

Theses of a DLA Dissertation

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HOROWITZ AND RICHTER

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## **I. The Preliminary Steps of the Research**

Vladimir Horowitz (1903-1989) and Sviatoslav Richter (1915-1997) can be considered as the greatest piano players of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, from the cultural, artistic or music historicist standpoints. In their life, a wide range of critics published essays on them, mainly praising their artistic quality, their career is known from numerous sources.

In our era, the genre of interview became quite prevalent. Out of the biographic monographs, we can read dialogues with the artists, furthermore interviews with their acquaintances. From these conversations we can learn about the artists in the focus, not just what an outsider could know about their lives, career, but we can have an insight into their most inner thoughts and we can even study their personal relation to music.

I haven't encountered an analytic work, which would choose the path of the deduction (from the general to the specific), attempting to unveil the secret, which made these two artists the greatest pianists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with professional devices.

## **II. Sources**

In addition to the fact, that from my childhood, I considered these giants of art as role-models and monitored every biography, essay, film, interview on them, the corpus of this thesis is built on the records stated in the bibliography.

The Hungarian audience could have heard Horowitz in the Vigadó Concert Hall in the thirties, but no recording of this event exists.

Sviatoslav Richter between 1954 and 1993 often performed in Hungary. A great documentation was made on these concerts, edited by Papp Márta, published in 2001. The Magyar Rádió (Hungarian Radio) recorded these concerts and from the most beautiful and most memorable interpretations the MR3 Bartók Rádió (MR3 Radio Bartók) and the BMC released a collection of 14 CD-s.

The life and work of Horowitz can be known from the monography of Glenn Plaskin of the same title. Glenn Plaskin is a music-critic and pianist from New York City. He made his PhD in the New England Conservatory, than he was a disciple of Leon Friser in the College of Peabody, John Hopkins University. His work *Horowitz* was published in 1983, the Japanese version was published in 1984, (may 16) in Tokyo, the Hungarian translation is still a missing point. The book is an unconventional biography. The author had the opportunity to make interviews with more than 650 acquaintances of Horowitz. The group of interviewees included the childhood friends of Horowitz, like the ex-member of the Conservatory of Kiev, who had personal experiences of the successes of Horowitz in the metropolises of Europe,

and the crew of the Horowitz concerts. It worth to mention the long interviews with Arthur Rubinstein, Alexandr Steinert, Rudolf Serkin, Nathan Milstein and the dialogues with the disciples of Horowitz: Gary Graffman, Byron Janis, Ivan Davis, Ronaldo Turini, Alexander Fiorillo. Natasa Zajcev the cousin and the only relative of Horowitz, who is living in America, produced valuable information. There were a lot of different interviewees: art critics, producers and technicians of recording companies, the leaders of Steinway & Sons, RCA Victor, Columbia Master Works and a lot of unspecified experts. The work was published under the surveillance of Horowitz, so it can be described as an authentic source. The last interview had been made on the 8<sup>th</sup> of October, 1980 with Nathan Milstein, then the manuscript was closed, so the book cannot contain an overview of the last nine years (1980-1989) of Horowitz.

Another important source is the work of David Dubal: *Evenings with Horowitz: A Personal Portrait*, which was based on the noted and recorded conversations between the author and Horowitz. Another virtue of Dubal is that he arranged auditions for talented children at Horowitz, who heard their play dedicatedly.

In the case of Richter, the works of Bruno Monsaingeon and Jurij Borisov are considered as bases.

Bruno Monsaingeon was born in 1943, Paris, learned law and political studies at the university. In an institute for orient languages he acquired Russian and Bulgar languages and learned to play the violin in the Conservatory of Paris. He became famous mainly because of his documentaries on musicians, like Glenn Gould, Yehudi Menuhin, David Oistrakh. His film on Richter titled *Richter: the Enigma* was released in 1998, in the same year, he published his book: *Sviatoslav Richter: Notebooks and Conversations* in French, it was published in Hungarian in 2003. It is an unconventional biography, as its title shows, like Borisov's work.

