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ORATOR OR POET?
SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT THE TRANSLATION OF FEELINGS
IN THE ART OF VIOLIN PLAYING
IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY*

Music is the soul of speech, and by its expansion it gives expression to sentiment in the same manner that speech helps to give a signification to music. It is this fact, which has induced us to seek in dramatic music for the greater number of the examples, contained in the third part of our work. Music being above all a language of sentiment, its melodies always contain a certain poetic sense, a speech either real or imaginary which the Violinist must always keep prominently in his mind, in order that his bow may reproduce its accents, its prosody, its punctuation, in fact, that he may cause his instrument to speak.¹

Charles de Bériot encapsulated the essence of his method of playing the violin, clearly presenting his aesthetic stance and performance ideals. This guiding thought runs throughout the entire manual and serves as the primary objective that young violinists should strive towards. These violinists are accompanied by an experienced

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* This article elaborates on some of the issues raised on another occasion, expanding the discussion to include the concept of the violinist as an orator, emphasising the performative and rhetorical aspects of violin playing in the 19th century and delving deeper into the philosophical roots of music as a language of emotions. It thus complements the issues discussed there, which focused more on the practical aspects of how this concept was applied in violin pedagogy. See Renata Suchowiejko, “«*Toutes les passions rapprochent les hommes*»: Le jeu du violon en tant qu’art oratoire et langue des sentiments,” *Ad Parnassum* 11, no. 21 (2013): 43-55.

¹ Charles de Bériot, *Méthode de violon / Violin-School op. 102. Divisée en 3 Parties*, trans. Dr W. J. Westbrook and Dr Phipson (Paris: Schott, 1858), 2.

teacher who introduces them to the secrets of playing the violin and provides them with precise technical instructions and a series of practical exercises as they walk along the path to excellence. De Bériot emphasized that technical proficiency alone is not the most important aspect of playing the violin. He explained: “It is our intention not so much to develop the mechanical features, as to preserve the true character of the Violin, that of reproducing and expressing all the feelings of the soul.”²

THE VIOLIN AS A VOICE:
METAPHORS AND MUSICAL RHETORIC
IN THE 19TH-CENTURY PERFORMANCE PRACTICE

The true mission of a virtuoso is to allow their instrument to “speak” – to learn to translate feelings into sounds and arrange them into a logical whole. The artist should do this so perfectly and suggestively as to convince the listener of their reasoning and to move their intellect and heart. In the early nineteenth century, the metaphor of a musical work as an “oration” was widely used in aesthetic writings, rooted in the preceding epoch. Several decades earlier, Charles Batteux wrote that a musical composition possesses properties similar to that of an orator’s speech. The emotions contained therein should be presented in a clear, just, lively, simple and novel manner.³ It is important for virtuosos to freely develop their themes while not losing the main thread of the discourse.

The metaphor of a sonorous oration was very lively in early Romanticism,⁴ both in theoretical treatises and in violin teaching. This is very apparent in the *Méthode de violon*, which was used at the Paris Conservatoire, as well as in the textbooks of Pierre Baillot and de Bériot, which have had a tremendous influence on shaping the aesthetic awareness of young performers.

The image of a performer as an orator was firmly entrenched in the consciousness of audiences and artists in the nineteenth century. A virtuoso possessed all the qualities of a good speaker: eloquence, persuasiveness and a skilful mastery of their instrument. They could speak in public and captivate crowds. Jérôme-Joseph de Momigny advised musicians: “Be consistent and coherent in your words or proposals, eloquent in your expressions, varied in your use of colors, nuanced in your

² de Bériot, 2.

³ Charles Batteux, *Les beaux arts réduits à un même principe* (Paris: Durand, 1746), 290.

⁴ cf. Mark E. Bonds, *Wordless Rhetoric. Musical Form and the Metaphor of the Oration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

effects, and occasionally surprise with unexpected breaks.”⁵ However, brilliance and eloquence are not everything. The violinist must also stimulate their audience’s senses and evoke emotions. In his *L’Art de violon*, Baillot writes that the goal of music is “speaking to the soul by pleasing the ear, causing an image to be born in the spirit, and even more often, causing a feeling to be born in the heart.”⁶ This is made possible by the instrument itself, which possesses immense tonal and expressive potential:

If we consider the different *characters* and effects of the violin, we find richness combined with simplicity, grandeur with delicacy, power with sweetness; it can bring joy and sympathize with sadness. Depending on how one approaches it, its response can be common or sublime; any melody is part of its function; any harmony is in its domain; it becomes the most noble interpreter of genius; initiated to all mysteries of the heart by its continuous contact, it breathes and it beats with the heart.⁷

Music is therefore the “art of emotion” and is capable of expressing and evoking feelings. The listener reacts instinctively to sounds and recognises their meaning as they resonate with their emotional state. Each emotion has a tone – a specific sonic image. These tones are arranged into a sequence and, like words in a language, create a coherent whole. However, music reaches much deeper than language because it touches the intimate sphere of human experiences. This happens thanks to the extraordinary properties of melody, which can convey feelings not just by depicting them but by truly realising them.

