athletic conception of professionalism is evident in the case of Russian pianists, as are the big, broad sound and tempo extremes that mark their performances. The specific features of an instrument also belong to this modality, and are important to the Russian piano tradition, especially concerning the desired cantabile quality of the piano.

This brings us to the third modality, 'Know'. Despite the wide variety of individual pianists of this school, most tend to follow the Romantic piano tradition. Consequently, they concentrate on tone and timbre, especially on a deep, robust sound and as mentioned, on cantabile. Conveying extra-musical meaning is important, and in trying to achieve that goal, many ways of exuding a Romantic mystique are chosen, depending on the artist: from powerful emotionalism to meditative contemplation, from profound reflection to extrovertive brilliance. The 'Know' modality represents also the idea of the institutional school. In Russia, the bonds of the student-teacher relationship, their connection sometimes even lean towards exaggeration.

Finally, we reach the modality of 'Must', where the composer's identity comes to the fore. Analysis of this semiotic aspect of performance surely has to take into account musical structures, through detailed examination of particular pieces and their various interpretations (which, as stated repeatedly, is not the aim of this study). Ideological content is also important here, and we have already mentioned Russians' admiration for Beethoven's persona and for the values reflected in his art. Both this ideological and theoretical idolization has undoubtedly contributed to the highlighting of Romantic and heroic values in Russian performances of his works.

Certain difficulties arise when deciding to which modality – 'Know' or 'Must' – one ought to ascribe the extremely strong censorship carried

out by *Glavrepertkom*[188], which regulated musical repertories and granted permission for concert trips during the Soviet era. Programmes, announcements, posters, even concert bills were subject to advance approval. This was something that artists not only 'knew' but also 'had to' obey, in order to maintain at least their artistic careers, if not something more vital. One assumes that the same constraints apply to musicians working under similar totalitarian or fascist regimes.[189]

There is one modality absent from our scheme, namely, that of 'Believe', the importance of which should not be underrated. It is precisely the epistemic values of Beethoven's music that give it credibility. Its persuasiveness in reception, the implicit extra-musical meanings that this music holds for its performers and listeners – these are vitally important in its interpretations by Russian musicians. At least since the days of Asafiev, Beethoven's has been considered the 'truest speech'.

Some detailed accounts are relevant on the art of individual exponents of the Russian piano school, as gathered from their interpretations of Beethoven's piano sonatas.

3.5.4.2. 'The Classics'

If the essence of Russian piano art is the prevalence of strong *Moi*, i.e. breaking of common rules, eschewing of norms and interpretive clichés, then we may look at a few of the so-called eccentric, extravagant, and unpredictable artists who belong to the Russian piano tradition.

One of these was Vladimir Sofronitsky (1901–1961), an emotional and erratic artist, always intriguing, although his performances of the Classics perhaps lack balance. Being one of the greatest interpreters of Romanticist repertoires, Sofronitsky was not only worshiped by his audiences, but also exercised a great authority among his colleagues.

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[188] *Glavnaya repertuarnaya kommissia* (The Main Repertoire Committee) was a special section of *Narkompros* (*Narodnyj komissariat prosveschenija*, People's Commissariat for Enlightening), which approved of performers' repertoires.

[189] Musicians, unlike, say, theatre artists or literati, were often less harassed by regimes of all kinds, perhaps mostly due to music's non-referential nature. Besides other sources, this issue also appeared in the author's interview work with such representatives of the (Soviet) Russian piano school as Vladimir Ashkenazy, Nikolai Petrov, and Alexander Toradze (cf. Navickaitė-Martinelli 2010a).

Another equally unstable, 'nerve-triggering' musician was the legendary Vladimir Horowitz (1903–1989), who, though ethnically Ukrainian, may be considered as an ardent disciple of the Russian piano school. Just after immigrating to the West, Horowitz became known as the 'Wild Russian', due to the spontaneous virtuosity and nervous strain of his performances. Harold C. Schonberg names Horowitz's concerts as 'demonic' (Schonberg 2006: 433) – and indeed few artists of the time brought such fever onto a concert stage, moreover not too many became such a legend as Horowitz did. In many respects, his musicianship was a romantic atavism: Horowitz did not belong to the circles of the intellectual pianists who would consider a score the sanctity. He preferred playing the most technically demanding pieces, as in them he could fascinate the audiences with his wonderful pedalling technique and particularly wide colour range. Horowitz himself claimed that there are in the world pianists who are technically stronger than him, however, his secret lays in the infinite colour palette: the ability to provide the *staccato*, *legato*, *portamento*, *pianissimo*, *piano*, *mezzo-forte* or *fortissimo* twenty-five or thirty shades (quoted in Plaskin 1983: 448). It comes as no surprise that Horowitz did not play much Beethoven, but those works that do appear in his discography are worth studying as representing this Romanticist tendency of interpretation.[190]

As opposed to extremes of all sorts, especially in post-Revolutionary and post-War times, 'healthy' emotions were greatly appreciated by the government and the people. Art was supposed to move masses of new listeners, to be natural and easily comprehensible. In this light, academic concepts predominated in performances. One such 'normal', academically oriented player was Lev Oborin (1907–1974), winner of the first Chopin Competition in Warsaw in 1927, the first in what was to become a series of remarkable triumphs by Soviet-trained *virtuosi* at international competitions. Another player of similar orientation was Maria Grinberg (1908–1978), the first female pianist to record the whole cycle of Beethoven sonatas. Her style of interpreting Beethoven is very romantic and somewhat 'earthy' at the same time: impulsive and technically strong, with an easily-perceptible

[190] Performances of various sonatas by Beethoven as played by the Russian performers mentioned in this study were analyzed before any conclusions were drawn. The only ones referred to explicitly in this section are the Sonata Op. 27 No. 2 in C sharp minor, *Moonlight* as played by Maria Grinberg (rec. 1961) and Heinrich Neuhaus' interpretation of the Sonata Op. 31 No. 2 in D minor, *The Tempest* (rec. 1946).

emphasis on the 'meaning' or narrative in a piece. Even the first bars of the *Moonlight* sonata, as she plays it, seem to 'tell' (not just contemplate) something. There is always a yearning or going forward to be sensed in Grinberg's playing, with its deep sound, much pedalling, and consistently dramatic and passionate *fortes*.

The international success of the Russian piano school has strong connections with another name: Heinrich Neuhaus (1888–1964). A great teacher, Neuhaus created his own highly intellectual and at the same time very romantically oriented school of pianism. Speaking about the way of teaching, it is surely instructive to study a performance via the indications in a score that some good teacher has marked. But Neuhaus preferred a different pedagogical manner, a kind of 'oral' tradition. His classes were always open for anyone from the Conservatory to attend. This undoubtedly can be considered a real, conscious creation of a 'school'.

The requirements of the Neuhaus' school might perhaps be studied by examining his performances, as, for instance, that of Beethoven's Sonata Op. 31 No. 2, *The Tempest* (which was discussed in Chapter 3.4). In addition, his own preferences in performing the classics come to light in an article where he writes about how Beethoven was played by a famous pianist of the German school, Egon Petri: "Petri is a little formalist in Beethoven. He emphasizes first of all the intellectual, constructive sides of Beethoven's works. The natural, heroic pathos of Beethoven, his deep spiritual tension, incredible passion, his 'boiling' play of imagination – all this finds no adequate expression in the performance of Petri." (Neuhaus 1975: 157). Needless to say, all the aforementioned features find a place in Neuhaus' interpretations.

Among Neuhaus' students, two were rated as superb concert pianists: Sviatoslav Richter (1915–1997) and Emil Gilels (1916–1985). Richter's high interpretative culture as well as his many particular performances are well-known, hence requiring little discussion. Still, there is something to be said about the place that Beethoven's works occupied both in Richter's repertoire and in his teacher-student relationship with Neuhaus.

Richter played twenty-two sonatas by Beethoven. Yet Neuhaus only made him play Opus 110, which Richter did not want to do; but it was precisely in this work where Neuhaus taught him to obtain a singing tone, the one that Richter had always sought. Since then, and after several other important encounters with Beethoven's music, the composer's sonatas

became highly significant in Richter's pianism. The style in which Richter preferred to play and to hear Beethoven differed greatly from the Romantic interpretations of his famous teacher. But as concerns a somewhat nationalist approach, it is suitable to quote Richter's notes after the Brandis Quartet performed Beethoven's Quartets Nos. 12 and 13: "A massive programme solidly and ponderously played by large fat Germans. Not bad, but very German. After a concert like this, what better than to go to a restaurant and order sausages, sauerkraut *und so weiter*?" (Richter, quoted in Monsaingeon 2001: 302).

Another pupil of Neuhaus, Emil Gilels, serves as one of the most canonical examples of an earthy yet broadly passionate type of playing. As his teacher wrote in 1936, "Treating Beethoven a little dry-scholastically still recently, now he [Gilels] has sort of 'revealed' him. And all these boundless treasures of the emotional and intellectual world of this greatest composer and human have confronted him." (Neuhaus 1975: 142). Gilels recorded the complete Beethoven concertos three times, but unfortunately died in 1985, while in the midst of recording the Beethoven sonatas for Deutsche Grammophon. Gilels' tone in Beethoven is especially robust; quite frequently his presentations sound over-pedalled and thick, falling sometimes into a tantrum of extremely loud chords. As David Dubal writes, "[…] in essence Gilels' Beethoven is not Germanic, but has been transformed into a Byronic Beethoven – or perhaps even 'Pushkinian' would apt" (Dubal 1990: 104). To sum up in his teacher's words, "His natural features are wonderful. He has a powerful, bright sound, lightness, an exceptional sense of rhythm; his musical phrasing is always natural, healthy, organic and easily reaches the listener" (Neuhaus 1975: 142). A member of the Communist Party, Gilels was the first Soviet artist to be allowed to travel extensively in the West, and thus one of those through whose name and performing style the West got acquainted with the Russian piano school of Soviet times.

3.5.4.3. Recent Trends

Compared with the times when prominent professors – Neuhaus, Igumnov, or Yakov Zak – were working at the Russian conservatories, today one finds that much has been reduced to the average. What used to be piece-production has been put on a conveyer belt. As a result, the performer's individuality has been lost. Some complain that upon hearing contemporary

young Russian pianists, even the strongest ones, we hardly remember their names. As Nikolai Petrov puts it:

> I would have named plenty some 20–30 years ago. Now everything is uniform and standardized. The level of craft teaching in Russia is really high, but to train a pianist is really easier than to turn an individual into a musician. Quite often I hear performances of impeccable technique, but these things that have not passed through one's heart and mind do not achieve great success. They give a precise rendition of a piece, a statistical average. I repeat this often in my interviews: I see a very clear dividing line between a pianist and a musician: pianists are legion, while there is but a handful of musicians. There is no luxury which we witnessed some thirty, forty years ago. (Petrov, in Navickaitė-Martinelli 2010a: 222)

Yet, obviously, there is still a lot to choose from. For instance, some 'middle-generation' names, such as Mikhail Pletnev, Andrei Gavrilov, Arcadi Volodos, Nikolai Lugansky, or Denis Matsuev, are undoubtedly the worthy carriers of the label 'Russian Piano School'. It is rather impossible here to list all the distinguished Russian pianists of the late twentieth century – the names of some of them appear in the genealogical charts above, however, many artists are still to be included if the goal were to present the school in its entirety and variety.

A highly interesting pianist still active on the concert stage is Grigory Sokolov (b. 1950). Richter was already heading in this kind of 'mystical' direction. But Sokolov's performances go even further in their associations with this branch of Romantic aesthetics. His appearance onstage is very ascetic, and his playing grabs the listener, almost inducing a kind of hypnosis (Afanassiev and Pogorelich also come to mind as a comparison in these terms). He can become a thinker or a wild, extremely intense player, according to whatever image is needed to interpret a particular piece of music. Extremes of tempo, dynamics, and inner tension are specific features of his art.

One may distinguish one more name, namely, Evgeny Kissin (b. 1971), who is sometimes labelled as 'the last one' of the great Russian tradition. However, he is mentioned here not so much because of his marvellous qualities as a pianist, but mainly for his almost mysterious connection with his teacher, Anna Kantor. Even after Kissin had achieved celebrity, Kantor remained his teacher, often offering advice and making suggestions – much as Alexander Goldenweiser did with Grigory Ginzburg and Lazar Berman,

and Heinrich Neuhaus with Richter, long after all three had become celebrated pianists. Kissin repeatedly states that the fact of Kantor having been his teacher for so long means that she knows him as an artist better than anyone else, which makes her advice invaluable. Kantor's impact on Kissin might be compared with the influence that Aliza Kezeradze had on Ivo Pogorelich (b. 1958). The latter pianist – infamously original and idiosyncratic – can be labelled as yet another remarkable representative of the eccentric branch of the Russian tradition (as he himself proudly acknowledges, tracing the pedagogical line through Siloti to Liszt).

Among the youngest in the line, some highly talented performers appear – such as Miroslav Kultyshev, Evgeny Starodouptzev, Lukas Geniušas and others – however, some distance in time is desirable in order to properly evaluate their creative paths. Be that as it may, telling is the case of the Chopin competition in Warsaw in autumn 2010. Five pianists representing Russia (one of them, the second-prize winner Lukas Geniušas, represented Russia/Lithuania) advanced to the final phase of the competition[191] – a quite notable achievement even for a country with such a solid piano-performance tradition. Is Russian pianism making a 'comeback'? Or does this simply prove once again the Russian school's particular strength in interpreting Romantic music?

[191] The Russian laureates of the 16th International Chopin Piano Competition were Yulianna Avdeeva (1st prize), Lukas Geniušas (2nd prize) and Daniil Trifonov (3rd prize). Other distinctions were received by Nikolay Khozyainov and Miroslav Kultyshev.

3.6. Concluding Remarks

Positioning musical performance. In the course of time, a cultural paradox happened: Beethoven's music, constantly performed with conviction and delight, has yet remained something of an enigma. Beethoven was treated as the symbolic center of music history through the nineteenth on up to the early twentieth century. Nevertheless, the reception of his music – especially the re-evaluation of it as a historical phenomenon – has led to ambiguity rather than certainty. Many believe this happened because Beethoven's reception was from the outset quite different from the author's intentions. Of course a significant factor in this paradox is that Beethoven's music can be attributed to two musical epochs at the same time. Standing at the turning-point of two different style traditions in Western music history, Beethoven reflected this break in his music. Beethoven's music has established a divide in that history, both as the culmination of Viennese Classical style and the beginning of a new, Romantic musical age. And yet, when his works started being romanticized, everything that linked him with the Age of Enlightenment was forgotten with incredible ease.

Theoretical dogmas, too, have had an impact on performances of his music. Romantic aesthetics, with its heavy influence on current performance practices, has also influenced sounding interpretations of Beethoven. The great Beethoven interpreter, and nearly direct teacher of modern pianists, was the mythical nineteenth century virtuoso, Franz Liszt. The image of Beethoven as a tragic hero, which Liszt presented in his early career, shaped the tastes of many future generations of pianists. In the early twentieth century, Artur Schnabel added to Beethoven some features of intellectualism, solidity, and introversion. Later, attitudes towards Beethoven-interpretation were influenced by the authenticity movement, which suggested a look back at the context and, especially, the instruments of Beethoven's time, in an attempt at exploring their potential.

The history of Beethoven-interpretation has proved crucial to the overall development of Western performance practices. As early as the eighteenth century, Beethoven's music loomed in the background and exerted remarkable influence on the concert life that was then forming. Since then Beethoven's sonatas have been performed by Liszt and other mainstream pianists, interpreted by the authenticity movement, and have had post-

modern treatments of them; this music has survived and absorbed the various symbolical meanings attributed to it and its creator – whether viewed as a passionate Romanticist, a disciplined Classicist, or even a forerunner of modernism. Curiously, the twentieth century found Beethoven easier to perform and to understand than, say, Bach or Mozart. It should be acknowledged, however, that Beethoven-interpretation still raises problems and requires more understanding to perform than does the music of earlier composers. Interpretation of Beethoven's music, despite the abundant studies on this composer, still calls for a synthesis of musicological research, style analysis, and performance studies.

Was Beethoven a Classicist or a Romanticist? Does it matter? Are there unambiguous criteria that would determine our assigning this composer to one group or the other? It seems that there is no one simple answer. As the best sounding interpretations are those that combine Classicist and Romanticist features, the same holds for scientific insights, which realize and value the controversies of this figure and creator, the Classical logic of his music, its rigorous order, and the temperament that extends far beyond the boundaries of that logic and order. Perhaps this dialectics, this unanswered question, constitutes the main determinant of the exclusive status of this composer in Western musical culture: in musicological analyses, in the performers' repertoires, and in the listeners' experiences.

Modalizing the narrative. All performers, when interpreting a musical piece, change it somehow. If it were possible to notate all the dynamic, agogic, tempo, and other qualities of particular performances, one would get a completely new edition of a work, with graphically visible changes. In realizing the author's text in sounds, a particular 'performer text' arises. But how can a performance fully realize the qualities of a signified such as, in the case of Chapter 3.4, a tempest? Some surface differences are evident in the performances of the sample of this dissertation, determined mostly by the dominant attitudes of certain generations, e.g., as related to the flexibility of tempo. However, it may be argued that the performances analyzed do not present some essential, conceptual differences in how the contents of the musical drama and the general style of the piece were perceived. A possible explanation for this might be that, despite developments and changes in tastes and manners of performance practices, this Sonata contains a certain universal message. But perhaps it is more reasonable to talk about the

performance of certain signifiers that can operate meaningfully without given signifieds, or even in the absence of any signified at all. As Lawrence Kramer said, it is possible to have "meaningfulness without meaning" (Kramer 1994: 35). On this view, the tempest would be found not in what the music 'says', but in the way it 'sounds'.

A further step, then, which goes beyond the scopes of the present study, would be indicating how performers *modalize* music. According to Eero Tarasti, "The most important aspect of the concept of modality is that it provides music and other sign systems with a meaning that cannot be fixed into any lexicographic unit or verbal concept" (Tarasti 2004: 295). It represents semanticism without any particular semantic content (Kramer's "meaningfulness without meaning"). The presence of modalities in the musical utterance – the score itself – means the existence of a kind of structural logic that is embedded in the musical message (cf. Tarasti 1979, 2004). Thus, when speaking of modalities in performing or listening to music, we mean the same thing as what we normally understand by musical interpretation: we can 'modalize' the same piece in different ways. We can regard modalities as the source of musical narrativity, without implying that a particular story is being told.

Appropriation of the canon. As discussed throughout the present dissertation, the process of musical semiosis is continuously affected by various cultural, social, and psychophysical factors. Thus, all compositional or interpretative 'innovations' are directly influenced not only by the subjective identities of composers or performers, but also by traditions and contexts, cultural constraints and circumstances, styles and trends. As regards musical performance, it might seem that interpretations of music should stem from structural and semantic depths, that is, from the narrative logic of the musical work. (Indeed, in most musicological circles, the composer's idea seems to be taken as a kind of absolute, and the performer is supposed to remain as 'transparent' as possible.) What happens, though, is that we constantly face many different interpretations of the same work, the discursive figures and modal characteristics of which are significantly different from or even contrary to each other. And still, the performer is not absolutely free to make his or her interpretative decisions. What, then, are the conditions that govern the art of the interpreter?

An important assumption in the chapters of Part 3, as well as earlier in Chapter 2.6, is that many stylistic qualities and semantic features of musical performance have their roots in schools of interpretation. Despite the fact that the ideals and influences of a school on the individual have changed over time, the longstanding quasi-national approaches to music theory and historiography still persist. One may ask, if differences in music theory in different countries are still quite distinctive, why should the matter be different in the field of musical performance?

Having acknowledged the existence of a 'collective identity', and assumed that it affects performative signification, a possible step is to combine those with an empirical phase of research, which relates mostly to 'subjective identity', that of the individual performer. To do so requires the careful registering of subtle differences among various interpretations, determining the modalizations employed by each interpreter, and trying to find connections between those and the internal semiotic paradigm of certain musical works. In this way we may examine how 'Beethoven *à la russe*', the uncompromising Beethovenian *Moi*, interacts with both the subjective and collective identities of a performer.

Of particular interest in the case of the 'Russian Beethoven' is the conjunction of musical, personal and existential qualities necessary for communication to become possible between the endogenic (as well as exogenic) aspects of the several *Me-Tones*. Thrown into the flow of passionately romanticized interpretations, the *Moi* of this composer, belonging to a certain cultural and ideological context, has gained remarkable universality. The doctrines or beliefs that shape our imaginings about this artist have continued to evolve from his lifetime up to the present day. This has enabled interpreters – of various ideological and aesthetic persuasions and trends, and from different cultural epochs and performing styles – to claim Beethoven's music and the extra-musical meanings surrounding it as being *theirs*.

PART 4

From Onstage to Online: On Musicians' (Self)Representation in *Old* and *New* Media

4.1. Introduction

The centrality of media in the representation and promotion of a musician is nowadays more relevant than ever. Not only do media perform the most part of such jobs, but also, particularly the so-called *new media* (the internet, firstly), they have become a vehicle to convey new, unusual and more intriguing forms of picturing and describing a given artist. A quick glimpse as to how certain CD covers, websites or concert publicity look these days (with layouts ranging from mysterious to intellectual to sexy) provide an interesting trajectory of how the image of musicians has undergone a thorough evolution and multiplication of its manifestations.

Additional variables have intervened in and affected this process. First, the impact itself of new media in musical consumption has generated an entirely different landscape in the market and the culture. The metaphor of the internet as virtual society has often been used to describe how each of the diverse contexts where internet communication occurs (such as websites, blogs, social networks, etc.) correspond to social contexts and communities exercising similar functions: social networks as city squares, blogs as newspapers, websites as information offices, and so forth. Listeners buy their music in internet shops, purchase their concert tickets online, and share their experiences through posts and threads instead of traditional conversations or musicological reviews.[192] It is only natural that the ways musicians present themselves in the world had to develop accordingly.

Second, there have been instances of representational changes that are intrinsic to art music. While it looks like popular music was always keen to pursue a diversified aesthetics that would characterize each artist according to their own image and music (as well as following the graphic trends of a given period), art music has been anchored for decades to a standard aesthetics displayed in recurrent templates: the layout features of a respective recording company (white and yellow framing for Deutsche Grammophon, white and dark red for Phillips, and so forth); neat portraits of the performer or composer; classical paintings serving as clear but unoriginal metaphor of the musical work itself (e.g., countless wilderness landscapes associated to Romantic music, such as the systematic, almost inevitable

[192] For instance, to follow and comment in real time the latest edition of the Chopin Competition through an official Facebook group appositely created by the organizers was indeed a rather educational experience.

association between Friedrich's *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog* and nineteenth century music, as in Figure 4.1). All this, in the end of the twentieth century, was dramatically challenged by the need (certified by a decrease in sales and interest) of renewing and refreshing the communication between art music and its consumers. Performers could no longer be perceived as museum waxworks stuck in a time and space frame that was not reaching out anymore to their listeners.

Figure 4.1. Johann Caspar David Friedrich,
Wanderer above the Sea of Fog, 1818

What were those changes? How do the performers nowadays communicate with their potential or actual audiences, how do musicians present themselves, and to what target audiences are their messages actually being addressed? As mentioned previously in Chapter 2.1, in addition to such 'classical' means of finding and establishing new stars, such as competitions or the usual verbal communication by performers in interviews and books,

the present world of musical performance has become surrounded by all kinds of consumer media and branding inventory, from concert publicity with 'pop' appeal to half-fictional biopics at the cinema. Importantly, in all this, we encounter more often than not visual artefacts serving to promote the sonic art and its practitioners. The visual culture of our days allows putting the music played, both its records and live performances, on the same shelf where photographs and magazine articles are stored: these are all products of the commercial apparatus of the music industry. Clear comparisons can be drawn with popular culture, the representations of which can sometimes upstage the music itself.[193]

Figure 4.2. *A Beethoven Piano Weekend*, Wilhelm Kempff (piano), 2005, CD DG Deutsche Grammophon # 000428702, cover illustration by Karolin Klimek

193 In his most sorrowful complaints, several decades previously, Adorno wrote that "… it no longer makes any difference whether it is to [react to] Beethoven's Seventh Symphony or to a bikini" (Adorno 1991: 33). And indeed, when bringing his remark to the current scene and seeing someone such as the prominent pianist of the *serious* German tradition Wilhelm Kempff performing Beethoven in the Deutsche Grammophon series *Weekend Classics* with the astoundingly kitschy CD covers (see Figure 4.2), there is only one conclusion to be made, that no juxtaposition is considered inappropriate anymore. (Perhaps it is slightly more comfortable seeing the similarly-designed Gershwin or Chopin 'weekends', yet it is altogether too evident that all these are meant for the consumption of the women magazines' readers.)

This remark must be understood without any negative connotations, although the commercializing process of classical music will probably never be perceived as something positive by its purists. What we can learn from this is – again – that, whatever may be aesthetical or ethical evaluations of such a process, a semiotic-musicological research should not overlook the new meanings created by the many visual and/or commercial nuances of the performers' activity. As Philip Auslander put it, referring to a pivotal role of visualization in the pop culture:

> If rock music can be seen as a form worthy of aesthetic appreciation, despite (or because of?) its industrial origins and commercial character, the visual culture that surrounds the music and its live performance must be seen as contributing to that aesthetic experience, not merely as a systematic misrepresentation of the music whose sole purpose is the cynical promotion of an attractive illusion. (Auslander 1999: 65)

What is the musical message of the pianist, a truly remarkable virtuoso, when he demonstrates his impressive musculature in the picture that his public relations assistant sends to the organizers of the festival? What professional skills are represented in the photo of a beautiful half-naked violin player having a sea bath with the instrument gracefully resting in her hands?[194] And in what terms actually should we compare those artists with the seemingly ascetic ones of the twentieth century, such as Richter, Sokolov and Pogorelich, or with Gould, passionately creating TV and radio broadcasts? They are all so different, and the only similarity is that they have their instruments and music. But are the musical sounds really the only means of a performer's communication, and is it only the composer's intentions that the performers 'mediate'?

It seems that of no less importance for their personalities, their socially defined roles, and for everything that takes place outside the concert hall or even within, are the signals sent via their public or onstage behaviour, performers' outfits, verbal communication, books written, and myths created. As the Lithuanian philosopher Audronė Žukauskaitė writes trying to define the essence of the post-modern art: "First of all, the work of art

[194] In the present research, the inspiration for this remark came from the visual representations by the American pianist Anthony de Mare (cf. Introduction, Figure 1) and the pop-violinist Vanessa Mae. These two artists, however, are by no means the only representatives of a marketing of this very kind.

is not a medium, carrying a certain message […]; the work of art is *both* the medium and the message: all the information, necessary to understand it, can be found within itself" (Žukauskaitė 2005: 136). If we shift this insight into performance practices, we see that it is equally relevant for the discourse about current music performers. Obviously, most of them abandoned the romantic conception of the artist as an unworldly creature starving in the attic and following the divine precepts a long time ago. They are rather minded to look after an apt PR campaign, and, together with the music played, be noticed themselves. And this is where the novel discourses on musical performance in contemporary culture come to help research into art. In the closing part of this dissertation, some aspects of the possible analysis of personal websites of classical music performers, eleven Lithuanian pianists in particular, are presented.

4.2. Novel Discourses on Musical Performance in the Contemporary Culture

4.2.1. Introduction

Here, it is proposed that analyzing the way a pianist communicates and represents him/herself on new media appears to be a very 'complete' way to discuss all the above-mentioned topics. Not only because the internet in particular is nowadays a focal point of social communication at various levels, but also because the nature itself of a website is very eclectic, particularly in its possibility to combine different media and discourse genres into a single entity. By accessing musicians' websites visitors can listen to their music, see their pictures, watch their performances, read their personal thoughts and learn about their professional activities; frequently, there is even more than all this. A website is multitextual, multimedial and multimodal at once: for these reasons, it is not exaggerated that a whole chapter of a musicological thesis such as the present one is entirely devoted to the topic of web communication. It fits in with the direction of expanding the field of musical performance studies in the interdisciplinary way that was described at the beginning of this dissertation.

Let us begin with the very function of the website. In most cases, a personal website is for a pianist the vehicle for promoting his/her profession. Nowadays, and not infrequently, it is the *primary* vehicle of promotion. The necessity (or lack thereof) of promoting one's activity may be the reason why websites of this type are rather common, almost compulsory, among pianists who have not (yet) achieved monumental fame. Conversely, in more than one instance (say, Martha Argerich or Ivo Pogorelich[195], among others), internationally acclaimed performers are not particularly bothered

[195] In the course of writing this thesis, in September 2013, Ivo Pogorelich has actually for the first time launched his personal website. There, the pianist welcomes the visitors in a rather unusual, highly personalized manner: "Et Voila! Here is my new and first ever website page. As a matter of fact I was reluctant to participate in forming one for some time. However I decided not to resist any longer and keep pace with modernity, as it were." (http://ivopogorelich.com, last assessed in March 2014). Paradoxically, by the time the pianist had decided to keep up with modern times, the online source for getting the latest updates on Pogorelich's pianistic or sometimes personal (photos from the dinners, etc.) life was much more than a personal website (even though with all the by now 'obligatory' links to FB, Twitter and Google+) a Facebook group "The

about launching their own homepage. Information and promotion of their concerts and repertoires is in this case entrusted to their agencies, which issue basic profiles coated in a standard graphic template. Nothing else, or fancier, is really needed in this case: the existence of personal websites of such stars as Daniel Barenboim, Lang Lang or Evgeny Kissin is more explained by a wish to add to the characterization of the pianist as a 'persona', rather than 'artist'.

In fact, in rather many websites, besides the obvious wish or necessity (which, after all, is the main *raison d'être* of these websites) to promote the pianists' activity – their concerts, recordings, and repertoire – their 'personality' is also demonstrated. This feature, in principle, serves two functions: inspiring sympathy among the visitors (by showing that the performers have a 'life' outside music, with thoughts, hobbies, preferences, etc.), and creating a connection between their human character and the way they play (a manifested passion for nature may correspond to a sentimental/delicate performing style; an idiosyncratic personality may equal an idiosyncratic style, and so forth).

To generalize, it is possible to distinguish three distinct forms of promotion that may work separately and/or simultaneously, and that can be summarized in a *3P model*[196]:

- The promotion of the pianist as a *Performer*: in this case the attention-grabbing features of the websites are designed to convey information and create curiosity around the pianists' playing style, their repertoire, the orchestras/musicians they have played with, etc.
- The promotion of the pianist as a *Product*: the accent, here, is on all the elements that are commercially valuable (information on the pianists' releases, on their concerts, recitals, etc.).
- The promotion of the pianist as a *Persona*: the website, in this case, focuses the attention on the extra-musical world of the pianists. A picture gallery may show them in a non-concert outfit; a list of their 'likes' may appear, and so on.

Cult of Ivo Pogorelich Fan Club", where his fans rapidly share any type of information they are able to gather around.

[196] The terms, and the methodological strategy, are adopted from Dario Martinelli's *Professional/Product/Persona* scheme appearing in Martinelli and Navickaitė-Martinelli 2014, and more thoroughly elaborated in Martinelli 2015, forthcoming.

It goes without saying, every single medium employed in the website (which is – again – a multimedial and multimodal text) contributes to these three functions, which may specialize on one particular promotion, or represent more. The appearance of a picture gallery where the pianist is happily sitting in a meadow on a sunny day is predominantly a promotion of the persona, but might also hint a few thing about his/her approach to playing, or his/her preferences in repertoire (Schubert, in this case, would be a safer guess than Conlon Nancarrow). Or, to take another example, the inclusion of audio samples that can be freely downloaded or randomly played is certainly a promotion of the pianist's musicianship (P for Performer), but it can also serve the function of advertising his/her recordings (P for Product).

As a multimedial, audio-visual text, a website should be analyzed by taking into consideration each of the media employed. For this reason, the various models produced in web-semiotics (Codognet 2002 and Islam 2011, to mention but a couple) are a result of combined techniques of media analysis. In a way, the theoretical problems raised by internet texts are not dissimilar from those discussed half a century ago within film studies (including the legendary debates of *Cahiers du Cinema*). That is, can the internet (or cinema, back then) be considered an autonomous form of text, or is it mainly a combination of existing texts (images, videos, writings, sounds…)?

There is no intention here to solve the problem (although, hypertextuality would perhaps be the starting point), but merely a wish to explain why the present analysis uses elements and concepts from a wide range of fields, including advertising, audio-visual texts, fashion, visual arts and general semiotics.

Roughly speaking, we can say that a website employs four main groups of media, each in turn possessing different codes. Those are:

- The *visual* medium, consisting of images, layout, most of the info-graphics, chromatic choices, management of the space, etc.;
- The *linguistic* medium, consisting of all the written text and some of the info-graphics;
- The *videographic* medium, consisting of moving images, such as videos or animations (some of which can still be part of the info-graphic area);
- The *sonic* medium, consisting of all kinds of sounds (particularly the musical files, but also often specific sounds and noises used to liven up links or animations).

In the case studies that follow in Chapter 4.3, each of the pianists' websites shall be analyzed according to the elements belonging to all the four media groups.

4.2.2. Case Studies

The way the performers' art is promoted through the website, and the particular ways this promotion is organized, deserves more thorough reflections and an in-depth analysis of particular cases. For the purposes of the present research, a sample of eleven Lithuanian pianists was considered:

- Gabrielius Alekna (abbreviated GA in schemes and plates. Website: http://www.gabrieliusalekna.com/)
- Petras Geniušas (abbreviated PG in schemes and plates. Website: http://www.petrasgeniusas.com/)
- Gabrielė Gylytė (abbreviated GG in schemes and plates. Website: http://www.gylyte.com/)
- Ieva Jokūbavičiūtė (abbreviated IJ in schemes and plates. Website: http://www.ievajokubaviciute.com/)
- Daumantas Kirilauskas (abbreviated DK in schemes and plates. Website: http://www.daumantaskirilauskas.com/)
- Darius Mažintas (abbreviated DM in schemes and plates. Website: http://www.mazintas.lt/)
- Edvinas Minkštimas (abbreviated EM in schemes and plates. Website: http://www.minkstimas.com/)
- Evelina Puzaitė (abbreviated EP in schemes and plates. Website: http://www.evelinapuzaite.com/)
- Mūza Rubackytė (abbreviated MR in schemes and plates. Website: http://www.rubackyte.eu/)
- Kasparas Uinskas (abbreviated KU in schemes and plates. Website: http://www.uinskas.com/)
- Andrius Žlabys (abbreviated AŽ in schemes and plates. Website: http://andriuszlabys.com/)[197]

[197] During the course of writing this dissertation, Žlabys' website has gone "under construction" for what will probably be a restyling. The material referred to here was up-to-date on 31st August, 2013, when the text and images analyzed here were last retrieved. The decision was taken to include the analysis of this website into the overall sample, despite the possible risk that it may differ significantly after the change,

The characteristics of the sample, besides the nationality and, obviously, the instrument played, include the following:

1) The eleven pianists correspond to almost 25% of pianists listed by the Lithuanian Music Information Center (www.musicperformers.lt), which consists of 47 entries.[198] One quarter of the list may be considered an acceptable and representative sample, from at least a qualitative point of view.
2) Nine pianists belong to a 'young generation' of performers (that is, born in the 1970s or 1980s), while two (Geniušas and Rubackytė) were born in the 1960s or earlier. Such unbalance is simply due to the fact that more aged performers do not display great interest in the World Wide Web: Geniušas and Rubackytė are literally the only two Lithuanian pianists of their generation who have personal websites. Therefore, a first preliminary remark, here, is that, in Lithuania, the inclination to use the net mostly (almost exclusively) concerns those pianists who are young enough to have grown up in a web-oriented environment. Whether such picture follows or not a general trend in the rest of the world remains to be seen, and goes beyond the scopes of the present analysis.
3) Four performers are women, and seven are men. The idea, here, is to portray reality in a faithful manner. While, according to the mentioned database of the Music Information Center, the ratio between female and male pianists is 28 to 19, it is also true that the latter group is more present on the web, moreover, several female pianists appearing in that database are primarily accompanying/chamber pianists, and therefore not specifically pertinent to the solo repertoire analyzed here. An acceptable compromise between these data, plus the necessities empha-

mostly because Žlabys' musicianship and aesthetic viewpoints are discussed more than once in this thesis, thus the risk of having analyzed the 'wrong' website is of a less harm than not having any of this performer. Moreover, it was clear from personal communication with the pianist that the website under discussion was designed carefully taking into consideration the performer's preferences and ideas, hence the conviction that it is worthy presenting here.

198 The data was valid as of October 2012, when the sample for the dissertation was selected. Piano ensembles are excluded from the number, as they do not pertain to the present investigation.

sized in other points of this list, settled the final figure to a proportion of 4 to 7.

4) The sample does not include those performers who are using existing web platforms and social networks (such as MySpace or Facebook), with standard graphic and layout templates, to promote their activities. The point of this analysis is the specific, *personalized*, characterization of a pianist's image. That, inevitably, goes through a thorough consideration of graphical solutions. With the mentioned, and other, networks, notoriously, layout, colour schemes and graphics of the page are the same for everybody, basically leaving ground for personalization only in the inclusion of a profile photo.
5) The selection of the sample was, for obvious reasons, driven also by the necessity of including the five pianists already discussed in the previous chapters, particularly in relation to their interpretation of Beethoven. To those (Alekna, Geniušas, Kirilauskas, Rubackytė and Žlabys), six more pianists were added, following the previously-listed principles.
6) It is of extreme importance to point out that an analysis of such a medium as an internet site, which, in its essence, is a dynamic, ever-changing (i.e. being constantly updated) and, sometimes, even interactive entity, is doomed to a constant need to be updated accordingly (if the choice, or a need, is to present the various changes). As a matter of fact, even a couple of days is enough time for the information on a specific website to be changed and thus 'out-dated'. Here, many of the remarks on the specific elements of concrete websites are pertinent to the time the analysis was conducted, i.e., between autumn 2012 and summer 2013. Some snapshots of the sample homepages, in particular those having a blog structure, have the data in themselves that is also relevant to the specific period. The decision was made not to continuously change the results of the research conducted according to the possible novelties on the websites, but instead focus on a specific time-span and adhere to its findings. As pointed out above, one website of the sample, at the final moments of writing this thesis, was altogether not accessible, however, there were strong reasons to still include its discussion into the dissertation.

4.2.3. A Semiotic Website Analysis

Of the sample analyzed, all the websites use the visual, the linguistic and the sonic media, the first two being generally a *must* in homepages (cases based exclusively on one or the other exist, but are extremely rare), and the third being a rather predictable occurrence in a context whose focus is musicians promoting their music. However, no more than six websites make use of the videographic medium as well, showing the pianist 'in action' during concerts and recitals. This is the case with Alekna, Gylytė, Mažintas, Puzaitė, Uinskas, and Žlabys. The platform adopted, in all instances, is YouTube embedded clips. In addition, Žlabys' website is endowed with a Flash animation (at the home, or index, page). Not exactly a video, but the display of Žlabys' portrait, followed by a picture of a forest in a blurred environment that might connote windy, or foggy, weather (the latter picture itself animated by a dynamic use of colours and tones). A tiny Flash animation appears also in Rubackytė's website (a fade-in of the homepage's features in chronological order).

Starting from the classics of semiotic analysis, a Syntagmatic vs. Paradigmatic approach seems to be called for. In order to convey the three types of promotion in the aforementioned 3P model (performer, product, persona), websites adopt concerted strategies from all the texts available. Their main organization form, the one certainly standing out at 'macro' level, is the subdivision of the site into contiguous sections that are different but complementary (home, news, gallery, contact, etc.). These shall be the syntagms. The first goal, therefore, shall be to see what sections appear in the eleven websites, and what do not.

Having established the syntagms, each website operates specific choices, based on more individual needs/requests. A section such as "Audio" may present entirely or partially downloadable files, streaming, links to other sites where the file is audible, etc. It is of course the realm of paradigms, and it is of particular interest here, as it shows the 'ideological' orientation of the performers' choices, starting from their inclination to focus their communication on one, or more, of the three P's of the model.

The result of the syntagmatic examination appears in the following table:

	Home	News/Calendar	Biography	Recordings	Repertoire	Concerts	Press/Reviews	Audio	Video	Photo Gallery	Contact info	Guestbook	Sponsors	Links	Other
GA	+	+	+	+	+		+	+*	+*	+*	+				
PG	+*	+*	+	+	+		+			+	+				+*
GG	+	+*	+	+	+	+*	+			+				+	
IJ	+*	+*	+*	+*	+*	+	+*	+*		+*	+*			+*	
DK	+	+	+	+	+					+					+
DM	+	+	+	+		+			+	+	+	+	+		
EM	+	+	+	+			+			+	+				
EP	+	+	+	+*			+	+*	+	+	+			+	+
MR	+	+	+	+	+		+	+		+	+				+
KU	+	+	+	+		+			+	+	+	+	+		
AŽ	+		+				+	+	+	+	+				

Table 4.1. The result of the syntagmatic examination of the sample

Before commenting, two preliminary specifications:

1) The entry "Other" corresponds to sections that seem to have a performer-specific significance. Puzaitė (EP) includes a specific section on her ensemble project "Cosima Piano Quintet"; Rubackytė (MR) has a "Lithuania" section; and Kirilauskas (DK) has an enjoyable "Favorite things" area, with a reproduction of his handwriting listing eight favourite musicians and seven favourite extra-musical activities. Geniušas (PG) is the only one who has an "Events" section distinguished from the "News" (although the contents are almost identical, as mentioned in the next point). The intention is to discuss these individual variations on more common pages below, while analyzing the websites one by one.

2) The asterisks correspond to sections that are organized in an unusual manner, as compared to the rest of the websites analyzed. Namely: in Alekna's pages (GA), pictures, audio and video files are grouped under one single section named "Media". In Geniušas' case, as the website has mostly a blog structure, "News" and "Home" are in fact the same (as customary of blogs). Moreover, there is another section called "Events" which basically

contains the same information as the news section, with the addition of some anticipated concerts scheduled for the future (it was anyway decided to indicate that page as part of the "Other" group). Gylytė (GG), too, has one single section for two purposes, "Concerts" and "News" (that is, the only news items she is interested in spreading concern her concert activity, although there is a lovely "Babypause" inscription between the 2009 and 2011 calendars to indicate her maternity leave in 2010). Jokūbavičiūtė (IJ) displays a rather peculiar site-structure by assembling together several sections that are normally separate (Home and News; Biography and Photos; Contacts and Links; Press Reviews, Recordings and Audio Samples), and also by presenting her repertoire choices in form of "projects", with a concise explanation of their significance. Puzaitė (EP), finally, groups audio samples and recordings under the same section.

