Artistic and Conceptual Tasks of a Musician in Solo and Ensemble Performance

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Abstract---The relevance of this study is justified by the necessity to investigate the tasks for the improvement of musician’s professional skills. Artistic perception of the surrounding world is based on active artistic and conceptual thinking. The purpose of this study is to define artistic and conceptual tasks of a musician. In addition, the primary purpose of this research is to consider and analyze the tasks of a performing musician. The methodological background of this study is shaped by theoretical methods of scientific knowledge. For this, the study involved such research methods as analysis and synthesis of information, as well as analytical, cultural and comparative methods. The first stage of the study was a theoretical analysis of academic literature. For the sake of this study, the types of musical performances and interpretations of works as well as the main tasks of the performing musician were considered. It was determined that musical performance is a form of art that involves the reproduction of music in a variety of ways. As a result, it was established that the task of a musician is to decipher the emotional and sensual image created by the author of the work. It has been proven that artistry and skills of stage performance are important qualities for a performing musician as well. The practical significance of this study is the...
possibility of studying the main artistic and conceptual tasks of a performing musician.

**Keywords**—artistry, creative work, instrumentalist, musical semantics, performing musician.

**Introduction**

First of all, a musician has to possess musicality, which is perceiving the world through music. Musician has a well-rounded personality. Artistic personality is also commonly associated with musical talent, creativity, hard work, patience, will, empathy and self-discipline (Caruso et al., 2016). Music is defined as a number of general and special abilities such as a sense of order, a sense of rhythm, musical and auditory ideas, sense of pitch, creative imagination, and emotional sensitivity. They also include the sense of wholeness, which is the logic of the development of musical thinking, the image of culmination, ictus, pulsation and intonation (Meshkova, 2018). Primarily, this is a complex integral ability that consists of a sense of pitch, musical rhythm, musical memory, and musical thinking, which includes musical imagination and emotional sensitivity to music (Balaguer, 2020). Musicality provides for creative perception and processing, which is the performance of music. Scholars characterise musicality as a set of abilities that are present in various types of musical expression (Carmeli & Schaubroeck, 2007; Atwater & Carmeli, 2009). The structure of musicality includes both general, musical, aesthetic abilities and individual ones. The first category is characterised by an aesthetic attitude, which is presented in perception, reproduction, presentation and creativity, in the form of the dynamics of various feelings, creative imagination, the emergence of an evaluative attitude. The second category includes basic musical abilities such as experiencing, distinguishing, imagining, reproducing relations of pitch and musical rhythm as well as a sensory basis (Song & Kim, 2020).

Musician’s abilities are a combination of innate and acquired qualities, which are also known as phenotype. Among phenotypic abilities there are those that appear depending on the innate psychological, physiological and morphological characteristics of a person as well as on personal experience, knowledge, the best ability to use this knowledge. The music student acquires this knowledge during the completion of music education (Li, 2016). Internal factors of effectiveness of the practice are expressed through the professional skills of a performing musician and teacher. It is important to distinguish four main blocks of a musician’s professionalism: musical and performing orientation, knowledge, skills and professional qualities of a musician. The musical and performing orientation consists of a number of components (Ohanezova-Hryhorenko, 2019). Many sources put emphasis on the love of music as a general professional orientation of all musical specialties. Notably, the structure of musical and performing orientation would be incomplete without the need for the stage performance. An artistic image, which is a personal category, always possesses a certain abstraction and generalisation, while representing the unity of the emotional and the rational, the subjective and the objective at the same time (Budagyan, 2016). Subjectively, it happens due to the fact that the author’s assessment and
perception through the artistic image occurs through dialogue. As a result, the generalisation of this dialogue is an objective and meaningful assessment, the central content of the artistic image.

The interpretation of a piece of music transfers emotionally and intellectually aesthetic information from the artist to the listener (Smith et al., 2018; Vereshchahina-Biliavska et al., 2021). The instrumentalist’s task is to decipher the emotional and sensual image created by the author of the work. The instrumentalist also has to understand, comprehend, feel and, finally, express the artistic image in a proper way. In this case, the performer is a conductor of thoughts, emotions and feelings of a musical object. The purpose of this study is to determine the artistic and conceptual tasks of the musician. In addition, the primary goal of this research is to study and analyse the tasks of a performing musician (Dommerholt, 2010; Gallivan & Eitner, 2006).