Jurij Albertovich Borisov is a director, film-director, born in 1956, as the child of the outstanding actor Oleg Borisov, in Kiev. He learned musical direction at the Conservatory of Leningrad, his graduation work was performed in the Moscow Chamber Musical Theatre and till 1988, he worked there. Later he directed numerous plays at the Moscow International Theatre Festival, which was founded by the Russian Cultural Foundation. In 1999 he published his book: *Without Punctuation*, based on the diary of his father. A film was made later from the same inspiration, which won the grand prize of the Television and Film Festival in Yalta. Following, Borisov made a portrait-film on Rudolf Nureyev. Currently he is working in Moscow. His book on Richter, titled *By Richter's side*, was published in Moscow in 2000

and in Tokyo in 2003. The book is based on the conversations of the author and Richter, and the concert-experiences of the formal. These conversations were not just about music, but literature, fine arts, mythology and much other topics. From these book, one can deduce information, which cannot be obtain from any other source, representing Richter's personal and intimate thoughts and point of view.

I draw on these works of Japanese authors: Kawashima Midori: Richter Talks, Nomura Koichi: The Pianist, Yoshida Hidekazu: Pianists of the World, Aoyagi Izumiko: The Pianist with the Eye of a Pianist. I have to mention the Russian Music Dictionary as a source, which was published in 2006, the Kawai Publishing company, edited by the Japan-Russian Musical Company.

At the research of the repertoire, the internet based collections provided a great help.

Vladimir Horowitz and his wife, Wanda Toscanini, at the end of his life, in 1986 left a great collection to the Yale University. Great deal of the heritage are letters, but it consists scores, contracts, notebooks, credentials, which shows sincerely the career of Horowitz. In addition valuable manuscripts and letters from famous composers can be found in the heritage, furthermore some original works of Horowitz. It proves Horowitz's intimate connection with notorieties like Sergej Rachmaninov, Rudolf Serkin, Arthur Rubinstein, Nathan Milstein, Gregor Piatigorsky, Olin Downes, Isaac Stern, Arturo Toscanini and Bruno Walter. The still unpublished 281 recordings of Horowitz's concerts in Carnegie Hall in the forties hold a great importance. These recording were made for the private use of the artist.

The heritage was catalogued, re-recorded with modern technique and in addition, it was opened for research at the Yale University. Wladimir Horowotz left our realm in 1989. Wanda Toscanini, according to the last will of Horowitz, donated the remaining reliquaries and some memorial of her father to the university in the early nineties. The Heritage organised by Chris Johansson can be found at the Library of the Yale University.

We owe a great dept to Caine Alder, a music lover archivist, who by his life-long, self-sacrificing founded a free to search collection, called the official Horowitz website, where the concerts and concert-programs of the artist can be found. The URL address of the site is: <http://www.vladimirhorowitz.hostzi.com>. The maintainer and the operator of the site is Bernie Horowitz.

According to the previously mentioned, these sources can be considered as authentic. On the career of Sviatoslav Richter outstanding sources can be found on the world wide web. The first is <http://www.trovar.com>, founded and maintained by Paul Geffen, the other is <http://sviatoslavrichter.ru>, the third is <http://richter.ukf.net>, which one is maintained by Pete

Taylor, according to the website, who is a software developer and as a hobby, in his free-time, organised and digitalised the Richter's oeuvre. This last database can be considered as a finished one.

During my research, the difference between the data provided by the different sources (books, online collections) caused controversy, as like the deficiency of the notes of the early years, so I could only rely on the procession of the concerts and recordings, which were unambiguous. Despite the difficulties the organising of the processed data (according to our present knowledge) is doable.

### **III. Method**

The method of this thesis is comparative, which takes the historicist standpoint into consideration, which is an usual method in the empiric and scientific parts of the research. The data chosen by the comparative method is compared qualitatively and quantitatively.

The substance of the comparative method is to grasp the similarities and differences and the increment is, that some of the qualities of the given phenomena are identical, so an order can be found and state according to the data.

