

Peculiarities of the instrumental competitions functioning in the context of performing arts development

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Abstract

The research aimed to determine the distinctive features of contemporary performing arts and their reflection in the specifics of the instrumental competitions. In particular, the roles of the jury and the audience are considered in the context of the influence on the development of the musical career and skill of participants in the competitions and the vectors of instrumental music development in general. Particular attention in the study is paid to musical works created using the latest digital technologies. In general, the role of instrumental competitions in shaping the development vectors of the performing arts and accompanying concerns are outlined.

Key words: Instrumental competitions, performing arts, online contests, conceptual art, digital personality.

1. Introduction

Knowledge about contemporary performing arts is not homogeneous. There is theoretical, “verbal” knowledge – the essence of modern stylistic trends, the names of performers, the name of concert halls, competitions, etc. This type of knowledge complements the “intonational”, non-verbal knowledge about the sound of musical works in a modern form. Sources of information about contemporary performing arts are also divided into two types – scientific and methodological literature on contemporary performing arts (articles, essays, reviews, studies, monographs), and the primary given – the sound of musical works in modern interpretation. Intonational knowledge about contemporary performing arts can be divided into

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four parts according to the organizational formats of the performing arts:

1. Modern contests.
2. Festivals.
3. Concerts.
4. Audio, video recordings, webcasts and websites with recordings.

These four sources most fully represent the features of the performance of musical works in modern interpretation; at the same time, they have specific formats and forms. The performed work appears in different system contexts corresponding to these sources. Each format of performing arts has its own idea, ideal, and style.

In its modern form, competitions/contests appeared in the 19th century, when professionals began to replace the era of amateurs. Before that, along with professionals, there were amateur actors, amateur musicians, artists; home music making, amateur art and poetry salons were popular. There have been piano duets on three lines of musical notation, especially for playing music together with a beginner amateur one-line player (Lochhead & Auner, 2013). Good quality has been replaced by perfectionism – the desire for absolute quality which can be achieved in one's activities.

To date, many national competitions are organized into a global competition movement. It is prestigious for any competition to be a member of the World Federation of International Music Competitions. Evidently, the competitions in terms of the skill level of the participants, the competence of the jury, and the complexity of the competitive program differ quite significantly. So, among the piano competitions, the range of participants' training extends from amateur competitions to the most difficult professional competitions in several rounds in a complex of specialties – solo concerto, accompanist skills, such as at the Honens Piano Competition in Calgary.

The pathos of competition at contests contributes to the development of a virtuoso-technical direction in the performing arts (Andreeva, 2021). The program requirements of most contests include complex technical studies. If technical possibilities allow, some contestants demonstrate transcendental masterpieces of etude performance. The requirements for the performance of sketches are a “passing” criterion for evaluating the contestant. In this regard, the contestants can be divided into three groups: a group of virtuosos, participants with “sufficient” playing technique, and the rest of the participants who did not pass to the next rounds of the competition due to imperfect technical skills.

It is quite clear that the ideals and criteria for evaluating performances by listeners and jury members do not coincide for a number of reasons. Both the audience and the jury in the ideal sphere compare two types of work: an extremely rare masterpiece of performing art (novelty of interpretation, artistic discovery) and widespread good performance (accuracy, impeccable quality, canonical rather than heuristic interpretation). Listeners often confuse the evaluation of the performance and the evaluation of the composer's work. The jury, having a thorough knowledge of the composer's form, evaluates only the performance. In addition, according to B. Gillespie, the criteria of the jury are functioning as "cultural standards", a kind of benchmark for the subsequent development of the performing arts (Gillespie, 2020).

However, it is impossible to create any objective system for assessing the content of a musical work, while an objective assessment of the form of a work is a simpler task. The accuracy of the execution of the text, the perfection or errors in the performing "grammar" and expressive means, etc. these evaluation criteria are much easier to agree on and confirm in the course of discussions between the jury members. The difficulties of formalizing the content parameters of the performance of musical works lead to the gradual replacement of the scoring system for evaluating performances at the competition. Scores (points) are replaced by admission to the next round. In the last round, those already became laureates of the competition are distributed according to the places won.

As a result, as some experts note, "both on stage and at competitions, the same average-unified play prevails. This is a significant problem for the development of musical art, because play of the artist always goes beyond the average. The artist is more talented, brighter, more powerful. He is an individual" (Gloag, 2012). Often there is a "sporty approach". Instrumental competitions are turning into "some new sport on a global scale" (Tsay, 2013). In addition, "... the chances of scoring more points are also more likely on the side of a correct, more or less impersonal and therefore, in any case, acceptable to all "judges" performance, than an interpretation that is clearly individual and, therefore, controversial, capable of being maybe to delight one or two members of the jury, while extremely irritating the rest. The situation is aggravated by the fact that the majority of the jury is usually made up of musicians-teachers, accustomed by their very profession to be meticulously demanding of the "correctness" of performance, especially intolerant of any kind of artistic 'liberties', deviations from school "canons"" (Easlea, 2013).

Meanwhile, the work of a performer-musician is as complex and contradictory as that of any artist. It is even more difficult to evaluate

this creativity. In this regard, the analysis of the features of the functioning of modern instrumental competitions in the context of performing arts development acquires a very relevant scientific and practical significance.

2. Methodology

A performing music contest as a socio-cultural phenomenon reflects the competitive (agonistic) nature of culture. It is natural that such actions have always been and remain attractive to the media. Some aspects of this phenomenon (more often historical) have already been subjected to scientific research. The elaboration of this theme is highlighted in the works of art historians Alink, Cline, Kim, and others. At the same time, some aspects of modern musical performance competitions remain poorly studied and problematic. The variety of competitions, their development, the search for new forms, permanently carried out by their organizers, open up promising areas for studying this phenomenon. Musical competition as a phenomenon of modern culture is the subject of consideration in this article.

The angles of analysis include musicological one, as well as artistic and aesthetic. To solve the problems outlined when writing the study, a complex of complementary scientific methods was used. The methodological basis of the work is determined by musicological, genre-stylistic, aesthetic-culturological, and historical approaches. Musical and stylistic approach to the study of instrumental culture is integrated.