If one excludes the obvious recurrence of the index page ("Home"), the only two sections that appear in every single performer are the Biography and the Photo Gallery. This is already a rather clear indication that the main purpose of these websites is to provide a platform for interacting with the press and concert organizers. A biographical note and a neat, high-resolution, 'official' picture are indeed the very two things that both a newspaper and a concert agency will always need, in order to review and advertise a musical event. Having said that, when analyzing the sites individually, it is intended to show that pages such as these two can reveal a lot about any of the 3 P's that each musician seeks to represent/emphasize/promote.

In ten cases out of eleven, a "Recordings" section is present. The only one missing here is Žlabys, who is still a recording artist as are all his colleagues, but only as part of an ensemble (in the 2003 Grammy-nominated collaboration with Gidon Kremer). Despite this exception, it remains clear that all the performers are highly motivated in letting their visitors know what their recordings are, how they sound (entirely or in part), how their covers look, where they can be purchased, and – in more than one case – what the music critics thought of them. A section such as this has no specific model reader, meaning that it has them all: press, agents, managers, promoters, devoted fans, first-time visitors, colleagues.

Žlabys is also the only performer in the sample who does not offer a "News" section. This, coupled with the fact that also a "Repertoire" section is missing from his pages, shows that the pianist does not conceive

of his website as a 'dynamic' source of information (where he is playing in the next days, what he is playing at the moment and what he has played so far…), but rather he aims at presenting himself as a well-established, internationally-known and prize-winning pianist (all data emphasized in his biography), who does not necessarily need to let his public know about his commitments and musical choices: the public *knows* them, or knows where to find them.

Next in line comes the "Contacts" section, with nine occurrences out of eleven, although this datum is slightly misleading: both the missing cases, indeed, are not completely omitting this piece of information. Kirilauskas does include his email address, but only in form of a tiny link at the bottom of his "Home" section. In Gylytė's case, her email address in fact appears in the German-speaking portion of her website (there is also a Lithuanian and an English one), under the section "Unterricht" ("Teaching"). This is explained by the fact that although Lithuanian-born, Gylytė is a German resident, and her activities include didactics, for which sole purpose she offers her email contact.

Eight pianists out of eleven display a "Press" and/or "Reviews" section. The basic principle, in all of them, is to show how the artist is well-appreciated by critics, and how certain characteristics of his/her playing are particularly noteworthy (sensibility in interpretation, delicacy or strength of 'touch', etc.). The amount of information provided varies in degree. Žlabys offers a single page with relatively short quotes from six newspapers (of rather illustrious fame: The Los Angeles Times and The Chicago Tribune, for example). In a couple of such cases, the quote is not more than a bite: "…Contemplative and mesmerizing…" is all we learn from the LA Times' review. The page is an image, not a text, meaning that the quotes cannot be copy-and-pasted with simple mouse work: the concert organizer willing to use some of these quotes for the concert programme will have to go to the "Pictures" page, where a biographical note inclusive of those quotes is available in both .pdf and .doc format. Even more concise is Minkštimas, with only five (short) quotes, but his "Press" page is the concert organizer's dream, as *all* the material needed is found on that very page: CV, high resolution pictures (even a colour or B/W option is available), audio samples and, indeed, quotes from reviews. Puzaitė's "Press" page is also based on short quotes, but the number of review sources is higher and amounts to twelve. Alekna offers thirteen quotes and slightly more text than the simple

one or two sentences that we find in the previous three cases. Geniušas follows with eighteen quotes, and definitely with more text (one review from the Lithuanian magazine *7 meno dienos* is in fact transcribed entirely). Jokūbavičiūtė provides a number of quotes and also the opportunity to read some reviews entirely. Rubackytė and Gylytė, finally, display both excerpts and full text of every single review included. It is difficult to assess what these choices really mean. On the one hand it could be the usual quality-quantity dilemma, with Žlabys or Minkštimas opting for the former, and Rubackytė or Gylytė opting for the latter. On the other hand, the time and energy that a pianist devotes to his/her website could play a relevant role, here: after all, a concise "Press" section might simply be the result of the practical impossibility of sitting down and transcribing a whole review. Not to be underrated, finally, is the subtle art of selecting and isolating words and sentences from a not necessarily flattering review that nevertheless concedes the occasional compliment to a musician.

In six cases, a "Repertoire" page appears. They are ordered by formation (with some exceptions) and sub-ordered by composer (in all cases). Generally, the main taxonomic preoccupation is that of distinguishing the works performed with some ensembles (from chamber to orchestra) from those for solo piano. That distinction may vary from a simple binary structure ("Concertos" and "Solo repertoire" for GA[199]) to more complex ones, plus the mentioned exceptions. In MR, we have three sections: "Concerti", "Recital", "Chamber music", the second one obviously referring to solo performances. In PG, we have "Works with orchestra", "Solo works", "Chamber music" (the same as MR, just with different words), and the first exception to the rule, "Lithuanian composers" (an instance that we shall see repeated elsewhere). More articulated are GG and DK. The former chooses to be very specific with formations, including the sections "Piano concerts", "Piano solo", "Chamber music", "Piano duo" (with such works as Johann Christian Bach's Sonata in C Major), "Accompaniment" (a feature that perhaps not many pianists are too anxious to emphasize), and even the peculiar "Diverse", featuring orchestral works where piano does *not* appear (like the Cello Concerto in B minor, Op. 104, B. 191, by

199 Curiously, a specific "Chamber" section is missing in GA's page, despite the fact that Alekna has more than once performed with string quartets, ensembles such as the Grammy-nominated Ursula Oppens (a collaboration that is especially valued by the pianist), and has also released a CD with cellist Edvardas Armonas.

Antonín Dvořák, among others): in this case, Gylytė is simply informing the reader that she has helped the soloists to rehearse (the so-called piano-coaching), and thus she still masters the work *per se*. Rather interesting is also DK's repertoire page. Besides the usual triad "Works with orchestra", "Chamber music" and "Solo works", Kirilauskas adds a "Lithuanian composers" section (like PG), and even a "Recital programmes" part, where he carefully lists every programme he has performed from 1999 onwards. Finally, perhaps the most original categorization of repertoire is encountered in IJ, who not only (as mentioned previously) uses a different denomination for the whole page ("Projects/Programs" instead of "Repertoire"), but also assembles her repertoire in the same way as one of DK's sections (that is, by programme), with the addition of written introductions (explaining the thematic connections among the works of each programme) and the same evocative titles of the actual circumstances where each programme was performed ("The Double Staircase", "New Century: New Paths" and "The Romantic Imagination": details of the occasion appears only in the second programme, where a specific link loads a .pdf of the whole concert booklet).

The different strategies for 'packaging' repertoires tell us something of what is relevant for each performer. Given the basic tripartite structure (orchestra-solo-chamber, normally in this order), it appears that some pianist may not find a given repertoire particularly worth a mention (Alekna's surprising omission of chamber works, for example), while others will list just anything they can offer (such as Gylytė's page). Two cases (PG and DK) commit themselves to some national branding, when they devote a specific section to Lithuanian composers, a feature that may be interpreted either as a means to facilitate work for concert organizers (in Lithuania or abroad), or, as discussed previously in Chapter 2.7, indeed as the rather common gesture of an artist from a relatively small country giving visibility to his/her national culture (most likely, both the interpretations apply). Finally, two performers (DK and IJ) include their concert programmes, with the possible interest of showing how their repertoire choices are thematically (or at least, conceptually) connected.

Audio samples are an interesting issue. They 'officially' appear on only five websites, either on a proper "Audio" page, or under titles such as "Media" (for instance, combining Audio and Video, as in GA) or "Listen" (MR). However, the counting is not complete, because, in addition to

this, and leaving aside that "Video" pages (which shall be discussed below) are anyway *audio*visual, every single site does in fact feature audio files or streams, in forms of short samples of released material (in DK's case, there is just the additional step of clicking each CD's image-icon and listen to the samples in the very web-shops that sells those recordings). EM also made the choice of launching an audio sample at the very moment his page is opened. Otherwise, variations exist only in the quantity of samples offered. Figures range from the three samples available on EP and GG to the impressive 64 audible on MR.

Five also have the 'official' "Video" pages, but one additional clip can be found in GG in the section named "CDs". Interestingly, every single video (as mentioned, YouTube-embedded files, in all cases) are excerpts from concerts. However obvious this state of things may read, it is certainly worth attention that after a vast promotion of the 'Persona' part that each website operates through the other sections (photo galleries, biographies, personal thoughts, etc.), no video cares to show us 'parallel' activities such as interviews, press conferences, CD presentations, ceremonies, and so forth.

The question of the "Concerts" page is similar to the "Audio" one. Strictly speaking, only four performers have this kind of page. In practice, however, all the websites analyzed except AŽ provide accurate information of where and when (and sometimes 'what') each pianist is playing. When a specific "Concerts" page is missing, it will be pages such as "News", "Calendar" or "Agenda" that serve the same purpose. Not much can be added on this topic, since the structure and the description of the events is rather similar across the whole sample: this kind of page is purely informative, and the examples vary merely on the basis of *how much* information is provided (for instance, IJ is also careful in adding a link to the very institution that hosts each event), without nuances of any other nature. Worth a mention is only the fact that, rather than listing the concerts *inside* the apposite page, KU provides a link to his Facebook page, where indeed an accurate list is displayed. Such a move can be explained in two ways: on the one hand, Uinskas may be interested in bringing as many visitors as possible to the social network, where notoriously plenty of web traffic occurs, and the system of the 'comments' and 'likes' certainly adds to the image and popularity of an artist. On the other hand, there might also be a very practical reason behind this decision: updating a page on Facebook is a much easier task than doing the same on a webpage that was created by a professional designer

(a certain Tomas Liutkevičius, in this case). If KU hired Liutkevičius simply for designing the site (rather than also maintaining it), it might be that he found it much easier to do his updates on Facebook. Once again: both the interpretations might be valid, and this could have been a classic win-win situation for Uinskas.

On only three websites there are the "Links" pages, and on no more than four are actual links to external websites that each of them contains. Such a feature, which in the internet's infancy, so to speak, used to be among the most important ones on any website of any nature/activity (a sort of celebration of the concept itself of hypertext), is now reduced to few connections that are, in most cases, directly related to the performer him/herself. In EP's case, we are exposed to links to a photographer, a make-up artist (possibly, the very two that Puzaitė herself hired for her Gallery photo session, although no specific information appears in this regard), and to her oboist colleague Andrius Puskunigis. GG offers the same YouTube link to the video of her performance, featured on the "CDs" page, plus links to Frankfurt's Alte Oper concert hall, and to the Lithuanian National Philharmonic Hall and State Symphony Orchestra. IJ, finally, includes a link to her project "Trio Cavatina" (with violinist Harumi Rhodes and cellist Priscilla Lee), to her recording label "Labor", to the Borletti-Buitoni Trust (which had awarded her a fellowship in 2006), and to the Bard College Conservatory of Music (organizer of a festival where Jokūbavičiūtė performed).

To conclude this general presentation of the websites, something should be said also about the "Guestbook" and "Sponsors" sections, which appear in only two cases, and in the *same* cases, that is, KU and DM. The coincidence is easily explained by the fact that the two performers were once conducting a joint partnership for managing and promoting their careers. When compared to each other, Mažintas' and Uinskas' websites are strikingly similar in many respects, starting from the use (and denomination) of the same amount and type of sections, and continuing with layout, graphic, and stylistic choices.

After this long review of the structural features of the websites, the attention shall be turned to a more specific semiotic investigation of the sample. For this purpose, it is proposed to organize the analysis by artist, rather than by topic, as it is more practical. Snapshots of the various webpages are also included, to get a better idea of the visual dimension. Normally,

there are two pictures for each site: the homepage and one of the contents pages (for reasons of uniformity the "Biography" page was selected for everybody). The only exceptions are GA, PG and DK, for whom the sole homepage appears. This is due to the fact that these three websites have a "Blog" structure and layout, which means – among other things – that every page looks the same except for the contents (and, in DK's case, for the top picture, which anyway belongs to the same photo session, and has very similar aesthetics). In these cases, there was really no need for a second page sample to illustrate the visual characteristics of the site. In all other cases, a more classical website layout was witnessed, which is ideally inspired by books and magazines, that is, they have a 'cover' (the homepage), with less contents and very appealing graphics, and an 'inside' text, with more contents and more standard graphics.

4.3. 'Bar-To-Bar' Analysis of the Pianists' Websites

4.3.1. Gabrielius Alekna

(GA, http://www.gabrieliusalekna.com/, Figure 4.3)

Of the whole sample analyzed, GA is probably the website mostly aiming to provide a young/informal image of the artist. It is also one of the least 'traditionally-looking' layouts, as far as classical pianist's sites go, from more than one point of view. As already mentioned, this is also one of the three cases presenting a 'blog' structure (which, as said above, means also that one single snapshot is needed for the present analysis – see Figure 4.3): blogs are more recent platforms as compared to traditional websites, which possibly adds to the 'fresh' and 'dynamic' spirit of the whole image that Alekna conveys to his visitors. Reasons for this strategy may be more than one: firstly, Alekna *is* a young pianist, having been born in 1975. Underlining this characteristic is not only a mere question of personal data, but it also aims to hint a few things about the pianist's talent: any of his skills/successes, indeed, get amplified by the fact that he managed to achieve them at a fairly young age. In addition to this, it must be said that Alekna lives in New York, where an artist's image (including the *serious classical musician*) may easily acquire a more informal/laid-back shape. To sum up in key-words, and in a half-serious way, the main message of this website, we can easily suggest that Alekna is telling his visitors: "I'm young, talented and cosmopolitan".

4.3.1.1. Visual

Using the well-known Greimassian categories (cf. 1976: 129–157), we can approach Alekna's website (and the others as well) by distinguishing between topological, plastic and eidetic categories. In the first case, we notice a rather standard planning of the objects' position, with a basic two-column layout with header and footer. The header serves altogether as both a logo and navigation bar (name, qualification, index of the pages and the main iconographic material, all of them appearing on every page). In the middle of the page we have a content column on the left (occupying 2/3 of the space, roughly), and a menu column on the right, showing links to the video and photo gallery pages and a widget to Alekna's Facebook page.

Figure 4.3. A snapshot from Gabrielius Alekna's homepage
(as retrieved in October 2012)

This part is not redundant, as compared to the navigation bar, because none of the three links are featured there, at least not directly. Videos and pictures are in fact subsections of the "Media" page, along with sound samples, so the menu column helps locate pages that are not explicitly stated in the navigation bar. The connection to Facebook is not featured at all in the header, so it is a totally novel piece of information. Finally, the footer has the sole purpose of reporting copyright information, and is therefore comparatively very tiny.

From a plastic point of view, GA offers a neat colour scheme, albeit not the most recurrent one within the special genre of classical musicians' sites (we shall return to this below). As a combination, it is rather neat and sober (although not 'austere', as we shall see from several case studies of the sample), with an informal, sunny accent provided by the use of orange. Besides the latter colour, the palette employs exclusively neutral colours: white (the primary one) and several degrees of grey, including very dark ones approximating black. So, depending on how we define white and grey, the palette is either triadic or monochromatic. White, as dominant colour, provides

the whole background of the site, including the non-diegetic one.[200] Grey is used for most graphics and infographics, including the name "Gabrielius Alekna" on the header, the links in the navigation bar, and the whole content of each text. Orange, finally, serves the purpose of qualifying the profession on the header ("pianist"), highlighting the links in the navigation bar (with the typical mouse-over technology), giving emphasis to each entry's title, and signalling the presence of a clickable passage inside the texts (like the typical "Read more" function). Orange is not overstated, meaning that it is far from saturation: there is obviously no need for that, since it already, and very easily, stands out against white and grey. Moreover, it was surely the designer's intention that of simply providing an 'accent' of vitality to the website, and certainly not an adolescent quality. Additional, incidental colours appear whenever a full-colour picture is featured. For instance, the eight Alekna's portraits included in the navigation bar (in correspondence to each main section), which are black and white by default, become coloured once the correspondent section link is clicked. This means that the overall colour layout of the website is never *exactly* the same. It goes without saying, this is another addition to the sense of youth and dynamicity that the website conveys.

Within the eidetic categories, except one single feature (which shall be soon described), we have a certain regularity and straightness of lines and shapes. Borders, contours and frames are all straight with sharp edges and horizontal/vertical lines, adding to the 'sober' part of the website. The 'informal' element is in this case provided by the diagonal positioning of the navigation bar, which grabs most of the attention, and remains unchanged throughout the whole navigation. Along with other features (already or about to be described in this analysis), this is an important part of the young/fresh component that dominates on the website's semiosis.[201]

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200 Martinelli 2015 borrows the expressions 'diegesis' and 'non-diegesis' from film studies in order to qualify the space 'belonging' to the website content, and the mere background that appears in the browser, whose size may vary depending on the resolution adopted by individual users. Such space is normally *not* perceived as part of the website, although its main features (colour, pattern, etc.) are still established by the designer of the website itself.

201 It must be noted here that those visitors of the website who are already familiar with the pianist's playing, may be somewhat surprised by such a visual choice, if they think that a website must mainly represent a musician from the professional point of view. Alekna's musical interpretations, as also discussed earlier in this dissertation,

The visual material should of course be analyzed also in terms of its figurative content, and that in principle would require that every single picture/photo/drawing appearing on a website receives a proper semiotic treatment. Obviously, there is no room for embarking on such a venture, so this part shall be kept to a rather general level, reserving attention for the most salient instances, and to an overall assessment of the communicative strategies of figurative material as a whole. To make it clear, GA website alone already displays 37 pictures, not counting repetitions in different contexts, which may acquire different signification. Analyzing all the figurative visual material in the whole sample would equal working on something like 500 pictures.

Returning to GA, a relevant figurative attention-grabbing feature is the navigation bar, which, as mentioned above, displays eight different black-and-white photographs of Alekna that turn to full colour once the correspondent page is opened.[202] The pictures portray Alekna in different poses, moods, fashion styles (mostly informal, and certainly not concert-like), and are taken from different distances and angles. Once again, the pianist communicates to us in a youthful, informal and dynamic manner. Also, the eight pictures are framed into a photographic film-looking stripe, and one might possibly remark that this particular idea may be slightly misleading, not being an *explicitly* musical element, but rather reminding to other arts such as photography, cinema, and possibly fashion. This is quite interesting when we consider that altogether there is very little visual material informing us that Alekna is after all a musician, and a pianist in particular. There is a linguistic statement ("pianist" written in orange on the header), a pentagram-inspired background for the navigation bar (conveying a general 'musical' sense, although the pentagrams could be easily mistaken for simple, decorative horizontal lines), and a video-still from the menu column showing Alekna playing the piano in a concert. For instance,

stand out first and foremost *not* for their 'dynamism' or 'youthfulness', but rather for their well-informed and structural qualities. Here, the conclusion may be drawn that GA website has after all more explicit relation to the promotion of the musician as a *persona* and as a *product*.

[202] It is certainly worthwhile remarking that the sixth of these pictures (the one corresponding to the "Repertoire" page), when displayed in full colour, reveals dotted orange wallpaper as a background. Frequently, for a site's colour palette, web-designers take inspiration from the visual material already available. It would not appear too much as a surprise if the decision to employ the orange in the palette did actually originate from this very picture.

none of the eight photos in the navigation bar shows Alekna by a piano. As compared to most musicians' websites, this is a rather small amount of explicit information. On the basis of the main attention-grabbing features, a stranger's first glimpse at the website would give three types of information: *Gabrielius Alekna* (linguistic), *pianist* (linguistic) and *cinema/photography* (visual). Of course, in the end, the visitor trusts language more than images, so 'pianist' comes out as a statement, while 'cinema/photography' is just interpretation. Yet, it cannot be excluded that some casual visitor will get an idea that Alekna is a pianist specializing in film music, or perhaps a musician who also works as an actor (the latter interpretation being possibly encouraged by the general style of the navigation bar pictures).

Of the other pictures appearing inside the website, three are included in the photo gallery, and are the type of material that a concert organizer or a journalist are going to need when dealing with a performer. Once again, Alekna plays the card of the informality, as two out of three pictures portray him in 'civilian clothes', and only the third one displays the classical musician's 'uniform', that is, a tailcoat with a bow tie (although, one may argue, casual clothes sporting a very visible scarf, as in Alekna's case, has conveyed an unmistakable idea of 'artist', since the days of Aristide Bruant). Remarkably, once again, no piano appears in any of these pictures.

4.3.1.2. Linguistic

First and foremost, it has to be stated that GA adopts only for the English language: this is another sign of cosmopolitism, and might hint a not-too-strong interest in promoting Alekna as a 'Lithuanian' artist. However, that has certainly not been his case, particularly in recent years, when an increasing number of Lithuanian composers have appeared in his repertoire, and his research interests focus on Lithuanian music (as stated earlier in this dissertation, Alekna successfully defended a DMA thesis on Vytautas Bacevičius' piano music).

Exactly at the linguistic level, we can witness a few instances where the pianist's nationality seems to be a prominent feature of his musical identity. To mention only one case, the very opening line of his biographical note reads as follows: "Pianist Gabrielius Alekna is the first Lithuanian to hold a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the Juilliard School." Throughout this very text, the words "Lithuania" and "Lithuanian" are repeated rather often.

We of course read about Lithuania also in the “Calendar” and “Home” pages (the latter being used as newsfeed, as customary in blogs), but these instances are very context-bound, and appear always and only in those occasions where *something related to Alekna* is happening in Lithuania, not as a specific ideological choice. The same applies to the “Press and quotes” page, where obviously some Lithuanian media are mentioned.

In the light of this, and, most of all, the lack of visual signs that would associate Alekna to Lithuania, in some shape or form (we shall instead see that, in other performers, this is a firm priority), it is possibly safe to assume that the performer’s wish remains that of representing himself as an international performer rather than one whose mission is to promote a specific national repertoire.

As for the fonts, they, too, contribute to the general informal mood of the website. Two types are visible, both sans serif: a regular “Tahoma” for most of the text and headings, and a lively handwritten-looking font for the primary headings.

4.3.1.3. Videographic

Not too much can be said about this and the next category (both to be found in the “Media” section of the website). Videos and sound files, by Alekna’s own admission (Alekna 2012: personal communication), were selected on a very practical basis: what was available, what had the most decent audio/video quality, etc. In that sense, no particular ideology is here conveyed.

4.3.1.4. Sonic

See Subsection 4.3.1.3. “Videographic”.

4.3.2. Petras Geniušas

(PG, http://www.petrasgeniusas.com/, Figure 4.4)

Petras Geniušas is one of the two pianists in this sample belonging to an older generation. Born in 1961, he is a highly respected performer in Lithuania, where he also decided to devote most of his time and energies as pianist, trading a more international profile for a leading, charismatic role in the panorama of the Lithuanian piano school. His age (and, consequent-

Figure 4.4. A snapshot from Petras Geniušas' homepage
(as retrieved in October 2012)

ly, a lesser inclination to new media) and the tiny size of the Lithuanian musical community (i.e., information can be spread rapidly) are probably behind the fact that Geniušas' website is possibly the simplest and most elementary of the whole sample.

The site was created with Weebly, which is one of the many companies (like Wix, Wordpress, Google and others) that offer free, basic templates for websites and blogs. It is rather safe to affirm that Geniušas does not consider his website as the utmost priority, in terms of promotion and representation of his professional profile.

4.3.2.1. Visual

On this website, everything seems to be conceived in the name of simplicity and soberness. Topologically speaking, the website has a "Two column layout with a header", with the left column used as menu, the right one for

the contents, and the header is used exclusively as logo/identification. With the exception of two photographic portraits in the section "Nuotraukos/ Photo", and three pictures in the section "Įrašai/Records", the header also happens to be the only iconographic material available. Unlike Alekna's film-inspired navigation bar, Geniušas' header leaves no doubt that he is a pianist. The picture (a collage of two different photos) is somehow tripartite: on the left (in black and white and with reduced contrast) an image of two hands playing on a piano keyboard; in the middle (in full colour and regular contrast) a shoulder close shot of Geniušas in tuxedo looking at the camera (that is, at the visitor); on the right (still in colour and normal contrast: it is in fact the continuation of the former photo) an open grand piano, at the top of which the inscription "Petras Geniušas" appears. The statement is thus extremely clear: piano playing (hands on the piano), concert pianist (Geniušas with a tuxedo), big concert halls (it is a *grand* piano and it is open at its maximum). Unlike Alekna, it is totally unnecessary for Geniušas to add the word "pianist" under his name: nothing could be clearer.

As mentioned, besides the header (which, visually speaking, dominates the whole website), the only other pictures available are in the "Photo" and "Records" sections. In the former case, the journalist or concert organizer can download two high resolution portraits of Geniušas.[203] Once more, this material differs from Alekna's 'casual' portraits, in that Geniušas' job is again unmistakeable. In the first picture, he appears wearing a tuxedo and bending on the piano; in the second one, there is no piano visible, but he is still wearing a tuxedo, he is standing by a score sheet, and behind him (out of focus) one can spot the head of another musician, the scroll of a string instrument (a viola, possibly) and the pipes of an organ: evidently, thus, the visitor understands that the picture is taken during a concert. No room for ambiguity. It might be said that it is the 'old school' of a pianist's representation.

In the "Records" section, we get two pictures of recordings' covers and one portraying Geniušas during a concert with saxophonist Vladimir Čekasin.

Plastically speaking, the colour scheme is even more sober than Alekna's. Like the latter, this site too is dominated by white and filled with shades of grey in the texts: however, no sparkling orange appears here, but – besides

[203] The data is valid as of Fall 2012. Since then, a lot of new photographic material has been added, which, however, does not change the main features of the website.

the warm colours of the header's photo (the pianist's skin and the inside of the piano) – we are only exposed to the mild blue of the mouse-over of the navigation column's links, and to the bordeaux of the headlines in the "Naujienos" page (which is also the home-page).

Eidetically speaking, finally, we get another restatement of simplicity and soberness. All shapes are regular and all lines are straight. The totality of the texts is oriented horizontally.

4.3.2.2. Linguistic

Certainly, the aspect that immediately catches a visitor's attention is the bilingual (Lithuanian and English) structure of the site. In the majority of cases, in practically any field of web communication, if a website addresses its readers in more than one language, an apposite menu, containing as many links as the languages available, appears somewhere at the top or at the bottom of the page (normally, with the infographics of national flags, or with abbreviations such as "ENG" or "EN"). The visitor selects *one* of the languages available, and reads the whole contents in the selected idiom. On the contrary, Geniušas opts for a coexistence of the two languages, so that all the information is visible in both Lithuanian and English at the same time. Once again, although one may be tempted to interpret this choice in an ideological sense (i.e. an attempt to give Lithuanian the same importance as English), the truth is probably that the website creators did not really bother to create a 'double' of each page, which would have been more demanding both in the stage of preparation of the website, and (mostly) on the occasion of the various updates.

Even more interestingly, the "News" section is the only one that appears *only* in Lithuanian ("Naujienos"). It seems that Geniušas, after a few decades of various international professional commitments, has decided to focus most of his career efforts inside Lithuania. Besides the obvious occasional concerts abroad, the majority of events related to him happen in Lithuania and/or is in one way or another addressed to a Lithuanian audience.[204] No need is probably felt to create a news section written in English.

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[204] For instance, the "Lithuanian Days in Eindhoven" event organized in 2012 by the Lithuanian Embassy in the Netherlands, where Geniušas played a solo recital to

In general, Geniušas does not state too loud that he is a proud member of the Lithuanian musical community: it is probably to be inferred that he takes this aspect for granted, given his fame and his career choices. At least on his website, he does not seem to make too strong a point about it (as we shall see, for instance, in Rubackytė's case). Not to be disregarded, however, is the fact that the "Repertuaras/Repertoire" page has a specific entry called "Lithuanian composers", and that certainly stands out in a context where the other entries (Works with orchestra, Solo works and Chamber music) are classified according to a different taxonomy.

Finally, the fonts, too, follow the general feeling of simplicity that one gets when visiting this website. There is one basic serif type in the header for the pianist's name (possibly a "Times"), while all the rest is written with the sans serif "Verdana".

4.3.2.3. Videographic

No video file is included in the website at the moment of writing these lines.

4.3.2.4. Sonic

The "Įrašai/Records" section contains no less than thirteen sound streams, taken from two CD releases and from the above mentioned performance with Vladimir Čekasin. The choice of the samples is rather generous, not only because of their amount, but also because they are available in full length, and not in the common 30-second or one-minute sample format. Some opuses get more exposure than others (as in the case of Schubert's Sonata No. 19, of which three episodes can be played), but what certainly stands out is the recording of the concert with Čekasin, available in its entirety.

It is rather peculiar that the recordings listed in this section are not *all* of those released by Geniušas (there are several other compilations where at least one performance of his is featured). It is again tempting to read this datum as yet another suggestion that this website is hardly Geniušas' prioritized way to promote his activities.

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celebrate the Lithuanian State Day. The news on this concert is visible in Figure 4.4 as part of the homepage's snapshot retrieved in October 2012.

4.3.3. Gabrielė Gylytė

(GG, http://www.gylyte.com/, Figures 4.5 and 4.6)

With Gylytė's website we enter a different dimension. The site does not have a blog structure or layout, as the previous two, but rather belongs to a more classic, visually-refined, category of web communication. By playing the cards of feminine beauty and elegance, the values conveyed by this website are best summarized by a quote reported at the beginning of the "Bio" section: *Critics describe the artistic work of Gabriele Gylyte as "Cantability and transparency, apparently effortless virtuosity with endless energy reserves…"*. In a sense, this is exactly what this website is about, and there are even specific elements that remind the visitor of the exact words used in this quote.

4.3.3.1. Visual

The visual dimension is definitely the emphasis of this website. Starting this time from the plastic dimension, we witness a colour scheme that is certainly more typical of classical pianists' websites. The dominant colour is black, which has several important connotations that fit the purpose. To begin with, black is the colour of most pianos and, more importantly, of the *prototypical idea* of a concert piano.[205] Besides that, black is the colour that most closely conveys the ideas of elegance, classicism, austerity, seriousness, and style. It is no coincidence that, Gylytė included, no less than seven websites out of the eleven of the sample adopt the same chromatic strategy.

Other colours in GG include the lightest shades of grey and a mild orange for the text, a darker nuance of grey for the text background in the various sections, and the full palette for the many colour pictures available on each page.

The topological dimension is obviously focused on Gylytė's many pictures. As already said, the pianist here intends to convey an image of femininity, elegance, beauty and effortlessness (it should not sound surprising, in this respect, that her repertoire largely consists of classical and

[205] Brown is mostly associated with vertical pianos used at home for training, white feels too much like Richard Clayderman, and other colours are more pertinent to interior design solutions than to musical instruments themselves.

Figure 4.5. A snapshot from Gabrielė Gylytė's homepage

romantic composers). In the quote that inaugurates the "Bio" section, we read, among other things, that her playing is "transparent" and "cantabile": by consequence, it is intriguing to notice how many of her pictures relate to concepts of 'brilliance', 'light', 'cheerfulness', and 'luminosity'. The homepage picture (Figure 4.5) shows Gylytė sitting by a piano, with a bright glass wall as a background. The same environment is displayed in four more pictures in the "Gallery" section, while in seven more cases (out of a total of fifteen photographs) the pictures are taken outdoors on a sunny day. However, the quote also refers to "endless energy reserves", so what we have here is not a weak/fragile type of woman, but one who is energetic and resolute. Checking the photo gallery, it could be said that there are at least four pictures that suggest this kind of image: we see Gylytė walking or standing in rather confident, self-assured poses, almost always smiling, and anyway far from the melancholic/insecure mood that many female artists like to convey.

Back to the homepage picture, the fact that Gylytė is sitting by a grand piano, leaves no doubt about her occupation, so – as with Geniušas' website,

and differently from GA – there is no need to add any "pianist" inscription after her name.

The website's layout lacks a proper header, replaced by a simple navigation bar, and presents a two-column structure with the contents on the left, and a picture on the right. Under the picture, we find the inscription "Gabrielė Gylytė" and, always at hand, the language menu: any time, on any page, a visitor can switch to any of the three languages available (see, for instance, the "Bio" section in Figure 4.6).

The eidetic dimension keeps no particular surprises in reserve. There are straight lines, regular shapes, and horizontal orientation for every text. It is only the pictures (various photographic portraits of Gylytė) that add some dynamics to the layout. Gylytė's poses are indeed always lively (she bends, crouches, sits down in a slightly asymmetric way, etc.), and are certainly the main attention-grabbing features of the website.

Figure 4.6. A snapshot from the "Bio" section of Gabrielė Gylytė's website

4.3.3.2. Linguistic

As a Lithuanian living in Germany and addressing an international audience, it is certainly no surprise that Gylytė decided to create three language options. As soon as the homepage appears, the visitor can choose among Lithuanian, German and English, and (as mentioned) can always change his/her mind at any point of the navigation.

The general tone of the text is informative, formal and light at the same time, and the fact that, in the "Concerts" section, she would justify her 2010 hiatus by writing "babypause" (maternity leave, in other words), suggests a friendly attitude towards the reader. This impression is enhanced by the many smiles and looks at the camera that the pianist's photographic portraits display.

No particular wish to be associated to the Lithuanian musical community seems to emerge. It is only at the fifth paragraph of Gylytė's "Bio" that we learn that she was born in Vilnius, while no other textual choice gives prominence to this aspect (for instance, no "Lithuanian composers" entry appears on her "Repertoire" page). Certainly, living in Germany, and not in Lithuania, plays a role in all this, but more importantly, if we browse her repertoire, we notice that there is only one Lithuanian composer (Čiurlionis, it goes without saying). So, more than anybody else in the present sample, Gylytė is much more a pianist born in Lithuania, rather than a Lithuanian pianist.

The fonts are an elegant mix of serif and sans serif types. The former are used for menus and main inscriptions, and the latter for the contents.

4.3.3.3. Videographic

The "CDs" section offers an extensive clip of one Gylytė's performance in Frankfurt in 2007. The footage is semi-professional: there is one single camera resting on a long shot most of the time, and only occasionally zooming in; plus an audio quality that is certainly acceptable but also allows plenty of audience noise in, clearly showing that the source was the camera's in-built microphone, rather than a specific one placed closer to the piano.

4.3.3.4. Sonic

Three samples are available, and they are the three parts from Haydn's sonata in E flat Major, Hob. XVI:49.[206] The piece is featured in Gylytė's eponymous release, advertised on the website (the cover's picture is the same as the homepage, incidentally). It is user-friendly, hence the three samples can also be downloaded.

4.3.4. Ieva Jokūbavičiūtė

(IJ, http://www.ievajokubaviciute.com/, Figures 4.7 and 4.8)

In terms of graphics, images and colour scheme, Jokūbavičiūtė's is one of the most interesting websites of the sample, in that it displays a rather unusual range of choices, as compared to the classical pianist's criteria of selection in these areas. Reasoning again in terms of key-words that should summarize the spirit and the message of this website, one may use the following three: 'informality', 'modernity', and 'femininity'.

To a certain extent, although in a totally different graphic context, IJ has similar goals to Alekna's pages: both seem to be motivated in conveying a not-too-traditional image of themselves, and in both cases living in America seems to have a role in this. Jokūbavičiūtė does indeed live in the States, and it is not to be excluded that the generally informal approach that, in those latitudes, musicians have in representing themselves, was behind certain decisions in the construction of IJ.

Another big factor is Jokūbavičiūtė's repertoire, which features several examples of twentieth century music (Berg, Bartók, Ligeti), and that – as we shall see in other cases as well – bears a certain license to *sui generis* representation that goes along with the general aesthetics and etiquette of contemporary music (which may be performed in unusual venues, where performers and audience may dress more casually, where unconventional ways of playing an instrument may be required, etc.).

Finally, there is no doubt that also IJ is making a point on unmistakeable femininity and elegance on the website. We shall now see how the three main messages interact.

[206] The website erroneously reports the piece as "Hob. XII", which was the Hoboken-Verzeichnis catalogue number for Duos with Baryton, piano sonatas being under "XVI".

4.3.4.1. Visual

It is, once again, the most interesting part of the whole website. The plastic dimension is probably the one that attracts immediate attention, with the unusual (for a pianist) colour combination of various shades of Air Force blue, pink, Brink pink, white and grey. It is certainly a cheerful (but not flashy), stylish (but not classic), feminine (but not Barbie-like), modern (but not hi-tech), and informal (but not careless) scheme, and is alone capable of stating the previously listed main points of the site. In particular, for this and other considerations, it should be noted that Jokūbavičiūtė's inclination to a contemporary repertoire is a) not isolated (such composers as Chopin, Schubert and Beethoven abound too), and b) not *state-of-the-art* contemporary, that is, it mainly concerns composers who were active in early or mid-twentieth century (with the exception of Ligeti's *Études*). In that sense, the idea of 'modernity' should not be pushed too hard, and definitely not trespass on *post*-modernity or futurism (as so often we witness in the representation of interpreters of electronic, spectral or minimalist music). Jokūbavičiūtė's repertoire is *mildly* modern, and certainly her goal is to be perceived as an eclectic performer, not a specialist in the twentieth century.

Topologically, we have two levels: a floral motif appearing on the left and right sides of the page, and the pictures of Jokūbavičiūtė herself, which are in many cases very useful in the chromatic context (for instance, the big Brink pink umbrella on the homepage, see Figure 4.7) or in the general uniformity of the visual appearance (the picture in the "Contact/Links" section features flowers similar to the mentioned motif). In the former case, one may guess there are three main ideas conveyed: a) the predictable topos of femininity, which perhaps requires no explanation; b) a spring-like sense of novelty/freshness (the flowers appear on tree branches, so they are directly reminiscent of that season); and – hopefully this being not merely a speculation – c) again, that sense of mild modernity mentioned above. This is suggested, because the drawing style of those flowers is vaguely orientalist, and may recall that kind of aesthetics that was very popular in the early twentieth century, thanks to schools such as Art Nouveau, and to the increasingly popular Great Exhibitions that were spreading exotic flavours in many fields of art (in this sense, a direct correspondence would exist between the floral motif and the inclination to oriental exoticism

Figure 4.7. A snapshot from Ieva Jokūbavičiūtė's homepage
(as retrieved in October 2012)

in such composers as Debussy, who is indeed featured in Jokubavičiūtė's repertoire.

The pictures, as was already hinted, are perfectly coherent with these values. Besides the mentioned two, there are five more, with the following characteristics:

a) Two black and white and three full-coloured: the latter are also reinforcing the chromatic spectrum of the whole site (in two cases Jokūbavičiūtė appears with an Air Force blue jacket, and in another she sports a black and pink evening dress);

b) Only one out of five represents Jokūbavičiūtė in the act of playing the piano. As we shall see in the “Linguistic” paragraph, the inscription “pianist” appears right besides the performer's name, on the header, and persists in every section of the site. Yet, similarly to Alekna, one might wonder whether this parsimony in revealing the artist's profession could be the source of a little ambiguity;

c) Interestingly, with the only exception of the picture where she is playing, and the one in the "Contact/Links" section (where she is out of focus, anyway), in all the remaining portraits Jokūbavičiūtė is smiling, sometimes laughing. Needless to say, more 'Spring', informality, modernity and femininity are understandable from this choice;

d) The two pictures meant for press and concert organizers are the ones where Jokūbavičiūtė is wearing a blue jacket (and a pair of trousers with paisley patterns, which means more flowers – see Figure 4.8). She is not playing the piano (therefore, again, renouncing a 'traditional' and 'obvious' choice), and she is instead sitting on a chair, *backwards*, therefore giving once more the idea of an informal, fresh atmosphere.

The layout of the website consists of header, content column and footer, throughout all the pages, although this structure is very evident only in the home/index. The other sections give an illusion of a two-column structure, due to the fact that the text is always placed on the left side, and the pictures are always on the right, as if there were two columns, but that is not the case.

From the eidetic point of view, even though the website (like most others) is based on straight-line schemes, there are several elements that construct a more asymmetric (therefore, again, modern and informal) layout. The floral motives are certainly important in this sense, because they recur in every section of the site, providing every time a lively mood to the geometries of the site. Most of the pictures, too, serve a similar purpose, with the homepage's umbrella adding circular shapes, and all the other images consisting anyway in unconventional poses and shots.

4.3.4.2. Linguistic

As already anticipated, Jokūbavičiūtė's occupation as pianist is expressively announced on the header, after name and surname, and that inscription remains throughout the whole navigation, along with the menu. Little reinforcements to this information appear in the form of two quotes from American newspapers, which (although not really mentioning the words 'piano' or 'pianist') are unmistakeable excerpts from concert reviews (additionally, "Schubert" is mentioned too, so they are surely about music); and in certain words from the menu ("Concerts" and "Programs", particularly), which again suggest a music-related activity. As we said, no image, except

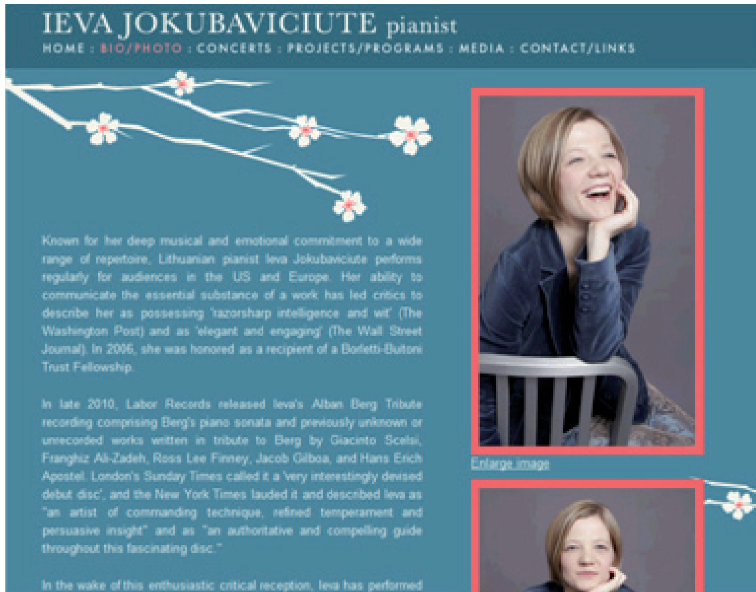

Figure 4.8. A snapshot from Ieva Jokubavičiūtė's "Bio/Photo" section

the one on the "Concerts" section, portrays Jokūbavičiūtė *in action*, so – similar to Alekna's case – we might wonder whether this may occasionally mislead the visitor. It may be proposed that IJ is slightly more explicit than GA, because, unlike the latter, it does not display openly conflicting images in the home/index page. GA has that cinema-like menu bar, which might have suggested a career in the moving pictures, while IJ only displays Jokūbavičiūtė in a more neutral bucolic environment, which does not hint at any occupation in particular. Incidentally, more excerpts from international media appear in the "Media" page.

