

L8Nite Performance

Hélène de Montgeroult: rebel woman, offbeat artist. A concert-melologue

So many times we have seen music preceded by words that explained or commented on what was to be played! But what would happen if the words were spoken *during* the performance of the musical works? Would the magic be lost? Or could it be, instead, a way of achieving a deeper connection with the audience? That is what I am exploring in this new chapter of my inVERSIONS project, starting with the nineteenth-century practice of the *melologue* and filtering it through some striking musical experiments from the last half-century (I am thinking, in particular, of Frederic Rzewski's *De Profundis* and his other works for *speaking pianist*.) The idea is to make these words part of the artistic product, talking and playing *at the same time*: not only comments between works in the form of interludes accompanied by piano improvisations, but also sentences and thoughts inserted in strategic places in the works themselves.

This L8Nite Performance for EPARM 2023 focuses on the extraordinary studies of Hélène de Montgeroult (1764-1836). A leading figure on the Parisian musical scene at the time of the Revolution, her activity as an improviser, composer and treatise writer left a mark of incalculable depth on the history of the piano. Until very recently, however, the works and the person of Montgeroult have been almost totally forgotten, despite the fact that the interplay between her life, her music and their subsequent reception makes her one of the most fascinating cases in the history of music. It is then doubly interesting to present this extraordinary woman in the framework of this reinvention of the concert format that I propose here: there is so much to share with the audience, in the form of music and of ideas! This is what I propose with this intimate reinvention of the classical recital format: an alternative way of living together with the audience a musical experience that turns into emotion what we could read in a hand program. Biographical details, stylistic nuances, metaphorical readings and the musicological research itself become the basic material of a creative way of sharing knowledge, applicable to the most diverse situations.

Technical requirements:

- grand piano;
- if the room is larger than 80m², it is also convenient to have voice amplification, with a Shure microphone (which I can bring personally) and a microphone stand, so it is possible to play and speak simultaneously.

Links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=flvZzs4b1eE&t=63s> (in Portuguese)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3loGpJfKfWo> (concert-lecture in English)



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Musician and scholar Luca Chiantore (Milan, 1966) is currently focused on exploring how the combination of artistic-research and musicology can create new models of interaction between performance and composition. His books and articles on the history and theory of musical performance are well known in many leading universities worldwide. He is the author, among other works, of *Historia de la técnica pianística*, reference in

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Spanish-speaking countries (English enlarged version, *Tone Moves*, 2019), and of *Beethoven al pianoforte*, the first book on Ludwig van Beethoven's widely unknown keyboard exercises. PhD in Musicology and researcher at INET-md, he has given lectures and masterclasses in more than 150 institutions in Europe, Asia and the Americas. His daring concert projects around the Western classical-music repertoire—alongside composer and producer David Ortolà as Tropos Ensemble, and performing solo on his In-Versions—have been acclaimed in major venues such as Carnegie Hall (New York), Teatro Colón (Buenos Aires), and Bellas Artes (Mexico City).