3. Results and Discussion

In contests, the competitive function of performing a piece of music is most clearly implemented. Contest event, as a rule, is strictly regulated. The requirements for participants (age, education), the rules for selecting participants (selection by documents or by appointment), the conditions for participation (monetary contribution), the requirements for the program and the time limit of each round, the procedure for drawing lots, etc. are described clearly enough. At the same time, the work of the jury (and this is understandable) remains somewhat closed, and therefore often causes misunderstanding among the participants, the public, and the musical community. Sometimes this misunderstanding develops into discontent, and even into protests.

The results, which become a kind of result of the work of the jury, should reflect the trends in the development of the performing arts. They must be substantiated and motivated, and clearly formulated

and predictable criteria for evaluating the skill of the performer can help in this. For example, let us turn to the “parameters” by which the famous American cellist Gregor Piatigorsky evaluated young performers. “I judge a person's talent,” he wrote after the contest, “by three main “advantages”: 1) head, intellect; 2) heart, emotions, feelings; 3) technical excellence, which predetermines the possibility of implementing any ideas. If one of these three qualities outweighs, this is a serious shortcoming. Keeping this “balance” in the proper form is the most important task” (Lowe, 2018).

Of course, the score given by a jury member is a reflection of his own perception, his performing style, experience, his sympathies, etc. It is important to understand that each jury member is, first of all, a living person, and only then a professional. Having their own subjective opinion on a number of professional issues and possessing a certain amount of professional knowledge, skills, as well as professional taste due to subjective factors, each member of the jury is able to accept and recognize one direction, form of performance and not recognize the other in professional activities. The paradox is that this is precisely what constitutes the value of this specialist, since it expresses the subjective, personal in art, in creativity, in a professional approach. In other words, namely the professional subjectivity of assessment is the value here (Levinson, 2015).

At the same time, subjectivity cannot and should not become the ultimate truth. In this case, any sense of grading is lost. Only collegiality (the sum of the subjective), as well as the presence of a certain evaluation system, can ultimately lead to objective, reasoned results in the design of the competitive rating scale. For this purpose, and, as a rule, for each specific performance competition, so-called unified evaluation criteria are developed that allow analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of a public performance (for example, the depth of interpretation, style compliance, musical speech, virtuosity, emotionality, intonational expressiveness, etc.). Actually, the presence of such criteria and adherence to them are designed to ensure objectivity and unity in approaches to determining the assessment, acquiring a very specific material form in the form of a score for playing, and the score in the future in the form of a sum of points determines the rating of the contestants, the position of each participant among other participants in the creative competition. It is obvious that not everyone and not always manages to win the contest.

This is due to the fact that a competitive performance is a complex activity in special extreme conditions that differ significantly from the usual, rehearsal ones. The most common extreme factors that have a negative impact on the nature, content, and quality of directly performing activities on stage are external and internal ones. External

factors include, among others, the acoustic imperfections of the concert hall, the imperfection of the technical condition of the musical instrument, poor lighting, noise interference in the hall, etc. Internal (psychological) factors include a high degree of responsibility of the performer, intense attention, the risk of forgetting the text, making a mistake, stop during execution, etc. Let us add here the lack of self-confidence, internal, sometimes unjustified, concern that the opponents are much more 'technical' and better prepared. Being in the epicenter of events, in the stressful atmosphere of a competitive contest, few are able to hear themselves during a performance, as if from the outside, and even more so independently analyze and critically evaluate the performance that has already taken place. Finally, the direct presence of jury consisting of professional musicians, designed to record any performance miscalculations or achievements with the help of a certain amount of points, increases the already nervous tension of most of the contestants.

Nowadays, a direction worth mentioning is clearly marked on the concert stage – improvisation of the classical repertoire in pop style. Known from the jazz practice of the 20th century, it gains a second wind in the pursuit of a democratic public in the early 60s in the Frenchmen Jean-Jacques Loussier and Richard Clayderman, the vocal ensembles King's Singers, Swingle Singers. Today, academically educated musicians improvise a "lite" classical repertoire. In particular, Serbian pianist Maxim Mrvica in his "shows" performs with video sequences, lighting special effects, participation of choreographic ensembles, actively using classical "hits". Not a classical, but a variety orchestra, the use of computer effects, synthesized sounds, and the pianist's appearance (youth-style clothing, tattoos, leather bracelets) are performances of a special format. His performance of F. Chopin's etude op. 10 No. 12 represents a kind of improvisation-transcription: a piano original of the text with dubbing in unison by a string orchestra, a rhythmic sound of a bass electric guitar and a drum kit. Mrvica's improvisations on the themes of Edvard Grieg's Piano Concerto are also well known. In general, the composition resembles the production of modern DJs. As in their compositions, which are not called works, but "soundtracks", a short musical turn is repeatedly used, and a rhythmized computer version of the introduction theme sounds in the background.

Another example of the popularization of the works of classical composers in the format of a variety show is the performances of the American violinist David Garrett. An academic graduate of the Juilliard School, who won a composition competition with a fugue written in the style of J. S. Bach, he declared himself as a talented composer. But under the influence of modern trends, Garrett turned to the pop format: along with music of an academic orientation, he synthesizes

various styles of mass music of the 20th century – rock, jazz, folk, pop. Garrett's show performances, in which he often performs transcriptions of popular classical music samples in modern arrangements, are characterized by an improvisational beginning. His improvisation on the theme of the main part from L. Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, posted on the Web, is very popular; also, the arrangement of A. Vivaldi's concert "Summer" from "The Seasons" in the style of rock music has gained wide popularity.