Tones and style of the texts are rather standard, for these purposes. They are serious but not academic, light but not colloquial. The site has a single language option, English, and that fits in with the direction of an international profile that very likely Jokūbavičiūtė intends to maintain. Another proof of this is that the words 'Lithuania/Lithuanian' are used only three times throughout the whole website, all in the "Bio/Photo" section: of

these, only one case, the first, is an explicit statement of Jokūbavičiūtė's nationality, while the other two are circumstantial information of concert venues (Vilnius being listed as one of the main places where she performed) and artistic collaborations (the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra being featured among them). For the rest, the biographical note and other texts are rather focused on Jokūbavičiūtė's activity (and reputation) in the USA and in the whole of Europe. As we shall see, this choice is strongly confirmed by her repertoire choices.

4.3.4.3. Videographic

No videos appear on this website.

4.3.4.4. Sonic

An almost unique case among Lithuanian performers, Jokūbavičiūtė's main repertoire (at least, the one she officially declares on her website) does not include any single Lithuanian composer: a final confirmation, if more were needed, of her intention to represent herself as an international performer, not bound to any particular origins of school or tradition.

Her main product, as a recording artist, is the CD "Music of Tribute: Alban Berg, Vol. 6", here promoted through the "Home" section (in the news part, although the actual release of the album dates as early as October 26, 2010), and chiefly in the "Media" section, where three previews, no longer than 2–3 minutes, can be played or even downloaded in Mp3 format. It is difficult to establish the selection criteria of these samples, but it would not be surprising to learn that they were considered true 'highlights' of the whole CD, in terms of performance focus and brilliance.

Links to digital downloads of the album tracks are also available, but, in a manner that is not particularly user-friendly, they simply link to the homepage of each internet shop, and not to the specific page where "Music of Tribute: Alban Berg, Vol. 6" is sold. That may be a little bothersome for some visitors, especially when browsing the pages of a huge portal such as www.amazon.com.

4.3.5. Daumantas Kirilauskas

(DK, http://www.daumantaskirilauskas.com/, Figure 4.9)

DK is another very interesting and original website, or, technically speaking, a blog, like GA and PG. It is particularly noteworthy for the attention it pays towards the 'persona' dimension of the artist: at least three elements (the close-up portraits on each page, the "Gallery" and the "Favorite Things" sections) bring the extra-musical, personal (occasionally private) side of Kirilauskas to clear prominence. The message a visitor gets is the one of a musician who also has a distinctive personality – 'an edge', one could say – and this personality is possibly a key to understand his musical activity as well. This is certainly visible from his repertoire, which – classic entries aside – is *sui generis* enough, thanks to the inclusion of a lot of contemporary music and the authors who would more often appear in jazz-related contexts (Corea, Gershwin and Piazzolla).

4.3.5.1. Visual

DK underwent a re-styling process during the year 2012. Had the data for this sample have been selected earlier, we would have been discussing a rather lively website, dominated by the colour yellow, and by pictures that would show Kirilauskas in the most unusual contexts. As he turned 40, however, the pianist chose a more sober profile[207], replacing yellow with grey and the heterogeneous catalogue of images with a series of close-up portraits. The layout (as seen in Figure 4.9), however, remains exactly the same as the previous version, with a minimalistic three-layered structure composed of a first header with Kirilauskas' photos (occupying more than half of the screen), a second header serving as navigation bar (unchanged throughout the whole navigation, except for the fonts' colour of the section selected), and a content column on the lower part of the page (not entirely visible on the screen: the visitor needs to scroll down, in order to read the whole contents of each section).

[207] Such a conclusion is not a speculative one, and is based on the pianist's own admission (Kirilauskas 2012: personal communication). Alongside the fact that, more or less in the same period, Kirilauskas also turned to intellectually demanding, not infrequently monothematic, concert programmes and/or CD releases, this perhaps means that the pianist feels the need to clearly state to the audience his artistic and personal maturity.

Figure 4.9. A snapshot from Daumantas Kirilauskas' homepage

The entire chromatic spectrum of the website consists of neutral colours. The pianist's portraits are all black and white, while the navigation bar and the content column have white (occasionally black) text against a grey background. The only chance to access other colours occurs in those sections (such as "Gallery" or "Discography") where several full-colour pictures are available (and, to be overly meticulous, in the "Discography" section there is also a green "Buy CD" link that is the only written text available in a different colour other than white).

The style of the B/W portraits on the top of each page is intellectual, reflective and serious, but occasionally ironic. We start with a mouth-to-brow extreme close-up with low-key lighting on the home-page, and, throughout the navigation, we are exposed to several variations on the theme, with a camera distance that range from extreme close-up to close shot. In all cases, Kirilauskas is elegantly dressed, does not smile, but, as anticipated, two intentionally overstated James Bond*esque* poses in the "Gallery" and "Favorite Things" sections (not accidentally, the two most *personal* ones) inform us that, after all, Kirilauskas is perhaps not taking himself too seriously. In none of these header's images is Kirilauskas shown playing the

piano, but all of them are accompanied by an inscription with his name, surname and the word "piano".

The "Gallery" section is extremely rich, and, by far, exceeds in number any of his colleagues analyzed in this sample. It includes no less than 31 photo galleries (that is, several hundreds of pictures, altogether) in descending chronological order, with a variety of themes that ranges from concerts to holidays, up to shots taken with Kirilauskas' personal jazz heroes Chick Corea and Al Jarreau (whose album "My Favorite Things" is probably behind the decision to call one section of the website almost eponymously). This is one more proof that Kirilauskas is especially concerned in letting the visitor know his 'persona' side (where he goes, what he likes, whom he admires). Curiously, none of these photographs was taken during a professional photo-session, and there is no specific section where a journalist or concert organizer can download an 'official' picture. Possibly, the hint is that the header's portraits serve this function, or maybe one should simply write to Kirilauskas and request them.

From the eidetic point of view, the website is exceptionally straight, and oriented horizontally. There are no side-columns in the layout and no visible vertical lines (except for the perimeter of the pictures). The three layers are separated by two dotted horizontal lines. Only the natural curves of Kirilauskas' face provide balance to this regularity.

4.3.5.2. Linguistic

DK presents most of its material in English. The only section that is available also in Lithuanian is the "Bio". This, however, should not be interpreted as Kirilauskas' attempt to detach himself from his homeland. On the contrary, his contribution to spreading Lithuanian repertoires is very remarkable, and there is virtually no relevant Lithuanian composer whom he has not performed (that also includes several recordings, as one can read in the "Discography" section). Also, it is significant that the entry "Lithuanian composers", in the "Repertoire" section, is the first one to appear in a list of five. Finally, when reading his "Bio", Kirilauskas' bond with the Lithuanian musical community emerges in several spots, from his titles and prizes (most of them achieved/received in Lithuania) to his – so to speak – 'contributions to the cause' (it is for instance mentioned that he was the first in Lithuania to perform Chick Corea's *Concerto for Piano*

and Orchestra). There is no doubt, thus, that Kirilauskas is a committed *Lithuanian* performer, and that his choice to present most of the website's material in English should simply be interpreted as a wish not to confine his readership to Lithuania only.

With the exception of the "Daumantas Kirilauskas, PIANO" inscription appearing on each of the header's pictures (written in a Lucida typeface), all the text available on the website (including menu and titles) is written in Arial. In both cases, the fonts are sans serif, which simply adds to the generally minimalistic appearance of the website. However, the "Favorite things" section is very interesting, because it features[208] a scan of a handwritten paper (by Kirilauskas himself) containing an enjoyable list of the pianist's tastes and interests. In a way, nothing is more personal and 'persona' (in the sense of the 3P model) than this.

This very paper, among other things, serves also as counterbalance to the generally formal tone of the rest of the information available on the website.

4.3.5.3. Videographic

No videos appear on this website.

4.3.5.4. Sonic

No sound files appear on this website, but each recording featured in the "Discography" section links to a page within the Lithuanian Music Information Centre where the given album is promoted and, in most cases, can be previewed in one or more tracks (and frequently all of them).

4.3.6. Darius Mažintas

(DM, http://www.mazintas.lt/, Figures 4.10 and 4.11)

Along with Gylytė's pages, and a couple of examples which shall be illustrated below, DM represents the most typical approach to a classical pianist's website: elegant, austere and serious. What we witness here are all the values that one traditionally associates with classical music, and piano

[208] Or, rather, *featured*. At the time these lines are being written, the section seems to be under construction, although no specific notification appears.

playing in particular. It is rather significant that the homepage does not give any indication, neither linguistic nor graphical, that Mažintas is in fact a pianist, but somehow, with that vast use of black (and accents of the equally sober white, grey and red) and a black and white picture of Mažintas sitting on a chair, elegantly dressed in a tuxedo, visitors do not need to think too hard before guessing his profession.[209]

4.3.6.1. Visual

As in Gylytė's website, the plastic dimension seems to be the one that mostly conveys the idea of the traditional/serious musician. Black is unmistakably the dominant colour throughout the whole site, while other colours include several shades of grey, white and a scarlet red for the headings, titles and mouse-overs in the text (plus the very inscription "Mažintas", in different points). There are also full colour pictures, which of course offer the full palette, wherever they appear.

The topological dimension focuses on Mažintas' numerous pictures, plus stills that include other musicians, concert audiences, or circumstantial events in the "News" section. The image that Mažintas seems to want to convey of himself is that of an elegant, polished, middle-class and serious musician, with a nuance (but just a nuance, and perhaps with a retro flavour anyway) of youth. Most of the pictures (in the "Gallery" and other sections) portray him in an evening outfit, sometimes with, more often without a piano, but, as already pointed out, never leaving a real doubt about the nature of his occupation. The few images in 'civilian clothes' are those mainly responsible for that aforementioned 'youth' accent. In an indoor one, we see him with jeans and sneakers (an *elegant* pair of LeCoqSportif, to be precise), in two of the outdoor ones, rather than a predictable black coat, he sports a padded jacket. This whole picture is perfectly coherent with what the music and the words of this website tell us about Mažintas.

[209] An additional note is pertinent before proceeding. Most of the considerations that shall be now proposed in relation to DM are – occasionally word-by-word – applicable to Kasparas Uinskas' website as well, including the fact (that was emphasized in Section 4.2.3) that both sites have exactly the same number and type of sections. There is a specific reason for this: Mažintas and Uinskas were business (concert-organizing) partners for a while, and during that period they were using similar promotional strategies for their respective careers. Although they eventually went separate ways, the signs of the partnership are still evident in the graphics and contents of the two websites.

Figure 4.10. A snapshot from Darius Mažintas' homepage

The music available for preview reveals a clear inclination for the classics *par excellence* (Beethoven and Bach, with a refined addition of Scriabin), while the "Biography" section starts with the following line (quoted from an endorsement by conductor Saulius Sondeckis): "Darius Mažintas is a young and though experienced piano soloist." An additional interesting image consists of a blurred black and white detail of the inside of a piano, used as a background for various pages.

The website's structure consists of a two column layout with header and footer: the left column (appearing everywhere, save the homepage and the "Gallery" section) is always occupied by a slideshow of Mažintas' pictures; the right column (larger than the left one) hosts the contents; the header displays the inscription "Darius Mažintas" (backed by the initials DM that also serve as logo of the website, see Figure 4.10) and the navigation bar; and finally the footer serves the purpose of reporting copyright statements and linking to the webmaster's contacts page.

The eidetic dimension is rather varied. Besides the common straight lines that are usually employed for framing the layout and separating the bodies, and the horizontal orientation for every text, the website is gently brightened up by a number of curvilinear objects (the DM logo, written in a calligraphic font; the bevelled corners of the columns' frames;

the piano detail of the background image; plus the various pictures, of which there is abundant supply throughout the whole website) that interact with more regular shapes. Once again, the pictures (particularly those portraying Mažintas himself) are certainly the main attention-grabbing features of the website.

4.3.6.2. Linguistic

As already mentioned, Mažintas' occupation as pianist is not explicitly declared on the homepage, but the information seems to be conveyed anyway by several visual elements. What the homepage displays is the name and surname of the pianist (initials included) and the words "English" and "Lietuviškai" for the language option.

Tones and style of the texts are neat and sober, without excesses of either informality or seriousness. The "News" section is compiled in a neutral, informative way, and so is the "Biography" (which, as mentioned, starts with a quotation from Saulius Sondeckis – see Figure 4.11). Additionally, several sections adopt a very schematic writing style, with nothing more than the absolutely essential information needed (such is the case with the sections "Concerts", "Recordings", "Video", "Contacts" and "Sponsors", while the section "Gallery" has no text at all). Mažintas' Lithuanianness is affirmed with clarity (e.g., the first lines of the biography, after the

Figure 4.11. A snapshot from Darius Mažintas' "Bio/Photo" section

endorsement are, “Darius Mažintas is one of the most prominent Lithuanian pianists of a young generation”) but definitely not overstated or redundant. Being identified as an interpreter who embodies a ‘Lithuanian way’ to piano performance does not seem to be a priority in Mažintas’ promotional programme.

Finally, there is a “Guestbook” section that allows comments from the visitors (who are in most cases attendants of Mažintas’ concerts, or listeners to his CD). In this case, DM chooses the option of not separating the two languages on the website (English-written comments in one version, Lithuanians in the other), but instead hosts them all on the same page.

4.3.6.3. Videographic

Eight YouTube-embedded clips are featured in the “Videos” section. In three cases, they are actual footage from concerts, in the other five, they are simply edited slide shows from the “Gallery” pictures, used to visualize tracks from Mažintas’ CD release (see “Sonic”). As mentioned, slide shows (and therefore animations) are also the various pictures rotating in the left column of each section (“Gallery” excluded).

4.3.6.4. Sonic

DM offers complete previews of every track of Mažintas’ only solo release so far (*Darius Mažintas, Piano* – an album which, incidentally, features the same graphic work as DM’s homepage), in two different versions: a streaming player in the “Recordings” section, and YouTube-embedded videos in the “Video” section (the latter, as mentioned, in fact consists of photographic slide-shows). The CD includes material from Bach, Beethoven and Scriabin. More music is available in this very section, where three clips from different concerts show Mažintas playing Bach, Šenderovas and Grieg. All in all, however, this is an exceptionally limited display of the pianist’s repertoire, because DM is the first of five cases in the sample where a “Repertoire” page is not in fact available. Visitors cannot therefore receive any other hint of the composers and opuses that Mažintas is able to interpret, except for the ones mentioned. Also the “Concerts” section, which could be an opportunity to mention more repertoire, is written in such a schematic manner that there is no room for this kind of information.

4.3.7. Edvinas Minkštimas

(EM, http://www.minkstimas.com/, Figures 4.12 and 4.13)

EM is another representative of the class of websites that also includes DM and GG. Once again, all the elements are concerted to create an atmosphere of elegance, classic taste, austerity and seriousness: a black-based chromatic environment, a series of pictures portraying the pianist in evening clothes, images of pianos and scores, etc. In this, as in the other two cases, the values conveyed are naturally not meant in a threatening sense: it is not a *looming* type of austerity and seriousness we are talking about. Minkštimas, like Mažintas and Gylytė, appears to us in a friendly, often smiling, manner, but the message of these websites is that these musicians are doing something important and authoritative, preserving a very long tradition. The same applies to some of the next cases of the sample that use the same type of aesthetic strategy.

In comparison with the previous sites analyzed, EM is noteworthy for a number of original graphic solutions, starting from the not-too-common idea of structuring the homepage (Figure 4.12) as a Cartesian plan, with the menu and two pictures of Minkštimas in what would be the quadrants A and C, and semi-transparent pictures of a score and a piano in B and D (B also offering the "enter" option).

Figure 4.12. A snapshot from Edvinas Minkštimas' homepage

4.3.7.1. Visual

The most interesting ideas of this website do certainly belong to the visual appearance. The quadripartite structure of the homepage was already mentioned, thus it is pertinent to continue with a few notes about the layout. The inside pages are constructed with two columns (for navigation and contents, from left to right), a header (which, besides displaying a picture of Minkštimas and an inscription with his name and surname, serves the purpose of titling each section) and a footer (which, besides the predictable copyright information, also has another, very handy, navigation menu – a most appreciated feature when the visitor needs to scroll down a very long page). The originality of this layout lies in that – despite the mentioned structure – the visitor gets the idea that each page is only composed of two columns, without a header and footer. This is because the whole left side of each section (see, for instance, the "Bio" section in Figure 4.13) uses a black background, while the right side uses white and a very light flesh pink.

The plastic dimension has been largely anticipated: the colour scheme is indeed dominated by the black. Secondary colours are the mentioned white and flesh pink, plus yellow, brown and grey. There are a few more colours than usual, and the overall effect is slightly untidy, but it is nothing that would exceed the limits of tact. As it sometimes happens (we have already seen it in IJ) it is very likely that the whole palette of the website was inspired by some of the photographs featured – particularly the one that is used on the top-left of each section: when we look at it, it is possible to spot all the six colours.

The photographic material exactly (in other words, the topological dimension) constitutes a very rich part of the whole website. We see pictures in diverse disguise and position in every section of the website (starting from the four in the homepage), and we have (similarly to what we shall see below in Rubackytė's case) no less than two specific sections devoted to portraits of Minkštimas: the obvious "Photos" section (with 18 pictures filed under the two groups "portraits" and "in concert"), and a page that is specifically devoted to the press and media, called indeed "Press" (something which was previously called "the dream of every concert organizer"). In it, along with CV, audio samples and reviews, the visitor can also download four high-resolution portraits, in both full colour and black and white. Such a strong accent on public relations derives from Minkštimas' convic-

Figure 4.13. A snapshot from Edvinas Minkštimas' "Biography" section

tion, repeatedly expressed on such occasions as public seminars and other activities, that a musician *must* be able to handle his own public image and promotion with extreme care and attention. He thinks that very little is left to chance in the music business, and if one's mind is not of that disposition, things simply will not happen.

At any rate, the pictures available display the usual mix of formal and informal, with a prevalence of the former (several shots taken during concerts are available, something that we have not seen as being too common). As for those pictures that are not portraits, we have several representing piano keyboards and scores (mostly decorative) that certainly contribute in making EM the very case, within the sample, that is most unmistakably recognizable as a *pianist*'s website. No ground whatsoever is left for ambiguity, in this respect.

As with the other two dimensions, also the eidetic one presents a rather eclectic picture. Along with the usual straight lines, there are several elements that liven up the view: a grey ornamental pattern appearing both on the homepage (as background to the word "enter") and in the other sections (under the inscription "Edvinas"); a pair of brackets framing the pianist's name on the homepage and the audio player in the other sections; the natural curves and shapes of the various pictures; and also the fact that the website uses three different fonts, both serif and sans serif, and both straight and italics.

4.3.7.2. Linguistic

So far, we have seen that one of the most relevant topics, in the linguistic area, was the balance, or tension, between a performer's wish/necessity to establish him/herself *internationally*, and the – sometime opposite – wish/necessity to remark his/her own *Lithuanianness*, or at least his artistic role within the Lithuanian community. The two aspects were somehow in conflict, due to a general idea (on the part of the Lithuanian artists themselves) that Lithuania is a small and peripheral country, whose identity is hardly compatible with an international profile (unlike, say, the United States): as a result, to underline one's own Lithuanianness means mostly to play the locality card, making exoticness and unusualness the main attraction. In the course of this analysis, so far, we have seen cases that would put the emphasis on *either* the international profile *or* the local one, or – alternatively – that would make the two *coexist*. It is perhaps fair to say that with Minkštimas we witness a different form of mediation between the two values. What Minkštimas tries to convey is that being Lithuanian *is* being international, that is, the condition of Lithuanianness is not alien to elements of cosmopolitism that are recognizable on a larger scale. In other words, instead of being attracted by the *peculiarity* of Minkštimas being Lithuanian, the visitors of EM find sentences such as the following, in the biography page:

> A native of Kaunas, Lithuania, Minkstimas claims his early artistic influences from Nordic poetry, Baltic mythology and other romantic images. He conveys the lyricism and poetry within a musical work through his displays of virtuoso technique. He is strongly influenced by such great pianists as Richter and Michelangeli, and composers Brahms, Liszt, Rachmaninoff, Ravel, Ligeti and Penderecki. Of his contemporary colleagues, Minkstimas is inspired by Evgeny Kissin, Spencer Myer, Jeffrey Swann and Martha Argerich. (http://www.minkstimas.com/biography.html)

In such a passage, we see that being Lithuanian is 1) perfectly integrated with international taste and influences, and most of all 2) part of a wider artistic/cultural environment (*Nordic* poetry, *Baltic* mythology, *romantic* images, etc.). Moreover, among Minkštimas' several extra- or para-musical commitments (cooperation with embassies, membership of festival boards, charity work, etc.), we see a number of those where Lithuanian and foreign institutions/themes/purposes actively interact within the same project.

The many activities that Minkštimas engages in are also related to another important characteristic of the website, which was mentioned earlier, that there is a clear inclination to marketing and promotion. Not only is Minkštimas making things very easy for press and impresarios, as already remarked, but the language employed and the topics tackled, particularly on his biography page, are indicative of the special care taken for public relations and image. In a way, it would not be unfair to state that Minkštimas is, professionally speaking, the most 'modern' of the pianists analyzed in the sample. Whether this is for better or worse, is up to individual taste to say, but it is undeniable that the era of patrons and benefactors is hopelessly over, and a modern musician has to adapt to a few more jobs than just playing his/her instrument. This, among other things, is one reason why the present dissertation is so interested in these, so to speak, extra-curricular activities.

Among the linguistic features that pursue this goal we shall mention at least: the selected bites from reviews on the "Press" page; the very informative "Calendar" and "Recordings" pages; plus, throughout the whole website, the specific use of marketing-oriented jargon and expressions (one example of many: the "Contact" page, instead of straightforwardly listing the various contacts and addresses, is introduced by the sentence "Edvinas Minkstimas is represented by: […]".

4.3.7.3. Videographic

No videos appear on this website.

4.3.7.4. Sonic

Visitors to EM can enjoy Minkštimas' interpretations in two different forms, including a coercive one. The website is provided with an automatic player that gets activated by simply opening any page: the visitors can of course pause the music at any time, however, along with the visual stimuli, they get immediate exposure to the music as well. Eight additional full-length samples can be heard on the "Recordings" page, under a specific section called "Audio clips". All of them are live recordings, audible through the streaming technology (that is, not available for download). So far, Minkštimas has not released a personal CD, so the material one can find on the website belongs to recordings used for radio/TV programmes or stored in music archives.

4.3.8. Evelina Puzaitė

(EP, http://www.evelinapuzaite.com/, Figures 4.14 and 4.15)

EP brings back the attention to that type of web-design aimed at emphasizing a number of values that are commonsensically associated, so to speak, to the feminine dimension of music, and the musical dimension of femininity. In particular, an ambience of etherealness, elegance and romanticism surrounds the whole aesthetics of the website. This should not necessarily encourage the assumption that Puzaitė will play her Schumann (who is an important presence in her repertoire) only from the Eusebian side. On the contrary, Florestan is possibly the character she feels more comfortable with. Her playing is indeed passionate, energetic, despite (or, in fact, in intentional contrast to) her petite figure, which would rather embody a dreamy and delicate woman. By no coincidence, it could be suggested, Puzaitė's repertoire is particularly focused on romantics and late romantics, that is, exactly the type of period that celebrated that emotional dualism embodied in Schumann's imaginary characters: Beethoven, Rachmaninov, Čiurlionis, Ravel, indeed Schumann, and so on. Finally, it should be remarked that Puzaitė is also a writer, her first poetry and short stories book *Tempo Primo* having been published in 2008.

In other words, and once more, we are witnessing another case of solid coherence between a website's aesthetics and the words employed to describe a given pianist. In Puzaitė's case, her biography reads that she is a "performer of natural sensitivity and strong charisma". This is yet another reminder of Eusebius and Florestan.

4.3.8.1. Visual

Starting from the above-mentioned ethereal atmosphere, several features aimed at this purpose are immediately noticeable: the appearance of clouds in a grey/beige chromatic environment, suggesting an autumnal sky; the calligraphic fonts used for the pianist's name (a Palace Script, very probably); her soft, shaded close-up picture on the header (there is a different one for each section of the site); and – less evident than the rest – the Victorian ornament on the footer. All these elements are perfectly concerted to convey the values mentioned at the beginning (see Figure 4.14). Towards the 'ethereal' idea is also the fact that the website has no demarcation between

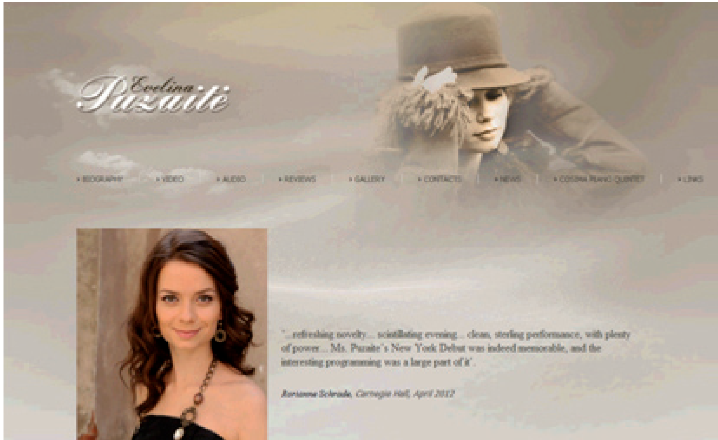

Figure 4.14. A snapshot from Evelina Puzaitė's homepage
(as retrieved in October 2012)

the various layout parts (particularly, very few straight lines appear). There is no header or footer or columns in a proper sense (even though we get the impression of them by seeing name and menu on the top, contents in the middle and credits at the bottom): everything stays on one single page, everything is as if suspended in that autumnal sky. This is not the most practical of the layouts, particularly when a page contains a lot of text (and therefore the menu disappears after scrolling-down a little). Moreover, it is the whole website which gives the feeling that not everything was done professionally. Pages such as the "News" section are rather untidy, one website in the "Links" page is inactive, some links open a new page and some do not, and so forth.

Back to the visual analysis, besides the mentioned dominant colours we also have black, white and orange for the text. In addition, with the exclusion of the sepia portraits in the headers of each section and four B/W photographs in the "Gallery" section, all the images are full-colour. It may be a strident element within the whole atmosphere of the website the fact that most pictures are framed in a very neat and straight manner.

In the photo-gallery, which consists of 18 pictures altogether, we witness a clear majority (fifteen) of extra-musical pictures, portraying Puzaitė in an elegant outfit, mostly outdoor and mostly cheerful. In only three cases are

the pictures taken by a piano, and in only one case is the keyboard visible (that is, the piece most immediately recognizable as 'piano'): as we shall see in the "Linguistic" paragraph, Puzaitė promotes an image of herself as a quickly-recognizable pianist, so there is no need to overstate the point by picturing her with a piano all the time. Plus, as seen in other cases of the sample, the use of extra-musical pictures is a rather fashionable strategy.

4.3.8.2. Linguistic

There is hardly any linguistic indication, throughout the whole website, that would inform the visitor that this is the homepage of a pianist. All that is left to either images (videos and pictures portraying Puzaitė playing or standing by a piano) or the suggestions of words belonging to the same semantic field ("Concerts", "Audio" and "Cosima Piano Quintet" – Puzaitė's main artistic outlet, besides recitals – are the names of three sections, the term "performance" appears in the review's excerpt of the homepage, along with the name "Carnegie Hall", etc.). One needs to open the "Biography" page to be officially informed that Evelina Puzaitė's profession is indeed that of a pianist (Figure 4.15).

The marketing trick, if marketing trick it is and not simple omission, is probably that of the "this artist needs no introduction" formula. Realistic

Figure 4.15. A snapshot from Evelina Puzaitė's "Biography" section

or bold such statement may be, it seems clear that Puzaitė relies on her public recognizability. After all, we read in her biography, she "has won numerous prizes", "regularly performs at the most prestigious venues", "has performed extensively throughout Europe", and so on. Additionally, we may add, she has also been a testimonial in one Yamaha Pianos' advertising campaigns.

Puzaitė moved from Vilnius to London several years ago, and although she cares to point out that she is "Lithuanian-born" (which are the very first words of her biography), it seems that most of her efforts are focused on being "an internationally recognized performer". No particular intention of promoting Lithuanian music, institutional Čiurlionis aside, appears in her repertoire; every excerpt from the "Reviews" section is taken from English-speaking media; and finally English is the only language on the website.

A note on the "Cosima Piano Quintet" section: It is a recent, yet important, artistic outlet for Puzaitė, who seems to have embarked on the venture of not only promoting the ensemble as such, but piano quintets in general. The text in that section is mostly aimed at introducing this format and the composers who wrote for it (all linked to the respective Wikipedia pages). However, as we shall see in the next paragraphs, no videos or audio files of the quintet are available on EP. Nor, in the "Links" page, do we get any connection to pages related to the quintet (there is no official website for the ensemble, but, for instance, there is a Facebook page). One is left to wonder whether it is due to the lack of material or straight oversight.[210]

Finally, as the "Links" page is mentioned, it must be added that the latter features only three links, of which the second one is currently inactive: the functioning ones are respectively the homepage of the photographer Erik Erkson (who it can be assumed, despite the lack of specific confirmation, is the author of the "Gallery" pictures), and the homepage of the oboe player Andrius Puskunigis, with whom Puzaitė released an album of Schumann's music for oboe and piano in 2011.

[210] As in several other cases (PG and AŽ, most evidently), by the final stages of writing the present dissertation, the situation of the website has changed. On this particular website, the link to the official Cosima Piano Quintet has appeared, along with the website of the newly-established BelVil Trio, in which Puzaitė performs, while, for instance, the link to Erik Erkson's page is missing (the one inactive link still being inactive though). However, as pointed out in the presentation of the sample, it would be virtually impossible to try and update the analysis every time the performers update their websites.

4.3.8.3. Videographic

The "video" section of EP is particularly rich, with no less than 14 YouTube-embedded clips. With the significant exception of the first one (her commercial with Yamaha), all the videos show Puzaitė 'in action', playing with orchestras or in recitals. As already anticipated, no video of the Cosima Piano Quintet is featured.

No animation appears on the website.

4.3.8.4. Sonic

Besides the music coming from the 14 clips of the "Video" section, there is also an "Audio" page where the visitor can listen to three samples from her first CD *Moments musicaux*, released in 2007. The sound clips are in streaming form and have lengths ranging from 20 to 80 seconds.

4.3.9. Mūza Rubackytė

(MR, http://www.rubackyte.eu/, Figures 4.16 and 4.17)

With MR one enters the realm of a pianist who is openly and fully committed to promoting her national identity. With a rich repertoire (she defines herself as musically 'bulimic' – although, on a closer look, the romantic repertoire clearly prevails), no less than 18 albums released, a cultural medal in 1998 and the national prize in 2006 (the latter being the highest cultural honour that can be received in Lithuania – and she is one of only two solo pianists, along with Petras Geniušas, to have received it), Mūza Rubackytė is arguably Lithuania's most famous pianist, home and abroad. Her personality is undeniably strong, often diva-like, and she is perfectly aware of her role as an ambassador of Lithuanian piano music.

Rubackytė's love for Lithuania and her commitment to promote its music is the most relevant characteristic of her website (together with the promotion of her own image). Graphical elements are reminiscent of Lithuanian folklore and paganism; the "Photos" section often displays her in the act of dealing with Lithuanian institutions and personalities (including, surely, the awards' reception); her repertoire and recordings is rich in Lithuanian composers, including lesser known ones; and – more than everything – there is on this website (a unique case in the sample) a section

called "Lithuania", written in first person by Rubackytė herself, expressing at the same time her loving feelings towards Lithuanian music, Čiurlionis, and the country altogether, including a touristic promotion of it.

MR is also abundant in unusual and original choices. The section "Lithuania" is undoubtedly one, but so is the decision to separate the news into two sections: "Agenda" for the current events, and "Archives" for the old ones. Also, the "Photos" section is interestingly divided into "Professional" (comprising session photos of the type usable by media and managers) and "Personal" (comprising the above-mentioned formal/institutional events Rubackytė took part in).

From the graphic/artistic point of view the site is very appealing (particularly in each section's header). MR has however two rather disappointing features: the contents are rather untidy (too many colours) and amateur-like (fonts are often too big and stylistically inconsistent across the various sections), and most of the sections, when clicked, open on another page, making the visitor's browser soon crowded with several windows (plus, this aspect, too, is inconsistent, as the phenomenon happens to *almost* all of the pages, while the few exceptions do not seem to have a special reason to be so).

4.3.9.1. Visual

As already anticipated, the headers' artworks are the absolute forte of MR.[211] Every section is a painting, really (see e.g. homepage in Figure 4.16), with Rubackytė's visage and/or hands in the foreground and a soft collage of images in the background, with a retro-decoupage taste that often recalls elements of folk and pagan traditions (but not only these). This kind of style is actually compatible with the artwork of at least seven of Rubackytė's released albums, leaving the impression that, perhaps, the aesthetics of MR was conceived on the basis of an already familiar public iconography of the pianist. No colour is dominant in these patchworks, but we get hints of both warm and cold hues. In fact, MR's very central colours are black and dark grey, which constitute the background for every part of the website. In any case, the palette is slightly too varied and inconsistent, especially

[211] The artistic collaboration, here, was with the Paris based Ukrainian artist Oleksandra Jaromova, who also designed the Shostakovich CD by Mūza Rubackytė (released in 2007 by Brilliant Classics).

Figure 4.16. A snapshot from Mūza Rubackytė's homepage

in the contents text, which – besides the predictable white against a black background – can be also red, orange, azure, lilac, light grey and cyan.

The "Photos" section, as said above, is very rich as well. Divided in "Professional" and "Personal" sub-sections, it presents respectively 18 'official' portraits, and in the latter one 16 shots taken on various occasions, including formal ceremonies (sometimes in her honour), meetings with different personalities and bows to her audience.

Of the professional photos, five are B/W and the rest are in full-colour; three portray Rubackytė in the company of a string quartet and the rest are of herself alone; five show her standing by a piano and the rest are mostly medium close-ups of her in elegant outfits of different types; and, finally, one is not a photograph, but a painting (used for the cover of one of her albums, *Portrait*).

The eidetic dimension of the website, too, is rather rich, if not – once again – a trifle untidy. Several straight lines separate the layout elements and can also appear in form of hatched segments, while the artwork, the pictures, and the headers' fonts provide an abundant variety of curves and asymmetry.

No need to say it, at this point, but Rubackytė seems to make no mystery of her wish to appear as an eclectic and colourful personality. Or, as we read in her biography, as "The Magnificent Mûza".

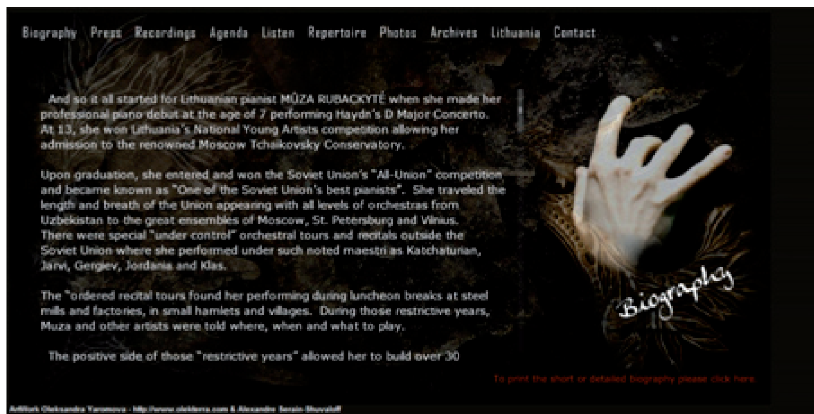

Figure 4.17. A snapshot from Mūza Rubackytė's "Biography" section

4.3.9.2. Linguistic

Of the whole sample analyzed, the MR website has more variations in language. We switch from the celebrative tones of the "Biography" section (Figure 4.17) to the personal style of "Lithuania", from the telegraphic synthesis of the "Agenda" to the review excerpts in "Press" (which, incidentally, link to a whole scan of the newspapers' pages they are taken from).

The themes of Lithuanianness and Rubackytė's persona, as mentioned, get the lion's share throughout the various texts of the website. Plenty is said about her musical career, her achievements, her struggles during the Soviet era, her love for Lithuania and Čiurlionis in particular, not only as a composer, but also as a symbol of the national resistance against Soviet Union.

4.3.9.3. Videographic

Although no video clip is available throughout the whole website, the latter is nevertheless rather lively in terms of animations. Each section opens up with a fade-in effect (with the background image slowly appearing before the text), and the picture galleries can be browsed as animated slide-shows.

4.3.9.4. Sonic

The "Listen" section of MR is the richest of the whole sample, with no less than 64 streaming samples available in the form of excerpts, representing altogether 19 different composers. Such a wide selection allows the visitor to get a rather fair idea of Rubackytė's skills, style and taste. At the same time, three of these 19 composers cover more than half of the whole playlist: Čiurlionis, Liszt and Franck, represented with 13, 12 and 10 compositions respectively. The one that stands out, among all, is the very last sample, which is a piano transcription of a string quartet by Čiurlionis, made by Rubackytė herself.

4.3.10. Kasparas Uinskas

(KU, http://www.uinskas.com/, Figures 4.18 and 4.19)

The decision had to be taken whether to treat KU as a separate paragraph or to incorporate it into DM as two versions of the same website concept and design. While discussing DM, the reasons for this have already been explained: business partners for many years, Uinskas and Mažintas have developed the same competences and attitudes in marketing strategies, reaching very similar conclusions on what needs and needs not to be done on their respective websites. Indeed, both KU and DM:

1) Have an English and a Lithuanian version of their pages, and present this option as the very first choice on the homepage;
2) Use a colour-scheme dominated by black, with white text and a warm colour for headings and titles (orange in KU and red in DM);
3) Have exactly the same number and type of sections (including relatively unusual ones such as "Sponsors");
4) Construct the homepage in an equivalent manner, with a name, a B/W portrait and the English/Lithuanian option against a black background;
5) Convey pretty much the same values: 'classic', 'elegant' and 'austere' with a touch of youth and informality (displayed in the same manner, through a few photographs in casual clothes);
6) Adopt the same idea of using a shaded image of a piano as part of the background of the various sections;

7) Treat and distribute the photographic material in the same way (particularly in the “News” and “Photos” sections);
8) Do not declare too soon and too explicitly their pianist profession;
9) Use album covers as photographic material on the websites (with the exception that DM adopts the album cover as homepage, and KU uses two album covers as parts of the gallery in the “Photos” section).

Et cetera, and the list includes also several minor similarities. In consideration of this, perhaps it is sufficient in the present section, instead of the usual description, to focus exclusively on those features that make KU different from DM.

4.3.10.1. Visual

As mentioned, the main chromatic difference with DM consists here in the fact that the secondary colour is orange rather than red. Also, the homepage picture portrays a medium close-up of Uinskas against Mažintas’ full figure. In the overall, KU is a little simpler and less elegant than DM, exactly like the jacket and tie sported on the homepage (Figure 4.18) are somewhat simpler and less elegant than the tuxedo exhibited by Mažintas. A good way to exemplify this difference is in the fonts employed in the

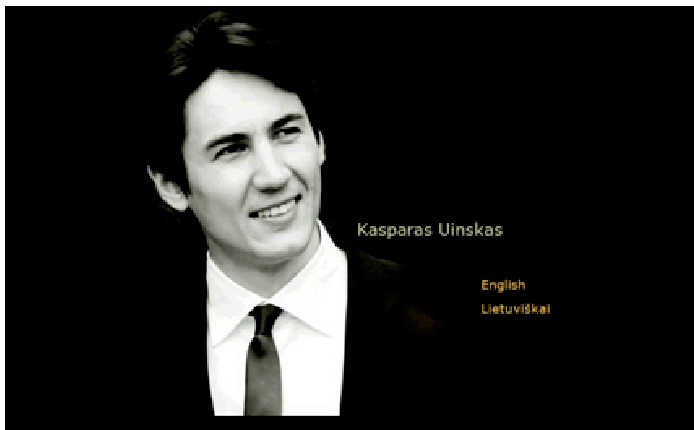

Figure 4.18. A snapshot from Kasparas Uinskas’ homepage

two websites. While Mažintas' initials are carved with a calligraphic serif, Uinskas renounces this feature and simply displays his name and surname in a more traditional Verdana. Also KU's eidetic dimension presents averagely less curves than DM.

Finally, although DM too features a lot of images in the "News" section, it must be said that the number and variety included in KU's "News" is superior and also includes such items as concert posters and publicity.

It is important to point out, however, that the apparent simplicity of the visual choices in KU (as compared to DM) and the relatively brief treatment of this website in the present thesis does by no means suggest that the pianist treats his visual (self)representations in various media and promotion of his activities as a pianist carelessly. On the contrary, Uinskas is one of those performers who do take particular care in presenting their appearances in cleverly-thought of, target oriented, yet (or hence) often a narcissistic and aggressive manner.

4.3.10.2. Linguistic

There are three main differences with DM here: the decision to entirely move the "Concerts" updates to Uinskas' Facebook page; the fact that the biography (see Figure 4.19) is more decisively based on quotations from

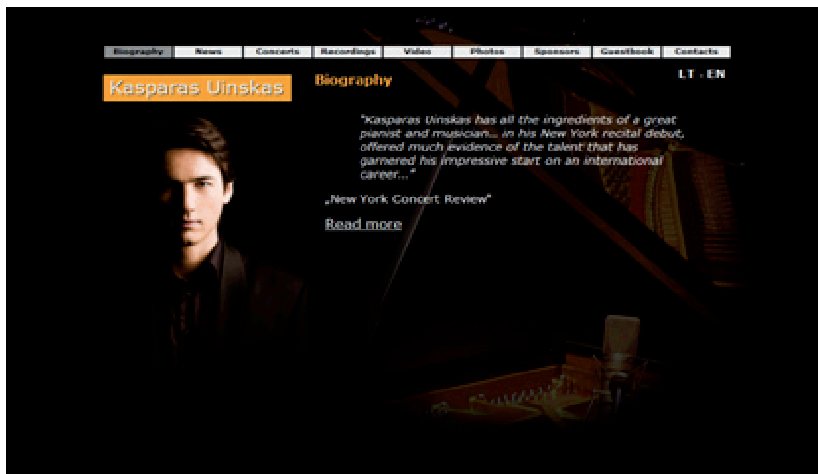

Figure 4.19. A snapshot from Kasparas Uinskas' "Biography" section

critics' reviews (while in Mažintas' case the review was more a point of departure); and – in the constant dialectics between international and national profiles – a prevalence of the former.

4.3.10.3. Videographic

Definitely richer than DM, the "Videos" section consists here in four YouTube-embedded clips (all taken from concerts and recitals, including two in the Berliner Philharmonie, part of a DVD release which shall be discussed in the next subsection), and no less than 21 written links to YouTube pages with older footage.