The conception of music as a language of feelings was a central issue in late eighteenth-century French aesthetics and resonated well into Romanticism. This idea was fully formulated and developed by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who argued that melody is a record of our internal experiences and creates – as it were – the outline of sensory impressions.⁸ This idea persisted in composition teaching throughout the nineteenth century. It was also adapted by violin pedagogues – Baillot and de Bériot – who tailored the concept to suit their own needs, drawing performance-related

⁵ Jérôme-Joseph de Momigny, *Cours complet d’harmonie et de composition d’après une théorie neuve et générale de la musique* (Paris: chez l’Auteur, 1808), 678. My own translation.

⁶ Pierre Baillot, *The Art of the Violin*, trans. Louise Golberg (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 256.

⁷ Pierre Baillot, 5.

⁸ cf. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Essai sur l’origine des langues où il est parlé de la mélodie et de l’imitation musicale*, in *Collection complète des œuvres de J. J. Rousseau*, vol. 8, *Théâtre, poésies et musique* (Geneva, 1782).

conclusions and paying attention to interpretative matters. As they argued in their textbooks, the expressive possibilities of the violin – the focus of their teaching – are limitless, and one only needs to know how to best utilize the instrument.

Baillot and de Bériot discussed various aspects of violin technique, demonstrated connections with vocal art and showcased special effects. They ensured the development of skills to master musical forms. This thread was extensively developed by de Bériot, who believed that in both performance and composition, the most important thing is to satisfy two human needs: a deep sense of order, and a desire for diversity. De Bériot devoted a great deal of attention to improvisation, teaching how to play the prelude (*le prélude*) and build ornamental cadential formulas. Similarly, Baillot stated that the ability to freely formulate thoughts is an essential element of every virtuoso's equipment and best demonstrates their eloquence.

BOWING TECHNIQUES AND THE ART OF PRONUNCIATION: TRANSLATING FEELINGS INTO SOUND

The central focus in French violin methods is on bowing issues. Baillot provided the most comprehensive explanations in this regard and proposed a detailed classification of bowing techniques, which other authors later utilised. He explained that bowing should be “like breathing in singing.”⁹ The regulation of this breath depends on various factors, including the correct grip on the bow, pressure force, and speed of movement. A diverse combination of these elements determines the richness of articulation and, consequently, the expansion of the palette of coloristic and expressive nuances. The more these nuances are present in the performance, the more convincing and moving the interpretation. As Baillot said, in bowing, clarity is the most important factor, as it makes the statement understandable and allows it to reach the listener. The basic condition for achieving this clarity is the execution of *détaché*, which has numerous variations. Baillot distinguished *détaché mat*: *grand détaché*, *martelé*, and *staccato*. Strong pressure on the string and limited flexibility give it a matte shade. The second type is *détaché elastique*: *léger*, *perlé*, *sautillé*. This is the “bouncing bow”, and it is very light and elastic. There is also an intermediate type, *détaché trainé*, that combines the characteristics of the previous two. *Détaché flûté* is a specific variation that, in the appropriate register and tilt of the bow, produces a *flautato* effect. The catalogue of articulatory means is very rich; the difficulty lies in masterfully combining them and using them to communicate emotions.

⁹ Baillot, *The Art of the Violin*, 227.

Coloristic shading must go hand in hand with perfect pronunciation (*la prononciation de l'archet*). In this field, the violinist should imitate singers and use the pronunciation techniques they employ. The phonetic foundations of language can indeed be adapted to their needs and translated, so to speak, into instrumental means. The art of playing the violin is remarkably similar to the art of singing. Leading a melody is based on prosody principles; it must consider parameters such as intonation, accentuation, phrasing and breathing (pauses). As De Bériot explained, the violinist should penetrate the hidden meaning of the melody as if imagining its verbal content. Then, they can truly “sing” with their instrument:

We cannot repeat too often that the performer will not be perfect until he can reproduce the accents of song in their most delicate forms.