A striking example of spontaneous instrumental music-making is the phenomenal work of an American, an emigrant from Kazakhstan, Eldar Dzhangirov. He is widely known as a jazz pianist. However, having received an academic education, he plays music from different historical periods and stylistic trends – improvisations on the themes of the classics not in jazz, but namely in academic style. These are brilliant stylizations with a surprisingly subtle sense of form and style, which he builds in different ways, in particular, starting to play not a theme in the spirit of a jazz standard, but rather a significant fragment of the original. His versions of J.S. Bach's works (the Cis-dur prelude from Volume I, The Well-Tempered Clavier) amaze with the elusiveness of the transitions directly from Bach's text to improvisational fantasies. Etude op. 2 No. 1 by A. Scriabin also sounds for a long time in the original (with an impressionistic introduction), passing into improvisation-stylization, in which the individual style features of not only Scriabin, but also S. Rachmaninoff, F. Liszt, F. Chopin are already clearly traced. Improvisation-fantasy in its purest form E. Dzhangirov plays on the theme of the famous "Air" from the orchestral suite No. 3 of Bach in the elusive "aura" of jazz, demonstrating the ability to adapt the music of the past to modern realities.

Glastonbury Festival of Contemporary Performing Arts is a striking example of a modern competition-festival, in the form that the 21st century music community, represented by generations Y and Z, is increasingly drawn to. Almost every year, ten kilometers from the city of Glastonbury, Great Britain, one of the largest and most famous festivals in the country takes place. This Festival is often referred to simply as "Glasto". It has been held since 1970, and the festival got its name thanks to the town of Glastonbury, near which it traditionally takes place. The forerunner of the modern Glastonbury Festival is a series of concerts, lectures, and poetry readings that took place between 1914 and 1926 at one of the city's summer schools. In the 1970s, the UK, like the rest of the world, was swept by a wave of the hippie movement, and namely this movement strongly influenced Glastonbury. The movement of free festivals, which also originated at this time, also made its contribution. That is when Michael Eavis decided to organize something similar in Glastonbury, or rather, on his farm, which is located near the city. Since then, it has become a

tradition that the Glastonbury Festival takes place on a farm near Eavis. Initially, the Glastonbury Festival was conceived only as a musical event. Over time, it has changed somewhat, and now for five days one can not only listen to the music of the world's leading artists such as Pink Floyd, U2, Blur, Bjork, Radiohead, Oasis, The Prodigy, Sting, Robbie Williams, Coldplay, Muse, Garbage, Adele, Lady Gaga, but also look at dance, circus and theater performances, admire art expositions.

In 2021, the event was held online due to the coronavirus pandemic. In general, it should be noted that the online format of instrumental performing arts competitions has been gaining increasingly more popularity in recent years. Each competition has its own electronic resource – this is an Internet site that includes several electronic web pages (documents) united by a common theme and linked to each other using links on the site; one can get acquainted with the program requirements, the timing of the competition, age nominations, as well as the criteria by which the musical audio recording (and more often video recording) of participants will be evaluated.

In February 2022, the international online competition “Winter Stars of Dresden 2022” was held in Dresden. All types of musical instruments and genres were allowed to participate in competitions in instrumental creativity – classical music, chamber music, folk, jazz, modern music, modern, pop and other genres, piano, string instruments, woodwind and brass instruments, percussion, folk and national instruments, electronic instruments, instrumental ensembles, orchestras, chamber ensembles, symphony orchestras, etc.

Another online contest is Musicworks Electronic Music Composition Contest. Participants should Compose/submit an experimental piece in any electronic-music genre—acousmatic, electroacoustic, glitch, soundscape, intelligent dance music (IDM), turntable art, video music, etc. The contest is open to entries from anyone located anywhere in the world and from artists at any age or stage of career.

The unique Digital Composition Contest is organized since 2014 in Tallinn. It has special nomination namely of experimental music.

The undoubted advantage of Internet contests is that they not only significantly expand the geography of participants, but practically do not limit either their number or their age. In addition, participation in an Internet contest, as a rule, significantly reduces the psychological burden of the contestant, since it allows, after making several entries, to select and send the most successful piece of performance. Finally, the recording itself takes place in conditions that are comfortable for the contestant, at a time convenient for him, in a familiar audience and on a familiar instrument. At the same time, the contestant and his

teacher are free in their preferences when choosing a contest according to the principle of its thematic focus.

One of the most authoritative and representative professional competitions is the Internet Music Competition, organized by the "Association of the education alists of primary and secondary music schools of Serbia" in Belgrade. The Internet Music Competition is held annually, and seems to be the earliest chronologically among the competitions in which only videos were judged: back in 2010 Belgrade musicians positioned it as the original and the only one in the world.

The main idea of online competitions is the possibility of contacts in the virtual space of all parties involved in the musical competition the participants, jury and the organizing committee (Brake, 2015; Rambarran, 2021). Applicants within a certain time period send videos with recordings of concert programs to the competition; members of the jury listen to them and set the final scores by the appointed time; the organizing committee ensures coordination of actions, documentation of the results and forwarding of the awarded diplomas.

The transfer of performances to the virtual space completely removes the problem of geographical remoteness, both for the participants and for the jury members. The jury may consist of musicians living not only in different cities, but also in different countries; there is a possibility of introduction of reputable performers into its composition, who, due to huge rehearsal work or other reasons that make it difficult to leave, do not take part in the work of "live" musical competitions.

Another important feature of online contests is their fundamental openness. Video recordings of performances are posted on the competition website or on another pre-specified Internet resource. Accordingly, they are available for viewing to all interested parties. This fact makes the work of the jury absolutely transparent and enables the instantaneous availability of competitive works to a wide audience, thereby contributing to the development of the performing arts. The points awarded by the experts to the contestants are also posted on the site and are available for review by millions of Internet users. In addition, in some competitions, for example, in the New York International Internet Competition, students of the jury members are prohibited from participating, which, of course, increases the objectivity of the assessment results.

Participation in the online competition allows each performer to express himself/herself as brightly as possible. This is due to the fact that, as it was mentioned above, in conditions of recording on a video camera and in a familiar room, stage excitement is much easier to overcome. Musicians a priori get the right to make a mistake and

correct it: after all, the competition program can be recorded several times and the best option can be chosen for placement on the site.

Thus, the main advantages of online competitions are:

- 1) Mitigation of stage stress and the possibility for the contestant to choose the best recording;
- 2) Minimization of material costs and independence from the geography of the place of organization of the competition;
- 3) Openness of the work of the jury;
- 4) The ability of teachers from different regions to compare the level of training of their students with the achievements of the winners of the competition;
- 5) The possibility of listening to video recordings by all interested parties at a convenient time for them, which, by and large, is one of the forms of popularization of classical musical art.

