

Parallel Session

**The Art of the Unspoken:
Rhetorical Devices, Linguistic Parallels
and the Influence of the Singing Voice in Classical and Romantic Piano Literature**

Book Presentation

This presentation focuses on artistic interdisciplinary research in performance. The book will be published by Peter Lang, Oxford, in 2023 and will also be available as an ebook. In addition, the discussion will address how insights from artistic research and practice can be integrated within the performance training curriculum. A digital toolkit for performers and teachers will be made available online, as an additional research output and resource.

This book focuses on the influence of rhetoric, drama and the singing voice on solo piano music from Mozart to Liszt. Today these traditions, which were important to the composers analysed, are threatened with extinction. Rhetoric provides a guide for logical organisation and persuasion, drama teaches us about plot and character, while singing offers a natural model for expression and inflection. Historical and aesthetic information along with literary and musical aspects are presented, in order to offer performers a broader understanding of solo piano music during this time.

The book covers a variety of topics. It discusses the relationship between instrumental music and language, emphasising the dialogue between the arts and interactions between artists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The relevance of rhetoric to wordless music traces the continuity of the rhetorical tradition. Several musical-rhetorical figures are defined and identified in piano works from J. S. Bach to Franz Liszt, with ample examples.

Two dramatic elements and the significance of their musical interaction are also explored in detail: plot and character. Theatrical plot is mirrored in formal structure, and character reflected in musical content. An essential part of the ability of piano music to convey meaning is by emulating the singing voice. The influence of the vocal model is linked to elements of expressive performance and singing piano style.

These concepts have practical application to modern performance training, and a wider pianistic pedagogical context is explored in the final chapter. This brings together ideas such as reflective practice, the relationship between musical image and technical means, and the role of physical comfort and breathing. Together with a clear focus and effective communication, these elements point the way to achieving an integrated approach to performance.

Parallel Session



Dr Gabriela Mayer
MTU Cork School of Music (Cork, Ireland)
Gabriela.mayer@mtu.ie

Dr Gabriela Mayer is a pianist, pedagogue, and researcher with a passion for connecting interdisciplinary insights. As a recipient of a Fulbright Graduate Fellowship to Germany, Dr Mayer studied piano performance at the Hochschule für Musik 'Hanns Eisler' in Berlin. She also completed a Doctorate in Musical Arts at the University of Maryland in the USA, graduating with distinction. Since moving to Ireland, she has engaged in teaching as well as performing. She has also given concerts and masterclasses as part of the Erasmus programme at European partner institutions and participated in Innovative Conservatoire Seminars and other activities of the AEC.

Her area of artistic research revolves around rhetorical and linguistic influences in Classical and Romantic piano music and the application of these concepts to teaching and performance. Her book, *The Art of the Unspoken*, will be published in 2023 by Peter Lang, Oxford. Her interest in effective practice and performance preparation has led to being part of the 'Potential to Performance' project, an international collaboration. Dr Mayer is also active on institutional panels as an international peer reviewer.