



HISTORY OF THE PIANO AND PIANISTS: THE NATIONAL SCHOOLS OR LINES PIANISTIC

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1

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Summary

As we have already questioned in another scientific article: does tradition have anything to teach us about how to interpret a Musical Work? Identical to Signorelli (2019), this work aims to demystify the concept of tradition as something old and outdated. In this scope, we use the theoretical framework embodied in the Bibliographic Review; as well as the wealth of knowledge experienced in the author's own experience. Therefore, the proper alignment of technical-musical ideas with the great piano masters may have the power to train pianists committed to technical excellence, mastery of the piano apparatus and fidelity to the musical content expressed in the text written by the composer in his score. **Key words:** Pianistic training and musical tradition. "Schools" or pianistic lineages. Technical-interpretive approaches. Pedagogical trends. Fidelity to the Musical Text.

Abstract

As we have already asked in another scientific article: does tradition have something to teach us about how to interpret a Musical Work? Like Signorelli (2019), this work aims to demystify the concept of tradition as something old and outdated. In this scope, we use the theoretical framework embodied in the Literature Review; as well as the wealth of knowledge experienced in the author's own life. Thus, the proper alignment of technical-musical ideas with the great piano masters may have the power to form pianists engaged in technical excellence, mastery of the pianistic apparatus and loyalty to the musical content expressed in the text written by the composer in his score.

Keywords: Pianistic training and Musical Tradition. "Schools" or pianistic lineages. Technical-interpretive approaches. Pedagogical trends. Fidelity to the Musical Text.

1 Introduction “History of the piano and pianists”¹: problem and nomenclature

As we extract from Signorelli (2019), we have that:

From March 2016, we began teaching the optional theoretical subject “History of the piano and pianists: technical-interpretive trends and pedagogical approaches” at the Faculdade de Música do Espírito Santo (FAMES). The main purpose of this discipline is to equip students with a technical-musical arsenal based on historical information that allows students to acquire new motor skills and enhance their capabilities in solving pianistic problems. We thought a lot about the title to be given to the aforementioned discipline. Modern theories suggested that we call the discipline simply “Piano and pianists: history, technical-interpretive trends and pedagogical approaches”, since talking about “History of the piano” would be presented as something very restrictive in tone or even conservative; while the title “Piano and pianists”, more comprehensive, would be responsible for the dialogue between two autonomous interfaces with clear points of contact, thus placing the elements on a broader scale. We are not oblivious to the suggestions of academic modernity; however, we are not subjugated to it. In this way, our discipline has the ability to restore respect for musical tradition, which, often forgotten and despised in our music academies, can greatly contribute to the formation of conscious and mature performers in technical-musical terms. Furthermore, we would like to record the unique teaching we received from the great Brazilian pianist Nelson Freire. Upon learning that we were preparing Grieg's Concerto for piano and orchestra, one of the Brazilian master's first instructions was for us to listen to the historic recording of his musical “grandfather”, Arthur de Greef, disciple of Liszt and friend of Grieg. And he added: “tradition has a lot to teach us” (expressing his belief in tradition to enable the instrumentalist to offer his audience a genuine, valid and responsible interpretation). Therefore, we have seen that the world's great piano interpreters do not have the attitude of distancing themselves from musical tradition. Quite the contrary, they use tradition as a tool, model and source of inspiration for their interpretations. As mentioned elsewhere, we can also say about the legendary Argentine pianist Martha Argerich, a friend of the great Brazilian pianist Nelson Freire, with whom we also keep in touch. We could, however, mention a series of other great names (with whom we take classes) who also consider tradition as an important basis of reference for interpretation, such as: Luiz De Moura Castro (disciple of Guilherme Fontainha, Arnaldo Estrella and Lily Kraus), Mordehay Simoni (disciple of Estefan Askenase, Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli, Arthur Rubinstein and Bruno Seidlhofer), Myrian Dauelsberg (disciple of Liddy Chiafarelli, Arnaldo Estrella, Carlo Zecchi, Vlado Perlemuter and Bruno Seidlhofer), Eny Da Rocha (disciple of Marguerite Long and Lucette Descaves), Luiz Senise (disciple of Elzira Amábile, Arnaldo Estrella, Magda Tagliaferro, Pierre Sancan and Nikita Magaloff), José Eduardo Martins (disciple of Joseph Kliass, Marguerite Long, Jacques Février, Pierre Sancan and Jean Doyen), Cristina Ortiz (disciple of Magda Tagliaferro and Rudolf Serkin), Aleida Schweitzer (disciple of Jaap Callenbach and Jan Ekier), Miguel Angel Scebba (disciple of Vincenzo Scaramuzza, Vladimir Nielsen and Vladimir Natanson), Lícia Lucas (disciple of Homero De Magalhães, Vincenzo Vitalle and Denise Lassimone), Gilberto Tinetti (disciple of Alfred Cortot, Magda Tagliaferro and Friedrich Wührer), Paul Badura-Skoda (disciple of Edwin Fischer), Carmen Adnet-Graf (disciple of Dulce De Saules and Jozéf Turczynski, personal friend of Paderewski and editor of Piano Works by Frédéric Chopin), Leon Whitesel (disciple of Isabelle Vengerova), Eugene Pridonoff (disciple of Lilian Steuber, Rudolf Serkin and Mieczyslaw Horszowski),

¹Reference in quotation marks because it is the name of the elective course we teach, according to Signorelli (2019).