However, the transfer of performing arts competitions to the virtual space also has negative sides. Let us list the most obvious ones.

The mass nature and accessibility of musical performance competitions (and not only virtual ones – the so-called “musical tourism”, for example, is no less a problem), leads to the devaluation of the title of Laureate. The number of laureates in our time is extremely large: they study and work in almost every music school, in secondary and higher musical educational institutions. The status of the title “Diplomatist” is even more reduced. And this problem is by no means new. “Laureatomania” embraced performers and teachers, turned some educational institutions into a kind of “incubators of laureates”, distorting the normal paths of the artist’s artistic maturation, adapting – often from a very early age – his repertoire, his interpretation, the whole character of performance to the leveling requirements of the future competition (Drott, 2021; Easlea, 2013).

So, for example, the piano culture for China, being introduced from outside, at the moment is more likely to refer to the “culture industry”, around which, first of all, financial relations are built (training, competitions, concerts, etc.). International competitions are also considered as a platform for entering the international stage, guaranteeing financial well-being. Partly related to these ideas about pianism is the so-called “Lang Lang effect” (Wueller, 2013), when tens of millions of Chinese children dream of an international career and make great efforts to enter and win international competitions.

However, it can be assumed that with such a pragmatic approach to piano culture, it will be very difficult to solve the problem of bringing

uniqueness and national identity to pianism, that is, instilling the piano to Chinese culture, harmoniously including this instrument “into the flesh and blood” of the Chinese worldview, it will be very difficult. It should be emphasized that only in the interaction of cultures does their mutual enrichment and development take place.

The results of the competitions, testifying to the preparation of the competitors, the strengths and weaknesses of the schools in which the participants trained, cannot be an objective tool for assessing the talent of pianists and other instrumentalists and their artistic qualities (Herstand, 2023). Programs of the same type for all participants become a “Procrustean bed” for artistic talent, which is always individual and far from ‘omnivorous’. That is, the idea that a talented pianist can equally well perform music of various styles or genres is deeply erroneous, which is proved by many examples not only from pianistic practice, but also from other areas of creativity, when later recognized cultural figures failed in various competitions, auditions, and other leveling competitions. It follows that instrumental musical competitions cannot be judged in the same way as sports competitions the quantitative indicators here are significantly inferior to the qualitative ones (Holzapfel et al., 2018).

The inability to please all the members of the jury at once with own interpretation also limits talented individuality. As a result, as it was mentioned above, as a rule, those performers who impersonally and correctly convey the “correct” for everyone, “canonical”, and therefore inherently “school” interpretation, are in a winning position. It is not surprising, therefore, that competitions are beginning to “become younger”: “From the competitions of concert artists, which were the competitions of the past, they are increasingly turning into competitions between students, school-type competitions, which differ little in principle from those that are constantly practiced within music and educational institutions” (Andreeva, 2021).

Moreover, international competitions are no longer a guarantee of a successful concert career for a performer. The excitement that flared up around the competitions is primarily due to the fact that there are almost no other ways to the concert stage the only indicator of the “artistic value of young performers” is the winners of which competitions they are, and therefore the number of both competitions and their participants grows very fast. There is a kind of “inflation of laureates”, that is, the depreciation of this title.

Nevertheless, the positive aspects of international competitions are in the intensification of musical life, in drawing attention to classical music, in creating some external incentives in the process of training young musicians, in organizing the musical community into a single

interacting organism, as well as in maintaining the traditionally high standards of musical performance.

Cultural and artistic projects, competitions, popularizing academic art, contribute to the professional development of young artists and their creative self-expression. In particular, for example, the participation of gifted instrumental musicians in the All-Ukrainian contest of instrumental and performing skills "Bellissimo" contributes to the development of the spiritual potential of Ukrainian youth. In 2018, the participants of the competition performed works of the widest range from Beethoven and Chopin to jazz-rock and melodies from the movie "Schindler's List".

Also in Ukraine, the International Competition of Young Pianists in Memory of Volodymyr Horovyts is the leader of the competition movement in Ukraine, which actively promotes Ukraine's entry into the global cultural space. The repertoire requirements of the Competition, which give each participant the opportunity to show their skill and creative identity, were developed in accordance with the generally recognized international competition standards from the obligatory performance of classical works to a more free stage, with the performance of works by composers of the 20th century. The organizers of the Competition managed to give new impulses and open new paths for each of the areas of activity, combining them into a single structure where all elements are mutually connected and strengthen the effect of each several times. Gradually, the jury of the Horovyts contest included 89 professors and musical figures from 22 countries of the world. At the same time, during the years of the competition, the social and spiritual life of the country changed radically, and this, of course, affected the history of the competition. Such transformations are typical for contests held in other countries/regions.

Every year in the Italian city of Pesaro, the International Art Festival & Contest "Open Italy" is held. This competition invites to participate individual performers, as well as musical groups and orchestras. The music competition is a unique competition not only for the contestants, but also for teachers. At this competition, much attention is paid to the educational program. As part of the event, master classes, workshops, rehearsals of joint numbers with foreign experts from around the world, whom the organizers of the competition invite to improve the skills of the contestants and additional qualifications of teachers, are held. After the end of the event and the announcement of the results, a round table with the representatives of the jury is held obligatory. As part of the music competition, a master class is also provided. Instrumentalists from all over the world are invited to the event. The founders of this international competition are the Spanish

festival committee Fiestalonia Milenio, the association Ad Arte (Italy), the production center for talented performers Fiestalonia International headquartered in London.