**Materials and Methods**

The methodological background of this study is the theoretical methods of scientific knowledge. For this research, methods of analysis and synthesis of information were used. In addition, a theoretical analysis of academic literature was carried out. The analytical, cultural and comparative methods were used to achieve the goal of this research. The goal of the analytical method is to determine the internal tendencies and capabilities of the subject; it is widely used in all disciplines. In this paper, the analytical method was used to study the main features of musical performance as well as the main tasks of a performing musician (Dommerholt, 2009; Dommerholt, 2010).

The comparative historical method is used in linguistics, literary criticism and other disciplines to find the similarity of plot lines, the similarity in the development of related languages, literary images in works of fiction or in the folklore of different ethnicities. Based on the similarity of certain phenomena, the reasons and sources of such analogies are assumed. For example, the similarity between different cultures is caused by the proximity of geographical location, diffusion of cultures, borrowing of cultural samples and other factors. In this research the comparative method was used to study various types of musical performance. Solo and group performance of musical pieces were studied (Koelsch, 2011; Poulin-Charronnat et al., 2005). The cultural studies approach is based on a combination of systemically important principles: historicism, communicative, social, anthropocentric and axiological principles. The characteristic features of every presented type were studied by applying a cultural studies approach. The specific features and characteristics of each type of interpretation of a piece of music were also identified. Using the methods of synthesis and analysis, the data of this study was considered and summarised.

In addition, scholarly articles related to the research topic were reviewed. In one of the reviewed studies (Geeves et al., 2016), the authors research the question of life performance for a professional musician. The authors found that musicians’ understanding and experiences of "connection" with the audience during performance vary greatly, which is influenced by their position in the two spectrums, which appear in this study and show the extent to which musicians
value attentiveness and mood of the audience during the performance as well as its open-mindedness. In another study, the authors explore such concepts as improvisation and individuality (Smilde, 2016). The authors found out that despite its immense importance, improvisation is still often marginalised in specialised higher music education, especially in conservatoires. In the conclusions section the authors wrote a strong call for conservatoires to take on this role and to include improvisation in the educational curriculum. The other study examines the musician’s freedom which exists in various musical improvisations. In this research the author examines the limitations, conventions and parameters within which musical improvisations are created, and identifies three main directions of improvisational practice that have emerged in response to the development of recording technologies. Finally, the author argues that the non-hierarchical and structurally indefinite forms of musical improvisation that appeared in the late 20th century are a form of music that shapes and expresses the significant freedom of the improvising musician (Gillon, 2018).

Results

Types of musical performances and interpretation of compositions

Musical performance is a form of artistic creation, the reproduction of music in various ways. During a musical performance, the sheet music of a composition gets a real audial embodiment. The performance of a composition is also its interpretation (Muravska, 2017). The performance of a musical piece can be vocal, instrumental or mixed. According to the number of performers, it can be divided into solo and group performances. Singing is the performance of music with the voice. Singing is able to convey the meaning of a composition through the voice of a performer. The types of singing are displayed in Figure 1.

![Figure 1. Types of singing](image.png)

Solo singing is also called individual or monophonic performance. Ensemble singing is also called group performance, and choral singing can be defined as mass performance. Opera and choral singing are the main genres of vocal art. There are three main vocal styles or types of singing, which are singing, recitation and coloratura (Triantafyllaki, 2016). A solo musical act is the performance of an instrumental or singing number by one person. A group musical act is a
performance that involves a group of performers. The types of group performances are shown in Figure 2.

![Figure 2. Types of group performances](image)

The chamber ensemble’s performance includes several relatively equal performers such as a trio, a quartet and others. Symphonic or choral performances held with the guidance of a conductor (choirmaster) who presents personal interpretation of the performance. Musical training puts more emphasis on consolidating primarily technical skills and studying musical pieces, orchestral and ensemble parts. In addition, many countries have a program for improving such professionally important qualities as musical thinking and imagination, a proper understanding of the genre, style, musical language of a piece and specifics of its interpretation as well as mental stability during public performances (Zaitseva et al., 2019).

The pieces created by composers are lifeless until they are played and interpreted. In this case, the musician acts as the interpreter of the piece. Thus, from the moment when the piece is written its “life” starts only with the performance, where the musician is the interpreter of the content (Sydykova et al., 2020). The performer not only recreates the work of the composer but also offers a special personal understanding of the piece. The artistic images presented by the composer in the musical text are more or less revealed depending on the level of mutual understanding between the composer and the interpreter.