Ruth Slenczynska (disciple of Sergei Rachmaninoff, Arthur Schnabel, Josef Hofmann, Egon Petri, Alfred Cortot, Marguerite Long and Wilhelm Backhaus), Maria Gambarian (disciple of Konstantin Ygumnov and Heinrich Neuhaus), among many others. (SIGNORELLI, 2019, p. 1 and 2).

And the same author continues:

So our discipline wants to bring to the academic world the proper alignment of technical-musical ideas with the great piano masters. We consider that we cannot form a generation of pianists uncommitted to technical excellence, mastery of the pianistic apparatus and fidelity to the musical content expressed in the text written by the composer in his score. In effect, we argue that the role of the educator is to respect tradition and pass it on to his disciples, continuing the flow of history without compromising the advent of new ideas or creativity. So the interpreter will look for the "*modus faciendi*" of a certain musical idea shaped by the composer in the score, but without being subordinated or constrained to it under penalty of seeing his artistic freedom restricted. From another perspective, it is not a good idea for the performer to transform the conception of the Work as he pleases, altering the traditional way of playing it at his own discretion and without due justification. (SIGNORELLI, 2019, p. 2).

3

Still according to Signorelli (2019), those who intend to take non-trivial, progressive, non-traditional, original and "innovative" paths must take due care in making their interpretative decisions based on consistent bases. For Signorelli (2019): "Otherwise, such an act would be, at the very least, irresponsible, mistaken and incorrect from a technical-interpretative point of view (since it is totally disconnected with the Style and Character of the Piece to be performed)." (SIGNORELLI, 2019, p. 3).

The interpretative decision mentioned above could even be, depending on the case, considered "vulgar", "mundane" or "common"^{two}(there is no need to talk, at this point, about labeling, standardization or stereotyping processes); or even deprived, lacking or lacking a consistent, clear, verifiable, plausible, defensible, substantiated, substantiated and verifiable aesthetic-musical conception.

In this sense, Signorelli (2019) highlights that:

Furthermore, it would constitute a distortion of the Musical Text and an attack on the essence of the composer's musical message, compromising both artistic-intellectual honesty and the seriousness of pianism in its genuine authenticity (the execution would be nothing more than a bluff, a typical work of charlatanism that falsifies the interpretation – "*fake*"). In view of the above, because we understand that "fads" and "modern theories" can pass (we are not saying that they will necessarily pass, but just questioning and suggesting such a possibility), we decided to base our discipline on the most solid and lasting foundations of musical tradition. We do this because one of the functions of our discipline is precisely to rescue this tradition (so distorted, disrespected and misunderstood especially in academic circles). Nevertheless,

^{two}The reference in quotation marks is due to the use of words in their common senses and currently accepted or recognized in common sense, popular imagination or collective unconscious.

tradition offers us more than enough ammunition for the exact understanding of a musical Work (both in relation to Style and Character) undermining any chance of caricatured interpretations, as well as reproductions (or repetitions) of existing recordings. In this sense, we understand that it is important for the instrumentalist, above all, to know how to read what was written by the composer, so that he does not fall into creating “pastiche” (even if they are not crude). In effect, the soul of the Piece is between the lines of the notes (letters in the Musical Text), as well as in its groups and designs (syllables and words in the Musical Text). (SIGNORELLI, 2019, p. 2 and 3).

According to Signorelli (2019), in an emblematic text, knowing how to read the Musical Text is not a matter of “purism”, “preciousness”, “archaism” or “conservatism” (or, even, a “conservatorian” vision - as some want); but only of respect and clarity regarding the Composer's message (correct interpretations, without mistakes, safe, legitimate, genuine, musically and intellectually honest, convinced and convincing, with truth, authentic).

In the meantime, Signorelli (2019) highlights that:

According to Lucas (2010), the *modern piano school* (initiated by Busoni at the turn of the 19th century to the 20th century and later unraveled by: Hofmann, Rachmaninoff, Schnabel, Michelangeli, Egon Petri and Giesecking, among others), in contrast to the romantic school of piano (marked by the performer's subjectivism), values, above all, by the rational observance of the composer's intentions in their constructive sense and essence in terms of emotional effects to be generated in the public. Therefore, the intellectual and objective search for the subjectivity of the composer (and not the performer) constitutes the supreme end of *modern piano school*, which prevails to this day. (SIGNORELLI, 2019, p. 5).

This time, Signorelli (2019) states that “creative interpretations” are not allowed, which are nothing more than a disservice to the historically accumulated musical culture in addition to pure subjectivism (or, sometimes, a product of mere personal vanity) revealing artistic eventualities and dishonesty. -intellectuals who border on charlatanism or scoundrels.

Often, they are stereotypical, poorly finished and caricatured performances that seek to escape the trivial through diametrically opposed obviousness, turning the interpretative elements upside down. As a result, we find a predictable, amateurish, boring, academic and scholastic presentation.