Separately, it should be noted that, since the middle of the 20th century, electronic musical creativity has created a powerful foundation for the means of expressiveness of music, penetrating into the space not only of academic genres, but also into the sphere of music for theater and cinema, all kinds of performances in their style. At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, a new direction in musical creativity and musical pedagogy arose, due to the rapid development of information technologies and digital musical instruments (from simple synthesizers to powerful musical computers), a new interdisciplinary field of professional activity of a musician, associated with the creation and use of specialized musical software and hardware, requiring specific knowledge and skills music and computer technologies. Being a phenomenon of cyberculture, the idea of virtuality, which finds its logical and artistic interpretation and embodiment in the musical creativity of various genres and styles, is determined today by the inclusion of music and computer technologies (MCT) in the sphere of musical culture and is interpreted as an artificially created medium.

The emergence and development of a modern computer recording studio as an instrument of musical creativity and a phenomenon of modern musical culture contains elements that allow preserving the traditions and mechanisms of cultural inheritance in the context of historical continuity and the translation of cultural values and meanings today.

Modern digital technologies have been used in the music world for a long time these are sound recording technologies, sound and voice processing programs, music editors (Encore, Sibelius, Final, etc.), electronic musical instruments. All this, undoubtedly, opens up wide opportunities for performing musicians, composers, musical teachers, and especially sound engineers.

The search for opportunities to release physical and intellectual efforts through the invention of a tool is one of the vectors that ensure the evolution of man. In turn, the new instrumentation provokes changes in many areas of life, including the art of music. At the beginning of the last century, sound recording changed auditory perception and expanded the techniques of composition (collage, montage, work with musical objects by Pierre Schaeffer, acousmatica of Francois Bayle). By the middle of the 20th century, the computer began to take root in the composer's work (for example, in Yannis Xenakis). New practices seek to reduce or exclude the role of the human factor and eventually come to a stage when electronic technology becomes not only a computing

assistant to a person, but also borrows his sensory intelligence (as in the first creative experiments with motion sensors by Merce Cunningham or Myron Krueger). At the end of the 20th century, the era of the development of interactive devices began, allowing interacting with the movement of performers. Musicological analysis of such compositions is complicated by the forced consideration of many elements that were previously neutral in relation to the music itself. One of them is a new approach to understanding the human-machine dialogue, which, in addition to technical aspects, also gives rise to new aesthetic phenomena.

Modern composers, turning to new technologies, are looking for special artistic goals that are impossible without these developments. Here, intuition, which has always played an important role in creative activity, acquires special significance. Digital media, being a new mirror of a comprehensive reality, offer infinity of material (including sound one) and options for its transformation. If the composer does not have a special artistic vision and a developed ability of anticipation, working with new technologies runs the risk of becoming a mere demonstration of the devices themselves (Reje, 2022).

There is also another problem: the illusion of freedom that arises from the interactive nature of these devices. This question was raised almost immediately by one of the pioneers of electronic installation art in Canada, David Rokeby. In his article "Transforming Mirrors: Subjectivity and Control in Interactive Media" (1995), he gives many examples of works from different arts where interactivity is the basis starting from Lawrence Sterne, who gives a large role to the reader in the humorous novel "The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, gentleman," written back in 1766, ending with John Cage's aleatory or Marcel Duchamp's statement that only the viewer creates the picture. However, at the same time, the author finds a big difference between such works and those created with the help of electronic devices (Auner & Frisch, 2013).

While in the first case an infinite number of interpretations are possible, directly depending on the performer (viewer, listener, reader), in the second case, a certain illusion of interactivity is created using the configuration of sets of possibilities. Here, the work can be compared to a video game in which the character seems to live a separate life, but in fact it is nothing more than a chain of pre-recorded actions. Interactive digital tools make the work look like unfinished sketches programmed into patterns, like a kind of "apparatus of meanings" that predicts and supports the subjective reading of the performer (Young, 2023). On the one hand, the piece creates a feeling of incompleteness, on the other hand, it is the realization of certain

possibilities that are in the field between the determinism of technology and the creative resources of a particular composer.

Musical electronics has long and firmly entered the sphere of musical performance in all instrumental and vocal genres without exception: it is impossible to hold a concert in a large hall, and even more so in an open area (open-air), without using microphones, audio amplifiers, a mixing console; audio recordings of performers, in particular instrumentalists', in professional recording studios are processed by sound engineers with the addition of special effects and filters (reverb, chorus, etc.). It depends on the professionalism of the sound engineer how "natural" the timbre of the acoustic instrument will be when building the equalizer. Various musical electric instruments and sound modules, MCTs have long been no longer surprising and are being mastered by both professional musicians and amateurs. Responding to the realities of the time and integrating into the system of show business, musicians change the stage forms of modern concert performance, and work, taking into account, mainly, the tastes of the mass consumer, focused on entertainment. Traditional for modern musical performance is the active use by musicians in their creative and concert practice of minus phonograms, the use of lighting and multimedia equipment in the process of concert performance to create synesthesia perception in the audience, a sense of immersion and belonging to what is performed on stage. All this is today an integral part of many instrumental music competitions.

Moreover, composers of a new generation worked on the splitting of sound, using its elements as the basis for the development of a work. At the same time, the musicians turned not only to the sound of musical instruments, but also to the sounds of industrial origin.

In particular, the work of John Cage can serve as an interesting example of such a search for extraordinary methods of composition. The author often included elements of noise or silence in his opuses: these could be both well-known, natural sounds taken from life itself, and found sounds artificially created by the composer. His musical "experiences", often unpredictable and not always artistic, bring the listener into the very depths of life, making him feel the reality of the world through immersion in an unusual sound environment (Clancy, 2022). Cage created a kind of musical prototype of the "happening" genre: in the process of performing his compositions, extraordinary spontaneous actions of the performers were combined with musical allusions built on the combination of natural, "vital" and experimentally found sounds. His search for a new sound was accompanied by discoveries in the field of electronic music, which, in turn, contributed to the further development of a new composing technique. Musicians of the 20th century are often referred to as the

“Generation of Electronic Dreamers”: following the discovery of electronic sound, unusual electronic musical instruments appear, sometimes surprising for a listener brought up on classical musical samples (Clancy, 2022).

Scientific and technological progress has undoubtedly influenced the formation of new types of electronic music, relevant for both the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The experiment goes along with creativity, and composers are constantly looking for new sounds, working with different timbres. In the process of actively mastering the possibilities of electronic technology, electro-acoustic, spectral, synthesizer, and later computer music appeared, based on a peculiar combination of new technical achievements and modern aesthetics.