4.3.10.4. Sonic

Besides those audible in "Videos", additional sound clips appear in the "Recordings" section, where the visitor can download Mp3 files of nearly whole debut album of Uinskas *Chopin*. The other release appearing in this section is the DVD mentioned of his recital in the Berliner Philharmonie: no sound clip is included here, but, as already said, two video clips are available in the "Videos" section.

4.3.11. Andrius Žlabys

(AŽ, http://andriuszlabys.com/, Figures 4.20 and 4.21)

One of the most beloved Lithuanian pianists, by both critics and audiences, Andrius Žlabys chooses to represent himself in a very stylish and minimalist way (which comes as no surprise, given his elegant/intimate approach to performance, discussed in the earlier chapters of this dissertation). His website is one of the most appealing visually and at the same time shares with DK and EM the record for the lowest number of sections (six only) in a website. In addition, inside these sections, the amount of material is also kept to the minimum: the "Biography" is short, the "Press" section contains six short excerpts from reviews altogether, the "Pictures" gallery consists of three shots only, the "Contacts" section displays a single email address exclusively, and on top of that the "Videos" section is under long-term construction. It is mostly the "Audio" section which shows more generosity, with ten full-length samples that are also available for download.

The first temptation is therefore to assume that Žlabys is so confident of his musicianship that he prefers to let the music speak on his behalf. While that may also be true, one may also interpret such choice in a different way, and that is a good example where not-strictly-academic material such as personal encounters and conversations with the pianist may come to hand: Žlabys is a rather gentle and shy personality, who also devotes little time to his own promotion.[212] The combination of all these factors is the very likely process that produces the sober result visible in AŽ. Wanting once again to create a correspondence between a pianist's musical skills and the aesthetics of his visual representation on a website, it can be said that this combination of stylishness and minimalism displayed in AŽ is well summarized in one of the reviews quoted in the "Press" section: that of Žlabys' is an "easy virtuosity".

4.3.11.1. Visual

There is another quotation from the reviews' section that may fit to inaugurate the analysis in this paragraph: the one, from the *Los Angeles Times*, that says that Žlabys' playing is "contemplative and mesmerizing". These words are probably suitable to describe the homepage image of an autumnal natural landscape with a leafless tree in the middle in focus, surrounded by blurred, windy scenery.[213] The homepage (more shall be said in the "Videographic" paragraph) is actually cleverly constructed, with an animation that departs from a photo of Žlabys himself, with name and surname, at the very moment when the site opens, and then, after a couple of seconds, merges automatically, with a cross-fading effect, into the autumnal picture that has been just described (in turn animated by a light but constant change of colours). On it, on the left side, the inscription "Andrius Žlabys,

[212] The pianist's words about the priority of the musical message while playing, or of giving up oneself for the sake of music are also telling. For instance, when asked to point out the type of performance which appeals to him personally, the pianist answers: "I am mostly impressed by humanistic qualities thanks to which a piece transcends the realm of music. I do appreciate one or another rendition not because of its outward qualities, exquisite technique or emotiveness, not because of unusual musical phrasing, colouration, and not even the presence of these elements in their totality; but by the musician's ability to convey the message inherent in a musical piece." (Žlabys, in Navickaitė-Martinelli 2010a: 262).

[213] The photo of the landscape was in fact taken by the pianist himself, while travelling on the train (Žlabys 2013: personal communication).

Figure 4.20. A snapshot from Andrius Žlabys' homepage

pianist" discreetly appears (as seen in Figure 4.20). This picture, unlike the previous one, stays as long as the visitor wishes and until s/he moves onto another section. For this reason, this image should be considered as the actual homepage, and Žlabys' preliminary portrait as a kind of appetizer.

More photographs are available on the website, but not too many. Four sections ("Biography", "Press", "Video" and, of course, "Pictures") use portraits of the pianist to accompany the text, mostly as its background. Besides Žlabys' face, a dominant feature of these pictures are his hands (see, e.g., Figure 4.21), almost everywhere very visible (including a case where they are the only item in focus, and another where they are *the only visible* item). The "Pictures" section also includes three photos available for download in high resolution. Of these, two are the same as the ones used in other sections. Once again: this is a minimalist choice.

Chromatically speaking, AŽ follows the very common trend that has been repeatedly encountered here, of using black as a dominant colour. To this, the equally typical white is mostly used for the texts (plus, in some cases, a pale yellow). More unusual is the use of the various colours of the animation on the homepage image, for both the mouse-over on the menu bar and the small icon on the bottom linking back to the homepage (and picturing the same autumnal scenery of the latter). Then, as usual, more hues are added by the various photographs, nearly all in full colour.

Figure 4.21. A snapshot from Andrius Žlabys' "Biography" section

4.3.11.2. Linguistic

Not so much is written in AŽ, so all the information needed for a linguistic analysis has to be collected from the short text of the "Biography" page only (plus the "Press" section, of course, but those are contents written by journalists and critics). In the lines of the biographical note we find very synthetic and formal information on Žlabys' main career steps and achievements. The tones are rather matter-of-fact, and it looks as if the pianist once again prefers the facts speak for themselves: yes, he is a Lithuanian performer and yes, he is active internationally, but neither data are emphasized as dominant features of his profile.

Such soberness is almost strident with the praising tones of the review excerpts in the "Press" section. Of course, an artist who deliberately selects non-complimentary reviews to promote him/herself has not been invented yet, but still the contrast between Žlabys' neutral tones and the high opinion critics have of him does not go unnoticed.

4.3.11.3. Videographic

For a long time since the website has been launched, the "Videos" section of AŽ has been under construction, but a nice compensation comes from the various Flash animations featured here and there on the website. The transition from Žlabys' portrait to the autumn scenery in the homepage, the ever-changing colours of the latter picture and the same type of animation in the small icon at the bottom of each page have been already mentioned. In addition to these, there is also the fade-in effect of the background images at the opening of each section, in the same vein as MR.

4.3.11.4. Sonic

One of the most satisfying "Audio" sections of the whole sample, AŽ includes ten sound clips that are at the same time full-length and downloadable in Mp3 format, allowing the visitor to get a more than fair idea of Žlabys' musicianship and to store it among his/her files. While most of the pianist's fame achieved at the early stages of his career was due to his remarkable interpretations of Bach, during the subsequent years Žlabys has gathered a rather eclectic repertoire, extended throughout different epochs, cultures and composers. The ten samples of the "Audio" section are a good synecdoche of this situation, ranging from Bach to Alfred Schnittke, and therefore covering a period that goes from the early eighteenth century to the very last years of the twentieth.

Both Bach interpretations appearing in this section serve also as musical background to the homepage (in a similar manner to EM), possibly showing the relevance of this composer within the pianist's choices (and perhaps personality), or maybe opting for a recognizable type of music that may hook the visitor into browsing through the whole website. However, unlike EM, which has an apposite control for stopping or playing the music, the only way to interrupt AŽ's background music is to move from the homepage to another section. In that manner, the music comes out as a complementary (and compulsory) feature to the autumnal image and the change of colours of the homepage, creating a rather charming effect.

4.4. Concluding Remarks

What impressions or insights of the musicians' art and personality do we get from the websites of classical music performers, and how do they correspond with how the artists themselves want to portray their identities? What kind of music do we think they play? What sociocultural background do they assume they are representing? As a specific category, musicians' (art pianists', in particular) websites are very diversified and specific, and the question of the subject's personality is just as relevant as his/her musical skills and repertoire. The differences between the visual self-representation of some Lithuanian pianists, such as Gylytė and Rubackytė, or Mažintas and Žlabys, seem to be rather clear from the analysis conducted above. But we could also take a look, say, at Lang Lang's *global sensation*-style website to get yet another discourse and yet another story.

Indeed, in order to place the sample of this dissertation within a wider perspective, it would be possible to compare these eleven websites with those of a number of international pianists, such as Pierre-Laurent Aimard, Hélène Grimaud, Herbert Henck, Stephen Hough, Roger Muraro, Fazil Say, Anna Vinnitskaya, Yuya Wang, or Ingolf Wunder. The goal of such a comparative analysis would obviously be to verify how much certain solutions result from a common, international, ground, and how much they owe to more circumscribed (national to individual) practices. However, in order to produce a thematically and culturally coherent sample, it was essential to reduce the number of variables involved in this analysis. To gather a group of performers playing the same instrument, belonging to the same social and cultural context, and operating within the same linguistic sphere, is a more productive way to uncover elements of continuity, recurrent *topoi* and the general pattern of artistic and individual expression.

It has been repeatedly underlined that the internet is a place where the smallest voice can speak as loudly as the largest one, and that is definitely true. However, the 'point of departure' and the actual socio-cultural position of such voices create a different aesthetics of communication, or – to keep up with the same metaphor – a different timbre of the voice. While the young, unknown pianist can promote his/her music and image with a website that is just as appealing as (if not more) that of the current superstars of the piano, s/he also has to face a significantly different cluster of

communicative problems. If Lang Lang can address the world as a 'global sensation', that is largely because he *is* a global sensation. A similar choice from the unknown pianist would be very risky, if not slightly pathetic. The same applies if the opposite expression of 'global sensation' becomes 'local sensation', and the set of communication problems to solve has to do with the type of audience, the familiarity of certain repertoires, and even general features like the language of the website. In other words: to speak "as loud as" is one thing, but *a voice* has many more characteristics. Hence, the choice to keep the sample within a fair degree of consistency.

Having said that, the conclusion cannot but be an open one: Would this kind of analysis, coupled with the more conventional performance studies, enrich or even alter the ways we perceive, elaborate and communicate the art of musical performers? Without, obviously, having answered all these questions and more, the main message here is that the meanings that are conveyed not through the art of music, but rather through seemingly extraneous medium, the visual one, are – in their interdisciplinarity – nevertheless relevant and revealing in the study of musical performance art.

Closure

Musical performance studies abound of late, yet, as this dissertation suggests, many facets of the phenomenon remain to be investigated. The contribution to the field of the present thesis is, first of all, that of offering a semiotic theoretical framework for analyzing the art of musical performance. A semiotic analysis of the art is an insightful and promising perspective for musical performance studies. It was not the goal of the present dissertation to encompass all possible types of semiotic investigation of musical performance, but rather bringing to the fore some semiotic theories and creating certain models which offer structures and tools for examining the musical performer's art. In all cases, the main premise remains that of seeing the art of musical performance as a coherent series of processes and gestures that cover the whole sphere of a musician's cognition, including aspects that transcend music as such.

Part 1 of this dissertation is most directly related to the creation of such a theoretical framework. The first model based on Eero Tarasti's theory of a performer's subjectivity presupposes an analysis of the balance between artistic individuality and collective standards in the activity of a performer, as well as of the ever-changing relation of an artist to society and the environment. The second model and Gino Stefani's theory of musical competence are chosen to illustrate that, as this dissertation suggests, it is in the essence itself of musical performance to construct a network of relations that are by far not limited to the musical work which is being performed, but that call into question a variety of anthropological, contextual and individual aspects. Performance stems from a physical body, exists within a society, finds its way backwards or forwards in time and history, manifests the presence of an aesthetic programme, develops into an artistic code, and much else besides. This research into semiotic theories of the art of musical performance is summarized within the author's semiotic model which invokes a broader (as compared to the mainstream musicology) viewpoint into a complex and polyhedral work of musical performers that still calls for closer scrutiny. It suggests that a semiotic approach to studying musical performance would encompass all the exogenic, extra-musical, meanings, which do not necessarily depend on a musical work. The claim is that musical phenomena are often not exclusively musical, hence it is meaningful

to approach them in relation to a great variety of social, economic, and cultural factors.

Together with offering a semiotic theoretical framework for the study of musical performance, a larger goal in this dissertation has been to trace the main changes and transformations of the art of music performers during the twentieth century up to the present time. Obviously, the intention was not that of encompassing *all* the aspects of current performance art or drawing far-reaching conclusions on what might or should be its future. (On the contrary, when it comes to a musicologist's perspective, each chapter features a somewhat prescriptive awareness of how else the issue may be approached in addition to what has been done, what are the prospects for further research.) However, certain assumptions underlie the issues discussed in the second and the third parts of the thesis.

It should be of no wonder that while analyzing the art of musical performance of the twentieth century the Romanticist approaches are often taken as a yardstick. The importance of the nineteenth century to the history of musical interpretation cannot be overrated, as this was the time when contemporary performance art was formed with its ideologies and practices. It was in the Romanticist era that significance was attributed to the individuality of a performer, and the latter began to be considered for the first time a substantial part of cultural life. Taking into account several important aspects of current music-making practices, it can be said that in the twentieth century the ideology of the Romantic era with its commercialized musical life, a pantheon of performing stars and the imaginary museum of musical works being formed was simply transferred to another medium. Yet, together with their evident impact on the present art of performance, the nineteenth century practices and the performative clichés used by the pianists of that tradition have undergone significant changes in the age of mechanical reproduction. (One may say that, in a way, they were of late shifted towards something reminiscent of a New Age philosophy, which still elevates the creative powers and supreme individualism of an artist.)

It is evident that the times of Romantic super-virtuosos are behind us. It even may be that such artists as Anton Rubinstein, Ignacy Jan Paderewski or Vladimir de Pachmann would hardly be allowed to graduate from a respectable conservatory of our day – contemporary professors would not forgive them for playing too many wrong notes and excessive effects of

tempo and dynamics. No matter whether we treat this as progress, or as regress, it is obvious that the standards have changed.

Current globalized criteria require many different things from the interpreter in relation to the repertoire as well. A contemporary performer is expected to be eclectic and prepare large, diverse and conceptual programmes; moreover, nowadays, a performer has to approach the music not from the point of view of his or her sympathy/antipathy, but rather from the perspective of a historical context; performers have to become scholars, because, in their art, they are governed by a document, a score, an *Urtext*.

It is clear that each interpretation of a musical score is inevitably subjective. However, throughout the history of musical interpretation discussions have persisted concerning the significance of 'objective', or even 'authentic', performance. In his/her activity, a performer is not anymore the single determinant authority as s/he was in the Romantic era, and the performance of a work is not perceived anymore as a mere expression of his/her personality. Surely, the salient stars of musical world rather often refuse common norms and tendencies by confronting the environment. Due to their colourful personalities they are able to influence and generate changes of contexts and practices. However, the main trend is that, since its emergence in the nineteenth century to our days, the art of a performer-interpreter has experienced an increasing rationalization, which is illustrated by the standardization of interpretations, the importance of technique and greater significance attributed to the objectivity (a written score) than the subjective emotions or intuition by a performer. There were several important factors that determined this rationalization, and they were closely related to the general socio-cultural situation of the twentieth century. Increased opportunities of communication, technically improved instruments, the importance of music's reproducibility (recordings, radio, TV and so on, influence by the performance art leaders on the styles of performance, disseminated by the recordings), a modified system of teaching, and, finally, the change of repertoire from the music of the period (which was the common practice of the previous epochs), to the music of the past composers (that dominates nowadays) – these are among the most important determinants of the qualitative changes of the art of musical performance during the twentieth century.

The academic novelty of the present dissertation consists, besides the semiotic theory as related to musical performance, also in an attempt at discussing a variety of topics within the art with a very clear emphasis on distancing oneself from the concept of a musical work. The art of a performer is perceived and discussed from the perspective of treating it as a separate cultural phenomenon, not necessarily dependant on the opus. The dissertation, however, also tackles the issue of the importance of repertoire choices in a performer's art, as well as that of the canons of various times and countries, the European canon with Ludwig van Beethoven being in the frontline. Positioning a performer's art within a certain musical repertoire, with particular attention to the musical canon (and its regular appropriation), helps one distinguish and analyze the essential elements of recurrent trends, practices and ideologies related to musical performance.

The last part of the thesis brings the focus of attention to yet another semiotic discourse on the performers' art – the websites of the classical music pianists, which have never yet been subject to musicological or semiotic analysis. As suggested, the performers of music have long time ago indulged into a variety of manifestations of their art, and different types of communication with the receivers of their art, i.e. the audiences. So should a musicological analysis expand its epistemological perspectives and be able to hear, read and explain the variety of (non)sounding stories told by music performers. It is claimed in this dissertation that the combination of a semiotic and a musicological approaches provides significant research tools for the analysis of musical performance. The employed methods and types of discourses, as well as the chosen case studies are of particular significance in the study of musical performance art in that they strongly make a case for current musicology to elaborate increasingly interdisciplinary paradigms and modes of investigation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. 22 recordings of Ludwig van Beethoven's Sonata in D minor Op. 31 No. 2 analyzed in Chapter 3.4 of the dissertation

No.	Pianist	Year	Company / Release
1.	Frederic Lamond	1927/28	Biddulph Recordings 43 (first issued as HMV D 1644/6)
2.	Walter Gieseking	1931	Andromeda ANDRCD 5144
3.	Artur Schnabel	1934	NAXOS Historical ADD 8.110760 (first issued as HMV DB 2649 - 2651 in Society Volume 8)
4.	Heinrich Neuhaus	1946	Appian Publications & Recordings APR 5660
5.	Yves Nat	1954	Angel Records 62901
6.	Clara Haskil	1955	Documents (2010): Clara Haskil, Vol. 7
7.	Wilhelm Backhaus	1958	Philips 456 718-2
8.	Clara Haskil	1960	Philips PHC 9001
9.	Wilhelm Kempff	1964	Deutsche Grammophon 4293062
10.	Claudio Arrau	1965	Philips 4323012
11.	Sviatoslav Richter	Live in Prague, February 1965	Praga PR 254 021; Music & Arts CD-910
12.	Glenn Gould	1971	CBS Masterworks
13.	Annie Fischer	1977/78	Hungaroton/Klassikcenter Kassel HCD 41003
14.	Alfred Brendel	1978	Philips 4125752
15.	Sviatoslav Richter	Live in Paris, November 7, 1980	Pyramid 13500/1
16.	Emil Gilels	1981	Deutsche Grammophon 2532061 (419161-2)
17.	Paul Badura-Skoda	1988	Astrée E8695
18.	Maurizio Pollini	1988	Deutsche Grammophon 427 642-2
19.	Richard Goode	1993	Electra Nonesuch 79212, 79328
20.	Indrė Petrauskaitė	Live in Vilnius, September 24, 1996	Lithuanian Radio Archives
21.	Daumantas Kirilauskas	Live in Vilnius, March 8, 1997	Lithuanian Radio Archives
22.	Andrius Žlabys	Live in Vilnius, June 20, 2001	Lithuanian Radio Archives

Appendix 2. The Durations of Sonata in D minor, Op. 31 No. 2 as recorded by the sample pianists

No.	Pianist	1st mvt.	2nd mvt.	3rd mvt.
1.	Frederic Lamond	5’08	6’33	6’39
2.	Walter Gieseking	5’01	7’58	4’13
3.	Artur Schnabel	8’55	8’17	5’40
4.	Heinrich Neuhaus	5’49	6’28	5’50
5.	Yves Nat	7’47	7’03	6’32
6.	Clara Haskil 1955	7’30	6’17	5’47
7.	Wilhelm Backhaus	8’05	6’07	6’03
8.	Clara Haskil 1960	7’44	6’05	5’58
9.	Wilhelm Kempff	8’22	7’07	7’03
10.	Claudio Arrau	8’38	10’19	7’31
11.	Sviatoslav Richter 1965	9’15	7’20	6’36
12.	Glenn Gould	7’12	8’45	4’35
13.	Annie Fischer	7’57	7’30	6’20
14.	Alfred Brendel	8’50	8’25	6’44
15.	Sviatoslav Richter 1980	10’20	7’56	6’49
16.	Emil Gilels	9’15	9’16	7’25
17.	Paul Badura-Skoda	8’14	7’10	6’36
18.	Maurizio Pollini	8’35	7’50	6’02
19.	Richard Goode	8’00	8’14	6’11
20.	Indrė Petrauskaitė	5’58	7’52	4’53
21.	Daumantas Kirilauskas	5’58	7’34	4’54
22.	Andrius Žlabys	8’20	5’12	6’07

Appendix 3. Interviews with Pianists

3.1. Music without Borders

An interview with Vladimir Ashkenazy; Helsinki, April 2008

Maestro Ashkenazy – extremely energetic, always smiling and not able to keep still – starts our conversation with his admiration of Lithuania's regained independence, Vilnius' churches and unending stories about his encounters with Soviet officials, one of which took place when he was visiting the Lithuanian resort town Palanga. Ashkenazy then could not suppress his discontentment at seeing a Russian officer in Lithuania, which irritated the high-ranking KGB official.

How did your more or less open opposition to the authorities begin?

Well, I never had an open fight with them… At the conservatory, I was considered to be one of the most advanced students: before entering the conservatory I won second prize at the Chopin Competition and in my first year at the conservatory I won first prize at the Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels, the most difficult contest at the time. And I was only eighteen. So I was quite privileged, and when the Soviets concluded a cultural agreement with the US in the late fifties I was included as one of the pianists who would be allowed to play in America. This programme was widely advertised in the press; *Pravda* published an official declaration of the Ministry of Culture with the names of the 'chosen ones': it was incredible to be on the front page of *Pravda* at the age of twenty. So in 1958 I played in America. It was big success, the reviews were good, and I got enchanted with the country. Unfortunately, there always was a 'companion' with me: Voloshin, a representative of the Ministry of Culture (I'm amazed I still remember this name!). After the trip, this absolutely miserable, good-for-nothing ministry clerk wrote a very negative report on my behaviour.

So what did you do there?..

To begin with: I was very friendly with many Americans, which was not very good. Secondly: I was interested in modern art and modern music. In addition, in my interviews I never said especially positive things about my own country. And it was said in that report: "He never showed the pride of being a Soviet citizen". To this day I don't understand what I had to do to show this pride… To stand in the middle of Time Square and scream how happy I am?... So I was summoned to the Department of Foreign Affairs in the Ministry of Culture and had to explain myself to the Head of the Department – Vladimir Timofeyevich

Stepanov. Even though a Party man to the marrow of his bones, he was a decent man, who nevertheless had to react accordingly to that report. And since I had admitted 'being guilty', they cancelled my trips abroad for several years. I was only allowed to perform in my country for 'workers and peasants'.

That took place in January 1959, right after I came back from the USA in December 1958. And before long, in 1961, the list of my 'crimes' was supplemented by my marriage to a foreigner who came to study at the Moscow Conservatory. So I was summoned again to the Ministry of Culture and it was said, unless she becomes a Soviet citizen I should forget my career. In addition, I have to participate in Tchaikovsky Competition 1962. Thus I had to play in the Tchaikovsky Competition, although Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto was definitely not for me… But I was lucky: I shared the first prize with John Ogdon, who played really well. After the competition, the crime was taken off my personal file and I was sent to America again, where Mr. Sol Hurok, a great impresario, wanted to meet me again since we first met in 1958. My wife went with me, while due to the Cuban crisis the Americans did not issue a visa to a person from the Ministry of Culture who had to accompany us… It was a wonderful trip. On our way back we even managed to stop in Reykjavík where I gave a concert.

My next important concert trip abroad was to London in March 1963. My wife (she is Icelandic) lived in London since 1946, because her father studied at the Royal Academy of Music: London was her permanent residency. Of course, I wanted my wife to accompany me, but it wasn't easy. Numerous times I had to answer questions at the Ministry of Culture and the Central Committee, I even turned to the demagogical tricks. You know the communists… I posted a rhetorical question to them: "How am I going to tell my wife (who already had a Soviet passport) that she is a citizen of "the world's freest country" and she cannot go to London where she lived all her life?..." I even was asked whether I have read *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Solzhenitsyn. Finally, they assured me that my wife will be issued a visa, but even on the day I was rehearsing in London she didn't have it. I told them that I am going to complain to the Embassy of Iceland. The next day she and our son got the passports and they arrived in London on the day of my concert. Then we decided that we rather not go back to the Soviet Union. Anyway, it's a long story…

…with the happy ending?

I kept my Soviet passport until 1972, and I travelled all around the world with it. Finally, when all pages were full of visas I went to the Soviet Embassy and asked for extra pages saying that if they refuse I will take another citizenship. Regardless, in 1972 I took up Icelandic citizenship. After the events in Prague I couldn't

keep my old passport… That year I received an official note from the Soviet Union authorities that I am *allowed* to "reject the USSR citizenship".

It was in the year you left, 1963, that Rachmaninov's Second Concerto with Kirill Kondrashin and Moscow Philharmonic was recorded in London. How did it happen?

They were on tour in England, and I was still a Soviet citizen. So when they came I offered to organize our concert together, which suited Soviet officials to have a show of them putting no obstacles on our collaboration even if I didn't return to Moscow. So they let me play one concert with Kondrashin at the Festival Hall in London and we recorded for Decca.

By the way, at the time I did go to Russia once: I played a few concerts. I came back, because the Soviets issued the multiple re-entry visa. However, in order to receive your passport back for you to leave the country you needed to get the permission from the Ministry of Culture (head of which at the time was Ekaterina Furtseva) with the blessing of the Secretary General. Have you seen the Memoirs of Khrushchev? Even though he doesn't mention my name, at the end of the book he writes about "a Russian pianist who won the Tchaikovsky Competition" whose wife was a foreigner and who, at Khrushchev's last years as the Head of the government, was allowed to go to England for "the Soviet citizens should be able to travel abroad and back as they like, especially for family reasons". In any case, we were allowed to leave. It took us twenty-six years before we came back to Russia, in 1989…

Talking about the recordings, do you ever reflect about the 'post-production life' of your recordings? Do you ever think of how people consider them, how do they receive your message? A recording takes its independent life: it is released, it is being listened to by people, and you can be understood or misunderstood there…

No, I do not think that way. I am a very realistic person, pragmatic. I know once I recorded something, that's it. If the company is interested in me and decided to record something, I do my best at that time, and the eventual future of this recording is not in my hands. Some people like it, some don't. It is their right to choose – they might like some other interpreter of that music. I simply wouldn't agree to release it if I did not like it at all. However, I cannot say that I always was the best judge of my playing… If you have to record cycles (I did cycles of all Mozart concerti, all Beethoven sonatas), obviously, some pieces will be better, some less good. It depends on a number of things. But in general, I don't think I made any truly awful recordings…

Your discography is huge, so the question whether you like recording is meaningless. But how would you compare the experience recording to that of a live performance? Do you like making live recordings?

Well, it is in any case not possible to control the audience's reaction – you cannot stop if you feel something is going wrong. I am open to live recordings as I am to everything in general. By the way, I didn't do a huge discography in order to prove anything. I did it because I like doing it, I like listening to myself and be informed of what I can do to improve. The recording process is interesting, fascinating, and often very educational.

One of the great things in the aforementioned Rachmaninov Concerto recording is the fever of the orchestra. Do you believe in somewhat nationalist approaches to music? That once this is a Russian performer, s/he is able to catch the essence of Rachmaninov better than a German or an American… (For instance, Ormandy's accompanying Rachmaninov at the piano in this very Concerto sounds less impressive to me.)

Not always. I think this is more of a legend. Remember Van Cliburn playing Rachmaninov's Third Concerto. It is my favourite performance, and he was American. I think we should forget about it. The world is so small, and there is so much interaction between different places and different nationalities…

Should we also forget about the great Russian piano school?

No, no… This school has some very good qualities: for example, it teaches people to get an affinity with the instrument, and that is excellent. Then it is up to the individual, his or her ability to express himself of herself.

But do you believe this school still exists? It was formed due to the country's isolation for half of a century; do you think it will still last as such in the context of today's cultural globalization?

Probably. I would imagine yes, because that stays very deeply – and probably forever – in the psyche of the nation.

It seems that the environment of the youth is extremely important to the formation of a human's mentality. But in one of your interviews you said that you were formed as a personality more after you already moved to the West. So which culture, if any, do you identify yourself with?

With the Western European culture. And, of course, Russian to a great extent. But the attitude to an individual in a communist-oriented society was nugatory. The collective was everything. Living in a country of that type has a very strong imprint on the development of an individual. Those efforts to leave Russia at the age of twenty-six… I cannot say that I had discovered a new world right away – I was still a Soviet product. But, for me, it was great luck, a great benefit and a great fortune that I married a foreigner and found myself in the West. I opened to the rest of the world doing what I was strongest in. There was nobody who would put any restrictions on my travelling, or absorbing what I wanted to absorb. I was a free person. I could do what I felt, what is right for me as an individual, for the music I was making… In the beginning, it was quite difficult, because before I knew people told me what to do, and now I had to decide on everything: what do I want to do with my family, my career, playing, which offers to accept, and what to reject. At the time my wife was great help, as she was the westerner, and I survived.

Are you following now the cultural or political life of Russia?

Well, we cannot help following political life in the newspapers. Culturally, I go there every couple of years, sometimes more often, but always for a very short time – two, three, four days. I cannot say that I am a full-fledged participant of the musical life of my country, but I do what I can. In 1989, I returned to Russia after twenty six years of absence, and since then I gave many concerts both as a pianist and conductor. I conducted several orchestras in Moscow as well as St Petersburg Philharmonic. Last October I even led the Moscow Conservatory student orchestra – I was invited to take part in the celebration of the centenary of my Professor Lev Oborin. And I had an incredible experience: students who are totally undisciplined or even not appearing at the rehearsals are able to present the best possible performance at the concert. My conservatory…

Tell me more about the Oborin's class; how was it different from the other famous 'schools' of the time?

Oborin was a very noble, intelligent and warm person. I liked him very much. But he was a pianist above all; he played concerts all the time. I don't think the professorship was his priority even though he liked his pupils and tried to help them. It was his assistant Boris Zemliansky who worked with us for the most part. He made me the artist I am.

What was his teaching like?

Zemliansky was very friendly, but he demanded the maximum from gifted students. He kept repeating: "How can you play like that?! You are talented, you cannot be happy with playing like this! Show me what you can do." He was just right. He was a good musician, he gave everything to the students. I am so obliged to him as I am to Anaida Sumbatian, my first teacher at the Central Music School, and of course Oborin. They all were wonderful people. But Oborin was above all of that, he didn't care much about students… However, whatever he said was always important. And the other two just pushed me quite in a right direction.

Were there any particular problems, either physical or psychological, that you had to overcome in order to proceed in the beginning of your career? For instance, you mentioned that Tchaikovsky was not exactly for you…

There is always something in your life you have to deal with: overcome obstacles and problems, perceive your nature and your possibilities. I came to realize that unless I do maximum effort with everything I have – with my mind, my physics, my musicianship, whatever I learned from my teachers… unless I do maximum effort I shall never get anywhere. I had a very good gift from nature, but then I have to be grateful to my environment in Russia, to my teachers, who gave me so much, and then to my wife, who in the West was the only one who could give me real support, spiritual and artistic. Without these people I wouldn't be as successful as I was in the end. So, to think it is only my own achievement is not right, because you are a product of what happened in your life, and people around you play a very important role. You should never forget that.

What would you name as the main turning point in your career? Was there any event, or episode, that was the crucial threshold overstepping which the whole career started developing?

To my mind, people who think there is such a threshold are often mislead. There could be 25 turning points and they may not lead anywhere. And then there might be one, which suddenly puts you on the level and you stay there. That depends on you, and not on anything else. You see, in our complex society, unless you are capable of making yourself well-known, you cannot get anywhere. But you can make yourself well-known, whether artificially or naturally, and then collapse. Being famous is not enough, because you have to sustain the fact that people know you and want to come to your concerts. And that is only possible if

you maintain a certain level of communication and you give people something important from the music and from spiritual entity. But if somebody pushes you on top and then you have nothing to offer, then you fail. That is so unpredictable like life itself… Some people stay there forever. But, as it often happens, some people stay there for a few years, and suddenly – nothing.

Given the current situation of 'no borders' in which young musicians start their careers, as well as facing the overwhelming competitiveness and commercialization, how would you compare the opportunities of today's young generation with the ones that the musicians of your time had?

It has always been there, this harsh competition. In the past, it was perhaps less obvious, but with the advent of immediate communication it became more apparent. In a way, it is easier now to attain publicity, exposure: let us imagine somebody in the deep province, in an uncivilized country heaven knows where, and suddenly because of our current communication opportunities you have access and you suddenly can be known here, and there, and everywhere at once. On the other hand, as I have mentioned earlier, even with splendid chances to reach the professional top the musician will collapse if he or she has no idiom. According to the famous phrase – you cannot fool all people all the time. I believe that the real talent will show itself, if there's a chance, and it will find the ways to stay there.

When you see a young performer, what are those most important qualities you are searching for? What is it that shows you that this is a real artist?

I know when there is a talent, but I cannot put it into words. Many young people want to play for me and I do find time for some. But in the last twelve years, among those many people who played for me I found two pianists who, in my opinion, had the potential for a big career. (One of them is not doing so well: something with personal life, which can have a very strong effect on everything…) Only two people! I didn't say it to the others, but they had no chance.

Officially, you are not teaching?

I never taught. I just simply do not have time for that. You have to have a vocation as a teacher. And you must do it daily, regularly… Even if I passionately wanted to be a Professor, I could not do it because I am too busy. And those people who think that they compensate daily teaching with master classes… No, I'm not like that. To my mind, master classes are the forum for the chap who is

doing the master class to show how good he is, how much he knows. While for the pupils it is of a very limited use and very often no use at all.

What is your main orchestra now?

I am a music director of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, before that I worked with the European Union Youth Orchestra. And I have a Conductor laureate position with the Philharmonia Orchestra in London where I am regularly invited to conduct and I am very happy about it.

When you are conducting the same piece that you once played yourself as a soloist, do you find it easy to get used to a new interpretation, to accept it?

Very easy because I know every note. And if this interpretation is better than mine, I am very happy.

Does it happen often?

Yes, it happens. Sometimes I find things that I myself haven't discovered. Sometimes I might not like the new interpretation so much, but I am quite open and objective: if somebody plays it very well, but not the way I would play, that's fine, very good.

What helps you retain this fresh, loving attitude to the piece that you have been practicing for decades, performing in public for decades, how do you still keep it? Is there anything that you really wouldn't like to touch any more?

Well, if you are a musician, music speaks to you. That is you life, and it's always fresh. In my life I played only music I wanted to play and most of it was so great that I felt so small next to this great music. Each time I come back to that, I feel so lucky that I am a part of it…

You have recorded certain works more than once. Did it ever happen that your attitude to that piece would change substantially with time?

Very often, it changes so gradually that you are not even aware of it, only some other people tell me that I play something quite differently than I did before. How did I come to it? I have no idea. The same applies when you mature; hopefully, you get to understand life better, the relationships between the people… But you cannot really know how and when does it happen – tomorrow, the day

after… It is a gradual accumulation of experience, and you are not quite aware when it comes to another level, it is just a natural process.

Are there still pieces that you take for the first time? What was the last one that you just learned?

Last week I conducted Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, which I have never done before.

Your repertoire is huge, but at the same time it is rather traditional. What is the reason for not playing much contemporary music: just being too busy with the canon, or is it a statement that you don't like it?

No, by no means. Today there are many very interesting, talented and devoted composers, who don't compose just for the sake of shocking people or for the sake of doing something especially new, but rather express something very special and very interesting. But, as always, an exceptional genius is not an everyday occurrence. In the times of Bach or Beethoven, even into the twentieth century, there were parameters everyone had to comply with. Later, music was released from all constraints: absolutely everything became possible, no more tonalities, even the dodecaphony is not important, the composer is free to do whatever he likes. What happens when people are given unconditional freedom? It is a chaos basically in every respect, in our societies too. There should always be some kind of guidelines for our life, behaviour and self-expression. Lack of them might determine a certain end. I am very afraid that this is what is happening to the arts today. And so where are we, where is music going? Nobody can answer this question. I would be pretentious if I would say I know where everything is going.

But even in the midst of this chaos the talent will emerge and say something of substance and importance. It is impossible to verbalize how it happens, but it is really possible to feel the genuinely gifted person communicating something non-eclectic, but original and personal; perhaps novel, not predictable, but comprehensible and valuable. Cases like that transpire, and we have to hope that this chaos will not last until everything valuable that was mustered so far will dissipate into eternity.

3.2. In Constant Struggle with Oneself

An interview with Dmitry Bashkirov; Helsinki, February 2010

Maestro, you have reached such a point in your career where one can sum up quite a few things. When do you think you discovered your style? Where does the 'real' Bashkirov start? Or, possibly, is there more than one?

It is not my style that matters, but my nature, my character: indeed, it was already in my teens that I had a rather clear picture of what I wanted. I will never forget the compliment paid to me by the celebrated Heinrich Gustavovich Neuhaus (he arrived in Tbilisi to give master classes when I was eighteen). After listening to my performance he said "it is not only talented, but wise." He could hear that I knew precisely what I wanted. Sure enough, there might have been mistakes (or maybe the ways to achieve my vision were not the best ones), just as today I can err in some things, but a vision and a sense of standard was already there. Yet there is nothing fixed in stone, no matter what. People who listened to some of the pieces I played twenty years ago and today say I started interpreting them in a different manner. I cannot even notice that, simply there is a natural process going on, the standards do change; while listening to my own recordings I am occasionally surprised by my earlier interpretation…

Are there any musical infatuations from you early period which are embarrassing or at least funny to remember?

I feel embarrassed of nearly all of my performances. On the stage, with all the excitement and other things, I seldom manage everything to my wish and to my best ability; yet I would love to perform the way I can do it on my own or when playing for an intimate circle. Try as we might, but this feeling of embarrassment, or shame, is inherent in the life of a performer. A performer who is always content with his playing and trusting the applause of the audience is on a very dangerous path. I have got this self-nagging nature. It is not very good, but, after all, you must be your own harshest critic. Otherwise you need a constant presence of somebody else understanding music, who will tell you, without flattering, what you did well and what places were weaker if not failures. (My wife from my second marriage is a musicologist, but her fine sense of music is even more important; indeed, one cannot have a more demanding critic…). Relying on public success is extremely dangerous.

If concerts cause such a great deal of excitement, maybe it is better to realize one's ideas by recording versus performing?

I do record. However, if a concert performance is more or less a success, the result as a rule is a livelier and more interesting rendition than that of a recording. Though there have been exceptions, when I was aware that the recording was so good (examples of such are Prokofiev's Sonata No. 8 or Scriabin's Concerto) that I would never be able to repeat this rendition… Things do happen. Yet most often when somebody tells me of a musician I do not know and suggests listening to his or her recordings, I always prefer listening to a live performance. Even if something fails, I want to feel the person. Recording is a great thing, but it seldom communicates an adequate image of the artist. I think that recordings cannot recreate this all-encompassing impression, the atmosphere which embraces the creation of an artist onstage. If he is creating anything at all…

During the yesterday's concert (the interview with maestro Bashkirov took place after his recital and master class at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki – L.N.-M.) you have really created something remarkable. The entire programme was saturated with great moments, but the electrifying, exceptional experience were the two moments musicaux *by Rachmaninov.*

Rachmaninov's music is the easiest to move with… It contains such a strong emotional impulse that I can understand you very well. You did not mean this as professional evaluation.

Why not? It is not the first interpretation of Rachmaninov that I have listened to, but such intensity of performance – and at the same time, the intensity of musical sound – by far exceeds a routine experience.

Well, intensity, especially in music, is one of my natural qualities. Maybe at this age one should stop being that intense… On the other hand, it is music that gives me strength for that.

By the way, in Mark Zilberquit's book on Russian pianists, you refer to this particular age by saying that when you are eighty, and past teaching or performing, then you will be able to pen down your artistic principles. Do you intend to do so next year?

In any creative profession, one should not concede that the principles, once established, continue working without any changes. Even if some of them are bare fundamentals, such as assigning the greatest value to the significance of music, its content or soul, or establishing a certain quality of sound, – even such principles within themselves are experiencing some major or minor metamor-

phoses, trigged by human experience, sensations and impressions (not necessarily musical) accumulated in the course of life. The artist should not allow this continuous evolvement to stop or to fall into a rut at a certain stage. Even though it is not easy, we should aspire to find something new, otherwise life in music becomes not interesting.

Next year I am really not going to perform, that is for sure. My pedagogical load is so great that it is impossible to combine both. I was proud of this fifty-fifty during my entire life, feeling that one enriches the other – and they did. Yet after I reached my seventy years, I realized that I could not go on like that: teaching exhausts me, drains my brain worse than performing. That means I have to choose, and I choose teaching, because multiplying oneself, as I have been doing for fifty five years the way I do, is a little bit immodest. But helping young people is a sacred calling.

You are a much desired teacher of the piano. What are the qualities of a good teacher? How do you imagine the teacher's role in a young musician's career?

A teacher is a teacher, irrespective of a profession. I use the years while children are studying with me for trying to teach them the knowledge of what to do in music when eventually they have to be on their own, without anyone's support, so that they do not get lost like many of those who have just perfected their skills. They currently pluck laurels at international competitions, but when left without a guiding hand, they can do nothing. They understand nothing and stop doing anything. That is exactly what we need to be teaching: to prepare for all the coming crises, to carry on with living their creativity in the face of all possible defeats. Such is my sole principle, I call it 'education *with allowance*', that is, education for future. Usually I take very few students, and, by percentage, most of them become successful concert pianists. This happens because I luckily managed to achieve that they start thinking individually instead of just following their teacher's directions. Yes, you can direct, but you have to do it the way that together with the knowledge they acquire, these young people build their own relationship with music.

Anastasia Virsaladze in Tbilisi and Alexander Goldenweiser in Moscow. How would you compare the experience of your education – what was the major difference between your teachers?

They were radically different personalities. Both were remarkable musicians. As human types, absolute antipodes. Despite that, each has played a major role in my formation as a musician, pianist and teacher. Anastasia Davidovna mostly

educated me on classical repertoire, but herself was a true romantic, a person of incredibly poetic, tender soul. Alexander Borisovich was a great erudite, a representative of pre-revolutionary intelligentsia, Rachmaninov's fellow student, Medtner's friend, frequenting Tolstoy's house and playing chess with the host… Goldenweiser bridged the pre-revolutionary and Soviet stages of the Russian school. He helped me more as a teacher by tempering my nature, while Virsaladze instilled in me an infinite love for music. I even told my wife once that she, at best, could only hope for second place in my life – after music.

You are one of the most prominent (my interlocutor laughs, saying that I must have meant "one of the oldest" – L.N.-M.) exponents of the just cited Russian piano school. Does it make sense these days, using this concept? If so, how would you define its essence?

As such, it surely exists, but the interaction between individuals, countries and continents these days is much closer than it used to be a hundred or eighty years ago. Therefore some mutual exchange and cross-saturation takes place. What is the American school – half of their greatest pianists are from Russia, or the ones who studied with Russian teachers… The German school did indeed exist and had a purely German foundation, the same with the French school: they are both characterized by some unique nuances. When it comes to the school I know best – it has preserved some qualities, but has also lost something. How was it special, this Russian piano school? I would note the quality of sound, the expressiveness, the unique spiritual, emotional lavishness – it is possible that in this respect some things have been already lost. But it has acquired a certain culture, which was not typical for us, for instance, in performing old music, especially what regards the precision of rendition in classical pieces.