The aforementioned author continues his exposition claiming that his discipline aims to enable students to escape these traps, which are the broadest path (that is, the easiest, a priori, hasty, incipient, immature, naive and obvious shortcut). Such instrumental practice can vulgarize or trivialize the interpretation, making music making common, offending the artistic dignity that those who try to play well must have.

Thus, the aforementioned author considers it nonsense (and a contradiction) to broaden the scope of knowledge, deviating from the main focus, which is making music (that is, piano performance). In his view, teaching must be allied and aligned with practice, under penalty of inevitable contradiction and deviation of function.

Furthermore, for Signorelli (2019), there is no point in expanding the spectrum of knowledge if such a theoretical framework does not result in effective growth in technical-pianistic capacity, as well as sobriety or musical seriousness.

For this author, it would be mere formalism or terminological purism; that is, innovation for innovation's sake (or differentiation for mere differentiation's sake, as an end in itself) without due epistemological and academic rigor.

In this spectrum, Signorelli (2019) considers:

We understand that the Academy is a place conducive to change and the vanguard. However, the Academy also has an important role in conserving and respecting historically inherited traditions. Regarding the term empowerment, Herriger (1997) highlights that the Empowerment Tradition (*Empowerment Tradition*) has its roots in the Protestant Reformation, initiated by Luther in the 17th century. XVI, in Europe – in a leading movement in the fight for social justice. In such a way that the theme of empowerment, as social emancipation, *no* constitutes a novelty. According to Freire (2011), individual empowerment is self-emancipation, based on an individualistic understanding of empowerment, which emphasizes the psychosocial dimension. Thus, empowerment involves a process of awareness and the transition from naive thinking to critical awareness. According to Freire (1979), awareness is a process of knowledge that takes place in the dialectical relationship between man and the world, in an act of action-reflection; that is, it happens in practice. Raising awareness does not mean manipulating, leading others to think as I think; raising awareness is “taking possession of reality”, constituting the most critical view possible of reality; It involves moving away from reality in order to objectify it in your relationships. Still according to Freire (1979), to develop the awareness process, dialogue and dialogic education are essential. Dialogical education is not a teaching technique, it is an epistemological stance. Furthermore, the Academy cannot miseducate; but to educate and transmit to future generations the cultural baggage built by humanity over the years. For us, the Academy's role is to add value and provide information; and do not subtract or omit them. (SIGNORELLI, 2019, p. 6 and 7).

The same author explains that, otherwise, the social function of the Academy will be it was impoverished, overshadowed and belittled (or even canceled and annulled).

Therefore, the attempt to produce new knowledge without observing the information accumulated over generations would be, at the very least, a harmless, fruitless, ineffective, stupid, foolish, childish, naive and immature act.

In fact, it would appear to be the historical moment in which society is currently inserted, marked by the following characteristics: obscurantism and regression; use of

masks making it impossible for the truth to be told; superficial, artificial and distant relationships (social isolation); behavioral falsehood in social relationships; use of masks as gags obstructing people's real voices; use of sanitizers with the intention of, allegedly, purifying society of what is supposedly considered politically incorrect and noisy to the ears.

In this supplement, the author in focus mentions that he could cite a host of great artists and teachers who defend adherence to tradition as a way of legitimizing interpretation while respecting composers (as well as the History of Music).

Following Signorelli (2019), we read that:

Given the reasons mentioned above, despite not being oblivious or resistant to academic modernities, we purposely decided not to "update" the name of our discipline precisely in honor of the traditional basic principles that guide music making and that must not be broken (under penalty of ruin of the piano building). (SIGNORELLI, 2019, p. 7).

In view of the above, like Signorelli (2019), we chose not to give in to the easy, temporary, populist, demagogue, dominant, oppressive, violent, anti-democratic, imposing, totalitarian, retrograde, cachectic, creativity-ravaging, deconstructive, iconoclastic, discourse. restrictive of the space allocated to freedoms and individual or subjective rights, denialist, arrogant, hostile, prejudiced, obscurantist, fragmentary, discriminatory and separatist (represented by cliché, cliché, falsification of creative potential, stereotyping, reverse standardization, by obtuse massification and the formation of caricatured commonplaces) to the detriment of centuries-old historical and socio-cultural structures that cannot collapse due to an epistemological stance characterized, in our way of seeing, by the irresponsible breaking of naturally and culturally consecrated paradigms.

In such a way that such an epistemological choice could end up disavowing the assimilated or acquired Musical Tradition itself, as well as the historically accumulated good customs. In truth, the deconstruction of monuments built for reasonable reasons over the centuries appears, to us, to be an unreasonable, unfounded, absurd, unbalanced and extremist attitude. A true misfortune, the result of radicalism and folly, in our point of view, generating misuse of content historically conquered by humanity.

In fact, the discipline addressed by Signorelli (2019) is relevant, significant and representative of a location, space or focus of *Resistance* imposition, injunction or prescription

of ideas of a so-called or supposedly Progressive nature already established, crystallized and widely predominant in the artistic, academic and teaching circles, substantially or materially realizing the consecrated, disseminated and proclaimed right of gagged, oppressed, rejected, harassed and coerced minorities to freedom of expression in the context of the much vaunted and celebrated Democratic Rule of Law that we have (at least, theoretically) in our Brazilian society.

2 Methodology and instrumentation

Based on the methodological proposition of Signorelli (2019), this work will be developed using the descriptive method without a Case Study, but will not be guided by a substantive hypothesis.

