

Some not-so-fully-written scores

Early 19th-century fantasias as an artistic research laboratory and the case of Maria Szymanowska's F-major Fantasy

From the distant 16th century to the present, the term “fantasy” has been used as the name of very diverse musical works and genres. But there was a brief moment in this long history, right at the beginning of the 19th century, when the word appeared as the title of a series of piano scores with common and singular characteristics, directly linked to the then very popular genre of the improvised fantasy, as they had already been the previous experiences of C.P.E.Bach and W.A.Mozart. In them, asymmetries, virtuoso passages, and changes in tonality, meter, and tempo multiply, while fermata signs are often the only connecting element between sections that follow one another without apparent logic. This is the case of Beethoven's Fantasy, op. 77, Eberl's Fantasy, op. 28, as well as the recently-discovered Fantasies in D minor and C major by H el ene de Montgeroult: enigmatic works before which the modern ear is generally baffled, so much so that performers tend to avoid them even when the author is Ludwig van himself. How is it possible that these works clash so much with our expectations, while we appreciate so much other compositions from those same years?

As part of the inVersions project, I am proposing an artistic response to this challenge. Taking literally the identification of the fermata sign with the improvisation of a passage freely composed by the performer, my interpretations expand the structure, turning these connecting passages into a determining element of the global structure. This presentation will be an introduction to this experience, placing special emphasis on what was the last example of this genre, the Fantasy in F major by Maria Szymanowska. Published in 1819, when the term “fantasy” was already used to identify more structured works in different movements (Hummel op. 18, Dussek op. 76), this apparently old-fashioned piece actually reveals a universe in itself, if we think about the score as an invitation to move between the determined and the undetermined. And it is an unbeatable opportunity to remember an artist who indelibly marked the history of musical performance.



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Musician and musicologist Luca Chiantore (Milan, 1966) has focused his recent activity on how to convert some challenging 19th Century piano practices into resources for Artistic Research. 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 books and articles on the history and theory of musical Performance are well known in many leading universities worldwide; his *Historia de la t cnica pian stica* is a reference in Spanish-speaking countries (English enlarged version, *Tone Moves*, 2019), and his *Beethoven al pianoforte* is the first book ever about Ludwig van



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Parallel Session

Beethoven's widely unknown keyboard exercises. His daring concert projects—alongside composer and producer David Ortolà as Tropos Ensemble, and performing his solo In-Versions—have been acclaimed in major venues such as Carnegie Hall (New York), Teatro Colón (Buenos Aires) and Palacio de Bellas Artes (Mexico City).