Do you keep in touch with the cultural life in Russia? How does it compare with the experience of living in Spain? Culture, pianists, cinema… everything must be totally different.

You know, I take no offence, but I am sick of reading how "Bashkirov in 1991 left to live in Spain." I did not leave: I work in Madrid on the basis of an annually extended contract, I do not even have my home there – my accommodation is school-provided. My son – he has really *left,* he turned 'Spanish' and lives there more or less on a constant basis. There are many things that appeal to me in Spain, and probably, had I started teaching abroad when I was forty, I probably would have assimilated better. Yet during seven decades I have grown too close with Russia and cannot picture myself without this country. I try to keep abreast

of Russia's cultural developments, let us say, I adore drama theatre, but when I come back for a few days, I am short of time to go anywhere. I either sit at the piano or meet my acquaintances.

It is very interesting to listen about your relationship with Spain. It is true that after reading something like this one can easily picture certain stereotypical images. On the stage you looked like a Spanish caballero…

O yes, the Spanish keep telling me I look more Spanish than they do – like a character from El Greco's painting. In Kuwait, similarly, when I tried on local clothes, they took me for a sheikh; in France I can easily pass for a Frenchman, in Georgia and Israel I also look like their fellowmen. Such is my complexion.

You have a very interesting, plastic, almost 'dancing' touch of the piano. How did you discover your physical relationship with the instrument? How did your approach to it change over time?

Thank God, I was taught plasticity in Tbilisi. Even if I feel some minor aches, or arthritis begins to set in, my hands still never get tired. I have just performed the entire recital, and I feel nothing, as if I have not even played. All the tension travels down to my legs, while here, above, all is free. I keep repeating to my students that hands are part of us, and their movement has to be absolutely natural. If in real life we can manipulate them freely, so why, as soon as we sit down at the instrument, we start handling them like quite flexible, yet a piece of prosthetics? Today at my master class I kept asking students why their hand is not breathing. So if you have noticed my relaxed hands – that is correct, I always try to relax them, as this changes the sound, then it is never sharp. The Russian school used to be famous for that, unfortunately, these days, such priorities are lost or have changed. The very life has changed. I cannot blame young people – they want everything as soon as possible: awards, money, concerts, success… They rush, rush, rush…

In your youth, did you encounter any psychological or physical obstacles in performing music, which you had to overcome?

Since the time when I was taught to play the piano, I did not experience any physical difficulties. Well, maybe once… I was on very good terms with Sviatoslav Richter – I felt greatly honoured and thrilled by his very favourable opinion of me. So once I took the risk of asking him to dedicate some time for working with me, while he simply could not stand pedagogical work… I keep this

postcard from him: I told him about a very talented French boy, who played perfectly at the age of eleven or twelve; so Richter wrote to me: "My congratulations – such pieces at this age. Unfortunately, I was not blessed with enjoying work with pupils." Yet at that time he agreed to listen to me, and here I land with a problem: one of the episodes does not sound. What should I do? He looked at me and said: "Why don't you play this part with your left foot?" I thought that a paradox, while later on I realized that I had been promoting this approach my whole life: one should play not only with one's fingers: your entire body, shoulders, arms, back and legs have to support you. Then there will be sufficient sound with no banging, no jarring sounds of rattling pots and pans. This was my one physical problem, while psychological awkwardness has never left me in my entire life: it is a struggle with my own self.

And have you ever struggled with the piano? In general, what qualities of an instrument are of the highest priority to you?

Of course, I have. Even yesterday I had to struggle with the instrument: it happened to be not a highest class piano. In general, the instrument should respond to what I am trying to bring out. Usually I have quite a clear picture of what I expect. The secret of sound is that our inner hearing has to know how it sounds a fraction of a second, a micron of time *before* we actually hit the note, especially, if it is a melodious sound – these need to be heard inside our head. Then only our finger will produce such a sound. If we are just poking the keys with no idea of what we want to hear, we are sure not to achieve good results. An adequately tuned piano will respond how it should. But it is not sufficiently good – try as you may, it will hit me back… And such things do happen…

Do you think music lends itself to verbalizing? Most often instead of demonstrating how to play, you tend to talk, tell things…

At the beginning, I also used a lot of demonstration just the way most of my esteemed colleagues do. With years I came to realize that is very dangerous. One can demonstrate how to produce a certain note or how a particular moment should sound… But if you sit all the time and play, students tend to imitate against their own will and become 'little Bashkirovs', what I do not really want. Reviews of my students performing worldwide often note that as pupils of one teacher – and a performing musician with a distinct style, – they all display a great variety in the manner of playing. I take this for an ultimate compliment.

I do not cling to a sole truth. In some cases it is possible to follow the notation, but the sense of measure… Loud – but how loud? It says *staccato* – but

what kind of *staccato*? Then there are instances when I say, like today, – that is horrible, but I am going to allow myself to disagree with Chopin. How obnoxious! But I have explained why. Because he wrote *diminuendo* too early. Then the phrase loses any inner intensity… Such things have to be taught. Of course, there has to be some limit, but within these limits there are countless possibilities of variations and gradations… Luckily for us, there is no one truth in art, there are many of them. Otherwise all the spheres of art would have been dead long ago.

When it comes to limits… Today, during your master class you have advised students more than once to change finger patterns according to their need…

Yes, because each person is anatomically and physiologically different…

…then what are the elements of musical text that are recorded by the author that you find absolutely unalterable?

There are two spheres. One is finger patterns, different means, tricks; and the other is the reading of the score (text of notations) and its interpretation. On the one hand, the notation is the core foundation, yet on the other, the notes are only hieroglyphs, and each of them can be deciphered in several ways.

Which editions do you trust most?

For classical music one mostly should go for an initial guidance to *Urtext* edition and use it as a point of reference for discovering one's own approach to the given piece. Only afterwards, with the teacher's support or without it, one should proceed with consultations and look at other, more individualized editions that might involve some interesting aspects. These can be used, included into one's arsenal, but we should stay away from a mechanical repetition of very detailed editions which mostly are in reflection of the editor's personal approach. Not infrequently by bringing his person into too prominent a focus.

Young people these days listen so much to multiple recordings…

And they make no mistake. What matters is to avoid copying. I know some teachers who say: "now you play this part as he does" – that is awful. For a productive listening of recordings, especially with inexperienced young performers, they must start from understanding something in the given work. Otherwise they will be only aping.

How would you advice a young person to create his or her own world? He should read, watch…

Who is still reading these days?… No matter what, this complex question should first of all be tackled at home and by educational institutions. I can only say that over the last ten–fifteen years, I had no time to read serious books, while in my youth I read a lot, visited theatres and exhibitions; when in America, I would go to visit museums even on the day of a concert; such experience is being stored somewhere for the times to come. Now I feel impoverished because of a shortage of time, but I can use 'prompts' from the stock of my young days. So if young people lose this time, the most productive time from 13 to 25, this gap cannot be filled in. At that time one absorbs everything like a sponge, later on it becomes more and more difficult.

You are constantly surrounded by music in your life. Do you ever listen to background music?

Classical music is a distraction to me (it is a professional problem). But I do not mind as background some quiet classical jazz which I adore, or something like semi-pop. What really irritates me is aggression of sound or character, I simply cannot stand that. Sometimes it is simply impossible to stay in a restaurant.

And how do you react to aggression in performing music?

There is so much aggression in the world, and performing music is part of the world, a reflection of the processes taking place in the human world. In performing art, aggression is usually supported by superb technique, and then it is accepted as something powerful, something virtuoso and welcome… There are pieces that have aggression coded in them, and in such cases, it no doubt has the right to exist. But if music is not aggressive yet rendered that way, then, putting it mildly, it is very bad. I will not mention any names, but there are some even very fashionable pianists who manage to break three strings during one concert. How can one react to it? Just laugh and cry at the same time. In 55 years of my career I maybe broke three strings, and it was because the instrument was out of order.

What gives you greatest happiness along your creative path?

I can say with absolute certainty that my students' achievements are the source of the greatest joy to me. I have no gene of vanity, but when my pupils play well,

I get so soft-hearted. Then I think there are some things I am good for. Actually as a teacher, I am much more vulnerable and sensitive than as a performer: as a pianist I know too well what I am capable of and what I cannot do, so I am not going to surprise myself, maybe only from the worse side. But when children play – this gives me great joy…

3.3. The Centaur at the Piano

An interview with Petras Geniušas; Vilnius, February 2004

One of the pieces on the Golden Disk 2003 launched by the Lithuanian Musicians' Union is Ludwig van Beethoven's Sonata *Pathétique*, Op. 13, performed by Petras Geniušas. The sonata is not only 'canonical' in the composer's creative output, but it is often an important introduction into the conscious artistic path of many young pianists of nowadays. Speaking of this recording, it is tempting to share with the reader the fantastically growing overpowering tension in the introductory *Grave*, the intensely rich, earthly sound, the shattering Beethovenian force and the climaxes of silent emotions. A brilliant interpretation. As if, to borrow the words from the pianist himself, a Centaur is playing the piano.

What is going on today in the life of Petras Geniušas? Where is your home, work, and stages that lure you to come back?

Until now I was surprised by such a question. When Gidon Kremer was once inquired about reporters' most frequent questions, his answer was that they most often ask him where he lives. Though my geography is not so wide, I am rather often asked the same question. Before, I did not think it really mattered where a person lived. Lately I came to realize that it does matter… Every artist, a performer or a composer, alongside with a formal structure of a musical piece, transmits some meta-information by opening up other than musical realms. So the place you are based at, just as other factors, unavoidably mould your inner world and, in turn, it all tells upon your listeners. So, yes, it does matter where you live.

So where?...

Nowhere… Presently I live in my inner world. (*Laughs.*)

The dwelling place question relates to the question about musical capitals. What does it mean for a performer to live in New York, London, Tokyo, Vilnius?...

It is a social aspect of the question: art and society. Maybe because I am presently based mostly in Vilnius, I try to avoid this social viewpoint. Yes, it does matter how your life develops in terms of musical show business, music business. But currently, and maybe partially by force of circumstance, I am less interested in these developments.

But this, perhaps, can matter not only in terms of business, but also in terms of cultural and musical life?

Yes, there is an economic aspect, and there is a cultural aspect to it. But today my interest in both is surpassed by the developments in the inner, intentional life space of an artist. I am more focused on the treasures of an individual, one's spiritual path. All these conventional concerns, such as where you get more concerts, where they are of higher quality, who are more active users of culture and art, they are of less consequence for me today.

It is only several days past your birthday. Let us take it as reference point. If we go fifteen or twenty years back, would you say that you were able to imagine Petras Geniušas as he is today?

Yes, some twenty years ago I pictured myself this way. When young, I aspired to become just like the Lithuanian artists whom I knew, such as Noreika, Katilius, Aleksa, and others… The icons of the Lithuanian intelligentsia.

Later, maybe some ten years ago, I became like a fish who hit unfamiliar waters, especially lured by Londons and New Yorks, I discovered another aspect of myself. That turning point was rather unexpected, and all of a sudden my geography opened up – this was not in my childhood dreams. But I find it really interesting that finally my initial impulse that I had brought from my childhood also came true. My dream was, by the time I am forty three, to become a true representative of the Lithuanian intelligentsia, a mature artist, well read, searching for self-expression, and spiritually rich… I really wanted to be like that. I imagined myself as somebody wise, almost a guru…

A guru needs to have followers…

A teacher immediately has followers in his students.

How does a teacher benefit from his teaching?

Teaching gives me the interaction with music. Students bring in an enormous amount of music. This is particularly true of London where each day ten students show up with some most complicated musical works: this is how you accumulate experience. Fifteen or even ten years ago it was unthinkable to me I could teach pieces without having played them myself, they seemed enshrouded in secret to me. Now I feel much stronger about piano literature, I can tackle it on the spot, I can take unfamiliar pieces and teach a master class. It all comes with experience.

You have once mentioned 'drastic' teaching methods of Vera Gornostayeva. What is the method of Petras Geniušas? Does it happen that female students leave your class in tears?

My teaching techniques are gentle. I do get angry, and my students feel that, but my nature prevents me from getting involved in open conflicts. I have other ways to show my students their failures. Of course, my students also occasionally get depressed…

This so-called guru has to be like a mirror, so that a person shows up and can look at himself. It is very important. It is not enough to simply offer your students a recipe how to play a piece, but to help them clearly see themselves and at what stage of their path they are. When they get to see that… This rude awakening often brings in a crisis, but the bright and talented usually suffer through that, and this really speeds up their progress. A guru has to break a person apart, to destroy him and put him back together, transforming into a new quality.

An experienced teacher is able to see and show on the spot. You do not go through pains of long speculations, because you pinpoint so many things just like that. And you know *how* to show it to a person. For example, there is no need in many classes of such giants like Mstislav Rostropovich: one in half a year's time is enough, or even fewer. He gives you such an impulse, he leaves you with so much information, which is not verbal, but some kind of essential, extremely concentrated knowledge, that it transforms a person in just one class.

There is a lot of good music in this world. To find your 'own', you have to apply your own criteria. How do you build your repertoire? Does it all exclusively depend on commissions of concert organizers?

As I do not belong to the mainstream market (the activity of most Lithuanian artists can be characterized as some sort of *underground* if we talk international careers), in the financial sense it affects my situation negatively, but in the sense of choosing the repertoire I am much more independent. Presently, only the crème de la crème musicians are able to dictate their preferences to concert organizers. Musicians with just a 'regular career' are very much dependent on the commissioned repertoire. The audience often has no idea how hard a pianist has to work to come up with a new programme nearly in a week's time. No saying that I value my freedom of selecting my own repertoire.

Therefore, the thought of *what I should play* is always in the back of my head. I am not a musician who visualizes a new solo programme in its entity, and it takes time. Often I select a new piece and start playing it, then reconsider, put it away, and select something new. If we talk about my criteria, most often I

try to figure out what I myself would like to hear at somebody's recital. It also helps if you have the sense for your time, it makes it easier to determine what people *presently* would like to hear. Usually a musician with a good feel for the contemporary needs is able to guess ahead of time. It works just the same as in the world of fashion. The best designers say that whatever is in fashion now, is out of fashion already. You have to predict what the audience might want in half a year's time.

The programmes of your concerts for the past several years had many pieces by Sergei Rachmaninov. Why Rachmaninov?

As a student, I used to avoid Rachmaninov. His music seemed to me old fashioned, too basic, and hackneyed. The 'intellectualism of youth' urged me to play Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Bartók, and old music. But later I felt I was lacking something – through Rachmaninov. I realized that his music involves all of your body, you in entirety, and it became very important to me as a human being and as a musician. Odd enough, I developed a stronger relatedness to my body in my thirties not in my youth.

Some philosophers employ the concept of Centaur: it is the state when your body is conceived not separately from your mind astride on your body, but when they are united like in the Centaur figure. In this respect the corporeality of Rachmaninov, his fantastic emotional and physical intellect is unique, and people intuit that immediately. Why does the audience like his concertos? It is not just empty virtuosity that they admire. In his music the Centaur, in its whole is present.

There is a generation of people, and not just in Lithuania, a large part of which has this contempt for the body. It is the world outlook when it is fine to 'skin' the horse as he is only fit for riding. But when you become one with this horse, he turns into the Centaur.

To the listeners with the interest to and exceptional appreciation of contemporary music, the flaws and drawbacks of Romanticism and sentimentality are rather synonymous with the name of Rachmaninov.

I believe that it is possible to identify certain stages in human perception. Pure emotionality and sentimentalism may be regarded as the initial stage of perception, lower than rationality and intellectualism. Yet their synthesis, which can be defined as post-rationalism, is the highest stage.

It is true that at present, the openly anti-intellectual attitude is not in trend. I also fancy the contemporary, intellectual, and mathematical music, Stockhausen,

Boulez, some Lithuanian composers. Yet often this naive pre-rationalistic sentimentality is being confused with post-rationalism. We forget that our goal should be the third stage which synthesizes the rational and the irrational. For a long time I have known this by intuition, but eventually I dug out some brand new fashionable theories in support.

Oddly, some theorists and composers still think it their duty to destroy Romanticism which had been destroyed long time ago and was even revived…

Given that Rachmaninov is the composer closest to you, who of the performers of his music were your major influence?

First of all Rachmaninov himself was influenced by Chopin-as-a-performer, through his own pieces. Chopin was also a composer and a pianist whose many ideas were derived from the corporal level. Of his performers, Vladimir Horowitz was the biggest influence on me. Also Rachmaninov himself.

How important is the piano to you as an instrument, what are its advantages and shortcomings? In what sense is it exceptional?

No doubt it is the best solo instrument. A symphonic orchestra as a collective phenomenon might be more perfect – but only the piano is that kind of instrument which is sufficient by itself. It is superior to an organ because of its connectedness to the human body. It takes a human body to produce all *crescendi* and *diminuendi*, and the immediate contact with the instrument means worlds. The strings are also related to the human body, there is always that moment of touch, of dynamics, but they are only equipped to produce one, at most two or three sounds at a time. The piano offers the totality of a full score. What a wonder is the piano pedal: it allows you endless possibilities of overtone play, all the riches within it, the bottomless possibilities of mixing and of diluting sounds – the entire alchemy of the piano. I don't think this instrument has any competition.

Some pianists probably went to extremes developing a purely tactile attachment to their instruments? For example, one of the private pianos of Glenn Gould was constructed with the unnaturally spaced out keys so that the pianist could visualize and psychologically imitate the vibrato of string instruments.

Geniuses have their own oddities. Josef Hofmann used to demand narrower keys, Horowitz liked an extremely shallow keyboard which allowed a fantastically easy performance of *pianissimo*. These are extremes which can be justifiable because

the demands were made by geniuses. I do not imagine that I might need to feel the illusion of vibration, but I do believe that Gould might have had that need.

Every artist has his own invisible singularities, his own illusions, and I do believe that such geniuses might have had plenty of such whims. All of them reflected their real needs, they *did* need that. Just like character features – some artists happened to be cruelly demanding to the point of insanity or sadism. But only such effort, and even beyond, produces the desired magic result.

What is the 'pianistic' music? What about 'pianistic' composers, are they necessarily pianists themselves?

Most often they are, though there might be exceptions. Tchaikovsky was a poor performer, but his piano music, though it is not 'pianistic' physically, sounds excellent. The same could be said of Schubert; and it often happens that simple pieces are inconvenient to perform but they sound adequate. It means that he was a perfect pianist on a higher level. Maybe physically he was not too well adjusted to the instrument but nevertheless was able to hear how fantastically it could sound.

Yet most often the piano repertoire was composed by those who were excellent pianists themselves: Mozart, Bach, Scarlatti, Schumann, Chopin, Beethoven, and Brahms. They differ only by their psychological and physiological types. Brahms and Beethoven have something in common – strong and substantial. Chopin, Liszt and Mozart have a lot of plasticity, natural gracefulness, almost like dancers: it is more pleasant to play them. When we talk of movement, playing is also a dance. When playing Chopin, you are learning from his bodily gracefulness. You probably cannot learn dancing from Brahms as he has more about strength. Sergei Prokofiev was also an excellent pianist; he was extremely natural, and in some aspects of Scarlatti-like nature.

How do you feel about Debussy? Your interpretation of the Debussy Préludes in the recital of 2003 was really impressive.

I knew the music of Debussy since long ago, and I loved its beauty, but I was influenced by the then-popular in Russia opinion that though extremely aesthetic, his music was on the cold side. But later the channel for him suddenly opened up, and I remember crying while listening to his *Pelléas et Mélisande*, and I listened to it from morning till night… Later, I discovered his preludes, Michelangeli's renditions… Some time later I started playing them myself.

I owe a lot of my understanding of Debussy to Professor Jurgis Karnavičius, who had studied in Paris. He used to say that Debussy's music was similar to

two simultaneously broadcasted radio stations: two layers a little bit out of sync. The Michelangeli's rendition gives you the associations exactly like that. Debussy is a true genius, and in his music he captured not just his own inventions but something present in reality, in nature, and in the surrounding world. It is a fantastic sensation to play him.

Do you ever study other than the piano compositions of the composers you are working on at the particular time? Their symphonic or vocal compositions?

Of course, I play a lot of chamber music. If am working on an ingenious symphonist, such as Beethoven, Brahms, Schubert, orchestral Bach, I naturally study their other work, too. Of course, there are some gaps, for instance, I am yet unable to listen to Schumann's symphonies.

I seldom hear Schumann, as well as Schubert, interpretations that would thrill me or at least live up to my expectations. Maybe the pianists who can perform these two composers well are too few?

Then you should try listening to Schubert's sonatas performed by Wilhelm Kempff. Every musician catches the 'Schubert bacillus' at one point in time. He did not exist to me up to my second year of studies. I reckoned he was a composer we could easily do without, somewhere between Beethoven and Schumann, yet neither of them. His sonatas seemed to be boring, long and unexciting. But then I listened to the concert of Sviatoslav Richter in Moscow, and I caught the deadly Schubert bacillus for the rest of my life…

Schubert had a unique ability to penetrate into the spheres beyond simple human awareness – he is absolutely unrivalled. Nobody has even distantly approached that realm somewhere between life and death where Schubert dwells. He maintained some kind of an immediate connection to the stars… so I do wish everybody to contract his illness.

How useful is the opportunity to communicate with the author when playing contemporary music? Given the chance, what would you like to ask of Liszt or Beethoven?

First of all I would give worlds for listening to them play. And what about asking questions?... Sometimes when a composer has a chance to verbally phrase his intentions, he does not know how to express them. An experienced performer sometimes is more efficient at digging into the subconscious intents of the composer than he is himself. Otherwise this world would not even need performers. It is one thing to compose a piece built on a conscious idea, and it is different

when this intent emerges from the depth impenetrable even to himself. Performers are sometimes capable of professionally reaching into this deeper level and rendering the intents not consciously perceived by the composer.

I do enjoy the interaction with contemporary composers yet sometimes they should not be allowed into rehearsals. (*Laughs.*) I remember cases when the presence of the author made me feel restrained.

So maybe a performer mostly used to playing the music of the past epochs, grants himself too much freedom to begin with, if the presence of the composer restrains him?

Freedom and restraint are both necessary. If a composer treats a performer as a robot who is supposed to realize his conscious intellectual intentions the result might be negative. When a performer stifles his personality, when he attempts to act mechanically, both the performer and the interpretation will suffer. It is necessary for the two worlds to collaborate. Most composers are aware of it, beneficially to the outcome.

What nowadays is the role of a performer as an interpreter of music? How different it is compared to the epoch when Romantic virtuosos were the pivot of musical life, and when their primary goal was to show themselves off?

The concept that they supposedly were mostly showing off originated because of the opinions of the Anti-Romanticism epoch which issued immediately after Romanticism. At that time it seemed critical to replace Romanticism by other trends, to do away with the Romantics. Nowadays we have matured to the stage of integration and synthesis.

At the period of licentious performers, when the composer's notation was completely disregarded, it was relevant to insist on the academic interpretation. Today it is already fully installed: we do have numerous performers perfectionists, we have computers… So this past stage became a must, just like other things: being civilized, wearing your clothes, showing respect to the text of an author, etc. Today we proceed to the next stage when a subjective world of a performer becomes more important. What matters today is his insight into the invisible, his ability to show it to the audience, to spread his understanding, something very intimate.

Occasionally we face sceptical opinions about music as a form of communication. Yet many creative personalities agree that some human experiences which are impossible to render verbally can be shared by painting, music, or dance. Here I am talking about composing. But is it possible to convey your own experience by rendering the experience created by another person (the author of the musical piece)?

My answer would be by one hundred percent positive. It is where two experiences meet. It just so happened that in time these two types of activity became separated, and today a composer often plays a more structural role: he conceives a structure that a performer completes. This is obvious in the practice of all great performers: regardless of what they play, they create a fantastic atmosphere, a unique world, real and compelling.

Every musical piece though has a bottomless variety of context. If we think about a classical piece, in it we will always have the conscious intent of a composer, as well as the unconscious, Freudian or even deeper, religious and mystical levels. We also deal with a cultural context that a composer, possibly even without being aware, was participating in. To add, there is always an economic context. A formal viewpoint of a musical piece mainly focused on the structure as stripped off any other context is possible just as any other. The context of this present day, it is also there: the concert hall, the audience, the listener, the history of the listening to this particular piece. If we talk about Beethoven's *Appassionata*, the context of its perception might even include Lenin, and what not… Or, for example, when listening to the Beethoven's *Moonlight* Sonata I remember my mother telling me about a German officer on the verge of suicide – at the time when the Germans were about to withdraw, he would sit at the untuned piano and play this sonata. He was an old Hitler's officer overwhelmed with the realization of the futility of the war. But Beethoven did not have the context of this war. So a performer, depending on his nature, focuses on one of the mentioned contexts, and this determines the multitude of the interpretations of the same musical piece.

Your recently released CD also includes Beethoven's Pathétique *Sonata. What can you tell about this recording?*

My story of the appreciation of the *Pathétique* Sonata is very subjective. It was the first sonata by Beethoven that I heard, performed by the now late pianist Vilė Baltonytė, a student of Liucija Drąsutienė. Just from listening to it once I realized how majestic Beethoven was. I only knew the *Pathétique* but the experience was shocking and transforming to me as a person.

Later on my acquaintance with Beethoven was formed by records, those of Richter, Gilels, and Horowitz. Until I was not able to play this sonata myself, my father played it to me. Later on I became familiar with other ones. I read Beethoven's biography to find out more about him. By the way, not long ago, I read *Beethoven* by William Kinderman, which left a very strong impression on me. All this as well as millions of other renditions and circumstances came together, and finally my version of the *Pathétique* emerged. Maybe it is not

particularly original, but it appeals to me immensely. No matter how immodest, or even shameful, is talking like this…

Have you ever recorded Sonata Op. 31 No. 2, another canonical piece by Beethoven?

No, I have not made a recording of this sonata but I played it in the 10th grade of high school. It was my first concert at the Philharmonic Hall. I remember after it, Edmundas Baltrimas wrote a review, the very first review about me as a pianist, in which he compared my playing to those of the best pianists… So it was with the performance of Beethoven's *Tempest* that Petras Geniušas all of a sudden emerged as a new pianist.

Somewhat later I performed Beethoven's Sonata No. 7. By the way, the sonatas of Beethoven are like landmarks of special success in my career, with them I matured as a performer. I have played Sonata No. 28, but I never lived up to my expectation. I played the *Appassionata* numerous times. But I have never performed the *Pathétique* on stage, it was only a recording. Yet I consider it one of my greatest accomplishments: I did all exactly the way I wished and imagined.

How would you define your style of work at the instrument? There is a large group of 'piano black-collars': at the keyboard, as if travelling down a dark tunnel, they discover a musical piece bit by bit.

Yes, but a travel down that tunnel may offer you many joyful experiences, and ever more as the years go by. To begin with, some things become faster. You become better at controlling the sound, your opportunities widen up, you develop a more flexible relationship to your work. Before I used to put a lot of effort into specific goals, felt anxious about my final result, but presently I allow myself to improvise more: today I might do it one way, it may change tomorrow, and often I am not sure what would happen in a month's time. Multitudes of ideas, versions naturally cross over my mind, and I play without thinking which one should be the best for my concert. And right before the concert I do settle upon a solid structure for the interpretation. Probably no artist would last long in his career, working like a freshman all through your life time. Our motivation would simply be lost. But new opportunities nurture our motivation.

Don't you find it unfair that only pianists have to play by heart? If not for Liszt and Clara Schumann who found this practice very romantic, there perhaps would not be the need to do it…

It is a very controversial and painful question to all pianists, and there is no definite answer to it. Nowadays we see pianists who make a public statement that they would be playing from the sheet exclusively, but I personally think that it depends on the piece you are performing, so sometimes you should play by heart, and sometimes from a music sheet. One of my friends in Germany decided to play Beethoven's concerto from the sheet. He is an excellent pianist, but critics wrote: "He thinks of himself he is Richter, but he is not…" So playing from a music sheet may have dangerous social implications: many people believe that if you cannot play by heart, there is something wrong with you. So this way you provide a shot in the arm to your critics.

But this can also be very deceiving. You think that you feel more comfortable with a music sheet yet you play worse. Meanwhile you suffer playing by heart, but your performance is better. Playing from a music sheet is an art by itself. Sometimes Martha Argerich performs from a music sheet, and she is really fantastic at it. Richter was also good at this. But the audience wishes that during a concert a performer would use his biocomputer at full potential. Sometimes the audience becomes thirsty for blood…

A standard repertoire is a fairly interesting phenomenon. What determines that concert life is essentially dominated by works of several composers, from two epochs mainly?

It is determined by the simple fact that the two and a half centuries were the golden time of piano music. There is not much we can do about it. It is a great pleasure to play good pieces by contemporary composers, for example, the Australian Carl Vine Sonata, but a large number of modern composers do not trust this instrument. And when they write it unwillingly, we perform it unwillingly…

Watching some artists perform gives you the idea that they have had certain psychological or energy management training. Appearing onstage, the first bars, the energy impulses that give command over the audience, a natural or intentionally fostered contact… All these things are very important. What is it? It happens so that, at a concert, people feel as if at a hypnosis session.

Naturally, nowadays with our ties to Oriental cultures and various spiritual, meditative traditions, some most advanced artists do indeed identify with diverse spiritual schools. And these individuals do have a different air. Let us say Michelangeli might just perform like some other pianists, but his art has a different quality because of the fact that he transmits different energy…

According to the mindset of the generation, of which we talk a lot today, the word 'spirit' is compromised. I do know a good number of such art connoisseurs and curators who snigger in a demonstrative manner upon hearing this word. They are comfortable in their material reality, and probably they do not need anything else. Any manifestation of spirituality to them is pre-rational to which they feel themselves superior.

But any deeper conversation on art inevitably leads us to encounter religion and mysticism. A religious icon is a good example. No work of a secular genius can be compared to an icon even by its artistic qualities – a (sacred) icon conveys things more powerfully than any personality of an individual genius. This is most obvious in the Tretyakov Gallery. Walking through the gallery rooms you see plenty of artwork, extremely interesting regardless of the fact if their aesthetics appeals to you, or not. But when you reach the section of icons, when you pause in front of Rublev, then you leave and see how shallow all these paintings are compared to the icons…

The masters of icons followed their canon faithfully, putting in just a little bit of their personality. But their mental state while painting was yet even more important. I do not know if they were fasting, but they reached a uniquely transparent state of consciousness, they experienced a truly fantastic spiritual flight. This accounts for this radiating quality of their work. There is this concept of the so called 'the art of a witness'. Firstly the witness has to be an outstanding artist himself, and secondly, he has to be able to establish the connection to that he intends to witness. Only then his art would belong to this entirely different order.

All other things that we have already mentioned, technological and cultural, belong to the superficial level. Recently, I am mostly fascinated by this mystical aspect of art as the witnessing of the higher phenomena. Other aspects – philosophical, theoretical – are only secondary. I do read a lot of various philosophical literature in quest for a better understanding that it is really possible, trying to justify myself. I went through a time when I felt like belonging to some other epoch, when I thought I should step aside, as the things that interest me are not important today. But now I feel more confident in myself, and I could say, I have a solid theoretic and practical basis.

Could we view the appearance of a performer on stage as theatre? What does this performer's image represent, what is his self-presentation, theatrical element at the concert?

Earlier some of these things seemed important to me, but now I see them as less important. Life itself is a theatre. So is the stage. Even a person who is searching for his connectedness to a higher reality has to live this life; he has to take part in

one game or another. This possibility that is given to us to play this game is the true theatre of a performer. I see theatre as one of the forms of the game of life.

Don't you feel tempted to try out multimedia projects? A piano recital is one of the most conservative types of a concert.

Yes, there are many art forms that border with the wild, and I am open to them. But presently I am less interested in inventing unusual forms but more in filling up the usual forms with the unusual content.

In their concerts, pianists mostly restrict their repertoire to musical works of the Western tradition. What is your relationship with the music of other cultures?

I do listen to a lot of music from other cultures. I listen to Sufi, Indian, and sometimes when I am getting ready to perform in public, I listen to extremely unconventional music pieces.

Sometimes when practicing I put a record on, and suddenly it helps me to find a different sound on the same instrument. We do know many attempts to bridge Western music and other traditions; Menuhin played with Ravi Shankar, Garbarek played with the Sufi musicians, maybe I will find someone to pair with too.

Do you look for visual associations for your interpretations?

I do not look for them intentionally, but they are there. Since childhood, in my consciousness music was related to visualization. I am not content with getting to know just the structure of a musical piece, to me there is always much more to it. It is also images, fragrances, moods, even other sounds that are heard simultaneously in the surrounding environment. It is also the atmosphere itself, its quality, the space of that particular day, all kinds of dreams and worlds – so visual images in music are legion only natural.

What are the spheres of life and culture that serve as the best or the most impelling inspiration for playing?

It is meditation. Mystical texts. Other things, such as movies and jazz. This inspirational atmosphere changes as time goes by. Earlier when in London or Moscow I used to talk to my senior colleagues, and some of them would say that they had transformed *everythin*g into sounds, it sometimes seemed to me as a literary metaphor. I used to wonder why they lost their interest in anything, why

they did not go to concerts, why they said they no longer needed it. I thought this must be a dead person. But later, I was struck that this helped them create even better work… Now I start realizing that there is no necessity for me to go to concerts either. I have reached the stage that I am able to transform into my art all that comes along: such as impressions from nature, from the urban environment, and even my attempts to relate to the immaterial world.

Somebody said that a conert pianist has to have two lives: one is for living, the other is for playing. Those who dedicate themselves to playing can be considered almost as monks, can't they? But is such a withdrawal necessary?

I think, as years go by, I feel a tendency to dualism. Here, I also see two things intertwined. We do need some periods of monasticism or at least some stages of it. On the other hand, the work of a performing musician becomes ever more connected to real life, and you start realizing that it is your life. All is important, all adds up. No doubt, every master has to observe his privacy. So you are realistically aware that you will not become the president of the world, you set boundaries for your realm and try to achieve the infinite within it. You cannot spread yourself too thin.

What are the criteria for good interpretation?

What could be the recipe for it? Your interpretation has to be perfect, deep, sensitive, rich, spiritual, magic, original, new and at the same time traditional, social… in short, it should be the best it could be. In Moscow they used to put it simply: there are performers whose renditions are slow and deeply spiritual, others play fast but empty music; but if they play fast and with spirituality, it is ingenious. (*Laughs*.)

And my last question: what is success to you as a person and as musician?

Success is a sure source of energy which grants you additional strength, but it is not related to the essence. Success is dope, recharging of your batteries, if you wish, yet it is better not to identify oneself with it.

3.4. Emotion as Necessity

An interview with Nikolai Petrov; Vilnius, May 1998 / September 2007

We talked on two occasions with the pianist Nikolai Petrov, labeled by one of the Lithuanian concert agencies, "a tender giant of the piano": in the spring of 1998, after his master class to the students of the Lithuanian Music Academy, then nearly in a decade's time, in 2007, during his visit to Lithuania to perform with the Lithuanian State Symphony Orchestra. It may work for promotional purposes to bestow the pianist of an emotional style and imposing stature with such epithets, yet Petrov as an interlocutor shows none of an ingratiating softness or compulsory 'political correctness'. Quite the opposite, he strikes as a person of an outright character. Based on anecdotal evidence, it was Petrov, the then chairperson of the jury of the competition, who 'banged fist on table' in the 1999 M. K. Čiurlionis competition, thus tipping the scales in favour of the Polish pianist Jan Kryszstof Broja, who was otherwise received with contradiction by both other jury members and the audience... A laureate of several important piano competitions, Petrov later did not spare them from scathing criticism. Being on staff of the Moscow Conservatory, he lamented the fate of the old Russian piano school and disapproved harshly of his colleagues who left their country...

How were your links with Lithuania forged?

I first arrived in Lithuanian in 1966. That time I came with a friend of mine for a holiday in Trakai, and we fell in love with these places. Since then I have been to Lithuania around twenty times and have performed, besides Vilnius, in Klaipėda, Panevėžys, Palanga, Mažeikiai, Nida. This was how our friendship with your brilliant conductor Saulius Sondeckis was built. I also enjoy a trusting relationship with Juozas Domarkas. I appeared twice with Jonas Aleksa and grieved bitterly over the loss of this great, absolutely marvellous musician. It was during the 1983 conductor contest that our paths with Gintaras Rinkevičius crossed: I played as a soloist under his baton in Prokofiev's Third Piano Concerto and he won second place. Overall in Lithuania you are blessed with so many talented conductors, and, to give them credit, they all get along and avoid major scandal. It comes as a surprise to me, because commonly four conductors are already enough for a 'Kulikov battle'...

By the way, recently the number of Lithuanian citizens has increased thanks to our culture figures: Elena Obraztsova, Pavel Kogan, Vladimir Vasiliev, Rodion Shchedrin, Maya Plisetskaya... I also had the impudence to apply for Lithuanian citizenship. I would love to have a plot of land by a lake.

What do you know about Lithuanian pianists?

Thank God, there is really no shortage of pianists either. I was in the same class and under the same professor with Aleksandra Juozapėnaitė; Mūza Rubackytė is one of your great pianists. Lithuania is rich with talent.

How do you find a common language with a new orchestra? Upon arriving to perform in a foreign country, how do you agree on a shared interpretation?

First of all, I feel more like a member of the orchestra rather than a distinguished guest who has landed to order about. I try to get along with the orchestra musicians, which makes dialogue possible, and the musicians take no offence. Let's say today (rehearsing Beethoven's Fifth Concerto – *L.N-M.*), I offered quite a few remarks, but it seems that nobody took offence. We see plenty of famous performers who behave offhandedly with the musicians of the orchestra. It is unfair, because they are musicians like us, only not everybody succeeds with a soloist's career. Moreover, we cannot survive without them.

You have worked with a host of conductors. Are there any you would like to set apart? If so, why, and how was this special artistic relationship built?

Nearly familial ties connected me to Yevgeny Fyodorovich Svetlanov, we enjoyed this feeling of kinship for many years (he was also my daughter's godfather). It was one of these cases… When Rostropovich dies, we know there will never be anyone like him. There will be gifted cellists, but not Rostropovich. It is exactly the same with Svetlanov: there will be brilliant conductors, but nobody like him. What he created was unforgettable, as if he was guided by the Lord in his work. He is always first in my memories; warm and good relationships have emerged also with Dmitri Kitayenko, Yuri Temirkanov, and Pavel Kogan. In general, I can play with everybody. But there are also other conductors with whom I would rather not play too often.

What would you say of conducting performers?

It depends on their artistic formation. Recently we have witnessed an epidemic of new conductors, the people who believe that false notes can be hidden by taking the baton in your hands, and that, compared to performing solo, conducting is an easier and a better paid job. Of course, it is a different story when it is done by such musicians as Rostropovich, who did not have an education in conducting, but his personality, his magic and his aura could overshadow any possible lack of professional knowledge.

Your grandfather Vasili Rodionovich Petrov was a famous Russian opera bass. What did it mean to you to be born into a family of musicians?

My grandfather, I dare say, a really unique, great bass, died six years prior to my birth, I knew him only from my granny's diary and from the stories by his contemporaries who had worked with him. But there was indeed no doubt what I was to become: I was born amidst a vocalist, cellist and two pianists; this question must have been resolved even before my coming to this world.

Which of your two activities, of a performing pianist or a teacher, is more appealing to you at this time?

Teaching is a source of great pleasure to me. Unfortunately, as long as I am still capable of exercising my fingers on these black and white keys, I cannot dedicate myself to it entirely, whereas attempts to combine the two would inevitably impoverish both. As long as I feel sufficient strength in me, giving concerts is undoubtedly something special. Each time stepping on the stage, seeing the audience who have come to listen to you and to examine you gives this wonderful feeling. Appearing in the hall where you have once played is no longer a concert, but a kind of an examination. The first time in a venue is the easiest, while the second is the most difficult. If you succeeded during your first appearance, this second time you are expected to prove that your success was not by accident.

Is there a concert hall anywhere in the world to which you always want to come back?

There is no other conert place for me like the Grand Hall of the Moscow Conservatory. To my mind, it is ideal in terms of size and acoustics, and overall, it is a hall whose sacred walls could tell so much… The looming prospect of repair works gives me great fears: I hope the Lord saves us from *improvement* and *bettering*. It is so easy to turn the place into a dull pit.

The hall of St Petersburg Philharmonic is also completely marvellous and ideally fitted. Of course, I will always add to these two Carnegie Hall (though after repairs it has already lost something). Alongside you can always expect nice surprises: in a small town in Finland or Japan you can find yourself in a stunning modern concert hall. There are no limits to perfection, while the result depends both on money and the imagination and energy of the person who conceives it. Such miracles happen in the most remote corners of the world.

People say that a bad dancer trips on everything – and what about a pianist and his instrument?

No matter what people say, but now we already have a right to be picky. When I get a call from a town where I was long ago, my first question is about their instrument. And if they have, let's say a *Förster* or *Estonia*, I simply tell them, "Excuse me guys, but I am nearly 65, and I cannot any longer play such pianos. I can use them for rehearsals, but not to perform."

So what instruments do you prefer?

Steinway, of course, is the best, it can also be a *Yamaha*, or a decent *Kawai*, or an Italian *Fazioli* – those are magnificent instruments. There are some interesting *Bechsteins*, yet fewer *Bösendorfers*… This must be about everything. By the way, quite recently my partner of our piano duo Sasha Gindin and me have been to Estonia and played new *Estonia* pianos there: they have indeed started making excellent instruments!

Performing so extensively, do you sometimes experience any musical adventures?

In total I have played 93 different concertos with orchestra, of course, not all of them – on automatic pilot. But today I have played on automatic pilot indeed: I come here, Beethoven's Third Concerto on my music stand – for some reason I was positive we were going to play it. Then I hear the orchestra's chord… (*Laughs.*) A totally different piece!

There are around twenty concertos, such as Beethoven's Third, Fourth and Fifth, several Mozart's concertos, Prokofiev's Second and Third, Gershwin's Rhapsody, several other ones that I could play should someone wake me up at four o'clock in the morning. As for the rest, they take quite thorough rehearsal.

Are you still learning new pieces? How do you select your repertoire, what principles go into building your concert programmes?

There are so many new pieces to be learned this year that I am not sure how I shall manage all that. With the pianist Alexander Gindin we have paired into (please forgive my immodesty) quite a decent ensemble and performed, during these ten years, around ten solo programmes and nearly all of the concertos that have ever been written to for two pianos with orchestra. Together we have especially interesting new programmes for this year, but they will require some practicing.