According to the aforementioned author's explanation, it is observed that:

No Work Study (Musicographic Review) will be carried out. No Phonographic or Videographic Review will also be carried out. The research will be based solely on Literature Review. Therefore, the work will be presented in a descriptive way only, with a large preponderance of qualitative analysis. The data will always be analyzed in a clear and direct way, never in disagreement with the paradigm based on the Theoretical Framework; except in the event that they appear to contradict previously established premises. Our methodology will also cover the comparison of data, analysis of arguments, interpretation of meanings, comparison of ideas, dialogue between authors, critical questions and problematizations, analogies with practice and application of concepts to reality. The analytical method will predominate, based on research into sources through critical-descriptive reasoning aimed at organizing and systematizing thought on knowable matter. It is worth noting that literary sources with exclusively musical content will be researched, that is, focused on specifically artistic themes. (SIGNORELLI, 2019, p. 8, 9, 28, 29).

In this epistemological approach, similarly to the study by Signorelli (2019), works pertinent to other fields of knowledge, such as Psychology and Medicine, will not be addressed, even if they have some relationship with the proposed theme.

Likewise, we have already pointed out in Signorelli (2019) that such types of work will not be analyzed in the Literature Review, both due to the strictly artistic nature of the present study and because of an obvious limitation of the researcher in the areas raised.

In this vein, Signorelli (2019) establishes that:

The measurement instruments used in this work will be created by the researcher. In the case of a study of pianistic performance, the instrument itself (piano) will be a means of measuring the results. It is important to emphasize that the researcher, as an interpreter-pianist, will also add

of the exhibition, always supported by literary data, information resulting from his piano training and his professional experience. (SIGNORELLI, 2019, p. 9, 28).

Therefore, we will conduct academic work and continue research in a coherent, concise, clear, consistent and well-founded manner.

In this dynamic, the authors will be placed in dialogue so that the comparison of ideas makes valid and plausible notes emerge, through analysis.

8

3 Theoretical framework

Like Signorelli (2019), in this work, we will use, as the main guiding theme, the book "*Apiano genealogy*", by pianist and author Lícia Lucas, published in its first edition in 2010 by the publisher Muiraquitã in the city of Niterói-RJ.

In the same way as Signorelli (2019), in this research we will also use the set of literature of manuals aimed at analyzing technical-interpretive aspects in the piano field, in their respective chapters consistent with the theme at hand.

Like Signorelli (2019), we will use the quotes of authors who speak with the same language, timbre and chromatic tonality in relation to the aforementioned author; which are, for example: Chiantore (2001, *apud* Signorelli, 2019), Rattalino (2005, *apud* Signorelli), Kochevitsky (1967, *apud* Signorelli, 2019), Schonberg (1992, *apud* Signorelli, 2019), Gerig (2007, *apud* Signorelli, 2019), Bruser (1997, *apud* Signorelli, 2019), among others. Furthermore, in the subsequent lines, the authors will parade.

In this context, let us review the different national lineages or "schools" of the pianistic tradition.

4 National pianistic "schools" (technical-interpretive trends): genealogies

As Signorelli (2019) explains, although we live in a globalized world, in which the amalgam of reciprocal influences is dynamic and continuous, causing pianists to play mixing diverse and plural technical-interpretive tendencies; we can,

mainly for didactic-methodological purposes, talk about traditional national piano “schools”³.

In this sense, the aforementioned author says: “Furthermore, countries (especially European ones), despite the openness generated by globalization, remain very aware of and attached to their roots, placing them at the level of cultural heritage of their respective peoples” (SIGNORELLI, 2019, p. 17). That is to say, these populations are proud (in the good sense of the word) of their tradition and the cultural heritage they received from their ancestors (ancestry, heredity, customs).

And the same author continues in his exposition:

Furthermore, we consider the division into traditional national piano “schools” for purely didactic purposes; since, in practice, depending on individual physiological and anatomical factors, the different technical-interpretive tendencies and technical approaches tend to merge according to the peculiarities of each instrumentalist. Likewise, understanding the principles underlying each technique facilitates the adoption of a “*modus operandi*” standard for each type of body (resulting from the fusion of the various schools, depending on the Style and Character of each Work to be performed) cooperating for the naturalness (ease, organicity, corporeality, physicality, spontaneity) of the execution. It is worth saying, the technique is also something personal, as it depends on the body of each individual (fitting the body, making it organic and natural, with more ease, mastery, control and authority in the execution of a Musical Piece). (SIGNORELLI, 2019, p.18).

However, Signorelli (2019) considers it extremely important for the piano student to know separately each of these pianistic techniques and musical conceptions in order to adapt them in their own way and take advantage of them by using them to their advantage, that is, helping yourself and acting for your own benefit. In this line of thought, the objective is the most perfect performance (that is, when performing a musical excerpt, the musician-performer will use the most different approaches together, choosing what suits him and what works best in his specific case with significant expansion of your repertoire, menu or vocabulary of piano movements).