Electroacoustic music originated in the late 60s of the 20th century, but even today it is associated with experimental and alternative areas of creativity, the key idea of which is the transformation and cloning of sound. Fronzi emphasizes that the searches for a new sound should not become an end in itself, they should work to reveal a certain musical idea: the composer must organize the sound structure of his work in such a way that the sounds, harmonizing with each other, fit into the composition, reflecting the main idea of the author (Fronzi, 2016).

Several years ago, one of the representatives of the world of music, a British composer Ash Koosha, created an image that later received its own name Yona. She was a digital singer whose appearance, “personality” and music were written by artificial intelligence. As it turned out, the software developed by Koosha made it possible to use different styles in the “creativity” of this computer character. They could also be combined. Moreover, the developer ensured that artificial intelligence took into account (very approximately, of course) the semantic content of the lyrics when writing music (Fei, 2021). There are many unclear points here, as the developer did not fully disclose all the know-how, but it was still a breakthrough. Music and songs were very unusual. In general, all this is no worse than that of most modern performers.

Very close to the 20s of this century, another cultural and digital phenomenon appeared, which also received its own name Lil Michela. At first, the authors of the computer “singer” decided not to talk about the fact that this is not a person. They started an Instagram account, added songs to Spotify, and collaborated with major companies as an influencer. And it ‘worked’ brands entered into million-dollar contracts. In 2018, when it became known that the singer is not a person at all, the name and songs associated with it became even more popular (Rambarran, 2021). The difference from the previous “AI artists” is that the texts and music for the virtual artist

were written by people. However, it becomes clear that for a successful musical project it is not at all necessary that the artists be real people. Digital personalities can be successful too.

Thus, the increasing popularity of online competitions leads to radical changes in the standard composition of participants and the inclusion of artificial intelligence products in the set of the evaluated musical works. Accordingly, this has an impact on the further development of the performing arts. On the one hand, this influence is positive, as it promotes differentiation, a greater variety of performing techniques and instruments. On the other hand, the combination of live creativity and improvisation of a person and products of artificial intelligence and digital technologies in the composition of performers is a factor of the “washing out” of artistic creativity from instrumental performance, turning it into an industry or sport, with purely “technical” quality parameters.

Also, in the context of the success of performers in instrumental performance competitions and the subsequent development of their activities, it should be noted that the financial success of a creative project does not at all reflect the artistic value and is not a guarantee that after many years it will not lose its relevance. The art of the digital century is a representation of a fundamentally new aesthetics of the information age, where it is presented in the form of a gigantic database. The loss of ‘aura’ as an integral feature of the modern process of artistic creation, noted by Walter Benjamin in his famous essay “The work of art in the era of its technical reproducibility” in 1936 (Persichetti, 1961), is an actual feature of modernity. The process of virtualization, the emergence of artificial reality is a kind of imitation of the impact of objects on the subject and the latter's reaction to the impact. The art of technological modernity, which began with the invention of photography and the advent of sound recording, put an end to uniqueness and established the principle of reproduction. The next step was digital technology, which brought the principle of reproducibility to unprecedented proportions. The Web is becoming an integral part of the realm of art, and the artist today is focused on the Web as a tool for replication and self-presentation. The social phenomena of network art and contemporary art in the information field of the global Internet network are reflected in the methods of the advertising campaign of neo-conceptualism.

The younger generation of composers not only actively uses media technologies, but also proclaims a new era of conceptual art, where the idea is primary in relation to the performance. It is significant that with the development of individual systems and author's composing technologies, at some point, the need for bright original ideas arises again, which do not always require adequate implementation. One of

the directions in the new music of the 21st century is neo-conceptualism, and the conceptualization of composer thinking is a general trend of new music in general. The dominant points of the advertising campaign of neoconceptualism are: firstly, the use of the Internet as the main platform for self-presentation, and secondly, the coverage of certain socio-political and economic problems through the mediation of a bright conceptual idea that can turn an ordinary life situation into an object artistic creativity and aesthetic pleasure from the originality of the concept (Leenders et al., 2010). This phenomenon poses new challenges for performers and not only complicates the competitive landscape, but also introduces an element of entropy into it.

Musical sound and noise, which previously seemed fundamentally different both axiologically and semantically, radically changed their positions in the 20th century, becoming equivalent and equivalent, and in some cases they even changed places. The era of noise music began in the early 20th century. In the Noise Manifesto of 1913 by the Italian futurist Luigi Russolo, the phrase was heard: "Today Noise triumphs and reigns supreme over human feelings" (Ablinger, 2013). Years later, in 1937, John Cage, in his manifesto *The Future of Music: A Creed* argues that noise is the future: ("I believe in the use of noise"). The "vicious circle" of pure sounds is now broken, open to the conquest of an infinite variety of "noise sound", and noise has become a by-product of technological progress in real life and a source of creative inspiration in the field of composing practice (Kramer & Carl, 2016).

The attitude towards the interaction and the question of the primacy of noise and the so-called musical sound in the 20th and 21st centuries is still ambiguous, and in many cases it becomes the starting point of aesthetic discussions. In the new music and composer practice of the last third of the 20th century, noise gained unconditional primacy, essentially displacing musical sound to a secondary position. Silence and soundlessness came out of "non-existence" and materialized in the composer's work.

Each composer in his own way defines the nature of the relationship between noise and silence, cultivated (musical sound) and amusical sound. Electronic and noise music theorist and practitioner Trevor Wishart (1996) characterizes noise as an "enharmonic and non-periodic" phenomenon. He establishes clear boundaries between harmonic and enharmonic, non-periodic and periodic characteristics of sound, suggesting the possibility of transformations of one sound quality into another. Noise sound objects, says T. Wishart, are usually considered out of a certain context as material generated from simple oscillators. At the same time, there is no clear division between

periodic and non-periodic oscillations. Wishart argues that the sound “grain” loses its properties if it is presented in the idea of pulsation and then accelerated to 20 Hz. In this case, the individual impulses merge into a common sound mass. Separate “grains” are felt as an overall “grainy” sound texture. A multidimensional sound continuum can be organized through the fusion of a large number of diverse individual sound impulses (Wishart, 1996).