When it comes to my repertoire, I think we should not look for any philosophical agenda to build it, everything is much more straightforward. It always takes some reason for a new piece to be included in a repertoire; at other times it

functions as part of some larger whole, either as the main focus or a supporting element. The same happens in building a recital programme. Sometimes we look for contrast; at other times, quite unexpectedly, one particular piece emerges, and the rest is structured around it. I would say there is no system applied, rather it is a scholastic process.

How do you sustain your emotional and physical disposition needed for the stage?

In 1972 I bought a house outside Moscow and left the city forever. There I have found peace, repose and the complete blessing of living out of town. I have isolated myself from my neighbours and live a little bit like a recluse. Though, on the other hand, we often receive visitors in our nice and lovely home – it is a normal, spacious wooden house, nothing like they build nowadays. There I have time for everything. No doubt, I have lost some important things: my theatre outings are very rare, so are my visits to first-nights and exhibitions.

It is a pity, but at least in Lithuania instrumental recitals are becoming increasingly rare. What are the attractive and off-putting aspects of this genre to you?

It is has been a good since when the balance between symphonic and solo concerts has strongly shifted towards appearances with orchestra. Only very few musicians still give piano recitals, such as Argerich, Brendel, Barenboim… In general, most often these are student solo evenings, while the rest are concertos, concertos, concertos. Unfortunately, there is nothing we can change about it.

But if you take a look, history appears to be moving in a circle: at the beginning of the century everybody was playing transcriptions, it was considered very appropriate. Then suddenly somebody – who probably was not a great virtuoso – declared it was wrong to play transcriptions and that we should perform authentic, original music. For a few decades nobody played transcriptions until very recently, when pianists rediscovered the concept to a huge success. Arcadi Volodos and other pianists are now making their own transcriptions. Pianists have rediscovered Horowitz's transcriptions: these in general were an unpublished rarity, so people made copies of his recordings and deciphered playing them back at a slowed down speed.

Other kinds of music. What is the gain of the studies of the composer's music for other instruments, how does it enrich our interpretation?

Nowadays the young are totally unaware of the associations behind solo or ensemble pieces; they do not know which of Beethoven's or Schubert's trio gave

rise to this or another piece of music. It is because we have lost… Before the era of CDs, CD-ROMs and DVDs people used to play music: they would get together, take Schubert's or Brahms's claviers and play, listen to music. Liszt, for example, made piano transcriptions of all Beethoven's symphonies, and of the *Symphonie Fantastique* and *Harold in Italy* by Berlioz. We understand a practical impossibility of making a piano arrangement of the Ninth Symphony, but Liszt was thinking of the towns that did not have and could not expect in the nearest future to have an orchestra; in order to give these people some kind of idea of these great works of music he undertook the task of making these, to my mind, incredibly important transcriptions. My determination was exhausted with the *Symphonie Fantastique*, and that was one of the most ambitious tasks I ever tackled. But I know of the pianist Cyprien Katsaris, he has recorded all of the transcriptions by Liszt – he is a virtuoso of prominence.

And your opinion of the recordings?

In my opinion, most of the contemporary young musicians have a wrong practice: before they start learning a piece, they listen thoroughly to the loads of recordings by Ashkenazy, Brendel, Horowitz, Argerich, and afterwards try to create something of a compilation. When I work with my students, I always advise them against listening to the CDs by other performers before they have found their own approach to the piece of music they are working on. Afterwards only you can listen to others.

Your own discography is especially wide. Do you like making recordings?

I have recorded plenty of discs. Yes, I enjoy the process, but of lately I try to make concert versus studio recordings. The contemporary technology makes it possible for every vagabond to make an ideal recording. It is done by superimposition, by cutting, computer processing, which allows the simple removal of some false notes by the computer – like before *Welte-Mignon* would simply cover up a hole in the roll with a false note with glue and pierce another, thus correcting mistakes. However, live recordings are more interesting. How often we happen to listen to a CD of a sterile, perfectly cleaned recording knowing that this musician has never played this way on stage – it is essentially distorting the facts.

What kind of repertoire is closest to your heart?

As I have already mentioned, I have played 93 different concertos with orchestra, from Bach to Stravinsky or Georgi Minchev (the Bulgarian composer who has

created a Concerto for piano, synthesizer and symphony orchestra). Not long ago I compiled a brochure and put everything together. I did not expect to arrive at such an astronomic number: over 45 solo programmes, plenty of chamber music. It is impossible to set anything apart.

Should you reverse your question, asking what is *not* close to me, I would say that I am indifferent to the contemporary aleatoric, dodecaphonic music, to all Cages, Xenakises and similar. I admit that it may be very professional and correct, but I am absolutely indifferent to such music. I am definitely not going to waste my time on learning a piece by Stockhausen, which requires employing one's elbows and knees and involves whistling, groaning and doing God-knows-what at the piano. I feel sufficiently good and cosy in the company of Beethoven, Schubert, Haydn, or Mozart.

And there is not a single contemporary…

Well, there is, of course, there is, Shostakovich, and Prokofiev… In general, any music becomes music worthy of existing if it is a vehicle for emotions. It especially applies to contemporary music, the quality of which is determined based on one criterion only, whether it involves emotion. Emotions are present when we can identify that this is Stravinsky, although everything is written in the same dodecaphonic technique. Or it is Schnittke, or Penderecki. One must have his own face – just writing according to a system is not enough.

Do you know what the biggest trouble with contemporary music is? That very often it is applied music. Let's say the paintings by Van Gogh, by Renoir, by Repin – it is big art, isn't it? But there are also pictures that simply match the colour of the walls… New music similarly fits very well in a sci-fi movie about the Cosmos or the depths of the ocean – it is just perfect for that. But they all want to be on a par with Mozart and Schubert, yet find that impossible. There were dozens of composers next to Mozart or Schubert, and, by the way, they were held in much higher esteem at the time. It suffices to recall Salieri, the only and the unsurpassable, and somewhere, on the fringes of his shadow, was Mozart… But time separates the wheat from the chaff.

One interesting detail in your biography is the award of the Balzac Academy for performing the work of Balzac's contemporaries.

Yes, the 1986 medal from the Académie Balzac came as a surprise to me. I was recognized for having performed music of Balzac's friends – such composers as Berlioz and Liszt – round the world. Probably I am the only person outside the literary world decorated with this medal.

What kind of literature is close to you?

Speaking frankly, presently there is no time left for that. I feel like reading some serious literature, or maybe even rereading the books we studied at school, but honestly, I have no courage to delve into these huge volumes. At home I read only contemporary bestsellers, and do not shun detective stories, especially when travelling they serve as good sedatives.

The lessons by Russian pedagogues abound in references to literature, cinema, theatre… Multiple associations that stimulate a creative approach.

Yes, and my professor Yakov Izrailevich Zak undoubtedly meets this criterion of yours; his lessons taught not only music, but also life, art, culture. I remember him once saying, "Kolya, you are going to Belgium. If you happen to be in Liege, there is such and such museum, so you go there, and on the second floor you turn left, and in the second room there is *such* van Dyck…" So I ask him, "Have you been there?" "No, I haven't." He was as man who lived his life in a police state where every visit abroad had to be sanctioned by the KGB or other great humanists, but this did not prevent him from having an encyclopaedic education and plenty books on art, he knew by heart the museums of the world… These were true lessons in art.

Let us talk more of the Russian school. This very unique school emerged as a result of the country's isolation during most of the 20th century. It is still possible to speak of the national schools?

The gap to the West was opening gradually. First it was an iron gate, later there appeared a vent, then a window, later, a small door, now the entire gate is open, and all this swamp of ours has seeped to the West. It has carried not only the best ones; the smart ones have also left, those who know how to promote themselves, and throw dust in the eyes creating the illusion they are geniuses. Very many people have left, almost all of them settled successfully and got good jobs, now they like so much to come back to Russia which they have fled and teach us who have always lived in our country how to manage things… I am tempted to send them to hell.

I wonder, can we feel something of a Russian identity in a pianist's performance?

Now it is considerably less obvious. In my day, there used to be Neuhaus' school, the schools of Feinberg, Goldenweiser, Sofronitsky… The younger generation knew the schools of Oborin, Flier, Zak… These were like small paths leading

to music from different sides. These distinct directions gave everyone a chance to select depending on one's needs. So somebody who needed to develop stage freedom knew that she or he wants this professor, if the problem was with academic school, there would be more use of the other one. Now we have the Piano Faculty, and the chairs led by various professors, such as Dorensky, or Gornostayeva, but there are no personalities. So there is no difference who will be your professor, only one teacher has more talent of securing premiums for his students, while the other has no such gift. Sure enough, most students select the one who is smarter in this.

Let us take my professor: he did not die, he was killed. He was killed from revenge. He was a cautious, even – I am not afraid to use the word, – cowardly person, who lived his life under Stalin's regime. When he wanted to say that it was cold today and was going to warm tomorrow, he looked around to be sure nobody was standing next to him. But in 1976 he said that he was sick of watching how the Moscow Conservatory was becoming a market establishment where students selected not a professor, but a position – the head of the department or some other section because this meant better placements and premiums… He said that creative activity at the Conservatory came to an end. He was never forgiven for that. When one of Zak's students did not return from a trip abroad, a party meeting was held and they raked him over the coals so that in a week's time he was hospitalized. He never left the hospital. This process started back then, during the years that today we refer to as the *times of our past life*.

You have mentioned the famous names of the old Russian piano school. Who sets fashions today?

Alas, these traditions are not fostered, but ruined. Sadly enough, I cannot mention any new names. I would have named plenty some 20–30 years ago. Now everything is uniform and standardized. The level of craft teaching in Russia is really high, but to train a pianist is really easier than to turn an individual into a musician. Quite often I hear performances of impeccable technique, but these things, if not passed through one's heart and mind, do not achieve great success. They give a precise rendition of a piece, a statistical average. I repeat this often in my interviews: I see a very clear dividing line between a pianist and a musician: pianists are legion, while there is but a handful of musicians. There is no luxury which we witnessed some thirty, forty years ago.

Evgeny Kissin is the last prominent personality. He will stand next to Gidon Kremer, Isaac Stern, Sviatoslav Richter. His prominence springs from his person, not from the fact of him being a pianist. When on stage a musician is carried away by music, he does not work – he creates. That's what it is all about.

Which personalities, as musicians and as individuals, have had the strongest influence on you?

Arthur Rubinstein is the greatest among my favourites and idols. I was interacting with him still as a student. I have collected plenty of his audio and video recordings, including the last ones, where a blind and almost entirely effete man plays so that it is impossible to withhold one's tears. My teacher, Yakov Zak was also an exceptional personality. When I was three and a half, my parents divorced. Zak was like my second father; we enjoyed a much warmer relationship then just a professor and his student. Now nothing similar happens. Our professors would give us part of themselves, now they make money at the cost of their students. And when one cares above all about money, the relationship becomes unimportant.

Music stores feature a series of young pianists' CDs Martha Argerich presents. *What young performers would be included into a series* Nikolai Petrov presents*?*

Indeed, there are plenty of people who play very well. Some of them are unknown to us because they have never been to Russia, but I give master classes abroad, sometimes I meet such incredibly brilliant kids… We also have some great performers who managed to become musicians. Surely, Kolya Lugansky and Sasha Gindin are among them. Miroslav Kultyshev is a recent star from St Petersburg. He won the 2007 Tchaikovsky Competition, an absolutely brilliant young man.

What is a performer's cultural role, his role in the creation of music and its further life?

It is huge. A composer while alive is looking for a performer the way a film director looks for his actor and makes a movie for him. Quite o lot of composers write for a particular performer, like Schnittke for Rozhdestvensky. When the composer is no longer there, a performer must co-author his musical work. His task is not only to precisely recreate the text, but also to help to create a piece of music.

In general, the culture of performance and the art of performing music is the most apolitical and incredibly subjective – it does not last anywhere. Why did Stalin's regime mince nearly all the elite of poets, writers, artists, stage directors, but almost did not touch musicians? Probably because he did not perceive the art of musical performance as dangerous to himself and the absence of victims seems to support this version. There were maybe one or two, but we should analyze these cases thoroughly, maybe there were some reasons for that, some violations of the law…

What do you make of the current Russian cultural policy?

There is plenty of money assigned to culture, yet it is not enough. And then it is scary that when a person donates money for culture and serious art, the tax inspection is immediately after him. As I see it, somebody who sponsored the construction of a new concert hall, even if he is a true rascal, who steals and evades taxes, we should thank him rather than vilify.

What is the field of activity of your charitable foundation?

I would rather not overestimate its importance. It is a humble foundation, considerably smaller compared to, let's say, Vladimir Spivakov International Charity Foundation, a ten or fifteen years senior solid organization, circulating big money. We mainly fund the annual festival, Musical Kremlin, which I have founded. It has already gained a reputation as a serious, prestigious event (the 10th festival will take place this coming April). It is hosted by the Moscow Kremlin Armoury Palace, a venue of incredible acoustics, the walls of which have some marvellous effect making music sound with some incredible quality.

How is a musician's career made these days, what qualities does it take? One can hardly believe that a talent and hard work would do…

No, just a talent will not take you far… There is a brilliant book by Norman Lebrecht, *When the Music Stops: Who Killed the Classical Music?* In the book, he demonstrates through diagrams and documents what happened to classical music when it was penetrated by show business and homosexuality. Eighty percent of the management offices in the world are today run by homosexuals. There are even special competitions held – gay competitions where a person of normal orientation will be immediately kicked out. It is a huge force, while their laments that they are not allowed to strut their stuff in a Love Parade along the streets of Moscow is a total nonsense. They have already got hold of everything: The Bolshoi Theatre, the Mariinsky Theatre, nearly all of the television, all show channels, they have occupied the Duma, where gays have a big percent. In general they tend to live by throwing their weight around, but that would not do, they must get on the streets to display how good they are at fuck each other – if not that, no freedom is enough for them. I fully support the mayor who banned all that. In general, I would recommend organizing this parade somewhere in Culture Park on a paratroopers' day – these guys would kick their shit out of the paraders.

Maybe we could better talk of the competitions… Your career started with two significant victories. Do you believe that competitions have retained any importance into our day?

I strongly dislike them. They are mafia infiltrated from the very top to the bottom. Some musicians operate by the principle 'help me, help you'. So the concept of a competition laureate has been corrupted. In our day, first prize from an international competition meant a great deal, but no longer. Nowadays competitions are the occasion for gaining experience. The young and the talented learn to interact with the audience and to control themselves on stage. These things are important and useful.

In general, the value of the competition these days is in the programme offered to the winner. Quite recently, Sasha Gindin took a great risk: at the age of thirty already he went to Cleveland and won the first prize by storm. The next year he will have 48 concerts across the USA, they are already organized, so he is free of all the trouble. The competitions which offer their laureates only a post-competition financial support in reality are very insignificant.

By the way, my first appearance for money – I was paid ten roubles – took place in Jūrmala, in the Winter Hall. The then director of the Riga Philharmonic Filip Yosiphovich Shveinik – one of the great directors – provided me with an opportunity to warm up before the Van Cliburn Competition.

After the competition, perhaps you were paid more?

I'd rather not talk of how we were robbed – it is too sad. I managed to dig out that from 1962 till 1985 I presented several million on a plate with a golden fringe, but my pension is lower than our cleaning lady's…

It is important to have a useful profession…

A profession was exactly what I failed to acquire in good time.

3.5. A Pianist's Notes

An interview with Charles Rosen; Helsinki, April 2008

Maestro, you are one of those 'speaking' performers: the author of numerous books, an extraordinary erudite. What do you think is the reason why the romanticized image of an artist so much prevails in our cultural practices? It does not seem too reasonable to think that intelligence contradicts inspiration, yet, both composers and performers often seem as if afraid of it…

I was once interviewed on the French radio and I was asked: "Don't you think that the fact that you're intelligent has actually hurt your career?" I was going to say that I'd rather be an intelligent pianist rather than a dumb interviewer, but I was polite and I just said, "I don't know." I don't know. That's not romanticism.

Romanticism is the art of taking something that is marginal, or actually, considered as non-central and turning it into a central aspect. For example, the great romantic poets such as Blake, took what was sort of didactic poems for children and turned them into the greatest poetry of the time. Or, in visual art, for example, the landscape was considered an inferior genre: major paintings were historical and religious paintings, something distant. The great romantic painters turned landscape paintings into an equivalent of the history paintings, and that was absolutely conscious. John Constable, a landscape painter, was even allowed to join the Royal Academy.

And in the music field, Schubert turned dance music, like the mazurka, into some of the greatest music, which is now equivalent to the greatness of an opera or a mass. Above all, songs were not considered to be major musical form: before Schubert produced *Lieder*, basically no composer wrote songs that were of any importance. The only important song by Mozart was *Abendempfindung an Laura*, but that is not really a *Lied*, that is an operatic scene for piano and voice. And there's a great romanticism in Beethoven's *An die ferne Geliebte*. What is interesting about Beethoven's song cycle is how simple the songs are, compared to Schubert's later. They were actually supposed to be sung at home; not meant for professionals. Whereas by putting them together in a song cycle, it makes it bigger. But when Schubert writes the *Winterreise*, this is already on the level of the *Mathew Passion*, or an opera. Majestic. Great.

And then the late Romanticism, pictures of everyday life. Courbet paints *After Dinner at Ornans*, which is a picture of himself and his friends having coffee after dinner. And it was life-size. This was a tremendous shock. Everyday people life-size! And he was painting while they were speaking. And romanticism is that. While that being a distrust of intelligence, that goes back to all sorts of places in Middle Ages, it's not particularly romantic.

Anyway, the only thing I have to say on this topic is that if some people have prejudice against intelligence, it is because they are dumb.

What is then the aesthetical origin for this 'inspired genius' cult?

The greatest geniuses for romantic critics would be Michelangelo and Beethoven. Neither of them was considered particularly stupid.

Isn't it paradoxical that anytime one asks a composer or a performer, why did they do something in one way or another, what was behind a certain artistic decision, they tend to provide only some indefinite answers about the chance, the feeling, or an inspiration that comes from nowhere…

They just don't want to talk about it. If they talked about it, it would be very technical.

But why not?

The greatest poetry critic in America, Randall Jarrell, wrote a novel *Pictures from an Institution*, which is hilariously funny, and there is a description of a sculptress talking about her work. And Jarrell comments: "Some of what she said was technical, and you had to be a welder to understand it; the rest was aesthetic or generally philosophic, and you had to be an idiot to understand it."

It really depends on what you mean by 'talking'. Normally, when artists talk about their work they talk technically, and people don't want to hear that. They want to hear something grand and philosophical, and most of the artists don't have that to offer. Or, actually, some do. Elliott Carter justifies the use of the very complex rhythms by saying that in modern life things do not happen at a single pace: they happen at different tempi all the time, and he feels he should represent that. But I am not sure whether that is just a way to justify something he wanted to do anyway. People have been writing very complex cross-rhythms before: Mozart had an oboe quartet with 6 against 8 and 3 against 4; the most complicated is Brahms, in one of the Paganini Variations, where he has a 9 against 8, which is rather tricky. Although it is actually easier than Carter, because every 8 and 9 notes there is an accent, while in Carter there is never a down-beat accent that coincides, and in Brahms they occasionally do.

What is your opinion about those musicologists who try to explain the composer's work by his/her biography? Do you think that this type of knowledge could in any way 'deepen' a performer's interpretation?

There was one fellow who wrote about Mozart's late symphonies saying that the Symphony in G minor was the really profound one, while the *Jupiter* was not, because when Mozart wrote the former he was sick. That is completely insane, of course. I don't think life has a great impact on a composer's work. He might have a traumatic experience in life and then write the funniest comic opera. Or a tragic opera, for the matter. That is one of the reasons why composers such as Mozart write three symphonies, one lyrical in E flat, one tragic or passionate in G minor, and one very majestic and brilliant in C major. Or, Beethoven writes three piano sonatas Op. 31: No. 16 is comic, No. 17 is tragic, and No. 18 is lyrical. They were interested in showing this kind of contrasts, it is not that all three were personally experienced. The idea that life is translated into work in a totally unmediated way is absurd.

If I play something in a tragic way, it is because I am following the *text* which is tragic. I don't need to know whether, say, Schumann's life was tragic, or Beethoven's…

I assume you are working with manuscripts, whenever available, aren't you? Or, if not, which editions do you choose?

I have Xerox copies of the first editions of a few compositions, also some copies of Beethoven's and Chopin's manuscripts. However, using manuscripts is not always helpful. For instance, Beethoven's Diabelli Variations: there was a copy made by the copyist in Beethoven's house, but the composer intervened on that before it was published, and then he still made more corrections on the published version. One should always compare the published version with the manuscript, and see whether the changes were made by the printer who messed things up (which is possible!), or whether it was the composer, in which case the published version is better than the manuscript, because these are the changes that the composer meant and approved. On the other hand, certain manuscripts are fascinating… Mozart's Rondo in A minor is fascinating because you can see how careful he was, and how certain changes were important to him, etc.

So, if one relies on editions, which ones would you recommend? For instance: which edition of Beethoven's sonatas?

It is difficult to say. Well, Henle is quite okay. Henle's edition of twenty years ago was good, then they started making changes, which made it worse. As for Chopin, the new national edition from Warsaw is fine, because the Paderewski edition was a national disgrace… an international disgrace, in fact. Schumann?... There are no good editions of Schumann. I have photographs of the original

edition. The problem with Schumann was that Clara edited his works after his death, and she did not follow Brahms' advice.

But normally I don't fuss too much about these issues. I just think that using manuscripts is not always great. As far as I know, the composers who would make most of the mistakes while writing down were Debussy and Schönberg. However, it is quite easy to find them out, by simply hearing them. For instance one edition of Schönberg's Piano Concerto was fixed because I actually wrote to them and pointed out what was wrong. (I was rehearsing the piece, when I noticed that there were six chords in a row and they were meant to be all the same, except that in the edition the last one was different: obviously, there must have been a mistake here.) Returning to the question of technicalities, intelligence and so on, I have to say that these kinds of things *are* a question of intelligence. Sometimes you really find editions with passages, or solutions, that are completely illogical. So illogical that even a bad composer would manage to avoid them. So, those things cannot be anything else than mistakes.

In the musical field, you are a pianist first of all (perhaps, it would be too much to start talking here about your PhD in French literature…), but, since the year 1971, when you wrote The Classical Style*, you also authored several musicological studies. How did you turn into musicology?*

Basically, by writing sleeve notes for my records. People thought they were good, and I was asked to write a book. A publisher took me out for lunch and said I could write about anything I wanted, so I signed the contract. Then I took a long time to write, and he wanted the advance payment back… I got infuriated with that publisher, went to another one, *Viking Press*, which was a great publisher at the time (with such authors as Steinbeck and Kerouac under contract), and actually they were very nice, they even doubled my advance!

Among other themes you have written on, your critique of the authenticity movement draw wide attention. You once called the movement the "Crusade of Early Music"…

I also said the movement was very useful. But what was wrong with it is that to believe that during the composer's life the music sounded *one* way is a fallacy. Take a simple example: the Well-Tempered Clavier was written for harpsichord, clavichord, organ or early piano. You know, indifferently: "clavier" means keyboard, it could be anything. Which is actually one problem with Bach: many of his compositions are for home-performance anyway, so there was no "control" on the actual instrument that was going to be used. The Goldberg Variations are clearer, because he actually wrote them for double harpsichord. But nobody

knows if, say, the Trio Sonatas are for organ or harpsichord: they are for two "claviers" and pedal, and that's all it says.

Have you ever played on a period piano?

I did, actually. It was funny because the concert organizers had a very nice period piano from the 1800s, and one E flat key did not work, but it was too expensive to repair. So, for my programme, I had to figure out all pieces that wouldn't feature that key. However, besides that episode, I do not particularly like to play on period pianos – mostly because you cannot hear them properly from the audience.

What interpretative solutions would you offer for somebody who wants to achieve 'that' original effect, but – inevitably – with a Steinway grand piano, and in a big concert hall?

I am really interested in how pianos used to sound, but then again, back in those days they did not sound like each other anyway. An English piano would sound completely different from an Austrian piano. Chopin used to play on a Pleyel, while Liszt on an Érard, which has a more brilliant and loud sound, but that does not mean that Chopin must be always played on a Pleyel. You never know what they would have chosen… Actually, Brahms' favourite piano, in the end of his life, was exactly the Steinway.

What about you? What instruments do you like most?

Nobody plays anything else than Steinway… Or, Bösendorfer. The problem with Bösendorfer is that it has this lovely, fluty sound, which is in principle prettier than the Steinway, but you are kind of stuck with that sound, while you can make a Steinway growl if you want. Having said that, I will always prefer that the audience leave my concerts saying that the instrument was terrible but the pianist did some amazing stuff with it, rather than the other way round!

According to Peter Kivy, the word 'authentic' recently became synonymous for 'good'. What does it mean to be 'authentic'?

I really don't know what you mean…

Let me reformulate it this way. There are different levels of 'faithfulness': to a composer, to a text, to your own interpretation…

I don't really see the difference.

Oh, come on!

Well, if you play music from the past, there are elements *of the past*. It becomes stupid to read Shakespeare, as if the words he used back then have exactly the same meaning nowadays. Similarly, you cannot play a piece by Mozart as if it was written last week. At the same time, playing Mozart is not like writing an essay in archaeology. Besides other things, also because you are playing for a different audience. So, there must be some kind of compromise. That is quite normal: if you read something from ancient Greece – Plato or Sophocles – you read it as something from the past, try and have some feeling of what it would have meant to a 5th century B.C. Greek, and, at the same time, what kind of relevance it has for you today. I would put it this way: a good musician is a musician who plays a piece of music with some sense of what the music would have sounded like during the composer's lifetime, but also he does not try to make a *literal* reproduction of it. Simply, he won't forget that it comes from the past.

So, would you say that the key to this question is the overlapping between past and present as historical 'units' (or, rather, wholes)?

There is a famous short story by Borges *Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote* about a fictional symbolist poet who decides to rewrite the *Don Quixote* exactly as if it was written by Cervantes. So, what happens is that now the work has an entirely different meaning, because now it is 1904 and it is a symbolist poet who is writing. There is always something between us and the past. In my opinion, this is in principle a false problem. And that makes me angry: I don't want to be asked questions, which don't have any answer.

When musicians start playing something, they get into a kind of routine, and one of the ways to overcome it is to ask themselves how would the contemporaries play, say, Chopin. We have been interpreting Chopin for 170 years now and, of course, the way of playing him changed throughout the years, via certain traditions. What you come up with today is *a certain* way of playing and that becomes a kind of routine. So, asking yourself *exactly* how Chopin played does not mean you have to reproduce *exactly* how Chopin played, but maybe you can get back a little bit further to what Chopin originally wrote.

Does our 'present' experience simply add something to the layers of the past, or, in a way, it can also 'reveal' the past, at least in part?

It gives me an opportunity to mention that what Hermann Abert did with Mozart was very interesting. In 1919, he became a great authority on Mozart, so the Encyclopaedia of Chamber Music, which was a British publication, a complete survey of all chamber music, asked him to write a chapter on Mozart. (It was at the very end of his life: he wrote it and died soon after.) The editor of the Encyclopaedia was very shocked by that chapter, because it was not the way he thought Mozart was. We had always thought that Mozart was an extraordinarily beautiful composer, very much like Raphael in the painting – so sweet and tender… While Abert had made him more like Michelangelo. As controversial as it was, the chapter was published, and the fact is today we know that Mozart was indeed more like Michelangelo!

The paradox of this story is that Abert comes along in the times of German expressionism, Stravinsky, Schönberg, Webern, Picasso and those were a big influence on the way he looked at music. It was 'modernism', in one word. He actually turned Mozart into a modern composer. But, interestingly enough, Mozart during his lifetime was considered to be an exceptionally difficult composer. So, in making him a modern composer, Abert made him more like what people thought he was like during his lifetime. After 100 years of playing Mozart, it did get into routine, so looking at him again from a very astonishing point of view recovered some of the ways people had actually looked at Mozart during his lifetime. And this happens all the time… Now, to the authenticity movement: I never attacked the movement itself, I attacked the nonsense that one gets from it.

Have you collaborated with any of the members of the authenticity movement?

I have played, for instance, with such authority of the field as the great Sir Charles Mackerras. That was brilliant. Mackerras is a conductor who can do anything: when he does Mozart he is happy to do it both with a modern orchestra and with old instruments. The same with Händel, of whom he is one of the best conductors. Moreover, he can also conduct Händel in the version arranged by Mozart, which, as you know, is not authentic at all. But he makes music out of anything. And he knows how it was done. I had the opportunity to observe his rehearsal: he was trying to get the orchestra to play the minuet of Mozart's G minor Symphony at the proper tempo. Everybody always played it slowly (*sings*), but it's Allegro, and Mackerras knew that in Mozart's time it was played much faster (*sings*). He was trying to get the orchestra play it right, and one of the things he said to the musicians was: "No, in this tempo you cannot use that *old* phrasing." So, you see, in trying to make Mozart sound more like Mozart sounded during his lifetime he made it more modern. He stopped that routine I was talking about.

In your opinion, which other performers (not necessarily from the 'authenticity' current) were instrumental in interrupting routines?

I still remember people complaining all the time that Toscanini used to conduct Beethoven too fast. Now we tend to think that the tempo Beethoven used was indeed faster. I am not saying that the right way to conduct Beethoven is Toscanini's way… (By the way, the very first concert I was taken to when I was four was Beethoven's Eighth and Ninth symphonies conducted by Toscanini. Thus for many years I was confident that this is the way the music should sound.) People thought Toscanini was modernizing Beethoven, while it was actually – in some respect – getting it closer to the original. There were aspects of Toscanini's performance, which were certainly not authentic (partly because he was conducting in a hall with terrible acoustics). In any case, Toscanini was largely misunderstood in principle: everybody complains that he conducted very fast, but the slowest *Parsifal* in history was Toscanini's. One hour slower! In general, Toscanini would conduct Wagner very slowly. And his Brahms' Third Symphony is certainly slower than everybody else's.

Was the choice reasonable?

Yes! It was very beautiful. When he was conducting Brahms, for example, that was quite slow but it doesn't sound slow because it is very steady and moves in proper pace. Bruno Walter conducted the same piece much faster, but he kept changing the tempo all the time. Maybe that was the authentic way to do it, I don't know. Brahms himself did not always insist on hearing his music the way he liked it: "Sometimes you can do it that way too", he would say. Isn't it quite funny? The idea that there is just one way of performing belongs only to an electronic tape. In fact, there are only two cases when the music has a sort of unique performance: one is improvisation, and the other is electronic music. Between these two there is always certain flexibility.

What about those composers of the twentieth century who were claiming that they "don't want to be interpreted"?

Well, Stravinsky objected to Koussewitsky's performance of the Symphony for wind instruments, because his phrasing was more suitable to Tchaikovsky or Brahms. The fact is that Stravinsky himself did not interpret his own music the same way; he changed tempos quite radically. But that was characteristic of many composers. For instance, Brahms always hated metronome; he considered metronome only valid for a week. Curiously, according to him, the first time you

perform a piece of music it has to be performed a little slower, because it will not yet be standard. But when you get used to it, you can play it faster.

Rachmaninov, probably, was the one most flexible with the performances of his works; or was there anybody else who would agree that the others are playing better?

Somebody has told me a similar story about Bryan Ferneyhough. As you know, his notation is almost impossible. Bartók would write something in 11/16, while Ferneyhough can write in 8/11, and performers are left trying to figure out what in the world is this… So, Ferneyhough wrote one piece for cello, and when he first heard it performed, he said that the musician only got about 30 percent of the notes right. Then he heard it five years later, and this time the cellist got about 80 percent of the notes right. But the composer said: "You know what? I liked the first performance better." Who knows? Maybe we shouldn't act as if there was a fixed ideal performance for each piece. There isn't. But, yes, there are also performances, which are complete betrayals, and make no sense at all.

Can a deliberately 'traitorous' performing choice enhance the original work even more than an obedient performance?

In fact, yes. Richter's performance of Schubert B flat major Sonata is certainly much slower than Schubert intended. We know that, but it's a very beautiful performance. It is very important that the performer realizes that this is a very intimate piece and was never intended for a large public, and Schubert played it for an audience of 10–12 people at most. So, when playing it in a slow tempo, you somehow feel that intimacy. In addition, Richter used to lower the stage lights… Very intelligent. But, for example, the G major Sonata he had so slow that it is almost impossible to listen to, because you keep waiting for the next note (*sings*). Much too slow, it doesn't work. The B flat, however, works. One can make mistakes.

So, in general, you don't seem to be a purist as concerns these 'mistakes'?

Well, you can have *real* mistakes, of course. Almost every conductor does the *Fandango* in *The Marriage of Figaro* much faster than Mozart wanted to. But it is *Andante*. In the original performance, it was danced by all the singers who had to sing a little bit slower and to do some action concurrently. It is a very formal dance, and should never be done in the faster tempo, which instead has become very traditional. Again, it is a question of authenticity: when tempo becomes obviously wrong and when it actually does harm to the piece, then you have to hope that someone will put a stop to it.

But there are a number of other pieces that are played at the wrong tempo, and I don't think it is illegal. (By the way, talking about the other kind of 'offence', I was the first pianist to record the six-voice ricercare from the *Musical Offering* on the piano, which a lot of people think was written for six instruments.) When I was doing the *Art of Fugue* (and, as you know, all the fugues are in D minor, all with the same theme at the same tempo, which gets very boring), I played one fugue much faster: certainly the wrong tempo but very effective. I knew it was wrong but I didn't care (although I am not sure I would do that again). I generally try and play at the tempo I think was intended at the time, in so far as I can find that out. That is in fact not as hard as everyone thinks. There is a lot of evidence, even for Bach.

What kind of evidence?

For example, the last movement of the Fifth Brandenburg Concerto is written in 2/4 with triplets instead of 6/8, which would be more natural. Why so? It is more complicated in 2/4 because you have to have dotted notes, and that means that dotted notes in 6/8 can be played like a triplet instead. Well, Robert Marshall has the right answer: Bach determined the tempo by this quarter note. If you write in 6/8, 6/8 is slower than 2/4 as triplets. So we know that this is a fast piece. All the gigues by Bach are in 12/8 with one exception, the Gigue in the First Partita, which is in 4/4 as triplets (*sings*). So, it is quite clear that this is a much faster piece – Marshall must be absolutely right. But this wasn't a problem then because everybody knew that these tempos are the ones that make sense in music all along.

In any case, isn't tempo today one of those musical elements that get the most flexible treatment?

There must be about 10 or 12 pieces in the history of music, which are always played at the wrong tempo. For instance, all Beethoven's *Allegrettos* are normally in a slow tempo. All the metronome indications Beethoven gave for his *Allegrettos* were very slow. The last movement of the Sixth Symphony is 6/8 *Allegretto* and it's 60 bpm, which is (*sings*) a beautiful tempo. But it is a little slower than most conductors would do it. And more beautiful. Another *Allegretto* of Beethoven is the Seventh Symphony's slow movement, which is 76, and that makes almost any other Beethoven's *Allegretto* interpreted as 76. But for *Allegretto vivace* he writes 88. People think that Beethoven's metronome marks are rather peculiar. However, probably there are about two or three mistakes. Mistake is the last movement of the Fourth Symphony, which is *Allegro ma non troppo*, and it's 80 for the half note, that's 160 for a crotchet, which is impossible – the bassoon

couldn't possibly play it. An 80 must be a misprint for 60, which means 120 (*sings*). You have to make sense of these things.

Composers, too, can make a mistake and write down the wrong tempo. Mozart writes *Allegretto* for the sextet in *The Marriage of Figaro*, and then changes it into *Andante*. So, it can happen. The thing is, tempo is not really a problem: people play something in a peculiar tempo or do it deliberately to be peculiar. Glenn Gould used to play things too fast and sometimes it works and it sounds fine. But basically we know what the proper tempos are without too much problem. I don't think people really care about. One often says: "Oh, but we don't know what the proper tempo is." Yes we do, we do. But it doesn't matter that much whether you play exactly the right tempo or you can play too fast or too slow if you think it's more effective.

Does that apply also to contemporary music, when there is an opportunity to actually interact with the living composer?

The same with contemporary music. When I was preparing Eliot Carter's Piano Concerto, I went to him and asked to listen to a couple of pages – if they were fast enough. He said it seemed almost too fast. I had to tell him that I had reduced his metronome marks by 20%, which is more than I would do for anybody else. Carter responded that everybody who played the Concerto reduced all the difficult parts by 20% but the easy parts they played at the original tempo, thinking that everything sounds the same. Whereas if you reduce the hard parts by 20% then you have to reduce the easy parts as well – then everything makes sense. You have to make sense of the piece.

Now we are talking about performance, for the first time in this interview. These are the problems the performers have. You have to make sense out of a piece of music, and what I mean by sense is not an 'intellectual sense'. The interpretation has to be intelligible, it has to be clear, and it has to have the big effect. If you play a sad piece people should be very sad when they hear it, and that's the way you express things.

3.6. Working with Love and the Muse

An interview with Mūza Rubackytė; Vilnius, August 2008

The questions to Mūza Rubackytė could be legion: of her new releases, of her creative plans and her recent concert tours, which took her, only during this past month, from Holland to Shanghai, to New York City and South America. Last year's winning of the Lithuanian National Prize merits no less attention. Yet above all, I feel like talking of the things beyond the visible world of stage and its institutions – of artistic tastes and interpretations. Of things not necessarily determined by specific events or occasions, yet key to her everyday activity, which the pianist prefers to call a ministry rather than a profession.

We are talking at the Lithuanian National Philharmonic, and it is a late evening. Probably the fact of your working here means that soon we will have an opportunity to listen to your new recordings?

For many years already I try to use this traditional vacation time – the end of August and early September – for recording, and do it mostly in Vilnius. For instance, last year around the same time, we conducted a gigantic work by recording the 24 preludes and fugues by Shostakovich. This cycle is on a par with Bach's genius: the same spirituality, richness, innovation… It was paramount to me to have it recorded in Lithuania. I wanted to relive that atmosphere, that psychological pressure. The slow fugues of Shostakovich have turned out a real gulag experience… This music requires such a total submersion into it that when reporters ask me what it was to do this recording, I just joke that learning the music was my first gulag, recording, the second, and the third one was editing.

I am especially pleased to hear people say that I have reconciled them with Shostakovich. It is no secret that not infrequently listeners shun such apparently drastic, depressive music. But it incorporates everything: all kinds of children's imagery, tales, grotesque, *chastushki*. Shostakovich is overwhelmingly diverse and far from always depressing. To us, his music comes so naturally, and he *is* melodious. It is our culture, like our language – we have the same firsthand experience.

This year the recordings also took place at the same time, this time it was César Franck. It is going to be a double CD, dedicated to Franck's piano and chamber music.

How do you select your repertoire? Can a performer these days afford the luxury of dictating what to perform?

Well, yes, we can. I have never done anything I do not like. I have built an ample repertoire, and concert organizers always have plenty to select from. But that means that they will always be selecting from the works that appeal to me, because there is no unacceptable music to me within that scope. Honestly, I do not think I would agree to perform, should they opt differently. The instrument and everything I do in life is a matter of love to me. I simply cannot work against my will.

Is there a composer whose music gives you the feeling of 'playing yourself'? The one that took no effort to grasp and make your own?

There are composers whose music 'carries your fingers', their language is easy to understand, and some of them accompany a performer throughout his or her entire life. But there are others, and they are the select few, whose music gives you the feeling that you have created it yourself. Like Karol Szymanowski to me. I keep asking myself why him. Maybe the answer is in the closeness of our geographical roots? It is hard to say. But his expression, his intonations, commas, spacing, harmonies… It all strikes me as if I have written this in my previous life.

And how do you feel about Liszt's music? Both your discography and critical reviews signal there must be some special relationship.

I am frequently asked about Liszt, and indeed, his music is woven like a red thread into my biography of interpretations. Though it is very pleasant on the one hand, on the other, it limits me in some respects. All pieces of the puzzle seem to match: the competition (Mūza Rubackytė is a laureate of the Liszt-Bartók competition in Budapest – *L.N.-M.*), my repertoire and my recordings: this forms a vicious circle, convenient to reporters and concert organizers, but I feel like stereotyped into an image supported by buzz phrases. I indeed relish in talking of Liszt and performing his music, yet I would like to emphasize that he is one among my favourite composers… When it comes to my repertoire, I am a bulimic person. Probably, we should talk of Romanticism in general, though again, it is not the only thing of interest to me. My criterion is the likeness of language, the emotional kinship and correlations. I can find this equally in Schönberg or Beethoven.

Yet it is also true that I perform plenty of Liszt's music. Of my recent years experiences with Liszt I would mention the recording of *Années de pèlerinage*. It was prompted by the invitation from Radio France Internationale to play the entire cycle within one day as part of their festival. Berman or Ciccolini are examples of musicians who had recorded the entire epic – but managing it within a span of one day seemed unfathomable to me. It is a high demand not only in

terms of time, but also emotionally, in terms of its entire content: how a pianist, playing all these pieces in a row, is supposed to guarantee, besides a neat rendition, a sustained fire – and not to expire before the long marathon comes to an end… It was a true voyage, not only to me, but also to my listeners. I was not sure of anything – would the audience come back after the first intermission? But it was a success, as it is demonstrated by the radio recording. The next year I recorded all the *Années de pèlerinage* on three CDs – the album has been received with critical acclaim. Now I perform this cycle in its entirety at least once or twice a year during a concert; the last such appearance was this past April at the Warsaw Beethoven Festival.

And should I say what I think of Liszt… I am always filled to the brim with love to him.

With this immense experience of interpretation of this composer and your deep penetration into his music, was there any kind of revelation, maybe during recent years, an insight into his interpretation, or a discovery of some optimal recipe for playing Liszt? Is there anything absolutely central about Liszt's music?

When talking of Liszt, we should be talking of *many* Liszts: of a romantic youth, a circus juggler, a hellish piano Paganini, a God seeker in his final years. There is one Liszt who wrote *Grand Galop Chromatique*, making all ladies faint, a different Liszt wrote *Vallée d'Obermann*, and yet another was composing on the basis of philosophical writings. It is very interesting to attempt at encompassing this synthesis of him – these two opposites of the spiritual and the earthly love that he struggled to reconcile his entire life.

Do you ever listen to the recordings by other pianists?

I would not say I am devoted to some kind of interpretations. Sure, you have to listen to the recordings simply in order to feel the pulse. Yet I would hesitate talking of any direct influences… Of course, there are some imposing musicians despite of the fact that I do not agree with some of their renditions. Even if you say: man, this is not the way, it is nevertheless inspiring; there are other versions that strike as impeccable, and maybe you would like to be similar, but it is somehow uninspiring… Most often I am looking for exactly these untraditional interpretations. Those challenging ones that make you think that maybe someplace it has been taken too far, maybe here is too relaxed or too slow, or maybe the colour is too much polished… But then, in an afterthought, you ask – why not? Maybe this path will really take you somewhere – only one should not go so far? And, needless to say, you sift it all through your own sieve.