By the song we mean not only the music, but also the poem of which it is the brilliant ornamentation – without which the melody would be nothing more than a vocal exercise. It is then of the highest importance for a singer to articulate clearly the words which he undertakes to interpret.

The clearness of the pronunciation depends entirely on the degree of force given to the consonants which begin each syllable. It is by means of this little percussive, in which the consonant seems to chase the vowel, that the singer makes himself understood even with a bass voice by the most distant of his auditors in a large room. It is well understood that the degree of intensity of this pronunciation should be in harmony with the spirit of the piece.¹⁰

Proper pronunciation has a significant impact on expression. It can bring out expressive accents even from the quietest melody or add power to it in other places: “This accentuation gives to the instrument the prestige of words: we say that the violin speaks in the hands of the master. This is what we call the utterance of the bow.”¹¹ It must be done with sensitivity, discreetly differentiating effects and avoiding extremes. Controlling the rhythm and tempo of this musical speech, as well as the moments of rest, is equally important. One must allow for moments of suspension or cessation. Pauses fulfil this function in music – they are as important as sounds in revealing the meaning of the entire melody. Musicians are advised to endure pauses carefully. Some virtuosos rush too much and thus fail to appreciate the expressive significance of silence. They do not allow for a moment of respite for themselves or for the audience. A pause does not cool emotions; it gives breath to the melody, helping the listener breathe along with it and follow its flow.

¹⁰ de Bériot, *Violin-School*, 219.

¹¹ de Bériot, 220.

Other factors regulating the flow of the melody include clear phrasing and punctuation marks. In music, as in language, commas, dashes and periods are used. Baillot explained this as follows:

Notes are used in music as words are used in speech; they serve to construct a sentence or form an idea. Consequently, we must use periods and commas in music just as we do in written language, to distinguish the ends of clauses and sentences to make it easier to understand.¹²

Punctuation marks are contained within the structure of the melody itself. Their function is fulfilled by various motivic and harmonic formulas, fermatas, periods of silence after the final note, appoggiaturas, ornamentations on cadential tones. Dynamic nuances, which are like light and shadow in painting, differentiating light intensities, and highlighting color contrasts are also important:

Nuances are to music what *chiaroscuro* and the play of lights are to painting. Their power is so great that it supplements the music itself; sometimes a single sound of an artfully determined loudness or softness is sufficient to produce as much of an effect as the most beautiful, harmonized passage.¹³

Pedagogues argue that the prosody of musical language, clarity of articulation and expressive accents are aspects of violin playing that are similar to speech. However, violinists also possess many techniques that have no analogies in spoken language. These are specific to the instrument and primarily made up of fingering and special effects. Fingering, which is the placement of fingers on the fingerboard, is extremely important in harmonics, entering positions, and playing chords. It affects speed, intonation and expression. In the first half of the 19th century, fingering was very rarely indicated in scores. Essentially, every violinist had their own preferred patterns. While general rules existed, they were adapted to individual needs. It was somewhat the secret knowledge of every virtuoso, and it influenced their individual playing style. Other techniques involved special effects: vibrato, harmonics, pizzicato, mute and scordatura. All these techniques added coloristic variety to playing and, consequently, aroused the admiration and awe of listeners. However, pedagogues warn against overusing them, as the excessive use of special effects could have the opposite effect of what is intended and diminish the pleasure they were meant to evoke.

¹² Baillot, *The Art of the Violin*, 163.

¹³ Baillot, 144.

The violin has mimetic properties; it can imitate the human voice while transcending its limits. Pitches beyond the vocal range, acrobatic leaps, fast runs and passages, and sudden changes in registers are unattainable for the human voice. Baillot explained that each string has a specific timbre that can be used for imitation purposes. The violin's ability to replicate various sounds depends on the construction of the instrument, although a great deal of responsibility lies in the hands of performers, "bringing to life the inert sound of the instrument and giving to its timbre all the expression of which it is capable."¹⁴ Sonorous aspects are extremely important for building tension and emotional differentiation in playing, and the violin offers almost unlimited possibilities in this regard. Therefore, violins can sing, even in very high registers or in polyphony (double stops, chords), and they can imitate other instruments:

Its timbre is that of a *second human voice*, and by the placing and extent of its pitch, it seems destined to serve as supplemental notes to the natural voice. At the same time, this timbre is so varied that the violinist can give it the pastoral *character* of the *oboe*, the penetrating sweetness of the *flute*, the noble and touching sound of the *horn*, the warlike brilliance of the *trumpet*, the fantastic wave of the *harmonica*, the successive vibrations of the *harp*, the simultaneous vibrations of the *piano*, and finally the harmonious gravity of the *organ*. Its four strings are capable of so many marvels: they produce more than four and one-half octaves from the lowest note to the highest. The bow, which sets this lyre of modern times in motion, brings to it a divine breath and produces its wonders by serving as a vehicle for all *affections* of the soul and all flights of imagination.¹⁵

The violinist, therefore, possesses a vast array of technical, expressive and tonal resources to move, touch and delight their audiences. However, their performances would not be as convincing if they did not respect the genre norms and stylistic rules of the era.