Still according to Signorelli’s claim (2019):

Thus, the larger the arsenal and the more tools it has, the more prepared the instrumentalist will be to solve the technical-interpretive problems of the Score. Likewise, knowledge of different musical techniques and visions enables different ways of studying, practicing and performing. On this basis, the greater the variety of ways of studying and playing, the better (since, strategically, all technical and interpretative difficulties will be surrounded on all sides; and, therefore, resolved). (SIGNORELLI, 2019, p. 18).

³We make the reference in quotation marks due to the controversy surrounding the topic discussed elsewhere.

It is important to highlight that, from now on, we will use the expression *pianistic lineages* to denote the varied “schools”⁴ national pianistics represented by the distinct or differentiated cultural traditions and customary practices of European countries.

So, in a very simple and succinct way, we will analyze some of the most important national traditional piano schools in terms of historical relevance,⁵ namely: French, Austrian, German, Russian, English and Italian.

According to Lucas's lesson (2010), the vast majority of pianistic lineages or traditions had as their original figure a common patriarch or ancestor, namely: Muzio Clementi.

Let's see, below, the main characteristics alluding to each pianistic lineage or tradition.

5 Pianistic lineages

5.1 The French "school"

Note that we have already commented on this topic in Signorelli (2019). According to Casella (1936, *apud* Signorelli, 2019), Schonberg (1960, *apud* Signorelli, 2019), Cortot (1986, *apud* Signorelli, 2019), Timbrell (1999, *apud* Signorelli, 2019), Chiantore (2001, *apud* Signorelli, 2019), Rattalino (2005, *apud* Signorelli, 2019) and Gerig (2007, *apud* Signorelli, 2019); we can extract the main characteristics of the French piano school, namely; strong alternating (isolated) and high articulation of the fingers (sometimes with curved fingers rounded to a fingertip – “old French school” by Marguerite Long – sometimes with curved fingers semi-extended in a fingertip – “new French school” by Alfred Cortot); precision (in touch); accuracy (in musical conception); technical cleaning; clarity; elegance (without exaggerations, bursts of contrast or excessive affectations in interpretation); “cup” hand position (form, structure or “arch” firm but not clamped – natural position of the hand when walking and acting: with the finger bones or metacarpal bones appearing visible on the back

⁴It is a controversial, ambiguous and obscure designation. Therefore, when we refer to the term National Schools in the sense of Pianistic Lineages, we will make due use of quotation marks in order to highlight the meaning adopted for the notion of “school” suggested considering the scope of this work.

⁵The basis for this statement is found in the set, group or “*corpus*” of bibliographic references used in this work.

of the hand, or as if someone were to rest their hands on their knees); literality in understanding the Musical Text (absolute in the “old school” and relative in the “new school”, with expanded use of Imagination) and strict fidelity to the musical content (Style and Character); little pedal (to provide clarity, purity of sound and transparency); independence and strengthening of the fingers; finger equality obtained through training and strengthening (in the “old school”), as well as mastering weight technique to compensate for different finger sizes (in the “new school” training and weight technique were used together); in both French “schools”, the touch must be deep, burying or sinking the fingers inside the piano keyboard with verticality of touch in the downward direction; also resort to the so-called “attack” indirect or indirect touch of the fingers (fingers “pulling” towards the palm of the hand bringing the pianistic movement to the fingertips); development or acquisition of a variety of touches, gradations of dynamics and colors (or timbres – especially in the “new school”, through the creation of different atmospheres); little latitude or flexibility in timing and rhythmic pulsation (in the “new school” there is greater freedom in this sense); touch usage “*je perlé*” (pearly), both to study and to perform certain passages; strong “*approach*” technical and use of pure technique (more radical in the “old school” than in the “new school”, which also emphasized the use of technique applied to the Musical Work); study with different accents and rhythmic variations; development of critical ear, fantasy (in the “old school”, with the use of typical elements of French culture), the ability to hear sound internally, artistic awareness and Musical Imagination (especially in the “new school”, both musical in both the strict and extramusical sense).

5.2 The German and Austrian “schools”

As we have already reported in Signorelli (2019):

The Austrian (Vienna school) and German schools have many common features, so we will analyze their characteristics together, pointing out the distinctions between them. These schools were influenced by the following pianists and teachers: Hungarian Franz Liszt and Austrian-Polish *Theodor Leschetizky* (both from the Czerny-Beethoven-Clementi line). It is important to remember that Leschetizky was a personal friend of the Russian pianist and teacher *Anton Rubinstein*, having been invited by him to found the Saint Petersburg Conservatory, the first conservatory established in

Reference in quotation marks, as we consider the term too crude and aggressive in our way of seeing.

Russia (where he taught from 1852 to 1877 as head of the piano department). (SIGNORELLI, 2019, p. 20).