I have compared the two oeuvres from different aspects: the analysis of the repertoire, according to the remaining recordings still available to the researcher, the rehearsing habits of the artists and I have executed a comparative critical analysis of the performance of four musical pieces.

The analysis of the repertoire includes the composers and their works, the prevalence of the given work's occurrence, the number of the concerts, the duration of the intermissions, the beloved encores, while I have calculated the percentage ratio of the music-historical eras and the ratio of the music of the motherland, the pieces of Russian composers in the repertoire. I have shown in detail the mutual repertoire, the ten most played work, furthermore the concertos, the cyclical works, the transcripts and not least the Hungarian references.

### **IV. Results**

Both Horowitz's and Richter's biography and repertoire are the object of studies all over the world, till today. Numerous Hungarian and foreign music-scientist, music-critic, film-director studied and are still studying their legendary oeuvre, including: Márta Papp, Kristóf Csengery, and the mentioned: Glenn Plaskin, David Dubal, Bruno Mondaingeon, Jurij Borisov, in addition: Nomura Koichi, Yoshida Hidekazu and others. So there are plenty of available sources.

A number of persons showed the similarities and the differences between the two artist's career. It is not the aim of this thesis to show these widely discussed differences and similarities.

This thesis aims the understanding of the phenomena called Horowitz and Richter, that is compares the two artist's activity in: performing arts, education, chamber-music and in addition it gives factual interpretation analysis, which shows the musical conception, artistic personality, perception of style, musical work and score interpretation of the two outstanding pianist character, and, following Richter's badinage to the Yamaha pianos, it interprets these phenomena from the point of view of the Japanese music-lover audience and art critics, while it shows a short historical summary of the spread of Russian and European music in Japan, stating the most important stages of this process.

The real novelty of the thesis, according to the previously mentioned, lies in the comparative repertoire and interpretation analysis. Presumably, the spread of the Russian and European music in Japan and history of how the Japanese people became sensitive to the classical (in the wide sense of the word) western music are not a well known phenomena.

## **V. Documentation of the Activities Relating to the Topic of the Thesis**

To understand the Horowitz phenomenon, I had learned Horowitz transcriptions, which I had the opportunity to perform in concerts. The following works were played as encores:

### **Horowitz: Variations on Carmen**

09.03.1994, Győr, City hall

19.06.1994.: Tokyo, Showa Hitomi Women's University, Auditory

02.10.1995.: Budapest, Óbudai Társaskör (concert hall)

16.02.1998.: Győr, Richter János Zeneművészeti Szakközépiskola (Music Highschool)

15.04.2011.: Győr, Concert hall of the University (Synagogue)

### **Liszt-Horowitz: II. Hungarian Rhapsody**

06.03.1995.: Veszprém, Music School

21.09.2011.: Győr, Concert hall of the University (Synagogue)

24.03.2012.: Sopron, Liszt Ferenc Conference and Cultural Center

### **Liszt-Horowitz: XV. Hungarian Rhapsody (Rákóczi March)**

11.04.1996.: Debrecen, Conservatory

1996.04.17.: Győr, Rehearsal Hall of the Philharmonics

12.09.2012.: Győr, Concert hall of the University (Synagogue)

It was a great intellectual and emotional experience for me, that I had the opportunity to play the Carmen Variations as an encore in Tokyo, on 19<sup>th</sup> of June, 1994, where 8 years prior, (on 21<sup>th</sup> of June 1986) Horowitz performed, in the Auditorium called Memorial Hall, of the Showa Hitomi Women's University, which was built in 1980, considered as state of the art in the era, with wonderful acoustics, with a holding capacity of 2300 persons. This experience was strengthen by the fact, that Svatoslav Richter made a concert here on 23<sup>th</sup> of January 1981.

In the nineties it was very difficult to get the scores of the Horowitz transcriptions, but today, it is not an impossible task. In the appendix of this thesis, I publish one, the famous Carmen variations. I rouse the younger generations, if they want to test their skills in piano, learn one of the Horowitz's pieces or transcriptions.