In the work of Peter Ablinger, an Austrian composer who today is one of the most original innovators in the field of new music, the basis of the creative method is the interaction of various noises with spatial structure, spectral modeling/transcription, and with the very perception of sound. As the author of orchestral compositions, operas, along with various kinds of installations, in a number of cases, related more to sound art than to academic new music, in each new work he reverses listener stereotypes and seeks to renew perception. At the heart of his method, there is the study of the differences between reality and our perception of sound as a mirror of reality. Listening to noises, defined by the composer by the German word “Rauschen” (noise (German)) for Ablinger, becomes a creative dominant not only in his compositional works, but also in theoretical ones (Ablinger, 2013). Ablinger's work with noise/rauschen is multifaceted: to a large extent, this is due to the material itself, which carries a lot of different sound data. The listening position implies active interaction with these data: the construction of certain auditory patterns, pseudo-melodic figures that form inside the “unstable static noise” (Young, 2023).

Ablinger's art aims to transform perception. “Basically what I'm working on is that what you see or hear is not what you see or hear at all. This is a kind of reverse art,” the composer claims. Thus he distinguishes art from craft, where evidence is craft that whose outer boundary describes what is seen or heard. Art, he suggests, is exactly where the visual or audio signal stops” (Ablinger, 2013). In this respect, his position coincides with the aesthetic vision of the essence of art by Adorno, who argues that the beauty of nature lies in the fact that “it seems as if it is able to say more than what it knows, to give more than what it has. To tear this “more” out of the realm of chance, to master its illusory appearance, to define itself as appearance and to reject it as unreal, constitutes the idea of art” (Demers, 2010).

It is quite obvious that the performance of such works requires new competencies from the performer, which are not yet fully taught in music schools. Even in the most advanced of them, “alternative” music is considered rather in a descriptive way, without working out the practical skills of its performance. However, at the same time, the new concepts described above often take classical works as the basis of the

musical “fabric”, and may well be performed within the framework of competitions with a free program.

So, for example, in several compositions from the “Quadraturen” cycle, P. Ablinger uses the piano – an instrument that has a certain established musical history and tradition. However, it is used in a completely unusual capacity: it becomes a repeater of human voices and creates in the recipient the effect of the familiar and alien at the same time, the effect of a simulacrum. The idea of reproducing a “phonograph” with the help of acoustic instruments, with its established history of instruments, is related to photorealistic painting by its documentary art, and at the same time, for Ablinger, it becomes the one that most accurately describes the technology: the use of a grid to convert photographs from a digital image to an analog one. When using tools, the grid must be zoomed in (slowed down) to allow time for playback. Thus, the result of the transformation is not so much a reproduction of the original, but rather a new approach or situation of comparing instrumental sounds and the sound source. The implementation of this idea in the cycle is different: in one case, it is a sound installation, in the other – it is a computer-controlled piano.

There are eight movements in *Quadraturen III* (“Wirklichkeit”). *Quadraturen IIIa* is based on the text of the Hail Mary prayer, which is little recognizable, as it falls apart, according to the single idea of the cycle. Unlike the previous part of the cycle, the piano is used here, however, in a completely special quality. In *Quadraturen IIIb* (*Fidelito/Revolution and Women*), the sound material consists of eight sides of four phonograph records of Fidel Castro's speeches, including applause and sounds of jubilation (primarily female audience) from his speech during the Congress in 1974. These sounds are integrated into piano sounds. Ablinger seeks to emphasize the three-dimensionality of sound and liken it to a 3D image. The piano literally spoke with a human voice. To do this, the author had to install an intricate technical system. This instrument was built by Winfried Ritsch in Graz after Trimpin's “*Vorsetzer*”, a key play structure based on 88 “electromagnetic fingers” (*Hubmagneten*) that can be attached to any normal piano or grand piano. The specificity of this computer-controlled piano (more precisely, not the piano itself, but the key player who plays the “*Vorsetzer*”, the player who makes up the structure that is controlled by the computer) is the ability to play all 88 keys simultaneously, each with different dynamics and, secondly, to reproduce such polydynamic attacks with fast sequences. The basis of all five parts of *Quadraturen* is frequency analysis – that is, a series of sequential static analyses. The hidden musical meaning of speech is “declassified”: the more accurate the “resolution” of a sound photograph, the more certain human speech sounds (Demers, 2010). When the content of the oral text becomes clear, the listener

experiences a qualitative change in the perception of aesthetic signs: the piano sound is no longer pure sound or music, it means something else. In this interaction of two symbolic worlds – music and language – there is a revision of the levers of perception of music and speech, music as speech and speech as music. Thus, the occasional intelligibility of spoken or rather “played” texts is perceived as hallucinations – the decoding of words bypasses the purely musical technique, pushing it into the background.

In this context, it is not surprising that at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, an interpretive direction was determined in musical performance, which put a number of new problems of a general artistic, aesthetic plan on the agenda (Gloag, 2012). Developing as a socio-cultural phenomenon that was gaining ever wider public recognition, the activities of artists-interpreters of musical works were strongly influenced by the most diverse types of artistic creativity – literature and poetry, painting and architecture, especially theater as an art synthetic in nature. It is easy to see that in the contests “environment” the most developed are the problems of the formation of performing skills (moreover, in its rather narrow, instrumental and technical understanding), as well as some issues of the rational organization of the process of studying a piece of music, the practice of classroom and homework, building a repertoire, and a number of others. But still open are the problems related to the artistic and poetic side of the performing arts: the expressiveness of intonation, the identification of stylistic trends in the eras of composing and performing music, the style of the author, as well as the construction of the compositional form of the work, its focus on the perception of listeners. In other words, precisely the issues that relate to the artistic and meaningful interpretation of the performed musical work are not sufficiently developed. Moreover, namely the cornerstone questions of the objective and subjective order, the creative realization of the idea, design and artistic conception of the performed composition have been little studied. In this regard, the experience of major performers-interpreters of the past, who worked in an era relatively not far from us, is completely insufficiently represented in the education of a modern musician. For example, the legacy of Alfred Cortot, an outstanding French pianist of the first half of the last century, includes not only recordings of his interpretations of piano music masterpieces, but also a number of theoretical and methodological works devoted to this problem. In a word, an artistic and creative attitude to what is being performed should be laid down at the very beginning of training, when a novice musician plays the simplest song and dance melodies, simple pieces. Here, an important methodological role is played by the implementation of the requirement of continuity in the professional training of a performing

musician, which ensures the fundamental nature of the subsequent stages of its formation and allows taking part in a wide range of competitions of various formats and “themes”.