Despite the wide range of studies dedicated to various aspects of the culture of interpretation and recreation of musical texts, this problem requires in depth development and understanding in a wide cultural context. It is impossible to examine musical interpretive culture and the identification of its primary features without studying its philosophical origins and functioning. From a philosophical perspective, the category “culture as a type of activity” is based on the conceptual theses of the theories of existentialism, philosophical anthropology and cultural and personal anthropology in particular, where the individual is understood as the highest spiritual value, the bearer and creator of culture. The culture of performance has complex structure. It includes the general culture of the musician’s personality, a set of personal traits, abilities and characteristics. At the same time, musical culture includes a range of professional aspects such as mastering interpretation techniques and performing skills, which development degree depends on the general level of the musician’s musical culture.
As a part of the process of understanding the author's ideologic and artistic position, the search for performative expressive means plays an important role for the musician and reveals the connections between the artistic image and cultural values of the era when this piece appeared as a result of working with artistic image. An important task for a musician is to investigate how the social and historical context influenced the appearance of the piece. It is also important for a musician to study the attributes determined by the influence of the natural environment as well as to examine the development of an artistic image over time, understand its transformations, connect new temporal contexts while absorbing historical experience (Povzun, 2020).

One of the basic tasks of a performing musician, who conveys the thoughts, feelings and intentions of the composer to the listener, is the ability to correctly and adequately understand the author's idea, the essence of the images of a musical piece and to convey the composer's idea to the listener through own interpretation. Engaging with the essence of the figurative system of a musical piece is closely related to attentiveness during the reading of the sheet music, its precise performance in compliance with all instructions of the author. Neglect of the details of the piece, the author's instructions about the nature of the specific of dynamic development, the change in tempo, the nature of sound, speech, feelings create the ground for arbitrariness in the interpretation of the piece and, as a result, misunderstanding of the real depth of its content by interpreter. One needs to pay attention to the techniques of articulation, fingering, pedalling, nuance and other notes for performance by minding stylistic features of a particular historical era.

**The main tasks of a performing musician**

The process of conception of an artistic image contributes for the development of the performative will and skill of the musician, the creative imagination and intuition, enhancement of musical erudition and artistic taste, which directly affects the level of the musician's general interpretive skills. An artistic as well as a musical image differs from a scientific concept or abstract thinking by the inextricable connection of artistic meaning with a material, sensual, imaginative representation. The artistic image has a communicative character since it is created by an artist, composer, performer based on its apprehensiveness for viewer's perception. The complexity of the issue of the artistic image in musical art always requires to maintain a balance between the preciseness to the author's idea and the creative initiative of the musician-performer (Bjelica, 2016). The imagery of a musical [piece is an indicator of the ideologic and artistic content, while the audial embodiment of a musical work is a consequence of the creative interpretation of the performing musician.

Everyone has the ability for artistic perception of the world. A musician must devote his entire life to artistic self-education. Broadening one's horizons enriches the imagination of a performing musician. Improvement of technical skills only is not enough for a musician. Performer's expressiveness during the interpretation of the piece and ability to demonstrate the artistic image of the piece to listeners are important (Li & Timmers, 2020). If the musician is completely absorbed by the content side of the piece, the composer's idea and has the ability to express
something, it can be argued that an inspired highly artistic interpretation will be created.

Sheet music provides rich information for expressive performance. However, novice musicians simply do not notice a lot of what score has. It is very important to highlight the main and secondary material, clearly intoned phrases, and motives in the sheet music. Music has its own punctuation. Notes help to organise and arrange musical thoughts. The performer experiences such subtleties that were never known before. The musician finds more new images, associations, necessary intonations that results in clearer the audial image (Zhu, 2017). Any musical piece is the result of human collective creativity work. It appears thanks to the composer but the display in a symbolic (musical) form exists only potentially since it is actualised and voiced thanks to the abilities of the performer, who is a medium between the creator of artistic values and the listener’s perception (Abel, 2018). Every artistic image represents a cognitive image, a form of human knowledge and life of a particular era and country.

Artistry and stage skills are also important qualities of a performer. Specifically, musicians’ artistry is revealed through their instrumental or vocal transmission of the corresponding musical and poetic images, where due to developed auditory representations, they can build emotional and artistic scores with personal influence without making any special efforts to take upon the role presented by the composer of a particular piece (Eisner, 2002; Bhattacharya & Petsche, 2002). Therefore, enhanced artistic and expressive capabilities help musicians to achieve tangible results in their artistic spirit due to a high level of empathy, reflection and especially emotional identification with various musical and stage images.

The assertion that the profession of a musician consists of a stage performance is out of the question (Lesiuk, 2019). As a rule, artistry reveals itself in highly individual and sometimes unique ways. This means that the discovery of the essence and significant aspects of art is impossible without a deep and comprehensive explanation of a person’s creative potential in any field of artistic knowledge and their actively transforming functions of personal potential. All of this concerns such a specific area as the performing musician’s work.