Note, again, that we have already commented on this topic in Signorelli (2019). According to Leimer-Giesecking (1951, *apud* SIGNORELLI, 2019), Fontainha (1956, *apud* SIGNORELLI, 2019), Schonberg (1960, *apud* SIGNORELLI, 2019), Kentner (1978, *apud* Signorelli, 2019), Gát (1980, *apud* SIGNORELLI, 2019), Göllerich (1996, *apud* SIGNORELLI, 2019), Brée (1997, *apud* SIGNORELLI, 2019), Horowitz (1999, *apud* SIGNORELLI, 2019), Chiantore (2001, *apud* SIGNORELLI, 2019), Rattalino (2005, *apud* SIGNORELLI, 2019), Gerig (2007, *apud* SIGNORELLI, 2019), Arx (2014, *apud* SIGNORELLI, 2019) and Cooke (2015, *apud* SIGNORELLI, 2019); it is possible to define some common characteristics of these schools, namely: use of arm weight from the shoulders; elbow as a guide for pianistic movements leading the gestures; preference for using open arms to accompany gestures (especially towards the bass and treble); freer use of the pedal (except for catchphrases) avoiding drier tones; flexibility and relaxation of the entire body; using the weight of the arm with passive fingers from a strong impulse (or “*not her*” = musical energy) for each note for study purposes (weight technique or weight playing); fidelity to the Musical Text, but with extensive use of Imagination; thrown or thrown, rotary, elliptical, drawer and rotating gestures; “vibration movement” (against gravity in the direction of the piano lid in order to slow down the playing, ensuring due body elasticity and the desired sound quality without timbre harshness); “round” touch and sound (without edges, points or hardness) as a parameter or aesthetic-musical ideal; smallest gesture possible (greater speed in execution, economy of movements and no waste of energy); prepared touch (anticipation of blocks or forms of gestures in order to suppress the percussive character of the piano – similar to the old clavichord, as previously announced – imitating the human voice); feel or perceive, through perception or tactile sensitivity at the fingertip, the keys previously under the fingers (or the fingers on the keys in advance - preparatory technique); technical cleaning; independence and strengthening of fingers (“gymnastics”); finger equality achieved through training and strengthening, as well as mastering weight technique to compensate for different finger sizes (training and weight technique together); developing or acquiring a variety of touches, gradations of dynamics and colors (or timbres, through the creation of different atmospheres); greater width or agogic flexibility, although the rhythm

(pulse) must always be present; rounded positions of hands, fingertips (for Baroque and Classical composers) and arched or flattened positions with curved fingers, pads of the fingers (for Romantic composers, such as *Brahms*, for example); the position of hands with “breaking” of the upper palm of the hand is permitted (giving the hand “softness”, as if it were a spring or car suspension); the arm and palm are a good support or bridge that transports the musical energy from the brain to the fingertips (there should be no point of interruption, impediment, obstruction, tightness or tension in this path); your fingers must fall like pendulums onto the keyboard, taking advantage of the full force of gravity; concentrated, conscious and intelligent study (the brain controls the fingers); study with different accents and rhythmic variations; strict fidelity to musical content, Style (above all) and Character; development of the critical ear, the ability to hear sound internally, artistic awareness and Musical Imagination (musical in the strict sense and extramusical).

In this sphere, Signorelli (2019) explains that:

The schools in question differ in the following point: the Viennese school gives less importance to technical-mechanical aspects, favoring the interpretative-musical issues required by the Musical Text, in addition to not showing much use of the weight of the arm. (SIGNORELLI, 2019, p. 21).

In fact, this differentiation arises from the influence exerted by the Russian “school” of Anton Rubinstein and his brother, Nikolai Rubinstein – founder, in turn, of the Moscow Conservatory.

5.3 The Russian “school”

Note, once again, that we have already commented on this topic in Signorelli (2019). Lhevine (1972, *apud* Signorelli, 2019), Neuhaus (1973, *apud* Signorelli, 2019), Schick (1982, *apud* Signorelli, 2019), Slenczynska (1986, *apud* Signorelli, 2019), Schonberg (1992, *apud* Signorelli, 2019) and Hofmann (2015, *apud* Signorelli, 2019) the principles of the Russian “school” of piano, namely: use of the weight of the entire body with the maintenance of the wrists free of any stiffness, providing economy of force; smallest possible gesture and distance (greater speed, economy of movement and no waste of energy), finger touch very close (“glued” or “sticky”) to the keyboard without allowing “air to enter” (“non-airy” touch) between one note and another with complete adhesion or grip of the hand to the keyboard (use

of the hand in its basic function position, which is to “grab” or “take” objects – “take”, in English); use of arm weight from the shoulders; relaxation and flexibility; technical cleanliness and clarity; strong “approach” technical (use of the so-called pure technique); minimum digital articulation downwards and always very close to the keyboard (from the key down to the bottom or “floor” of the key) without lifting the fingers so as not to lose energy, time and speed (even in Baroque and Classical composers, only articulates a little more, but without removing your finger too much from the key); independence and strengthening of the fingers (“gymnastics” – *finger flexors*, since the work of the joint is downwards); finger equality achieved through training and strengthening, as well as mastering weight technique to compensate for different finger sizes (training and weight technique together); developing or acquiring a variety of touches, gradations of dynamics and colors (or timbres, through the creation of different atmospheres); less space or time flexibility compared to the German school; posture always upright and further away from the keyboard (imagine a line that goes from the ceiling passing through the spine aligning the body – Alexander line, *Alexander Technique*), but using body weight; press the key with the tip of your finger on the key (feeling or perceiving the key under your fingers, that is, a block of chords or shape already prepared in advance and always in contact with the keyboard = preparatory technique) and then lowering your wrist relaxing the entire arm + wrist assembly as a whole body mass block; preparation-movement-relaxation; “down-up cycle” (“down-up cycle”) = going from note to note transferring the weight and changing the balance point: downwards produces the sound, upwards prepares it in the direction of the next note; sound quality comes first, never hitting the keys (“don’t strike the keys”); Russians consider the piano to be a string instrument (and not percussion) – similar to the ancient clavichord, as mentioned elsewhere – in which the keys are played directly on the strings, imitating the human voice and seeking to eliminate the action of the hammer (character singer); rounded positions of the hands, fingertips (for Baroque and Classical composers) and the arched position (flatter) with curved fingers, pads of the fingers (for Romantic composers, such as *Brahms*, for example); the position of hands with “breaking” of the upper palm of the hand (giving the hand “softness” as if it were a spring or car suspension) is permitted, but with parsimony due to the importance of the “shell” (shape, structure, or firm “arch” but not in a cast - natural position of the hand when walking and acting: with the finger bones or metacarpal bones protruding visible on the back of the hand, or as if someone were to support the hands