And who are these inspiring performers?

From the old ones: Rachmaninov, Alfred Cortot. Especially Cortot – above all when he plays Chopin; and many others. Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli. Sergio Fiorentino from our contemporaries: this recently deceased Italian pianist has remained nearly unknown. I was blessed with meeting him in a festival in the USA, where he played Chopin to us, his colleagues. It was the first time in my life when I cried listening to a pianist. He was an extraordinary person who remained in obscurity because of his flight phobia. But his recordings are a veritable miracle. It is so subtle, real, so genuine…

My generation also has quite a few interesting figures, too. I like Hungarian Dezső Ránki, and even more, Krystian Zimerman who helps me to test myself. This happens in science too: different individuals, in different countries of the world, work in the same direction thinking they are unique… This is how I feel about Zimerman. His interpretations seem to ascertain me of some things.

Your renditions of Čiurlionis are fascinating – abounding in romantic, impressionistic tones, playful or dramatic… To me, these interpretations confute the dominant opinion that Čiurlionis is 'non-pianistic'.

Sometimes we do hesitate to approach our own statues like human beings. We think that if we leave this score alone, or if we read it as neutrally as possible, we are doing it a service. I think we should go further and intuit what the author presented us with in this black and white graphic. The composer does not sleep his nights, he is dreaming, he is creating in his soul, somewhere in his deepest inner self, he conceives this world of sound, the image of sound, and like an architect, he tries to give it a structure firstly in his imagination. But then he has to compress all these infinite, these unbound ideas, just the way we use the computer to compress a document, and represent it by certain symbols, a kind of a dead Morse code, then add *crescendo* here, some emphasis there… That's fine, but how much of *crescendo*? Why? How strong should we emphasize it? It is enthusiastic or maybe desperate? *Ritenuto*. What does this *ritenuto* represent? Are we trying to stop or gain speed? Usually we cannot see this in our extremely imperfect notation. But if we do not limit ourselves to this superficial reading, if we take a step beyond and into the world of imagination, I believe we will see more than the black and white graphics.

I wonder how a foreign listener perceives this music. We have been raised on it at music schools. These preludes immediately conjure up for us a vision of Druskininkai, of Čiurlionis' garden, and the concerts held there…

Now we live in an extremely open world. It is thrilling – we need these different perspectives, the more of them, the better. If a particular idea can be approached just in one way, if there is no room for interpretations, this means it is a miserly, poor and dull idea. Fixing a composer within one approach equals an insult. It means his music does not have more potential.

Do you believe there exists something like 'musical identity' determined by the locus, by the context in the art of performing music? Do distinct national styles still merit any mention these days?

We have spoken of Shostakovich: why I was recording him in Vilnius, why I need some intangible things that are maybe not necessary for others, because in this music they will see something different. Sure enough, I think that *my* Shostakovich has an identity. Čiurlionis in our renditions has the air of Druskininkai. Yet all these things are a matter of an individual talent, it would be difficult to generalize. The world is a melting pot these days, and Korean musicians do not necessarily study in Korea (which, thank God, is finally true of us too). However, we all have some kind of roots and it would be a shame to lose them. First of all it is our Eastern European school, built on the platform of the Russian pianist tradition. There are certain elements typical of the region or the school, and we should feel sorry to lose this foundation, from which each individual performer can evolve into one or another direction depending on one's talent.

Does this mean that when listening to a pianist, live or a recording, we can feel which school he or she belongs?

It is possible to recognize musicians, but that is more a matter of individuality. However, many things depend on the repertoire. Let us take French music. I think in that case we can tell whether the performer is French or not. I am oversimplifying, but there are some clues such as the detail, line, hue and the manner of operating the pedal – which give you hints that either this musician studied with the French or is French. It is also possible to speak of English pianism, characterized by a certain refinement, distinct construction of form, a kind of gentlemanly manner. But talented individuals will confute all kind of generalization.

What distinguishes French pianism?

Priority is given to economy, refinement and intellect, not the internal drama. Again, these days there are lots of musicians denying these words. But there are also many prominent French pianists who still pursue this trend.

In your biography, there is a tendency to emphasize your Russian-school roots. Do you feel that your artistic career evolved along that line and the influence of the tradition?

Yes and no. Our formation took place in that direction – first of all our teachers came from that school, and such was their formation. But I have been blessed with slightly unconventional studies: I learned music at home, with my mother and aunt. We never arrived at any agreement – especially because they were very different, one said this, and the other – that. But it was very lucky for me – the absence of a single solution fostered my creativity. Both of them studied with the Germans and Polish during the war years, thus I have acquired a rather varied foundation which also integrated elements of the Russian school. However, I do not think that I am a typical exponent of this tradition. In terms of tastes and perception of music, I tend towards international potpourri; also, since very old times I have practiced self-education. I keep revisiting and transforming things that I have already done.

Your interpretations, however, seem to contain this uniting axis – the aesthetics of Romanticism. Is it perhaps one of the marks of the pronouncedly Romantic Russian school?

Both yes and no, it is again personal. I believe that in this profession (though this can hardly be called a profession, rather, it is a ministry, immeasurable by either time or pay) everything depends on an individual. Working daily with such a sensitive, emotional matter of extreme spiritual depth, existing constantly on an emotional knife-edge, we all are thin-skinned people. A lot depends on our way of life, we must be athletic, sporting and strong – otherwise we would not be able to endure travel, sleepless nights and constant memory tests. So personally I am moved by everything that touches the finest feelings. Then – be it the slow part of Mozart, *Romeo and Juliet* by Prokofiev, or a Scarlatti sonata – neither time nor style makes much difference.

You have mentioned the physical parameter. Is it not strange that all the talk about performing music tends to concentrate on the spiritual sphere and only spiritual inspirations are mentioned, as if forgetting that it is such heavy work, that physical relationship with the instrument is crucial?

This question is extremely complex. One sphere is preparatory work, it also takes a lot of stamina. We should not forget that we are working alone. (Only organists also work alone, but in contrast to pianists, they work in the house of God…) Thus first of all, you have got to love solitude, to feel at ease with

yourself and your instrument. Next comes time organizing and self-discipline. Nobody expects you to show up at the rehearsal, there is no time set for work, as it would be for a duo or a quartet – you can practice whenever you wish, or you can do nothing…

A different sphere is stage art, which has nothing to do with normal creative activity. This theatre, this circus is essentially *antagonistic* to artistic process. An artist in his studio can wait peacefully for inspiration to come, at a time which has not been planned or set. But we must, at seven fifteen, no matter where we are, push the button and 'be inspired'. It takes certain masochistic qualities, a heroic spirit, and, of course, we need to create appropriate conditions. Your body and spirit need to be perfectly comfortable. In order to achieve this, musicians, like sportsmen, have to think what to eat, how to sleep, how to rest and to plan everything so that you do not 'expire' before the concert… For that purpose we rely on all kind of medical and psychological advice, Oriental practices and similar.

So, stepping on the stage. The term 'performance art' more often applies to theatre studies or theories. Referring to this synonym, I would like to ask, how much theatricality there is in the art of performing music? What does stage give to interpretation?

We talked of the Russian school. In it – through Neuhaus and others – multiple examples were used from Stanislavski's theatre theory. We always talked of encircling yourself in a circle, which belongs only to you: no one is allowed inside, the place where you can reach a certain concentration. In short, actors and musicians have plenty in common – the art of the stage is similar. The difference is that we talk in an abstract language, operate only in sounds and nobody expects from us a smile, a fancy attire or beautiful body. Ideally, our movements should only be functional – only what is needed to either play *legato* or produce a certain sound… But in reality this is not the case. Quite infrequently, for the sake of charms or in order to mask our weaknesses, we throw dust into eyes. All of us have been guilty of this sin, at one stage of our life. I believe that most of the real artists try to give up these external supports and to be as natural as possible. But there also exists a type of music that requires a certain electrified condition. Without this burning engine and this audience-induced adrenalin it might not always be interesting. Some performers invite outsiders even during their recording sessions – just for the sole purpose of producing adrenalin. They need risk and the listening ear you are talking to, and it either accepts it or does not.

In discussing questions of image and theatricality, we should admit the overbearing presence of commercial visualization in contemporary performing arts.

If we speak of such things as presentation of a CD, its cover should be adequate to its content. Of course there is nothing we can do to oppose this commercial apparatus, because our entire life is permeated by advertising. But it is our call whether to follow it blindly or not.

The artistic design of your Shostakovich CD is very interesting; your website features the same design. How are the visual images of your CDs born? Are you involved in the process in any way?

It varies, but lately I feel like participating, and I try to include this requirement into my contract before I even start recording. Currently I cooperate on these matters with the Paris based Ukrainian artist Oleksandra Jaromova – she also designed the Shostakovich CD.

Photographs are especially important to me. I have been collaborating with several photographers in several countries – they do truly artistic work. Once we organized a photo-session with one of them, the Chicago based Bob Coscarelli. It lasted from ten o'clock in the morning till three in the afternoon. We did only three decent pictures during that time, but they were really impressive: they seem to show three women of different ages. It is a great art to set the same person into such different moods on the same day…

The collaboration with Lithuanian photographers, Arūnas Baltėnas and Michail Raškovskij, is always greatly enriching.

Unawares, we have drifted to 'feminine' questions. Quite often we hear comments on female composers and musicians who compose or interpret music 'in a feminine fashion'. Probably you have also encountered similar epithets in combination with comments of your exceptionally "Slavic beauty"? So where should we look and recognize this femininity in performing music?

It is an old-fashioned concept no doubt: roses, tenderness, girlishness… and the opposite – a strong guy. A woman is endowed with everything, and the more she has, the more feminine she is. Nothing can be more exciting than contrasts. Look what happens in music: a huge culminating explosion is immediately followed by a lyrical episode. All this is hidden in the female nature – the finest sensibility with its multiple facets and the special pliancy of disposition. Sometimes the female mind is more inclusive and richer, the female approach more out of the box compared to the man who is determined to remain a man no matter what. A woman can be anyone and anything.

And what about the repertoire? The famous Romain Rolland's book Beethoven. Les grandes époques créatrices *strikes with its openly discriminating approach of female performers: "He [Beethoven] is the most masculine of all composers. There is nothing […] feminine in him. I have to admit that (with the exception of some of his pieces) I do not like listening to female performers interpreting him."*

Beethoven – that is a great simplification – is with a grimly wrinkled forehead. He also owes all these spiritual riches, the refinement and soulfulness, especially in his final sonatas, these angelic trills that seem to elevate you into a kind of vibrating light… They are no longer trills, but aerial vibrations. But the *real* Beethoven, one of the middle period is, essentially, in its character cumbersome, inflexible. Therefore there are some aspects of interpretation that we have to take heed of in performing Beethoven. You cannot approach him with soft paws, even if you fancy that very beautiful. This element of austerity must be clearly pronounced, and a contemporary woman, just like a contemporary man, is capable of it.

Referring to our conversation about national identities – is only German Beethoven authentic? Is there, let us say, Russian or French Beethoven?

Beethoven is one of the most universal composers. It is enough to mention his Ninth Symphony, which keeps proclaiming this unity of humanity where all of us feel well. I believe he is one of the composers who have always been universal and will remain so forever.

But what led to the emergence of such an incredible conservatism of the artistic world of performing music? The main repertoire features canonical authors with canonical pieces: it is obvious in the seasonal programmes of any concert hall.

You mean that we rediscover too few of the forgotten composers? Now they receive a lot of attention from the recording industry: nearly everything that could be discovered has been recorded. It would be unjust to say that this music was forgotten because it deserved oblivion. Yet time sometimes is really merciless. One can find little pearls or pieces of amber, but seldom… On the other hand, all this information is undoubtedly enriching to us – it is necessary to know who rubbed shoulders with these giants, who lived and created, what was the milieu where these well familiar figures of music emerged.

Few select contemporary music either. Maybe the situation in chamber music is different, but the piano stage is dominated by the music two centuries old.

Well, all of us want try Chopin's ballads, we all want to play his *scherzi*, to get the feeling of Liszt's rhapsodies. Even this 'standard' repertoire is so immense that no life is enough for it. Contemporary music represents a special menu and takes a special appetite, and above all, tolerance. First of all, the instrument is not employed the way we have been educated to use it. It is not always singing, not always musical – the absence of just these two parameters is a significant lack. It is also not always virtuoso… where will you show yourself? It may also be minimalist: three notes here, a fourth there. Then you start wondering, what was all this practicing for? The reward – yes, I take part in a very interesting installation or a performance. However, in it I do not feel much of a pianist, but rather some kind of a tool, I perform bits and pieces, or fill in percussion's role and similar. Such scant employment of this instrument-orchestra is really disappointing.

However, you probably have experienced collaborations with contemporary composers?

Surely, sometimes life offers interesting motives or situations when you put aside all the stereotypes, all categorizing of music into good and bad, understandable and strange, beautiful and unappealing. Three years ago I was blessed with the experience of living at the artists' Residency of La Prée Abbey where we interacted with sculptors, writers, graphic artists, creators of installations. There were also composers, and we played their music at our local festival. It was really exciting to live in such an atmosphere and open up to contemporary music. You live next to this person, drink tea with him and play his music… You open up to everything, and all artistic barriers disappear.

I have played quite a few contemporary chamber music pieces. Why mainly chamber music? Because even solo piano contemporary pieces treat the instrument only as an element, it does not receive sufficient weight. Chamber repertoire fixes all this: there you feel really needed. Of the contemporary composers whose music I have performed in France, the wonderful Philippe Hersant is really my cup of tea. In a sense a follower of Debussy, he has written some charming miniatures for piano. Yet performing contemporary solo pieces takes not only immense work, but also a special fondness of such music. There are musicians who are fascinated with this music – one example is a dear friend of mine Pierre Laurent Aimard: he excels in contemporary repertoire and is thrilled by it.

So as I said at the start of our conversation: if you do not fall in love with something, there is no way for you to succeed.

3.7. A Longer Way into the Depths

An interview with Alexander Toradze; Vilnius, May 2009

Intense. Such is the first and the main impression of the Georgian USA-based pianist Alexander Toradze's performance of Sergei Prokofiev's Second Piano Concerto with the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra, under conductor Juozas Domarkas, during the 2009 Vilnius Festival. (All five of Prokofiev's concertos are recorded by Toradze with the Kirov Orchestra, conducted by Valery Gergiev.) This impression proves to be correct. Such a colourful conversation as was the meeting with the pianist is a rare occasion: the morning after the concert I got to experience the legendary Georgian hospitality; I was also, indirectly, introduced to the maestro's family members, and learned, from the pianist, some 'off the record' stories about his colleague musicians (we covered all of this while he was dashing about the spacious apartments of the hotel, running the risk of missing the flight). The 'officially' recorded interview is also rather emotional and captures, if a fleeting, nevertheless open and uncompromising musician's view of the main and the roundabout roads in the musician's career.

Our interview in fact started yesterday at the Philharmonic… It would have never occurred to me that somebody would feel like being interviewed immediately after the concert. How do you live with this post-concert adrenalin? I assume a conversation companion is not every late night circumstance, especially when travelling? The performance is over: you go back to the hotel, and then what?

It is quite a painful question. It is a kind of 'adrenalin disease', when your entire system gets fuelled up, and the next day you have to pay for that. Then the condition needs to be tempered, but I do not like to resort to anything artificial, any kind of night partying is just not my cup of tea, it completely upsets the structure of the following days. Now when I have got a younger girlfriend, it is somewhat easier; if we happen to be in the same time zone, it is possible to chat on the phone for a couple of hours. Otherwise it is hard, because you have to do something, sleeping not being an option: the system is set in motion, emotions on the edge, and your entire psyche in turmoil. Gradually it starts reflecting on other fields: in my case (I know it is no excuse) this huge belly is not from relaxation.

We live a life of a constant tide – low and high – of emotions. However, each of my friend musicians describes his experience in a different way. But they might have larger resources of talent, and they do not go through so much agitation and, correspondingly, do not produce so much adrenalin. It is quite possible, isn't it? Maybe others just take it easier. And I mean this seriously, without

flirting. I get caught up. First by practicing – and I work flat – it is necessary to me, I cannot give a concert without having put in long days and hours of practice before it. This Second Concerto by Prokofiev, I have been playing it all my life (around thirty years, to be more precise). The fact that I have played it so many times does matter, but… I want it to be interesting. Otherwise I will not be able to progress across two bars, I will stop immediately. While in order to engage myself, I need to constantly remove the old scum, to polish the mildewed surface and create a new layer, in short, – I have to work. The overall concept of rendition of a piece maybe is not changing so much, or just slightly, but inside it involves abundant detail, chords, colour combinations, and other things. And it is necessary to play the way as if it were the first time: if I cannot achieve that, I lose interest. And when it is not interesting, I cannot play.

I was wondering about one detail. How did you arrive in your interpretation at such an absolutely transparent pianissimo *in the first bars of the right hand? In your recording of this piece this episode sounds totally different.*

Thank you for your correct observation. First of all, I am sorry for you: life is so short, and you listen to my recordings… But I highly appreciate your professional approach.

I do not know how I arrived at it, but not earlier then in twenty five years of playing this piece. (*Laughs.*) Really! For twenty five years I have been playing the way the score says: *piano* – yet smoothly, without any pianoforte effects. But it was already then when Maxim Shostakovich, somewhat later, also Volodia Jurowski noted that my lyrics (in the cited cases they spoke of Rachmaninov's pieces) had changed. According to them, it acquired the quality of the Georgian traditional vocal polyphony, without any dynamic bubbles, dramatic gusts. Everything is upright: the intonation, the harmony – you hear a vertical, and there is some kind of stasis about it: it is both immobile and yet at the same time moving, but in any case, not twitching. It was Maxyusha Shostakovich who told me this some twenty years ago, in Chile, in Santiago, where we performed Rachmaninov's Third Concerto. He also told me something that made me hysterically happy. We played the Concerto three times, plus two rehearsals – and each of the five Rachmaninov sounded entirely different…

I hope so…

So it is! But this approach to detail is acceptable only to the artists of our emotional calibre. Rumour has it that Barenboim once asked, now the late Lazar Berman, before one of their concerts: "Which way are we going to play – the

way you played at our first or at the second rehearsal?" It is a little gossip… (*Laughs.*) Barenboim himself is surely an extraordinary pianist, but the structure of his talent and mind-set is entirely different from Borya's. It is not the case when a musician has to conquer something, to go roundabout, to circumvent something because he has some insufficiency of talent. He has none; he can go as the crow flies. From A to B he progresses in a straight line, without stopping. While the most – I hope so – including myself (I *know*, that including myself) have to go round about all the time, to camouflage their deficiencies – not only to hide them, but to overcome. In my path, I cannot make it from A to B direct. I lack such talent, every time I find I am short of something, either my hands are too big, or something else… The sound is not as clean as I would like it to be, and I have to fill in somehow these incongruities. Then I have to find my path. A longer one.

I had a great friend, musicologist John Ardoin, who wrote a brilliant study on Furtwängler, four books on Maria Callas… He is also the author of the first book on Mariinsky Theatre in St Petersburg, which is dedicated to me, in that I take a great pride. It was the last book by Ardoin, he died at the age of 60 (the book was published by Valera Gergiev whose picture taken next to the Mariinsky Theatre is proudly displayed on the cover). It was an unforgettable moment when I opened the book and read the dedication "To Lexo, who started it all." Because I have introduced them: my American friend to my best friend.

So it was him who told me once: "I feel a kinship to you, because you choose the roundabout ways." And he drew a parallel with Maria Callas. Please forgive me for selecting such an example, but I should be dealing with the most interesting cases, not just telling my story. Her performances had no coldness and perfection, but there were brains and culture. Callas could not 'take' the audience only by the beauty and quality of her voice, she had to struggle for that in some other way, somehow recompense her shortfalls. Thus she always went roundabout and finally achieved the same. But in these bypasses she found gold which is not to be found on a straight path. Or rather, it is there by itself, everything is gilded along that path – you just dash forth as a bird… whereas we have to look for it. And it is more interesting, more romantic… The listener in these cases is a partner of those discoveries and failures. It sometimes happens that you search – and find nothing. Yet what matters is the very road.

When you played Prokofiev, I had the feeling that the music was being created while you were performing, as if everything emerged at that very moment. An exceptionally intense experience of listening: what is going to happen next, what is happening now?

It is very important for me to be in the same state of mind. Otherwise I should become an unsurpassable manipulator, but that is simply impossible… you would see me through if I really was not meaning it. You could see all these efforts, all the stumbling. The very process is very slippery, uncertain.

I would hate to be misunderstood, but the music is already rather disturbing, and the rendition was not 'comforting' either… This might be perplexing and even irritating to most people, but probably this is what it is all about?

But of course! What comfort?! It was never created for comfort… I think that if you do something seriously, you should take the responsibility. Can you imagine how many hours of the human soul are concentrated at that time in the hall? These are the hours that you are taking from the peoples' lives. You hold all these life hours in your hands – and what are you going to do with them? Are you going to show them your fantastic talent or unrivalled beauty? But that is not interesting. They have to feel that over that time you have lost several years of your life. Another handful of years of your life went into achieving this condition. Within these two hours, the listener has to muster all his spiritual powers for perceiving and accepting it. For one single moment he has to forget his culture, education, everything that he has listened to before, all his human relationships… I must lift him from the rut of our existence. And then – in a moment – bring him back to the same things, only with the transformed perception. These are the things that I am interested in. All this has to happen in the course of playing, and it takes some gigantic effort.

Now let us forget the listener and talk of the symbiosis with the composer. Is it achievable – and overall, necessary? After the concert you mentioned that knowing the history is crucial to you. That knowing what the composer thought, what he did, is important…

While in Vilnius, I was working with two young pianists and kept repeating to them: keep searching. This piece (one of them was playing Schubert's impromptu) was written by the composer a year before his death. It is extremely interesting, but they really had not given it a thought. Therefore – go and look for, answer why he suddenly happened to write impromptus. Did he go mad, was he hallucinating? Or was he dreaming? He was already overcome by an illness… Go and look for it. If you see that something is missing, add it *yourself*, add something of *your own.* When you play, you are talking to me. Tell me something! Just hitting the keys is boring – it should be just something very straightforward. In Vilnius, I realized that again, as always, when teaching I am learning myself. Especially in these cases when you want to tell other people something

you cannot lie. You've got to tell the truth. You've got to tell the truth, to go deeper, to search, and along that road you discover something, not so much for them, as for yourself. So in talking about programme music – surely there are musical pieces with an established programme, and they resist any fantasy, such as Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* or Liszt's works… But it is important that one of the greatest interpreters was the first to start inventing programmes for himself. He wanted to add more interest.

When we are playing – and not only playing, but doing something different, even when we are not intentionally seeking to achieve it, and are unaware of it, we share something that we have inside – on different levels, in different forms. In performing music, it is the same: you give yourself. I believe we should try to instil in children from their early childhood the ability to perceive notes as letters. Though seemingly a straightforward notion, it mostly does not occur to you and the teachers never mention it. But when you translate these little notes into letters – then you start talking. Yet in order to say something, you need a story. If the composer left none, you have to make it up. And there usually *is* a story in it, anyways, because the composer mirrors all where he lives, all what he breathes: he is functioning on the political, economic, cultural and simply mundane level… Then you need to find a form for it… Every one of Mozart's sonata is an opera. All of him springs from the opera: each note in his music has a sung-out meaning. Therefore you have to create that opera. Bach, almost entirely, is rooted in the Church, religion, Gothic… So tell me this, create in me this type of disposition. So you imagine all these spheres, all these lives and you start creating your own stories of them. If you are ingenious, you cannot fail to attract the interest of the audience, and this is exactly what our task is: to make it interesting.

Do you often encounter ideology in music? You perform plenty of music by Russian composers, while in Russia, by force of circumstance, almost all of them lived in very complex times. How does this reflect on their music?

It is a question of great complexity. It is a disaster, when you come to think of it… Just imagine: if it had not been for this perverse Stalin, we would have had a totally different Shostakovich, and maybe even Prokofiev. Even Khachaturian mentioned the fact that 'before' all them used to write *different* music… Let's take Shostakovich's First Sonata: aphoristic, a total different dimension… And all of a sudden, the Fifth, the Sixth, and all the subsequent symphonies… Do we want a different Shostakovich? Don't we need him the way he is? And what is he? Alas, whether we like it or not, he served the regime, which made him write somewhat of an 'easier understandable' music. The same is true of Prokofiev.

Please forgive me a personal question, but it is temptingly interesting… You are a patriot of Georgia. In Lithuania we just had a small scandal because Valery Gergiev, the artist who openly supports the Kremlin in the notorious campaign, is constantly invited to perform here. He is a close friend of yours, isn't he?

I call him my brother.

So how do you take all this?

With deep sorrow, and I know that he is also in pain. He simply did not have a choice. Gergiev is not only an Ossetian, he is also one of the major Russian conductors in the entire history of performing music. What did I tell him? I told him, "You are my brother, and I can give my life to you. But not the lives of my children." I also told him that I understood he had no way out and that I would have probably behaved the same way had I been in his shoes. Unfortunately, and he is almost agonized for that, he was badly misinformed from the very start, and he believed the lies. In general, he is a very gullible person. Yet he could have verified all of that, and had he even done same, had he uttered the same words, he should have added that the concert was dedicated not only to the killed Ossetians and Russians, but to the memory of *all* who perished. It is a shame that Russia, having suffered so many wars and disasters in her history, is so stubbornly categorizing people into friends and foes. Alas, he was tangled by their hook. Now there are two avenues open for us: keep hating each other and fighting, I can even stop talking to him – or look forward. By the way, it so happened that this year we have not yet performed together. Soon, I am going to his festival in Mikkeli, Finland, and after these tragic events it is going to be our first appearance together. I am very happy about that, finally we shall be able to talk. In any case, talking is much better than silence.

Let us talk of your musical collaborations. What in general is important to you in the relationship with a conductor? Is Gergiev the conductor who can offer this?

The relationship with the orchestra should always be that of *giving*. I was so taught by my father, the composer David Toradze. Everyday the orchestra was before his eyes, in his ears, everywhere. Therefore I enjoy immensely working with orchestras – but not as a conductor, as a pianist. I have never even given a thought to conducting. Because in reality, while playing, I conduct different instruments, only they are under my fingers. What is the grand piano? These strings contain the distilled sounds of the entire orchestra, of the environment. Maybe gradually man will invent something that will encompass the sound of the grand piano too, but

so far it absorbs all that is on its left and sends it to the right. Thus the piano for me is not only the orchestra, it is also the organ, simply all the life.

I always tell my friend conductors how I hear the orchestra. It is not because there is something they cannot hear – simply I want to give them my point of view and I seek a dialogue with the orchestra. This is what I enjoy most. The interaction between the orchestra and the soloist is especially precious to me. Therefore I never worry or feel unsure that the orchestra, for example, might overshadow me. This can happen only in a very rare instance. I really have enough weight to ask the piano to give me the necessary sound… Of course, there are such moments, like the one at the end of the third movement of Prokofiev's Concerto, but there it is necessary, the composer meant so. It is natural that in such piano episodes the group of several dozens people have a hard time playing quieter than me. But they can do even that – like the LNSO did at the beginning of the first part. I have asked them, "Please be so kind, we need this… this is a wonderful piano, please try not playing, but creating something that would start a miracle…" And they believed me. They tried twice and succeeded.

Therefore we often work with Valera. With him, we always discover a common love of the score. He himself is a brilliant pianist and plays the piano stunningly, therefore I consider very seriously his requirements to the pianist. He also listens attentively whenever I ask to give more emphasis to some harmonious aspects or a particular instrument in the orchestra. We collaborate both ways.

What kind of the orchestra-piano repertoire do you prefer?

My father would constantly listen to 20th century music, therefore I found myself in love with this music considerably earlier then most of my colleagues. We listened to Prokofiev exceptionally often; according to my father, Prokofiev never wrote a single note which was not ingenious. At the Moscow Conservatory, my father studied under Glière, who was also Prokofiev's teacher. The veneration of Prokofiev was most probably a Glière-inspired thing. But not only Prokofiev; he adored Stravinsky, Bartók, Hindemith, Shostakovich, Berg, all of the 20th century. I can almost say that I got to know this music first, and only afterwards, all the rest. Though I do not think that he sought this intentionally: we studied Bach's inventions, sonatas by Haydn, Mozart… But that was school, while the 20th century was our passion. (By the way, Gergiev is also in love with Prokofiev, he idolizes him.)

It is unfortunate that we are short of time to discuss your unique "school on wheels" – The Toradze Piano Studio. It is so very interesting that the field of teaching is so important for you. Not all of performing pianists like getting involved in it.

This has developed so naturally that I am no longer considering whether it is important or not. It is simply part of life. In Vilnius, I also had to work for a couple of hours with two talented girls from the Rostropovich Foundation. I liked them both immensely.

Maybe you could tell me what this "real purpose of art" is, which, according one of your earlier interviews, the young artists should try to achieve?

You know, I cannot recall even the context. Do you expect me to remember all the nonsense I have told somewhere?

And what about this time, again?

Yes, of course, I have talked a lot of nonsense. But it is all sincere.

Thank you. Then let me finish by no less 'all-encompassing' question: do you give music priority among other arts?

Can you tell what is more important to you: eyes or ears, touch or smell? It is a match of all things. You cannot say that music is an elite expression of the human soul, more than pictorial arts or literature. As you have noticed, I try to embrace all of it, harmonize in my interpretations. But probably we can say that musical messages are not so straightforward, therefore even the world's despots were not so hard in exploiting composers. Like, for example, during Soviet times… Mandelstam, Gumilev, Akhmatova, Meyerhold and thousands of others did not manage to escape: they were either killed or arrested. The lives of musicians were crippled too, but composers and performers at least could survive. When Meyerhold and Prokofiev were together creating the opera *Semion Kotko*, Meyerhold got arrested, while Prokofiev continued living and writing music. So, from this point of view, music has this strength… By the way, it is strength no more as it is weakness. Music can provide a very powerful impetus to some revolutionary, protest movement, but in order to articulate your idea, you will need to rely on a word, or on something visual. Then music can contribute and strengthen the message, but – luckily, – itself it cannot just cry out "Glory to the CPSU!"

3.8. "I Have Learned Not to Say No"

An interview with Rokas Zubovas; Vilnius-Helsinki, September 2005

He is a pianist, in whose repertoire Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis occupies a special place. A person, whose predecessors, very important for the Lithuanian cultural sphere on one side and aristocratic on the other side, in many stir up hardly concealed curiosity. A performer, whose education started in Kaunas Juozas Naujalis School of Arts and continued in the institutions of Switzerland and the US, while his concerts and lectures took him all across the Europe, Canada, the United States, and the countries of South America. As a pianist, he has recorded several solo and chamber music CDs, and made recordings for radio stations in Lithuania and abroad. He is also a 'cultural activist' with constant initiatives for festivals and musical programmes, who strives for what he believes in and shares it with others.

Rokas, perhaps among the most often asked questions that you receive – either the first or the last one, but unavoidably 'most important' – relates to your lineage, your predecessors: Zubovas family and Čiurlionis… Of course, I shall also ask about the latter, especially since we are speaking to mark the release of a CD with his compositions. It has always interested me if you feel some weight of being a relative of the Lithuanian Great one? Do you consider your activities, in many ways interweaved with Čiurlionis' name, as a bounty to this artist? Or is he genuinely immanent to you, understandable, intriguing, more closely intimate than to other musicians?

It is true, I am sometimes asked this question, and it is possible to answer it briefly or in not such a short manner… It is difficult for me to judge any genetically based understanding of Čiurlionis, but I know for certain that it always takes time for me to 'unlock' his music, and, when I return to the same pieces, I always find something new. Thus, perhaps I discover his music not through blood, but rather through studies.

On the other hand, of course, the fact that I am a great grandson of Čiurlionis did have a direct influence on me becoming a musician and on my pursuit to study his works. Bearing in mind that both the Zubovas and Čiurlionis families pursued old musical traditions, every child in the family was schooled in music. None of my three older cousins chose the path of a musician, thus the family saw in me the last chance, and I was pushed along this path stronger.

Later on, at the Naujalis Art School, whenever there was a need for Čiurlionis' music, someone would remember that I am his great grandson, so it was only natural that I was supposed to be granted the honour to perform his works.

Thus, I have been actively engaged in performing Čiurlionis' music for some thirty years…

During these years, you have presented Čiurlionis' music and art around the world and throughout Lithuania – from the smallest hamlets to capital concert halls. What is the usual reaction to his art, is it any different here and elsewhere?

I think, on a certain level, wherever I am presenting Čiurlionis' music and art, the reaction to it is very much comparable. In Lithuania, of course, you present Čiurlionis to people to whom he is a legendary figure. Even a tradition of bringing pupils from various towns of Lithuania to Kaunas, to the Čiurlionis Museum, if not as active as some twenty years ago, is still alive. But there is also another extreme: some Lithuanians feel overexposed to Čiurlionis, even if in reality they only know his name and have seen only several of his paintings. I am trying to convince people through my effort that Čiurlionis' works are worthy enough to be seen and heard not only on his anniversaries; that to meet Čiurlionis means to listen into his music, to spend time with his paintings, to read into his texts; that Čiurlionis is not a star that ought to be adored from a distance, but a very intimate and openhearted creator, whose creative temple should be approached with an open heart…

This problem does not exist in foreign countries: every time I play Čiurlionis abroad, I understand that for the majority of listeners this is the first meeting with his world. This is why it is so important what impression his works will make. If a concert is successful and communication occurs, the listeners leave the hall with the same radiant faces as the people after a successful concert in Lithuania. By the way, I often perform Čiurlionis' music simultaneously with the slides of his paintings, in a darkened hall, and I believe that this kind of environment helps listeners concentrate on the music and the art, directly connect with their creator.

You mentioned Čiurlionis being 'legendary' in Lithuania. This phenomenon, of course, is not unusual: every nation has at least one such mythologized cult artist (I would say that our Čiurlionis is even promoted too little). Do you think one needs to fight this tendency? One of your current initiatives is called "The Age of Čiurlionis", and it tackles the context and the contemporaries of Čiurlionis. Maybe this would help to dissolve the legends? How do you see him in his context, are you succeeding in, or – do you wish to at all, do you think it is necessary to dissociate oneself from the Lithuanian myths about this artist?

When I look at history, I often get a feeling that during certain historical periods, certain ideas are floating around and finding ways into the self-expression of independently working artists worlds apart. The project "The Age of Čiurlionis" was envisioned to share these ideas not only with the listeners but also with performers; I felt it was important to portray Čiurlionis not as a loner artist who created his unparalleled visions in seclusion, but as a person who was thirstily immersing himself into various life experiences – nature, culture, history, philosophy, music – and sharing these experiences through his works with those around him.

The context in which Čiurlionis lived is unbelievably rich, and it is enormously interesting for me. Until the First World War, or shall we say until the dodecaphonic system, there were a number of very interesting artists in Europe who, even though not connected by any direct links, were investigating very similar areas. First of all we know very well the Russian tradition: Rachmaninov, Scriabin, Prokofiev (the works of Nikolai Medtner are known somewhat less); secondly – we know the French school with Debussy, Ravel, Fauré; and the German – Richard Strauss, Reger. However, in between these traditions, in Central and Northern Europe, besides Bartók there also worked Janáček, Martinů, Nielsen in Denmark, Sibelius in Finland, all linked by very interesting spiritual connections.

I do not want to go into detail about the historical and geographical aspects of Čiurlionis, but it is important to note that the music of Čiurlionis' professors, such as Reinecke, Jadassohn, Noskowski, and his fellow students – Morawski, Paulsen, Carrillo – has not yet reached Lithuania. Works of some of these composers were performed at the concerts of the cycle "The Age of Čiurlionis" by Lithuanian performers. There is plenty of material; the epoch is among the most colourful in history: it was the time when small and large European nations began liberating themselves from the hegemony of German music and started listening to their own voices.

So what is Čiurlionis' voice like?

When reading Čiurlionis' letters, or recollections about him, one can compose an image of a very sincere, communicable, sunny, often cheerful, even mischievous person; a picture that is overshadowed by his tragic fate and transcendental vastness of his final paintings and musical works. I often remind myself and the listeners, that when going to St Petersburg, Čiurlionis, in his heart of hearts, still felt that he was a student. And, besides, the communication with the listener, or spectator (I get this impression from his letters), was essential for him.

His world is by no means closed or distanced, even less tragic or pessimist. I recall a new introduction, which my very favourite writer Hermann Hesse wrote for his most popular book *The Steppenwolf.* In his introduction, the writer comments that his book is often misunderstood by those who admire it the most. Hesse argues that these readers cannot see through the protagonist's sufferings, torments, and spiritual drama that this book is not only a tale of suffering, but that it professes a belief in a different and better world. It maintains that after each torment there comes consolation, and that the suffering of the Steppenwolf are pains on the road to awakening. There is a very similar allegory about the storm and the blue sky that follows in the diary of Čiurlionis as well…

Indeed, many interpretations of Čiurlionis' music are marked by some sort of folklorist 'The Pensive Christ' aesthetics. Of course, no one would deny that he is meditative and 'melancholically' Lithuanian; and those 'blue forests' do resound in his piano works… However, at the same time, isn't he full of drama and pianistic challenges, doesn't his music include Rachmaninov-like storms, and Prokofiev-like (or, as you put it, specifically Čiurlionis-like) caprice? I thought about it on a number of occasions, while listening to the participants of Čiurlionis Piano Competition. What interpretations of Čiurlionis' music do you favour?

It really fascinates me that the music of Čiurlionis is so spacious for different interpretations. No doubt, I like when pianists are bravely searching for their understanding of the soul of Čiurlionis' piano works. A gigantic editorial work conducted by Jadvyga Čiurlionytė and Vytautas Landsbergis is a treasure for all pianists! Čiurlionytė is especially important in the sense that she remembered her brother play and grounded her editorial decisions on those recollections. Therefore, her opus organization, even if sometimes not necessarily historically accurate, is always naturally flowing and organic. Professor Landsbergis spent with Čiurlionis' music several decades – more than any other researcher, and his editions also contain a historic connection with Čiurlionis' times, through recollections of the composer's contemporaries. I have to confess that my most important suggestions on Čiurlionis' interpretation I have received from Prof. Landsbergis. Already after the Čiurlionis Piano Competition, at which I received the prize for the best interpretation of works by Čiurlionis, the Professor several times commented on my performance, gave suggestions which I vividly remember until now, even though it was some twenty years ago. Now, when forming my opinion and interpretation, I find myself more and more often going to the Čiurlionis Museum in Kaunas: more and more often I sit with his manuscripts and they do teach me a lot. I really think this would help any Čiurlionis interpreter.

Is there any exceptional side to your new recording of Čiurlionis' works?

Every single work on this CD was recorded for the first time in Lithuania. Admittedly, I did not investigate in depth every single CD recorded in Lithuania, however, if you look at the recordings exclusively devoted to the music of Čiurlionis, none of the works that I have recorded are included there. Some of them are not recorded for the first time worldwide: Sonata for piano has been recorded by Mūza Rubackytė in France, I recorded it in the US, while Nikolaus Lahusen recorded in Germany some of the early miniatures in his three wonderful CDs devoted to the music of Čiurlionis. It is difficult to overemphasize the loss that Lahusen's untimely death caused for the dissemination of Čiurlionis' music internationally, and I myself have lost a dear friend and a colleague who had a hihgly individual and deep feeling of Čiurlionis' music.

Another aspect of this new CD is that all of the works in it precede the opus numbering provided by Čiurlionytė, and they do not figure at all in her most extensive publication of Čiurlionis' piano music of 1975, which still remains the most widely accessible edition in the libraries and music schools. Some of the compositions featured on the new CD were later edited by Prof. Landsbergis, but even his latest, complete edition of all piano works by Čiurlionis released just last year, does not feature many of the here-recorded pieces. I have to thank Darius Kučinskas, who, some eight years ago, sent to me in Chicago his editions of the early works by the composer, deciphered and sometimes completed from the compositional fragments. We argue a lot with Darius about the various aspects of editorial incisions into Čiurlionis' music, and we both usually remain true to our previously held views, but I have to say that without his editions it would have been impossible for me to assemble this CD.

I also want to emphasize that among all Čiurlionis editions I am especially impressed by the work Prof. Birutė Vainiūnaitė has done with the Sonata in F Major. It is a very precise, logical, clear edition in which the editor's and the composer's suggestions are distinctly separated. The edition has existed for more than ten years, and it puzzles me that this Sonata has not earned wider recognition in Lithuania to this day, did not find its way into repertoires of a younger generation of Lithuanian pianists. It is an especially pianistic composition, which requires a healthy virtuosity, and, historically, it is the first Lithuanian piano sonata, and the only romantic representative of this genre in the history of Lithuanian music.

Čiurlionis went to study abroad, and this fact had a major influence on his world-views. I would like to turn to your own studies now. When considering a wider world-view, one's perception of the context, the place of studying is not unimportant.

You went to study abroad when it was not yet an 'order of the day'. Currently, students often do not limit themselves to one or two institutions: they use seminars, master classes, exchange programmes to get acquainted with various cultures, schools… What did you gain from your studies and work in Lithuania, Switzerland, and the US?

We left Lithuania [*with Rokas' wife pianist Sonata Deveikytė-Zubovienė – L.N.-M.*] in 1990. At the time it seemed like the only option. Times were unpredictable… In 1990, we went to a piano competition in Geneva, and we had a chance to work with the ingenious pianist and unique person Esther Yellin. After the lessons with her and an experience of playing on new *Steinway* pianos for a month, we came to realize that we hear music differently, we desire to play differently, and many things in life seem totally different for the both of us. It was a life-changing experience.

After that, we returned to Vilnius, we packed our bags and left. We had to get some fresh air. It is somewhat peculiar that in Chicago we found what previous generations of Lithuanian pianists went for to Moscow: for two years we had studied with a wonderful pianist Dmitry Paperno, a Russian emigrant, prize winner at Queen Elizabeth and Chopin competitions, a student of Goldenweiser. By the way, he had a portrait picture of Heinrich Neuhaus with insignia for Paperno on his studio wall. The Professor was very proud of it and told us stories how he, secretly from his own Professor, went for advice to the great Neuhaus.

In the United States, I was most taken by the accessibility of information and its endlessness. We 'devoured' books, as if trying to fill in all the existing information gaps. Later on we started recognizing that not all that is written in books must be trustworthy. Back home the Soviet system taught us that to learn is to know the right answer, and that everything that is in the book is sacred. In the US, we learned to raise questions ourselves, to be independent. There we realized that only what we will create ourselves will be accomplished. We learned not to say *no, I cannnot do it, I do not know, I cannot*; then we learned not to say to others *this is wrong; this is impossible; no one plays like this*.