GENRE NORMS AND THE VIRTUOSO'S REPERTOIRE: CONCERTOS AND SALON MINIATURES

The selection of musical means is greatly influenced by genre norms, which enable communication with the listener. Musical genres play a similar role to literary

¹⁴ Baillot, 227.

¹⁵ Baillot, 5. All these terms are italicised in the original text.

ones. They open up a certain space of expectations and possibilities, creating a channel of understanding between the creator and their audience. Genre functions as a cultural code that imposes certain rules of the game but also opens up new possibilities. It is a kind of agreement between the composer and the listener. According to Jeffrey Kallberg, “the composer agrees to use some of the conventions, patterns, and gestures of a genre, and the listener consents to interpret some aspects of the piece in a way conditioned by this genre.”¹⁶ This contract obliges both parties to certain behaviours. The composer expresses their intentions using various means (title of the piece, rhythmic-metric elements, thematic content, expressive markings), which serve as strong enough signals for the listener to interpret the genre format of the composition.

De Bériot wrote about the strength of the genre tradition in the context of the personal development of the artist. He referred to the metaphor of the tree, which symbolises art and its vital nature:

Art represents to the imagination a tree rising into space, of which the top is crowned with glory. The object of each artist is to attain to its highest point.

The branches of this tree are of various kinds a [sic!] which instead of hindering him in his efforts, make of their obstacle a support for him. But he, who giving in to the disposition of his nature, leaves the centre to follow one of *these* branches which seems to him more easy of access, will find himself in the tangle of a mannerism. The other, on the contrary, who attaches himself lovingly to the trunk, where all the varieties of the art converge, knows how to make of them his substance, and strengthened by them he carries his talent towards the infinite regions of perfection.¹⁷

The most important genre practiced by a nineteenth-century virtuoso was a solo concerto with orchestra, which was perceived as a kind of drama in music. The soloist becomes the main character who openly expresses their emotions, while the orchestra stands on the side and reacts vividly to them:

A Romantic violin concerto presents a spectacular drama in music. It brings to life vivid characters, intriguing plots, formations of relationships and so on, in a narrative structured through conflict and resolution... Central to the drama is how the lone violin encounters the enormous orchestra and somehow manages to emerge as a hero, time and time again.¹⁸

¹⁶ Jeffrey Kallberg, “The Rhetoric of Genre: Chopin’s Nocturne in G Minor,” *19th-Century Music* 11, no. 3 (1988): 243.

¹⁷ de Bériot, *Violin-School*, 276.

¹⁸ Maiko Kawabata, *Drama and Heroism in the Romantic Violin Concerto*, PhD diss. (Los Angeles: University of California, 2001), 1.

Therefore, the essence of the concerto is the juxtaposition of one soloist against the entire orchestra, while the composer's goal is to achieve a balance between these opposing forces. For this clash of opponents to be understandable to the listener, it must be framed within a well-planned and balanced form. Musical means serve this purpose by emphasising this battle's internal segmentation through melodic formulas, closing phrases, elaborate virtuosic inserts and solo cadenzas. The experience of form as a hierarchically structured whole was of fundamental importance in the virtuosic concerto. Musical punctuation marks acted on the listener's imagination much more strongly than its thematic content or tonal plan.

The metaphor of "drama" in reference to the solo concerto has a long tradition spanning the eighteenth century to contemporary analyses. Bernard Germain Lacépède argued that the concerto is like a theatrical art in which individual parts create distinct acts and thus allow the full range of human emotions and passions to be displayed. The aim is for "all these affections to form a natural whole and compose a kind of drama."¹⁹ A musical form is a kind of plot that organises the sequence of events. Themes undergo internal transformations in the same way that literary heroes embark on transformative journeys. The composer's goal is to present this plot in such a way that it is convincing, it captures the listener's attention and leads to a final resolution.