on the knees); study with different accents and rhythmic variations; systematic study with accentuation on each note individually to later organize and connect them into larger groups (this procedure can be expanded to the study of entire sections of Pieces); the instrumentalist must be able to accentuate any note in the musical phrase; strict fidelity to musical content, Style and Character (above all); concentrated, conscious and intelligent study (the brain controls the fingers); feather arm and iron fingers (like firm stakes to support the weight of the arm); the arm freely follows the choreographed movement of the hands (especially towards the bass and treble) and the elbows must float like balloons in the air; the arm and palm are a good support or bridge that transports the musical energy from the brain to the fingertips (there should be no point of interruption or tension in this path); fingers of iron or steel (to support - like stakes, columns or pillars the weight of the arm from the shoulder) in a velvet hand; highly developed block preparatory technique with the use of shapes (the fingers that are not working must remain resting on their respective keys) – this aspect of the Russian school, originating from Neuhaus or Neigauz, advocates the advance passage of the thumb when going between scales and ascending arpeggios, for example; as well as the hand over the thumb on the way back; A second joint is often not used, as the fingers walk and articulate together (i.e. together) close to the keyboard (principle of shortest path, smallest gesture, energy saving) causing the touch to come from the palm of the hand (the other fingers are concentrated or coalesced around the finger that is playing): this aspect is very close to the Italian school, as we will see below; the fingers must fall like pendulums on the keyboard, taking advantage of all the force of gravity (approximation with the Austrian-German school) – in this aspect of the Russian school, originating from Ygumnov, the passage of the thumb on the way up the scales and ascending arpeggios (as well as the hand over the thumb on the way back), for example, is not anticipated (but occurs naturally, with the thumb walking progressively and gradually behind each finger); development of the critical ear, the ability to hear sound internally, artistic awareness, fantasy (using elements specific to Russian culture or “soul”) and Musical Imagination (musical in the strict and extra-musical sense).

The Saint Petersburg and Moscow Conservatories were founded, respectively, by the brothers *Anton Rubinstein* (together with the Austrian-Polish composer, pianist and teacher Theodor Leschetizky) and *Nikolai Rubinstein*. Both were composers and pianists who influenced an entire generation of artists and teachers of the Russian “school” of piano.

In this way, the Russian “school” incorporated many precepts of the “Austrian-German school” both by way of influence and lineage.

5.4 The Italian "school"

As we already announced in Signorelli (2019), this is the opportune moment to discuss its characteristics and main notes. Furthermore, Brugnoli (1989, *apud* SIGNORELLI, 2019), Lucas (2010, *apud* Signorelli, 2019) and Candela (2012, *apud* Signorelli, 2019) give us news about the Italian piano school.

Marked by the “attack”⁷ set of fingers, presents the following characteristics: the fingers are raised in a grouped manner, and not isolated as in the French “school”; use of the hand in its basic function position, which is to “grab” or “take” objects – “take”, in English); use of arm weight from the shoulders; relaxation and flexibility; a very large and very quick gesture is made with the fingers simultaneously from the palm of the hand (considered as the driving force) as if making the gesture of “saying goodbye”; the arms do not follow the movements of the hand and wrist, as they remain parallel and relaxed along the torso (the relaxed arm is the one that has weight); the palm of the hand is like a “jaw” ready to take a “bite”; the thumb is seen as the strongest finger and the hand is “divided” into two parts from it; the fingers move up and down together with a lot of speed and power.

The maxims or aphorisms "arm of feather and fingers of iron" and "a hand of steel in a velvet glove" are often used.

In congruence with the teaching of Lucas (2010), the Italian "school" originated from the Swiss-born Austrian pianist and composer, *Sigismund Thalberg*, rival of *Franz Liszt*. Furthermore, Thalberg's teachings emphasized the *singing character* of the piano to the detriment of its percussive aspect. Therefore, the percussive factor was relegated and neglected in honor of the construction of the phrasing with a powerful and harmonious sound. From this perspective, he favored a sensitively poetic and perfectly finished performance.

After a successful tour of Europe, South America and the United States, *Sigismund Thalberg* dedicated himself to teaching the piano, founding and establishing a consistent and

⁷We prefer to use this expression in quotation marks so as not to leave room for any interpretation of brutality or aggressiveness on the piano.

sustainable the so-called *Neapolitan Piano School*, which has great weight and tradition in Italy, extending its influence throughout the world with derivations in many countries in various aspects and important descendants responsible for its continuous development over time until contemporary times.