The work at a small music department of Saint Xavier University in Chicago also taught me many things. One of them was the recognition of how many people there are who, being not musicians, are interested to experience music, to learn about it. Working with these people broadened my understanding of how these non-musicians perceive classical music, what they expect from the concerts, from the music. I vividly remember one of these students who confided in me that he likes going to concerts, and he fully understands that the musicians must show their 'sport-like' qualities hence they must play fast virtuoso pieces, but he goes to the concerts to listen to the slow music and knows that he has to endure the fast ones… Since that time I am not afraid to end my concert

programme with a slow, soft and peaceful piece. Experience gained there also most likely contributed to the fact that these days I gladly play in the small towns of Lithuania, where the concerts are attended by 'simple' people who are longing for the joys provided by listening to music.

It is almost five years since you are back from the United States. Do you think it is still worthwhile to ask you about the time you have spent there? Was the experience gained there so significant that even today you still see its footsteps in your activities, your vision of the world?

Of course, the traces are still obvious and clear. We returned to Lithuania on January 8, 2001, but only in 2004 I felt that we were fully 'accepted' back. I think that living for so many years in a different culture, under totally different conditions, will affect us for the rest of our lives. There are integral experiences which you cannot reorganize or change. Therefore, for example, certain problems that for many in Lithuania are mind-shattering, for me do not seem to be a problem at all, while certain things that are perceived as natural and normal, for me seem to be situations close to catastrophic.

Perhaps the educational concert programmes that you are organizing together with Sonata also spring from the same experience? Could you outline them, what principles affect their scope and nature?

Unfortunately, we have been running our educational programmes for only a year and a half, but the results, the way I see it, were noticeable. We were doing educational programmes for pupils who are in the final years at school.

I believe in the merit of educational work. We, musicians, in ten years time will only be needed if people keep coming to our concerts. I have no illusions that a sixteen-year-old adolescent, after once hearing classical music, will come running to the Philharmonic Hall, but we were trying to create an opportunity for them to hear this type of music. The presentation is absolutely vital here: we always involved slides, poetry, and other forms of expression in order to create multisided programmes presenting a certain epoch, or culture, or a country, or a certain period. Another principle that drove us was: we should not simplify our programmes for the youth. Young people should perceive that there are codes that they do not still fully comprehend. Those who reject it will reject it, but they would have been given a chance; in the meanwhile those who would become intrigued by art, should perceive from the beginning that there are depths, that there are not easily answerable questions, unfelt sentiments, unseen horizons. It is alike in Čiurlionis' art – there is an opportunity to explain it all with a few symbols, but it will not reveal the spiritual greatness of his art.

For the last three years you have been regularly writing articles for the magazine "Muzikos barai" on various pianistic themes. How did this idea occur, did you have any previous journalist experience? How do you conceive themes for your articles, is there any specific goal within them?

My column was born from the same sources as many of my other initiatives: from my desire to communicate. As I have mentioned, while living in Chicago I read many valuable books, acquired certain experience. After our return to Lithuania, I have noticed that the so-called 'information age' did not reach Lithuanian pianist circles and, possibly, all Lithuanian musicians to a certain extent. During the time of my studies in Lithuania, we all felt that we are caged and we all were eager to get out of the cage. We all felt that we lack the information and knowledge that was accumulated on the other side of the 'iron curtain'. This knowledge was not necessarily all worthwhile, but we strongly sensed the lack of it.

I do not want to condemn the current generation of students, but often I get a feeling that even if they are not caged anymore, they are not open either. There are seemingly enough books, but not too many of them have the ability to read professional literature in English or German, while many do not know the Russian language anymore. My articles were the attempts to fill in some of these information gaps, or, as you put it, to discuss some pianistic issues. And as far as the themes are concerned – there are so many of them, but I always lean toward those that do not have a clear answer at the end and that provoke discussion.

It seems that the verbal communication occupies more and more important role in your career: you are not only performing, but also talk to the audiences during and after the concerts, writing articles, for a year you have been hosting the TV programme "Melomanija"…

My view of verbal communication is very concrete: the structure of the concert that we are still using today was formed some two hundred years ago (and in England even earlier), and it was always related to fashion: the majority of works on the programmes were new, 'fashionable'. Today, on the other hand, concert halls are mainly filled with 'museum' music. It is very valuable, important part of culture, but is it as communicative as it was during the time it was conceived? Even such seemingly 'obvious' music as Debussy, when it is combined in the programme with impressionist paintings, suddenly becomes much more understandable… Or, say, the music by Beethoven and Mozart sounds in a different light when we submerge ourselves in their epoch and understand the stylistic requirements for the artists. It is rather difficult in our time to hear the radical and revolutionary features of Mozart's music, or to feel that Beethoven contains

not only pathos and passionate fight against fate, but also is filled with adoration of nature and contemplation…

I accepted the proposal to host “Melomanija” only, as I have mentioned, because I resided for ten years in the United States and learned there not to say *no.* The idea itself was intriguing, so I thought if I could teach the History of Rock’n’Roll class to the students of an American university, why shouldn’t I be able to host a television programme? Only a little bit later I realized how challenging it was.

Since you have returned to Lithuania, you are organizing various artistic projects: “Music Plain-Airs”, “The Age of Čiurlionis”, “The Land of Disobedient”, other events… Are these activities the turbine for your career? Do you sometimes receive sceptical reactions from larger organizations, or from your colleagues?

I have to confess that life is very generous to me: I am starting to find relative souls, and so-called independent organizations are becoming more and more a normal feature in the cultural life of Lithuania. There will always be sceptics, and if everyone would be listening to them, perhaps nothing would be created at all on earth. So I decided not to worry too much about ideas or initiatives and simply live my life: if a thought arises I try to materialize it. I know that nobody will do it for me, that I need to put in a determined effort for something that I believe in to happen.

One of very significant lessons that I have received in my life was also gained in the United States. I suffered from a trauma to my right hand and was not able to play piano for half a year. Those were the most depressing months of my life. Then I clearly realized that if I stopped playing today, perhaps someone would remember my playing for a day or so, but not longer. It would be only me who would feel the lack of it. And so I am trying to do everything to prevent this lack…

3.9. "You Cannot Have Emotions Contrary to Music"

An interview with Andrius Žlabys; Vilnius, June 2000

I first heard you play at the International Balys Dvarionas Competition for Young Pianists of 1992. In the first round you did not finish performing the Mozart Fantasy in C minor. What happened to your hands then?

To tell the truth, my issues were more psychological than physical. At the age of fifteen I struggled through some inner conflicts: music was turning into a kind of squares and cubes for me; emotionally I felt not ready for the competition. Afterwards, for some time on, when onstage I would experience the same mental state. Becoming extremely nervous makes my hands lose sensitivity; but by now I have figured out how to deal with it.

What determines how heavy your concert jitters would be?

The contact with the audience is critical to me. If I do not feel it, I tend to get too subjective about the things I am hearing, and about what goes on… I feel as if I am playing under the ground.

Is it very important to you to have a listener?

When without a listener, I simply play the music. With the audience, communication comes to the fore.

I would like to ask what playing piano is to you. Does it mean giving away oneself, or is it a self-expression?

To me, playing music has always been the expression of the deepest human parameter, the realization of the musician's inner self. It is more than just a self-expression: yes, playing does express feelings, yet not egoistic. It is like reliving the experience with the composer. The experience through which one discovers he is not alone in this world.

But don't you think that it is the distancing of oneself from the world?

In a sense it is an escape from a certain part of the world, the one that does not understand you or irritates you. But it is no way distancing of yourself from the world that you like being in.

What kind of music has this type of impact on you?

All kinds of music, mostly it is a very special performance of some pieces. I do not value formalistic playing. I am able to appreciate it in a somewhat clinical manner, but I realize it is not close to my heart.

Are you talking in general or could you point out the type of performance which appeals to you personally?

I am mostly impressed by humanistic qualities thanks to which a piece transcends the realm of music. I do appreciate one or another rendition not because of its outward qualities, exquisite technique or emotiveness, not because of unusual musical phrasing, colouring, and not even the presence of these elements in their totality; but by the musician's ability to convey the *message* inherent in a musical piece. Most of real music contains this universal message which might become accessible not just to musicians. Yes, naturally, somebody devoid of the ability to see colours is not able to appreciate a painting that appeals to you in colour. But I do believe that even the audience that we assume not to have any understanding, mostly understands it all. I am not talking of those with no appreciation of anything… I have in mind the listeners open to music.

I would like yet to return to your adolescence years. Do you remember any specific turning-point in your life when you became aware of how important it was to relate your life to music?

Nothing in music came naturally to me; I had always to look for ways to face challenges of which I had many, both technical and other. I was not a kid who would spend his every hour fanatically chained to the piano. I often had this feeling that I did not know how to play the piano at all. At the age of thirteen or fourteen, I developed the sensation of being 'choked', as if too much thinking was getting in my way and interfering with natural processes of my subconscious. Technique is motoric, subconscious activity, and too much of rational control is like poking a stick in your bicycle wheel. Particularly onstage.

How did you manage to overcome this?

My Teacher would always emphasize something like inner hearing. As if you purposefully visualize yourself playing, and a hand above you, playing in your imagination. In fact, it is not a hand but your inner hearing. For example, if you are playing a passage, the most important (and the most difficult!) thing is to

hear it rapidly, to visualize the sounds of the scale at the specific time, and with adequate dynamics.

On a continuum from 'back then' until now, would you be able to mark on it some landmark musical pieces, or simply stages of your artistic formation?

I can visualize a continuum, a curve, or even a spiral, but marking it would be more complicated. Maybe I should mention the Marcello Concerto which I performed with adequate accomplishment in Czechoslovakia. Maybe also Mozart's Fantasy… I have not played too many pieces in general: in terms of repertoire, my Teacher was always more after quality versus quantity.

Does Bach take an exceptional place in your repertoire?

Yes, he does. Sometimes I distance myself from Bach, get closer again, but since childhood my relationship to this composer was exceptional. At one time I listened to Bach only: I started from his organ music. Not only I feel some spiritual kinship with Bach, I am also very much used to him. If playing Bach music I stumbled, I would be able to improvise in his manner, and not everybody would notice that.

Do you know of any musical piece that you would like to perform but you are waiting for a special occasion or until you reach a certain level of maturity?

I am looking forward to the opportunity to perform Brahms' Piano Concerto No. 1. It is probably my favourite piano concerto. I was overwhelmed with the video tape of Krystian Zimerman performance under the baton of Leonard Bernstein.

Do you often listen to recorded music?

Recently I only had little time to listen as I was more preoccupied with performing. But I am convinced that listening to recorded music might even be more important than music lessons, particularly at a certain age.

What is most important in listening: the opportunity to get familiar with musical pieces or with their specific interpretation?

I am interested in some recorded pieces because of their performers, such as the recorded Berg Piano Sonata performed by Glenn Gould. Had I first listened to some other interpretation, I might have been even reluctant to learn it. I admire

the older masters, such as Artur Schnabel, and Alfred Cortot. Their sound was so mellow, and I have no idea how such a quality of sound could be produced today.

Their repertoire, at least that of Cortot, is purely Romantic.

Cortot performed a lot of Franck, who is probably my favourite composer. In general, I have difficulty in indicating my favourite performers versus singling out a specific rendition. To tell the truth, earlier I was not good at rationalizing what I liked or disliked about a particular performance and for what reasons. Presently (though it is probably better to keep away from that while playing), I am able to almost immediately notice a particular phrase as in need of correction due to a particular reason. You learn the tricks of mastery while you play, yet you have to be careful not to see the idealism through the door.

A little while ago you were performing with two excellent yet very different violinists: Hilary Hahn and Jonathan Gandelsman. It is only natural that these two concerts were compared. What do you yourself think about your partners?

Hilary surprises you by her perfectly controlled mastery: during a concert she plays absolutely the way she likes, and her performance is perfectly immaculate. For example, when playing Bach she distances herself from the music but in a very respectful manner. I do not necessarily share such a concept but I do respect her manner of performing as it is in line with good taste. While Gandelsman… He has a charisma, he plays beyond playing. The interpretations of Jonathan have radically transformed my understanding of how strongly music can overwhelm you. Playing with him was fantastic: simply our inner vibrations were of the same frequency.

What value does chamber music have to you in general? What do you find in it? We have to agree that a piano recital is a very special form of concert…

In a sense I love some aspects of violin music better than the piano. Gandelsman's ability to generate such a fabulous amount of colours is stunning… For example, a pianist has to find other ways to produce the effect of a prolonged sound as the piano does not offer this possibility. While playing chamber music you learn to give up the thrill of being a soloist, the sense of 'self', which many pianists find difficult to do. You just have to play for the sake of music.

Is that your viewpoint of interpretation in general?

If you really feel the music you don't normally think of a composer. The boundary between the composer and the performer simply no longer exists.

Is that the highest achievement possible?

It is the highest you can aspire to. While playing, you are never detached from feelings, but you cannot have emotions contrary to the music you are playing. Should that happen, it means you have stuffed it with some artificial emotions. In fact, music speaks to you and you, under its spell, express the message conveyed to you. So it will never be the composer, this piece will always pass through your prism… And I doubt if it is even a prism, it might be some other and more complex geometric shape… say, hexagonal…

So what is really important for an artist? What do you appreciate most in the artistry of other musicians?

The appreciation of music can only be subjective, no other is possible. Occasionally, we might call it 'objective' if it is collectively subjective… As a pianist I am often astounded by things of the nature of "how is it possible to do this?" I ask this when listening to Ivo Pogorelich though I cannot stand him from the musical viewpoint. His playing, though very impelling, is extremely egoistic. He seems to grab the listener by the throat and drag him along by force… This kind of music does not console me. When I hear Pogorelich play I feel it a cold, though otherwise powerful rendition. But nevertheless he is a master who is able to perfectly gouge every smallest notch of any music piece; he does all he wishes and his hearing is absolutely precise. These are things that I had always wanted to learn from Pogorelich and in this respect I can take my hat off to him.

So you cannot believe this is how he feels? Maybe he is not even making any attempt to prove anything, and it is all about his own sensibility?

I do know many unorthodox artists whose sincerity leaves no doubt. Let's take Gould as an example, who, as we say, would go overboard. Still when I listen to Gould I never doubt him. Though I know several occasions when he clearly intentionally plays the opposite. For example, the Prelude and Fugue E flat minor from WTC Book 1, or Beethoven's *Appassionata*. While performing the pieces that have been over-performed he passes them through his own prism, yet he elevates that prism above the music itself. My former teacher Seymour Lipkin would not stand listening to such a rendition as he is almost religiously dedicated to the composer's notation.

Do you always agree with Gould's renditions and commentary?

I approve of his interpretations more than of his comments… His intellect was so unique that occasionally he would outsmart himself.

Gould's influence on you?...

…is immense. Before I went to the USA, he in fact was the only pianist whom I respected and whose recordings I listened to; stylistically I was very much going in the same direction. It took me a while to accept other pianists. Later on though I naturally distanced myself from Gould, yet that did not diminish my respect and admiration for him. He is one of my favourite performers even today, however Gandelsman has opened to me an absolutely new viewpoint to Bach – one based on the inner voice that is most often *legato*.

What was it before?

Until then I thought that only *staccato* articulation is appropriate of Bach, an extremely rhythmic performance, I would not allow myself outside the boundaries of the rhythm. Now I search for the inner voice: it is not exactly inarticulate – yet to me it is more like the sound of the violin.

You play much Bach; what is your opinion on the authenticity movement?

I am excited by a rendition, not by the instruments. No doubt every style has its boundaries which probably should be observed, yet we should not compress them for the sake of historical or ethnographic reasons. There is no parameter in terms of which Gould's interpretation could qualify as authentic, but the very spirit of his playing is authentic. His understanding of music is authentic, yet his very concept of authenticity is unconventional.

What do you make of live concert and recording?

They are very different by their nature, yet the result may be fairly similar. This is particularly true of chamber music: it is based on human interaction, so generally there is no difference between a live concert and a recording. A solo recording could lose a significant part of its vitality if a soloist suffers from microphone fear. A microphone should be viewed as a kind of channel – though separating you from the audience at this particular moment it will link you to it later. With this attitude there is not much difference. I like recordings because they offer the

opportunity to try things out and listen to them immediately granting you the opportunity to understand what you would like to do a little differently, to find a perfect (within your own limits at the time) interpretation.

What is the make up of a perfect invariable version and spontaneity in your renditions? Naturally, you cannot always go by your preconceived attitude but anyway…

I definitely lack one thing: I do not have detailed memory which is no doubt necessary to achieve an adequate degree of mastery. Yet the most important thing to me is to feel while playing and to be able to express that feeling in sounds. And all these alterations, all improvisation… Three notes can be played with a slight variation only, but a different dynamic phrasing will tell you different things. It may even be the case that it either tells or does not tell you anything…

I do not look for an interpretation at the moment of rendition. To me it is paramount that every sound emerges with the inner impulse versus being the result of pure coincidence. When I am learning a piece I feel like I am digging a furrow; yet not filled with water it might remain as it is, it would not become a river. When I play at a concert that river, a moulded thought or a course of emotions, shifts its banks independent of my will.

Your mental state during the concert: how much can you control it and how much does it have the nature of catharsis?

They say that to play music you need a cool head and a warm heart. Yet rather often I experience the opposite, so although it is a very nicely phrased idea, the definition itself is not exact. In real life, if you play truly emotionally involved, your mind cannot stay clear. Some time ago I wrote down a few ideas on this subject: "Yesterday I realized the meaning of concentrating […] Just like the laws of physics on higher levels merge, so with the increase of concentration the inner vision becomes clearer, and I feel as if I sink into the state of hypnotic sleep where the outer world ceases to exist […] Earlier I tried to listen either to continuation of the sound (as if attempting to endow with energy each of them separately), or to the dynamics of sounds. If you connect both, the boundaries between the sounds disappear. I can make natural *diminuendo* and *crescendo* between sounds yet not under the attack of another sound as it interrupts the thought. It takes an infinite continuity which would flatten musical hills or waves without leaving anything to disturb musical thought, that all would flow like exhaled air – not in a single sound, but like a rising or a falling line…" A melody which creates the expression of the moment between separate sounds is very important to me. If my thought does not get interrupted it can lend my

feeling the ecstatic quality; this requires a lot of energy released only at the moment of extreme concentration. I imagine this concentration in visual terms: as if I am descending into a bottomless well. I slide down deeper and deeper until there is nothing else left except sound. The perception of time is altered, and I do not know if it is moving faster or slower. I was able to concentrate in such a manner only a few times in my life, and I can clearly feel these moments by listening to my recorded concerts. It is of great held: such concentration leaves no room for nervousness or anxiety. The impact it has could be compared to that of a laser: a simple light illuminates, but when focused it cuts through like a laser.

Have you ever practiced meditation?

Only when playing, if I'm lucky enough. Here is one of the exercises that I sometimes try out: I make a sound and listen to it as long as it lasts. Then I try to play a phrase in such a way that each time I would descent into a deeper level of the subconscious where no thoughts are left, yet I can hear everything. It is not simple, because all kinds of ideas keep crossing your mind.

How long does it take you to learn new pieces? How often do you change your repertoire?

It depends on my psychological state and physical conditions. The mechanism of hands is so precisely balanced that a small failure in its functioning can hurt everything, even memory. Instead of focusing on the creative process or using the energy to memorize a piece, I have to waste it dealing with this particular problem. This matters a lot to how fast I can master the new material.

In general, my repertoire is mainly what I have heard Gould play. For example, his performance of Prokofiev's Piano Sonata No. 7 made a terrifying impression upon me. It is a macabre piece, in particular the bells in the second movement; the music sounds like steadfast willpower that nobody can stop.

Do you often look for visual associations in your interpretations?

I do not do this intentionally but sometimes visual images arise naturally and it helps playing. If you do not focus exclusively on the plot, it should not hurt your performance. Yet to reflect on the plot while playing is already an extraneous thought: there has to remain nothing but pure sound, not even yourself.

Yet the bell image in Prokofiev is really uncanny… Shortly though some bottomless, unconditional tenderness is back. In some master class, while talking on

Prokofiev's Violin Concerto, Mstislav Rostropovich said: "It was very difficult to Prokofiev to be tender and that's what makes it so emotional…"

Is composing a side pursuit to you or is it a serious need?

When I hit moments with my inner state not fit for playing, I can only compose. These two are very different processes: yet a finished piece that I have composed gives me much higher inner satisfaction than playing.

What is your attitude towards competitions? Is it negative or just none at all?

I think I could say it is "none at all." It does remind me though of getting a job. You probably have some kind of attitude to your job but getting employed is just a process. You have to suffer through it or try to avoid it. The outcome of a competition, to my mind, is invitations to give concerts. In this respect you can see it as very positive yet it is always disappointing that out of one hundred people only one will receive this incentive.

Do you think you could do without participating in this process?

At least at this point of time I hope that I could pass it by. We do have a fair amount of chamber concerts, and, in general, the career of a pianist is being shaped gradually. Musicians who give too many concerts have to be careful and avoid falling into a rut. There is always the threat that you change your status from being unprepared into being overprepared. Often pianists have to make the choice between the inner quality and outside circumstances. I think that if a musician gives 70 concerts annually, it is fairly difficult to him to maintain a truly sincere relationship with music.

What are your plans for the near future?

I continue my studies with a fantastic teacher, a Moscow Conservatory graduate Sergey Babayan, at the Cleveland Institute of Music. Last year I had several lectures with him, and I use his comments until now: they are absolutely universal. Babayan was particularly helpful in changing my physical contact to the instrument: I feel how this tactile sensation enables me to physically express more of what I hear, to transform the physical language of my hands into a sound. At the core of his approach is the idea that the instrument is alive, as a human hand. Depending on what you feel in your hands – this has been of major importance for me – the sound takes on a different quality. The sound becomes more diversi-

fied not in between *piano* and *forte* or *piano* and *pianissimo*, but staying within the same dynamics through changes of colour. From a technical viewpoint this was the key thing that I learned from Gandelsman. He controls the timbre of the sound as no other musician does: his bow talks in a human voice.

Is there anything that you would like to learn from singers?

No doubt about it, yet I do not often meet singers who are able to penetrate into what I consider the most important in music. An instrument speaks to me in a voice no less human than the human voice itself… It takes a lot of energy to transform an instrument like this. Yet for a human voice to sound like one, all it takes is to open your mouth. I would suggest that singers should be striving to find their inner voices. Composers are looking for ideal melodies which are floating somewhere in the air and are expressed in real music only in a very imperfect form. I am not trying to deny the value of singing as the greatest art, yet I do believe that it is heavily abused with extremely unmusical traditions.

What is your appreciation of America? After all the time spent there you probably could easily indicate major cultural differences?

Yes, that 'switching back and forth' each time is very difficult. And there is a lot of controversy between American and Lithuanian cultures.

In Europe, there is a tendency to rate American culture as superficial.

I find it a very biased argument originating from our limited knowledge. Our understanding of the USA is often shaped by their tacky TV series or movies. Yet American culture is extremely diverse. What I really admire about that country is their appreciation, respect and encouragement of individual initiative, with no tendency to stifle it.

You could have studied somewhere else, not just in Philadelphia. Why wasn't New York your choice?

I chose Philadelphia not because of the city, but because the Curtis Institute of Music is a wonderful school, and also because of financial circumstances. The Juilliard School appeals less to me personally though it combines extremely high professional standards with the even more highly rated name. Yet I do not find any essential differences between the Curtis and the Juilliard, except that the former has far fewer students.

What do you expect of your teachers when you study with them? What were the most prominent highlights marked in your life by your teachers?

The most important of all that I received as a musician and much of what I have as a person was given to me by my Teacher Laimutė Jakniūnienė. I have never had nor will I have another teacher like her. She raised me, she gave me the foundation on which I myself could build and create. I cannot imagine that a person could give more than she gave to me. It would be only fair to say that she was my only Teacher. After she passed away I felt as if my whole foundation became shattered, I was so depressed and lonely.

It had to be very difficult to my Teacher to work with me. I am extremely stubborn, and when younger I used to be rather distracted. Yet my Teacher had a great deal of patience: my specialty classes sometimes lasted for five hours, and now I realize that if it had not been for all that time I would not have achieved anything. I remember very well one of our classes: it was fairly late in the evening, and we were rehearsing in a school hall. I was playing Bach's Toccata in D minor. It was that night that I had this unusual experience of music opening up in me; my playing was effortless, and I was truly connected to it. For the first time I realized my ability to express something from the depth of my inner being, something I was not even aware of having. I saw that this made my Teacher extremely happy.

She was the one who trained me to work in a disciplined manner. I do have the tendency in my nature not to focus on things seriously enough. At one point of time I liked basketball and did not think that playing the piano was that important. Yet I always felt the Teacher's hand guiding me back onto the path of music. She taught me well that to achieve true proficiency takes extreme effort, that there is no shortcuts to true mastery…

Are you presently teaching as well?

I have just realized not long ago that I started working with children immediately after the death of my Teacher. It seems I was urged to carry on things that she was doing through her life. I find teaching extremely intriguing. I sense that in teaching I can give more freedom to my fantasy than in playing. I am able to express the same thing in one hundred different ways, and one of them might just be right for my student.

But your ideas are limited directly by the student's abilities. Do you occasionally encounter the lack of comprehension or students' unwillingness to understand?

So far I have not experienced this. My students show tremendous effort. The important thing is not to force your students to do what you think they should – yet make them want it. It is possible by intriguing them, by identifying their goal which is difficult yet possible to achieve. Their positive attitude is critically important. I appreciate such style of teaching when a child is not afraid to make a mistake and correct it. Maybe he will make one more, but eventually he will move on. I believe that it is more important to make a mistake when playing in a relaxed manner than perform correctly in a forced manner.

How do you see your future?

I would like to play as much as possible, and no doubt, to keep up teaching. I see teaching not just as necessary but as something very important to my own inner balance.

Appendix 4. Biographical Notes of the Pianists Analyzed and Interviewed for the Dissertation

Gabrielius Alekna (b. 1975) has appeared as soloist with the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Juilliard Orchestra, the New Amsterdam (New York), and the Belarus State Symphony Orchestras, as well as with all major orchestras in his native Lithuania. The winner of the second prize at the 2005 International Beethoven Piano Competition in Vienna, Austria, Alekna has garnered more than a dozen top prizes in competitions on both sides of the Atlantic, such as Hilton Head (United States), Maria Canals (Spain), and Čiurlionis (Lithuania) International Piano Competitions. Alekna's recordings of works by Vytautas Bacevičius and Jeronimas Kačinskas were released by 'Toccata Classics'. He is a Visiting Associate Professor at the Music Academy of Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, and has co-founded the Birštonas Summer Arts Academy in Birštonas, Lithuania. Born in Vilnius, Gabrielius Alekna studied at the M.K. Čiurlionis Arts Gymnasium and the Lithuanian Music Academy with Liucija Drąsutienė and later at the Juilliard School, New York, where he received Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral degrees in Piano Performance, studying with Jerome Lowenthal.

Vladimir Ashkenazy (b. 1937) took his first formal lessons with Anaida Sumbatian at the Central Music School in Moscow. In 1955 he entered the class of Lev Oborin at the Moscow Conservatory, in the same year he won 2nd prize at the prestigious International Frédéric Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw. A great turning point in his career was reached when in 1956 he won 1st prize at the Queen Elisabeth of Belgium Competition in Brussels. In 1958 he made his first tour of the USA. In 1962 he and John Ogdon were both awarded 1st prizes at the International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow. Renowned for his performances of Romantic and Russian composers, he has recorded the complete 24 Preludes and Fugues of Dmitry Shostakovich, Scriabin's sonatas, Chopin and Schumann's entire works for piano, Beethoven's piano sonatas, as well as the piano concertos of Mozart, Beethoven, Bartók, Prokofiev, and Rachmaninov. He has also performed and recorded chamber music. He continues to record and perform internationally. Midway through his pianistic career, Vladimir Ashkenazy also branched out into conducting.

Dmitry Bashkirov (b. 1931) studied in Tbilisi, Georgia with Anastasia Virsaladze; then at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory with Alexander Goldenweiser. His name has been known to the public since 1955 when he received the

Grand Prix at the Marguerite Long Competition in Paris. Bashkirov has played with numerous famous orchestras under conductors such as Sir John Barbirolli, Kurt Masur, Wolfgang Sawallisch, George Szell, Igor Markevitch, Yevgeny Svetlanov, Kurt Sanderling, Zubin Mehta, Carlo Zecchi, Genady Rohzdestvensky, and Daniel Barenboim. In additional to his career as a pianist, Bashkirov is a professor at the Moscow Conservatory, Titular Professor at the Escuela Superior de Musica Reina Sofia in Madrid and a professor at the International Piano Foundation in Griante/Cadenabbia at Lake Como, Italy. The pianist was named Honorary People's Artist of Russia in 1968 and a People's Artist of the RSFSR in 1990. Bashkirov records with the labels Erato, Melodiya, EMI, Russian CD and Harmonia Mundi.

The pianist **Petras Geniušas** (b. 1961) is one of the most prominent and versatile Lithuanian performers. He has an extensive repertoire of classical, romantic and contemporary works, and frequently appears in recitals and concerts with Lithuanian symphony orchestras, various chamber ensembles, and musicians. In addition to his appearances as a classical musician, Geniušas often performs in theatre performances, as well as in jazz and crossover projects. Having a solid background of the Russian piano playing school, Geniušas' career as a teacher included engagements at the Royal Academy of Music in London and Yamaha Master Class in Tokyo; he currently holds professorship from the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre. He has been the winner and the jurist of many international piano competitions, and recipient of the Lithuanian National Prize in Culture and the Arts in 1992.

The Lithuanian-born pianist **Gabrielė Gylytė** (b. 1980) resides in Germany. She was granted numerous national awards by her home country (such as the medal of honour awarded by the President Valdas Adamkus), as well as prizes at international competitions. She has participated in numerous festivals, given appearances with orchestras in Lithuania and Germany and as a member of chamber ensembles. The pianist's CD was recorded in 2007 with works by J.S. Bach, Haydn, Schumann and Prokofiev. Born in Vilnius, Lithuania, Gabrielė Gylytė graduated from the M.K. Čiurlionis National Gymnasium of Arts and the Lithuanian Music Academy (Prof. Petras Geniušas). 2003–2009 she studied at the University for Music and Applied Arts in Frankfurt, Germany, at the class of the renowned Prof. Lev Natochenny. Gylytė is now extending her musical background in chamber music at the University for Music and Applied Arts, Mannheim with the help of Prof. Paul Dan. Since 2011, she has been a member of the Trio Enescu.

The Lithuanian pianist **Ieva Jokūbavičiūtė** (b. 1977) has led critics to describe her as possessing 'razor-sharp intelligence and wit' (*The Washington Post*) and as 'an artist of commanding technique, refined temperament and persuasive insight' (*The New York Times*). In 2006, she was honoured as a recipient of a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship. Labor Records released Ieva's Alban Berg Tribute CD to critical acclaim in 2010. She has recently given solo recitals in New York City, Chicago, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, DC, Vilnius, and Toulouse, France. Over the last few seasons, she also made her Chicago Symphony debut and her orchestral debut in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Her piano trio – Trio Cavatina – won the 2009 Naumburg International Chamber Music Competition and made its Carnegie Hall debut in 2010. She regularly appears at international music festivals including: Marlboro, Ravinia, Bard, Caramoor, Chesapeake Chamber Music and Prussia Cove in England. Jokūbavičiūtė graduated from M.K. Čiurlionis Art Gymnasium in Vilnius, Lithuania. In the US, earning degrees from the Curtis Institute of Music and from Mannes College of Music, her principal teachers have been Seymour Lipkin and Richard Goode.

Daumantas Kirilauskas (b. 1972) is a Lithuanian classical pianist. He graduated from the Salzburg's *Mozarteum* in 2000 with the highest evaluation achieving the Art Master's Degree. His teachers were Liucija Drąsutienė (1984–1994) and Karl-Heinz Kämmerling (1994–2000). Kirilauskas is the winner of national and international prizes including 1st prize in the International Maria Canals Competition of Young Pianists, Barcelona in 1991. He has performed internationally, in foreign and Lithuanian festivals, is a participant of numerous premieres as well as performing with all the Lithuanian orchestras as well as Sinfonietta Riga. Apart from solo playing he gave many chamber performances with famous Lithuanian and foreign soloists, ensembles, including Vienna Artis-Quartett in 2008. The pianist has released seven solo albums. Since 2001 he has been lecturing at the Piano Department of Lithuanian Music and Theatre Academy, and since 2009 has been an Associate Professor.

Darius Mažintas (b. 1982) is a Lithuanian pianist, cultural and political activist (Vice-Minister of Culture 2013–2014), initiator of cultural and educational projects. A winner of number of international piano competitions, he actively performs as a soloist giving concerts in the USA, Germany, France, Italy, Russia, Sweden, Netherlands and other countries. He also collaborates with orchestras and regularly performs chamber music. The pianist is a frequent guest on Lithuanian Radio and TV programmes. Along with his concert career Mažintas participates in an outreach programmes which promote classical music to the youth. Born in Vilnius, he studied at M.K. Čiulionis Art school from 1988,

then continued his studies at B. Dvarionas music school and at the world famous G. Verdi Conservatorio di musica in Milano, Italy. In 2010 the pianist graduated from the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre (Prof. Veronika Vitaitė's class) and was awarded a Licentiate of Arts degree.

Edvinas Minkštimas (b. 1980) has been a Steinway Artist since 2013 and a winner of international piano competitions. He is a widely recognized concert pianist. In May 2011, the pianist received his Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the Juilliard School, New York, where he was recipient of the C.V. Starr Foundation Doctoral Fellowship and studied with Jerome Lowenthal. He previously received an Artist Diploma from the Paris Conservatory (CNSMDP) under the tutelage of Michel Beroff. Previously, Minkštimas studied in Lithuania with Veronika Vitaitė at the Lithuanian Academy of Music. He also studied composition with Guy Reibel (Paris Conservatory) and Vytautas Barkauskas at the Lithuanian Academy of Music. Currently, Edvinas Minkštimas serves as Artist in Residence of the Embassy Series and Phillips Collection Music Series festivals in Washington, as well as on the Board of Directors of Malaga Clasica (Spain), Mahler Philharmonic (Vienna), and Liberace Foundation (United States).

Nikolai Petrov (1943–2011), one of the distinguished representatives of the Russian piano performance school, began his piano studies at the age of three. At the Central Music School of the Moscow Conservatory his teacher was Tatyana Kestner, and in 1961 Petrov entered the class of Yakov Zak at the Conservatory itself. He subsequently won second prize at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition in Fort Worth, Texas, and second prize at the Queen Elisabeth International Music Competition in Brussels. Petrov gave regular performances in the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory as well as touring widely and appearing at major world venues such as Carnegie Hall, the Concertgebouw, the Royal Festival Hall (London) and the Teatro Colón. His large repertoire included more than fifty concertos and he worked with many prominent conductors, including Mariss Jansons, Kirill Kondrashin, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, Yevgeny Svetlanov and Yuri Temirkanov. Petrov's awards included the Grande Médaille d'Or of the Académie Balzac, People's Artist of the USSR, and the Russian State Prize. In 1998, he founded the Nikolai Petrov International Philanthropic Foundation.

The Lithuanian-born pianist **Evelina Puzaitė** (b. 1982) is in constant demand as both a soloist and as a chamber musician (she is a member of Cosima Piano Quintet, BelVil Trio and Piano Duo). The pianist regularly performs at the most prestigious venues including the Barbican, Wigmore Hall and the South Bank

Centre. Her recent engagements include performances at the Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall (New York) and at the Rudolfinum Hall in Prague. Winner of numerous prizes and awards, in 2001, Puzaitė was awarded the prestigious Baltic State Scholarship to study at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, where she received a Masters Degree of Music in Music Performance with Distinction and an Artists Fellowship. After unanimously winning the Abstract Securities Landor Competition, she was awarded a long term recording contract with Landor Records. Puzaitė has performed extensively throughout Europe, as well as in Russia and the USA. She has released an album of Robert Schumann's music in France with the Lithuanian oboe player Andrius Puskunigis and recorded 'Nocturnes' for the British composer's Thomas Hyde album. In addition to her piano career, Evelina Puzaitė is an avid writer and composer.

Charles Rosen (1927–2012) was an American pianist and writer on music. He began his musical studies aged four and at the age of six enrolled in the Juilliard School. At age 11 he left Juilliard to study piano with Moriz Rosenthal, a student of Franz Liszt. At age 17, Rosen enrolled at Princeton University, where he studied French Literature (graduated with a PhD), also taking courses in mathematics and philosophy. As a concert pianist, Rosen appeared in numerous recitals and orchestral engagements around the world. He also made a large number of recordings, including those of various 20th century works at the invitation of their composers. Even after the scholarly phase of his career had set in, Rosen continued to perform as a pianist for the rest of his life. He was the author of many acclaimed books about music, among them the following: *The Classical Style* (1971), *Sonata Forms* (1980), *The Romantic Generation* (1995), *Beethoven's Piano Sonatas: A Short Companion* (2001), *Critical Entertainments: Music Old and New* (2001), and *Piano Notes: The World of the Pianist* (2002). He also published in other areas of the humanities: *Romanticism and Realism: The Mythology of Nineteenth-Century Art* (1985) and *Romantic Poets, Critics, and Other Madmen* (2000).

A native of Lithuania, **Mūza Rubackytė** (b. 1955) was born into a family of musicians. At the age of seven, she made her professional début in Vilnius performing Haydn's Piano Concerto in D major with the Lithuanian National Chamber Orchestra. Six years later she won First Prize in the country's National Young Artists' Competition, allowing her admittance to the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory, where she studied with Yakov Flier, Mikhail Voskressensky and Bella Davidovich. As a loyal citizen of Lithuania during those years, she was denied much, but she was allowed to enter the Budapest International Piano Competition (Liszt/Bartók), winning the Grand Prix. Political changes and Lithuanian

independence made it possible to settle in Paris, her base for continuing an international career. She is a recipient of the Lithuanian National Prize in Culture and the Arts (2006) and other significant awards of the country. Rubackytė's most important recordings, among others, include three volumes of Liszt's *Années de Pelerinage* and Schostakovich's 24 Preludes and Fugues.

Alexander Toradze (b. 1952) is universally recognized as a masterful virtuoso in the grand Romantic tradition. With his unorthodox interpretations, deeply poetic lyricism, and intense emotional excitement, he lays claim to his own strong place in the lineage of the great Russian pianists. Born in Tbilisi, Georgia, he graduated from the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow and soon became a professor there. In 1983, he moved permanently to the United States. In 1991, he was appointed as the Martin Endowed Chair Professor of Piano at Indiana University South Bend, where he has created an unparalleled teaching environment called the Toradze Piano Studio. His most successful recordings include a highly-acclaimed CD of Shostakovich Piano concertos with Frankfurt Radio orchestra and Paavo Järvi, all five Prokofiev concertos with Valery Gergiev and the Kirov Orchestra, as well as Scriabin's *Prometheus: The Poem of Fire* (the Kirov Orchestra and Gergiev) and recital albums of the works by Mussorgsky, Stravinsky, Ravel, and Prokofiev.

Kasparas Uinskas (b. 1979) has performed at most important world concert halls, such as New York Carnegie Hall, Berlin Philharmonie, London Wigmore Hall, Madrid Auditorio Nacional, J. F. Kennedy Center in Washington, DC among others. He studied at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, from which he holds a Licentiate of Arts degree, Frédéric Chopin Music University in Warsaw (Prof. Alicja Paleta-Bugaj), and the Juilliard School in New York (Prof. Joseph Kalichstein). Uinskas is a frequent guest at many international music festivals throughout Europe and the USA. The most significant part of his repertoire consists of works by the Romanticist composers. Recent releases include Uinskas' debut CD of his Chopin recital and the DVD of his live concert at the Berlin Philharmonie.

Rokas Zubovas (b. 1966), Head of piano department at the Vytautas Magnus University Music Academy in Kaunas, has previously taught at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre in Vilnius and in the Music Department of Saint Xavier University in Chicago, Illinois. A winner of international piano competitions in New York and Vilnius, the pianist has appeared with recitals and at various festivals throughout the United States, Canada, Argentina, Uruguay, Iran, and many countries in Europe. The pianist frequently performs with his wife,

pianist Sonata Deveikytė-Zubovienė as a Zubovas Piano Duo, and as chamber musician with various soloists and chamber groups. Rokas Zubovas has made several recordings for Lithuanian National TV and his performances have been broadcast on Classical radio stations in the US, Bulgaria, Norway, and Lithuania. In 2010, to commemorate Čiurlionis' 135th anniversary, he recorded all piano works of the composer. The 6 CD box was released in 2011. In addition, Zubovas has portrayed Čiurlionis in a feature film by Robert Mullan "Letters to Sofija", premiered in 2013.

Andrius Žlabys (b. 1977) began piano studies at the age of six in his native Lithuania and studied with Laimutė Jakniūnienė at the Čiurlionis Art School for eleven years. Upon graduation from Čiurlionis at sixteen, he spent a year at the Interlochen Arts Academy where he studied piano with Victoria Mushkatkol and composition with Joseph DeFazio. He graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music in the year 2000, where he studied with Seymour Lipkin. In 2005 he received an Artist Diploma from the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he studied with Sergei Babayan. Žlabys has appeared throughout the world as a soloist, recitalist, and chamber musician. A prize-winner at the 2003 Cleveland International Piano Competition, he has appeared as soloist with the New York Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony, and the Cleveland Orchestra. Žlabys made his Carnegie Hall debut with the New York Youth Symphony Orchestra in 2001. In collaboration with renowned violinist Gidon Kremer, Žlabys recorded the Enescu Quintet for the Nonesuch label; the recording was nominated for a 2003 Grammy Award.

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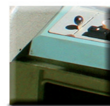
In an attempt to expand and enrich the existing trends of musical performance studies, as well as exploit the potential of semiotic analysis, *Piano Performance in a Semiotic Key* offers the theoretical perspective that enables the unfolding of the multiple meanings generated by and communicated through the performer's art. The focus of the study is the figure of a classical music performer, a pianist in particular, as a significant part of society, as well as cultural, institutional and personal discourses that both generate the art of music performance and originate from it. The main targets here are mapping the predominant tendencies of the art of musical performance during the twentieth-century and proposing a form of semiotic analysis of different representations and self-representations that musical performers put into action in their interactions with social and cultural contexts. The present dissertation makes a case for current musicology to elaborate increasingly interdisciplinary paradigms and modes of investigation.



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