Individual elements of the concerto are understandable to the listener, as they recognise familiar patterns of narrative construction and can interpret their expressive content. "Emotion occupies a privileged role in musical experience," wrote Fred E. Maus.²⁰ The listener acknowledges each event as significant, relying on their personal knowledge, experience and expectations. This happens through the cognitive activity of the mind, which allows the attribution of moods, actions, and emotional states to fictional characters: "In listening to a piece, it is as though one follows a series of actions that are performed now, before one's ears, not as though one merely learns of what someone did years ago," explained Maus.²¹

Another important genre area for the virtuoso was instrumental miniatures, which were strongly rooted in the musical culture of the salon. In the nineteenth century, salons served very important social, cultural and artistic functions. They were places in which new repertoires were introduced, the sensitivity of listeners was tested, and aesthetic attitudes were shaped. The salon repertoire was very

¹⁹ Bernard Germain de Lacépède, *La Poétique de la Musique* (Paris: Imprimerie de Monsieur, 1785), 332. Own translation.

²⁰ Fred E. Maus, "Music as Drama," *Music Theory Spectrum* 10, no. 1 (1988): 73.

²¹ Maus, 67.

diverse in terms of both genre and artistic level. Some genres were cultivated with particular fondness: *rêverie*, *élegie*, *romance*, *nocturne*, *souvenir*, *caprice*, *pensée fugitive*, *feuille d'album*, *chanson sans parole*, *légende* and *ballade*. The titles refer to vocal music or/and have poetic references. Such compositions are characterised by specific technical means (lightness of figuration, brilliant virtuosity, melodic singing) as well as expressive ones (sentimentalism, lyricism, elegance and charm).

The mood-setting miniatures played in salons served as evidence of romantic sensitivity and an expression of the need to retreat into the sphere of privacy and immerse oneself in a world of dreams and poetic fantasies. The atmosphere of the nineteenth-century salon favoured moments of reflection and intimate emotions, and instrumental lyricism was the best impulse for this. The instrumental lyricism operates with pure sound while simultaneously imitating singing, reaching back to the primal form of lyrical expression. In this space, the violinist speaks with the voice of a poet; rather, they sing with the instrument. The violin is the ideal medium for this purpose, as in its “singing” lies the entire range of emotions: “voice as lyric song, voice as declamation, voice as lament – and for that matter, voice as shriek and groan. But principally voice as the wellspring of melody.”²²

The ability to project melody in an affecting way is a fundamental element of every musician's performance practice and is as important as perfect technique. In the art of the virtuoso, it is essential to integrate the two elements of flawless technique and beautiful cantabile; only then can the performer reveal the full range of feelings and emotions contained in the music. As Baillot explained, the performer is a translator of feelings who faithfully renders all the nuances of expression and conveys them more clearly. The performer is both a mediator and a co-experiencer of these emotions and identifies with them:

It is genius of performance that allows the artist to seize at a glance the different characters of music, and by a sudden inspiration identify himself with the genius of the composer, follow him in all ... that gives the artist an idea of the effects so he can make them shine with the greatest brilliance and give the sound of his instrument the color suitable to what a composer has written. It is genius of performance that lets the artist know how to join grace to feeling, simplicity to grace, and strength to gentleness; it lets him know how to bring out all the nuances that make up contrasts; how to pass suddenly to a different expression; how to adapt himself to all the styles, to all the *accents*; how to make felt without affectation the most prominent passages and how to throw a skillful veil over the most mundane ones. It is genius of perfor-

²² Joseph Kerman, *Concerto Conversations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 69.

mance that allows the artist to imbue himself with the spirit of a piece to the point of lending it charms not indicated in the music, to go as far as creating the effects that the composer often leaves to instinct, to translate everything, to bring everything to life, to transmit to the soul of the listener the feeling that the composer had in his soul. It is genius of performance that allows the artist to make the great geniuses of past centuries live again, and finally to render their sublime *accents* with the enthusiasm suitable to this noble and touching language, which has been so beautifully named, along with poetry, the *language of the gods*.²³

The linguistic metaphors employed by violinists are strongly rooted in the aesthetic context of the era. Paying attention to the realm of emotions as the source of aesthetic experiences and human creative activity, belief in the affective power of art, the role of the artist in creating imagined worlds, the attitude of the orator and poet in artistic creation, and the idea of interconnections between arts are all deeply ingrained in Romantic ideology.