The foundations of this "school" are recorded in the work of Sigismond Thalberg "*The art of Singing applied to the Piano*".

It is also worth highlighting the important presence and contribution of the composer and pianist *Ferruccio Busoni* in the context of the so-called Italian "school". Although influenced by the foundations of the French, German and Russian "schools"; Busoni was a cosmopolitan artist (he taught in Russia, for example, at the invitation of Anton Rubinstein) and his ideas advocated both Musical Imagination and Artistry as driving elements of pianistic practice. Among his numerous students, we must highlight: Claudio Arrau and Egon Petri.

In this context, the aforementioned *singing character* of the Italian lineage under comment says with the propositions relating to *Musical Imagination* which we had the opportunity to highlight in other scientific articles focused on both instrumental practice and piano pedagogy. In this regard, see also our book "Interfaces between musical imagination and piano technique".

It is in this tone that we build our artistic and pedagogical conception; That is to say, our "*modus operandi*" with regard to making and thinking about music, privileging Artisticity and the spontaneity of aesthetic action in an integral way.

5.5 The English "school"

We can assert that with regard to the English school, reported by Matthey (1988) and Lucas (2010), which has aspects of approach very close to the German school (or the so-called "arm weight school", according to another scientific article in our authorship), we highlight the touch supported by the weight of the arm from the shoulders, generating the swing of the upper parts of the arm.

§Therefore, for us, it is necessary and fundamental to be an Artist before being a Pianist. Certainly, Art precedes the means of its expression. Therefore, the order of the value scale should not be reversed, which could cause a breakdown of basic principles and founding structures. This is also the point of view of the Russian "school" (depending on the pianistic-musical tradition that has been bequeathed or transmitted to us).

Similarly to the German school, alongside the massive use of arm weight, we also emphasize the use of passive fingers (they must be firm, but as mere support supports) in order to increase the incidence of application of arm weight.

In fact, the smaller the participation of the fingers, the greater the involvement or participation of the arm in the execution of pianistic movements.

However, Matthay (1988) emphasizes the invisible aspects of pianistic playing, which are duly studied and rehearsed in tempo or slow tempo (slow motion or "*slow motion*").

Such invisible gestures concern the movements of the arm and forearm performed by the pianist when using or applying the weight of the arm; which are imperceptible to the naked eye, but have real existence.

Congruently with what we have already alluded to in Signorelli (2019), we leave to comment on the different pedagogical approaches in another work, to mention the main ones: finger school (or pre-scientific or empirical); anatomical-physiological school (or natural or arm weight) and psychomotor school (or psychotechnical or kinesthetic or proprioceptive). As we have already reported in Signorelli (2019), we used as references the works of Schultz (1936), Kochevitsky (1967), Sandor (1995), Whiteside (1996), Kaplan (1987), Fink (1999), Mark (1999) and Leite (2001), among others.

Final considerations

In the same way as Signorelli (2019), we can indicate that, therefore, although this research is still in progress, it can already be seen that tradition has a lot to teach us about how to interpret a Musical Work (to the extent that it allows the instrumentalist offer your audience a genuine, valid and responsible interpretation – that is, free from vices and personal vanities).

Consistently with Signorelli (2019), we have seen that the concept of tradition has been demystified as something old and outdated, "*old fashioned*" or "*demode*". The conclusion of Signorelli (2019) was of the same nature, according to whom, on the contrary, the progressive character of the concept of tradition was noted, as it meets the demands of *modern piano school* (characterized by intellectual seriousness in observing the Content

Musical and strict fidelity to the Musical Text recorded through writing or musical notation written by the Composer).

It is worth noting that the Austrian-German, Russian and Italian “schools” very vehemently advocate the *singing character* of the piano. In effect, the piano must imitate the human voice through legato and phrasing, both anchored in sensory hearing or aural capacity (i.e., the critical ear).

Therefore, in line with Signorelli's (2019) understanding, it is concluded that the notion of tradition is current and useful in guiding (without impositions) the pianist in his interpretative decisions aiming at the faithful realization of the musical content. Furthermore, if used for students as an educational tool or strategy, understanding these different technical-interpretive approaches and pedagogical trends could result in *student empowerment* (that is: autonomous and active learning, modern and student-focused, creative and driven by the student's demands).

In this paradigm, in our opinion, the opening of methods and strategies, whether of performance or teaching, provides the necessary denial to the narrative of those who, under the pretext of not excluding, seem to act in latent contradiction to the supposedly democratic, politically correct and prejudice-free discourse. welcomed by them. Therefore, like Signorelli (2019), the systematic and methodical use of tradition only has to add in terms of sound richness and interpretative possibilities (without prejudice to the interpreter's personality, obviously) with a significant or relevant expansion of the skills and abilities consistent with the menu of resources that can be used to meet the technical-musical demands present both in the world of work and in the sea of life.

As a conclusion, we can list as a potential benefit of this work the increase in the technical-musical possibilities of the interpreter-pianist, who will become more aware and sensitive both in relation to the demands or requirements of the score and in relation to the possibilities of his own device. physiological-bodily or touching apparatus.

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