Discussion

In this study, foreign authors’ articles were reviewed, which explore the problems of musical art and performing musicians. In one of these articles, the authors research the question of life performance for a professional musician. In another paper, the authors explore such concepts as improvisation and personality. The other article examines the freedom of the musician, which exists in various musical improvisations.

The problem of identifying the artistic and conceptual tasks of a musician has been considered by many researchers. The musical academic literature often considers the problem of a musician’s professional training. In one of the studies the question of a life performance for a professional musician are researched. Geeves et al. (2016), used the proven theory of Strauss and Corby to conduct qualitative research with ten professional musicians to examine their musical
performance experiences. The authors discovered a performance that went beyond the time spent in front of an audience and included rituals to separate the performers from everyday life. Using a short version of the model derived from this data presented in this article, they explored how the professional musician's experience of musical performance is focused on building a “connection” with the audience and how prearrangement and procedures after the performance facilitate this process in which musicians participate. The authors found out that musicians' understanding and experiences of "connection" during performance vary greatly, which is influenced by their position in the two spectrums, which appear in this study and show the extent to which musicians value the audience's attentiveness and mood during the performance as well as its open-mindedness.

In another study, the authors explore such concepts as improvisation and individuality. The author conducted the biographical research in the field of continuing education of professional musicians that has shown the enormous importance of improvisation for self-expression. The concept of sound from the musical perspective served as a strong metaphor for identity. In addition, the "Music for Life in London" project in 2014, in which musicians participate in creative music workshops with people with dementia and their caregivers, conducted ethnographic research that sheds light on the use of improvisation as an expression of the identity of the “other” (i.e., a person with dementia). The sound turned out to be a metaphor for identity again. The study draws on George Herbert Mead's work on identity, which distinguishes between the personal self and the social self and points out that both concepts are important to the individual. In this way improvisation can be seen as a means of communication that connects the personal self with the social self. Moreover, considering Paul Ricoeur's “Oneself as Another” the concept of improvisation in relation to personal and social identity can be transferred to ways of interaction with society through music. However, despite its immense importance, improvisation is still often marginalised in specialised higher music education, especially in conservatoires. Finally, the authors made a strong call for conservatoires to take on their role in the community and to incorporate improvisation into their curriculum (Smilde, 2016).

Thus, in this research the concept of musicality explored. It was determined that it provides creative perception and processing, which is the performance of music. Researchers characterise musicality as a set of abilities that are present in various types of musical expression. A musician's abilities are a combination of his innate and acquired qualities, which are also called a phenotype. Among phenotypic abilities there are those that appear depending on the innate psychological, physiological and morphological characteristics of a person as well as on personal experience, knowledge, the best ability to use this knowledge the interpretation of a piece of music transfers emotionally and intellectually aesthetic information from the artist to the listener. The instrumentalist’s task is to decipher the emotional and sensual image created by the author of the piece, to understand, comprehend, sense and, finally, adequately express the artistic image.
Conclusion

In this study, the types of musical performance and interpretation of works as well as the main tasks of the performing musician were explored. It was determined that musical performance is a form of artistic creation, the reproduction of music in various ways. During a musical performance, the existing sheet music of a piece of music gets a real audial embodiment. The performance of a piece of music includes its interpretation. The pieces that were created by composers are lifeless until they are played and interpreted. Thus, from the moment when the piece is written its “life” starts only with the performance, where the musician is the interpreter of the content the performance culture has a complex structure. It includes the general culture of the musician’s personality, a set of personal traits, abilities and characteristics. One of the basic tasks of a performing musician, who conveys the thoughts, feelings and intentions of the composer to the listener, is the ability to correctly and adequately understand the author's idea, the essence of the images of a musical piece and to convey the composer's idea to the listener through own interpretation.

Artistry and stage skills are also important qualities of a performer. Specifically, the musician’s artistry is revealed through instrumental or vocal transmission of the corresponding musical and poetic images, where due to developed auditory representations, one can build emotional and artistic scores of personal influences without making any special efforts to take upon the role presented by the composer of a particular work. As a rule, artistry reveals itself in a highly individual and sometimes unique way. This means that the discovery of the essence and significant aspects of art is impossible without a deep and comprehensive explanation of a person’s creative potential in any environment of artistic knowledge and their actively transforming functions of personal potential. After analysing the available scholarly articles on the research topic, it can be concluded that the study of the tasks of performing needs further exploration, since this topic is of practical importance both for music teachers and students. The study of this topic is an important aspect for improving the system of music education and the performing musician’s professional skills.

References