International competitions are an effective form of communication between European instrumental schools and schools from other regions, and at the same time a platform for confirming the status of heterogeneous schools in the world music school. However, the researchers conclude about the rule-making function of competitions for regional instrumental schools expressed by (Curien & Moreau, 2009; Rudolph, 2016; Wueller, 2013):

- 1) The regulation of interpretations;
- 2) Attention to the embodiment of strict academic traditions of instrumental (primarily piano) performance;
- 3) Adaptation to the traditional values of Western instrumental culture (for example, preference for the traditional (romantic) repertoire).

The musical culture of the West is distinguished by an unprecedented variety of styles. Here is the so-called new-Vienna school, which developed a strictly regulated system of atonal music, and neoclassicism in its various modifications. In the 1950s, composer creativity was represented by various currents of musical avant-garde, cultivating concrete and electronic music, sonoristics and aleatorics. However, regional music can be fundamentally different from it.

For example, by its nature, Chinese music is distinguished by gentle sounds, reminiscent of the murmur of a stream or the singing of birds. Many medieval Chinese musicians specially imitated the sounds of nature, thereby creating a harmony of music and nature. Unlike the European music, Chinese melodies are melodies of one sound and its variations. Musicians can play the same sound for several hours in different keys and on different instruments, while it will seem to listeners that they are hearing a full-fledged melody from several different sounds. The music of China, like everything in this specific and highly interesting country, is built on the balance of “yin” and “yang”, which personify minor and major sounds – the main components of Chinese traditional music. One of the most amazing types of Chinese music is drumming. In ancient times, military parades and campaigns were accompanied by drumming. Very often, a certain drum rhythm was used to intimidate enemies. Today, the sound of drums can be heard during traditional Chinese holidays, when the procession of drummers turns into a real theatrical performance. The jury and viewers of the “global North” instrumental contests may find this music primitive, while music in China is inextricably linked with Chinese philosophy.

At the same time, unconsciously or consciously, the West will draw lessons from communication with such a peculiar culture of Asia, "open itself" in front of "the face of a stranger". In the composer's work of the 20th century, the course of musical Japonism revealed the vector of a gradual change in the model of the "Eastern" that developed in the era of romanticism. Conventionally-programmed exoticism, copying and emphasizing the bizarre details of the non-European original, gives way to the method of adaptation of the deep principles of the Japanese artistic tradition in the new European writing. The established Japanese school of composers solved the problem of "national self-expression in the system of European music" and "came to create an original musical phenomenon – the release of the mechanisms of specific national musical thinking stored in the subconscious" (Vikstrom & von Bonsdorff, 2022).

The radicalism of the search for European composer professionalism in the post-war stage of development contributed to the deepening of ideas about the nature and resources of the "non-national". With regard to Japan, the desire to master the specifics of the pitch and fret structures of traditional genres of music and the stylization of the timbre colors of Japanese instrumentation was enriched by the principle of "reconstructing the norms of musical thinking" of this culture, modeling the entire complex of its parameters (Reje, 2022). A new approach to foreign models is concentratedly demonstrated in the work of O. Messiaen, who worked with different models of Orientalism. Impressed by a trip to the "Land of the Rising Sun", Messiaen wrote the cycle "Seven Haiku" ("Japanese Sketches", for piano, xylophone, marimba and orchestra, 1962), trying to capture the landscapes and voices of Japanese birds, architectural monuments, and the sound of traditional national music. The name of the cycle can be explained by the popularity of the Japanese poetic genre "haiku" in Europe and by following its norms. Messiaen determines the composition of his work in accordance with the structure of this kind of versification. The symmetrical framing of the introductory and concluding (inversion of the initial material) pieces highlights the block of five program parts. The emerging "circular form" of the cycle helps to overcome the vectorial nature of musical time, makes the musical process non-directional, "contemplating", dissolving the present into the eternal. Such convergence in music writing and performance is to a large extent facilitated namely by contests.

4. Conclusion

Music is a special kind of art capable of simultaneously expressing with sounds a whole range of feelings and emotions, speaking in the language of metaphor, "both the concreteness of experience and the

generalization of thought". The peculiarity of music is that, being fixed in a specially organized sound complexes, it can really exist only in performance, sound, embodiment. The musical text as a source of informational, emotional impact is endlessly transformed, since each of its sound incarnations depends on a specific interpreter-performer, his knowledge, their volume, and professional orientation. Subjective factors also determine the difference in the perception of both the content of a musical work and the means of its expression, which is especially pronounced during a competition performance. At the same time, it is necessary to understand that there are no and cannot be universal, mathematically verified criteria for evaluating a contest performance, but there can be universal directions in evaluating a performer, which should always be in tune with the trends and prospects for the development of modern performing arts.

The scale of the current competitive movement, the contests "boom" excites the imagination. However, the quality of competitions and their effectiveness require, in our opinion, a continued search for new, more open, democratic forms. Conducting competitions for performing musicians should have clearer goals and objectives.

With all of the above in mind, it seems that it is quite possible to talk about a large-scale revival of the traditions of instrumental music making and not only about the revival, but also about revising them through the prism of modernity, their increasing actualization, adaptation to the requirements of modern society, about a new look at traditional forms of instrumental performance. It is about new directions for applying the creative efforts of musicians-performers in the realities of our time. At the same time, the issues of the role of music and the musician, their place and significance in our century, and development prospects are most relevant in the realities of today.

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