

DLA Doctoral Thesis  
 Balázs Fülel  
**Improvisation in Reservation!**  
**The Cadenza Phenomena in Piano Concertos of**  
**Mozart and Beethoven**  
 Supervisor: Dr. Habil. Katalin Komlós PhD, DSc  
 The Liszt Academy of Music  
 Studies in History of Art and Culture  
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## I. Background of the study

The question in what way the history of the cadenza, the delay at the cadence of the concerto movements, originally the history of the improvised ornaments by a soloist or soloists, parallels unaccountably with the disappearance of the performers' co-composer attitude has been occupying my mind for quite some time. With the spread of the genre of the concerto, which stems from Italy, the cadenza, which used to be originally interpreted as ornamentation, grows into a smaller musical insertion-piece in a couple of decades, which serves not only as an ornament but also as a reaction of the soloist to the musical material of the movement. The cadenza is originally an improvised ornament, however, compared to the period of time of its appearance, the 18th century, in about a hundred years' time theorists of that period go against the improvised cadenza unequivocally. From the 19th century onwards every composer without exception composes their cadenzas for their own concertos and adds them organically to the musical material of their movements. From this time cadenzas cannot only be found at the cadence but at any point of the movement. Although cadenzas alter in many respects their attitude still remains the same: they remind of improvisation even if they – every single note and the adherent musical instructions and signs for the performer – are a

result of careful elaboration.

Originally I was going to write such a comprehensive paper which would make an anthology of cadenzas embracing almost 300 years' time in which the disappearance of improvised playing can be clearly traced. However, at a certain moment of collecting material for the study I had to realise again that '...Tief ist der Brunnen der Vergangenheit...', and that such comprehensive work besides the monumental task could also automatically involve the danger of superficiality. At that point I decided to focus the study on the keyboard concertos of the 18th century and again I had to realise shortly that '...mit unserer Forscherangelegentlichkeit treibt das Unerforschliche eine Art von foppendem Spiel...', since Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach also belongs to the 18th century about whose pre-composed keyboard cadenzas a full doctoral thesis could be written. Having recognised this I felt urged to show the weakening of the tradition of the improvised cadenza and then the phenomenon of its disappearance through the cadenzas of Mozart and Beethoven. In their work the function of the cadenza radically separates: the cadenzas of Mozart clearly refer to the past and can be interpreted as ornamentation, figuration while the cadenzas of Beethoven play a dominant part compared to the whole of the movement. In his last E flat major piano concerto the possibility of

an improvised cadenza absolutely vanishes. This drastical change made me decide that my thesis had to present how 'improvisation got into reservation' through the cadenzas of these two composers.

## II. Sources

Due to the structural construction of the dissertation the sources used divide into two parts: The chapter named 'Theoretical approach' dealing with cadenzas and consisting of rules and advice noted down by 18th century theorists mainly, takes the six most important music – instrumental and vocalist - schools of the 18th century as a basis. (Pier Francesco Tosi – Johann Friedrich Agricola: *Anleitung zur Gesangkunst*. Translated and annotated by J. F. Agricola. Berlin: George Ludewig Winter, 1757; Johann Joachim Quantz: *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen*, Berlin: 1752. Title of Hungarian edition: Fuvolaiskola (Flute school), translated by András Székely. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2011; Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: *Versuch über die wahre Art, das Clavier zu spielen*, Berlin: 1753 and 1762. Facsimile edition: Leipzig: VEB Breitkopf & Härtel Musikverlag, 1957; Leopold Mozart: *Versuch einer gründlichen Violinschule*. Augsburg: 1756. Hungarian translation published in Budapest: Mágus Kiadó, 1998, translated by András Székely;

Giambattista Mancini: *Riflessioni pratiche sul canto figurato*. Milano: Guiseppe Galeazzi Regio Stampatore, 1777; Daniel Gottlob Türk: *Klavierschule*, Leipzig und Halle, 1789. Facsimile edition: Bärenreiter Verlag, Kassel, 1967) while the chapter named 'Analytical approach' almost entirely builds on the music scripts (W. A Mozart: *The Piano Concertos*, published by: Internationale Stiftung Mozarteum. Kassel: Bärenreiter Urtext Edition, 2006; L. van Beethoven: *Klavierkonzert No. 1-5*, published by.: Hans-Werner Küthen, Urtext der Neuen Beethoven-Gesamtausgabe, München: G. Henle Verlag, 1996; Beethoven: *Klavierkonzert Op. 61a*, published by: Hans-Werner Küthen, München: G. Henle Verlag, 2005; Beethoven: *Kadenzen zu Klavierkonzerten*, published by: Hans-Werner Küthen, München: G. Henle Verlag, 2011). In the chapter called 'The Approach of the Performer' I relied on studies of 20th century musicologists on Mozart and Beethoven.

### III. Method

I have approached the topic and processing the topic from three directions: theoretical, analytical and performer's views. The first approach attempts to define what a good cadenza is like in a concerto on the basis of the abstract rules of 18th century theorists. The second

one examines the cadenzas written by Mozart and Beethoven and compares them with the rules of theorists, compares the two composers' cadenzas and also examines how cadenzas function in the musical environment of the particular movement which they were composed for. The third approach, the performer's approach deals with such problems that are met by the contemporary artist. Beyond the first two approaches the third one makes a summary on the one hand and on the other hand carries on dealing with the questions of improvisation.

The recording charts attached to the appendix of the thesis aim to empirically supplement this point of view. The study which has been made from these three aspects has revealed far-reaching consequences.

### IV. Results

The unconcealed aim of my dissertation has been to inspire the thought among the artists performing the piano concertos of Mozart and Beethoven – including myself as well – that the most important part of performing a cadenza is improvisation. On the basis of different research I have been confirmed that the performer must find the strongest possible connection with improvisation either playing a pre-

composed cadenza of a certain composer or their own. This is the only way to play a cadenza authentically with which the player can become – even if in a small reservation – a co-composer of the piece. Having compared the writings of the theorists of the 18th century with the analysis of the cadenzas of Mozart and Beethoven I have gained such experience which could at least to a certain extent enrich those musicians who encounter the cadenza phenomenon during their musical activity.

#### V. Documentation of the activity relating to the subject matter of the dissertation

As a pianist giving concerts my activity relating to the Mozart and Beethoven cadenzas is relatively frequent. Before performing certain piano concertos of these two composers there had been quite some contemplation whether to include my own cadenzas in the piano concertos where it is possible or choose the cadenzas composed by the composers automatically where they are available. So far I have solely opted for the cadenzas composed by the composers like in 2007 in Milan when performing Beethoven's piano concertos with the

'I Pomeriggi Musicali' Orchestra, and also at different international piano competitions where Mozart's piano concertos E-flat major KV. 449, D minor KV. 466, A major KV. 488 and B-flat major KV. 595 were performed by me.