It was evident for nineteenth-century violinists that art was the language of emotions realised in the act of performance. At the same time, after delving deeper into their writings and setting aside the aura of romantic metaphor, one cannot resist the impression that the issues they addressed are still relevant. The belief that music is a language because it has the ability to communicate emotions preoccupies many contemporary researchers, and it has always troubled theoreticians, philosophers and artists. Attempts have been made in every era to find appropriate justifications for this idea. If we were to translate the arguments of violinists into the language of contemporary science, we might find that they are saying the same thing as today's semioticians, philosophers, music psychologists and cognitive scientists.

French pedagogues, Baillot and de Bériot, provided their own interpretation of the theory of emotions in music within the *métodes de violon*. They argued that the expressive character of music is determined by its melodic, harmonic and timbral properties, which most strongly stimulate the senses. Added to this are the technical possibilities of the instrument and the *génie d'exécution*. These pedagogues believed that a virtuoso is a translator of emotions who skilfully used various means to evoke emotional responses from the listener.

This translation has a multi-faceted character, i.e. feelings into sounds, spoken language into musical language, poetry and drama into a sonic version, and internal transfer between the arts of violin playing and singing. A violinist's speech is understandable because its foundation is the ability to empathise, which underlies every

²³ Baillot, *The Art of the Violin*, 274-75. Italicised in the original text.

art form. The artist skilfully utilises it and adapts it to their own goals and needs. The listener can decipher the emotional content of music because they recognise their own feelings within it. The difference between life and art lies only in how the artist chooses to direct the latter. Since the senses are the only way of knowing the world, much depends on the artist, as they can influence the feelings of the audience and shape their inner lives.

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ORATOR OR POET?

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT THE TRANSLATION OF FEELINGS IN THE ART OF VIOLIN PLAYING IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Summary

The image of the virtuoso violinist as an "orator" was firmly established in the 19th-century musical culture. He possessed all the qualities of a good speaker: he mastered his instrument, could speak in public, and was eloquent and convincing. However, brilliance and eloquence were not everything. The violinist also had to move the audience. This task was facilitated by the instrument itself, which had enormous expressive possibilities.

This article reflects on "translating feelings," as explained by 19th-century French masters in violin method books, particularly Pierre Baillot (*L'Art du violon*, Paris, 1834) and Charles de Bériot (*Méthode de violon*, Paris, 1858). Both consider music to be a language because it has the ability

to communicate emotions. They discuss technical means serving this purpose: articulation, bowing, phrasing, fingering, special effects (harmonics, pizzicato, scordatura), as well as ways of transferring vocal technique aspects to violin playing (punctuation, pronunciation, prosody). All these means have a significant impact on the process of translating emotions into sounds.

Keywords: violin playing; virtuoso tradition; nineteenth century; performance practice; esthetics; music as language; translating of feelings

ORATOR CZY POETA?
KILKA REFLEKSJI NA TEMAT TŁUMACZENIA UCZUĆ
W SZTUCE GRY SKRZYPCOWEJ W XIX WIEKU

Streszczenie

Wizerunek skrzypka-wirtuoza jako „oratora” mocno utrwalił się w kulturze muzycznej XIX wieku. Taki wykonawca posiadał bowiem wszystkie cechy dobrego mówcy: po mistrzowsku władał swoim instrumentem, potrafił przemawiać na forum publicznym, był elokwentny i przekonujący. Błyskotliwość i elokwencja to jednak nie wszystko. Skrzypek musiał też umieć wzruszać publiczność. To zadanie ułatwiał mu sam instrument, posiadający ogromne możliwości ekspresywne.

Artykuł ma na celu zastanowienie się nad ideą „tłumaczenia uczuć”, jak wyjaśniają to w podręcznikach gry skrzypcowej francuscy XIX-wieczni mistrzowie, zwłaszcza Pierre Baillot (*L'Art du violon*, Paryż, 1834) i Charles de Bériot (*Méthode de violon*, Paryż, 1858). Obaj uważają, że muzyka jest językiem, gdyż posiada zdolność komunikowania emocji. Omawiają szereg środków technicznych, które temu służą: artykulację, smyczkowanie, frazowanie, palcowanie i efekty specjalne (flażolety, pizzicato, scordatura), a także sposoby przenoszenia pewnych aspektów techniki wokalne na grunt gry skrzypcowej (interpunkcja, wymowa, prozodia). Wszystkie te środki mają duży wpływ na proces tłumaczenia emocji na dźwięki.

Słowa kluczowe: gra skrzypcowa; tradycja wirtuozowska; XIX wiek; praktyka wykonawcza; estetyka; muzyka jako język; tłumaczenie uczuć