

NTNU

Composing: Self-Expression and Self-Actualization through Communication

Ståle Kleiberg and Misha Alperin as
representatives of contrasting cultural climates

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“To think is at least something, but to think creatively is to live a satisfying and absorbing intellectual life, one which can be enjoyed only by a chosen few.”¹

Are there things that we know but cannot describe? That we feel but cannot convey? Are there yearnings that cannot be verbalized, and longings that cannot be put into words? The inner life of an individual is not always easy to articulate: its richness, depth and intensity can hardly be expressed through words alone. We need a tool that will match the task, a device that will empower us for the purpose. In other words, we need a language that can seize, embrace and express far beyond our intellectual grasp. Such a language has been available since the beginning of our human existence. It is generally agreed that this powerful mood of communication is music.

That in every human society people communicate by means of both a spoken language and music is well-known. The evidence of the tight links between the two dates from pre-biblical times. For instance, ancient Greeks used a single term, *musike*, to denote both language and music, and Plato preferred music dominated by words over that governed by mathematics. In the 17th century numerous theories about the relationship between music and language began to appear, and continued up to the present; in the 18th-19th centuries historical evidence of an increase in word-inflected genres appeared; and in the 20th century there were abundant musical experiments with language. This historical progression indicates the importance of this relationship.

¹ Reginald Smith Brindle, *Musical Composition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1986, p. 3.

Although in many ways music is unlike a natural language, it is the only language that is understood throughout the entire world; this language helps us, people of different cultures, to communicate across linguistic barriers. This language has been created so that we can verbalize our inner thoughts and emotions. It has been, still is, and will always be used to help us to express ourselves without fretting over being judged or misunderstood. It helps us to feel better, to know better, and to be better. We cannot imagine life without this particular language. Some of us use it as a means of comfort, enjoyment and enrichment, while others spend their lives creating it, and still others devote themselves to understanding and explaining it. One way or another, we simply cannot do without it.

At some point in life almost all of us create music. The experiences of making music are individual and, therefore, unique – whether we speak of individual creations or the results of group cooperation, whether we mean composing or improvisation. However, there is something all the creations have in common: every single music piece is a product of the process of composing, the process that can be examined from three different dimensions: intellectual, emotional and spiritual.

It seems very natural that the study of composition has fascinated people for a very long time. We have heard many intriguing stories of geniuses struggling with their muses and eventually obtaining almost miraculous results of inspiration. There are also many interesting fictional accounts of writing music. Besides, numerous scientific attempts have been made in order to explain music and its creation from a variety of perspectives. Since it is much easier to deal with the products of composing that are observable than the processes of composition that are hidden, researchers tend to be preoccupied with the former. However, psychological research has made significant progress enabling us to understand different phenomena taking place during the process of creation. An interesting example is John Sloboda's study, where he – a composer and a psychologist – explains the psychological processes that underline

composition.² Likewise, Roger Reynolds collaborated with the psychologist Stephen McAdams, to give us a deeper understanding of how music is created.³

I propose to examine the process of composing from psychological and sociological perspectives. As I will attempt to show in my thesis, the interaction of physical, biological, psychological and cultural factors clearly plays a role in the process of creating music. In other words, the relationship between an individual's vision and its realization in an artistic form, is strongly affected by his/her moral, social and cultural make-up. At the same time, the meanings we derive from musical experiences are completely individual and impossible to compare to one another. These two ideas are by no means contradictory. I will demonstrate in the following chapters that the truth lies in their synthesis.

It is usually agreed that music often is expressive of a variety of basic human emotions, such as joy and happiness, pain and sorrow, fear and frustration, as well as hope and determination. Even children can easily distinguish between a sorrowful passage of music and that of a joyful nature. We all understand the differences between the tragic and the romantic in music we hear. Likewise, we have no problems identifying the emotions of, say, Beethoven's Sonatas or Chopin's Preludes. It is natural that the meaning of a piece we hear will always somehow be tied up with our emotional responses to it. Nevertheless, it has to be remembered that since one's emotional response to a particular piece not only is the result of its effect on the individual, but also is a reflection of the latter's emotional state before/during the process of listening, so listeners' responses to the same piece will usually vary.

A number of philosophers and musicologists deal with the question as to *how* the emotion can be embodied in music. How can music possess sadness or fear? How can it express a feeling of thrill or confusion? Looking for an answer, it is natural to refer to different kinds of musical features that are responsible for making music sound the way it does. The agreement between the creators and the listeners generally is that, for instance, light major harmonies, upward

² John Sloboda, *The Musical Mind. The Cognitive Psychology of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1985.

³ Roger Reynolds, *Form and Method: Composing Music* (The Rothschild Lectures) (New York and London: Routledge), 2002.

melodic movements, fast tempos, or loud dynamics are the tools by which cheerful and light music is brought about. Similarly, gloomy or melancholic minor progressions combined with chromatic downward motions, subdued dynamics and slow halting tempos are the devices that help to convey melancholy or sadness. It is commonly agreed that diminished chords invoke a sense of restlessness; movements of sliding-down seconds convey a feeling of sorrow and tears; whereas leaping and rising intervals of either fourth or sixth, and galloping melodies in the high register, communicate joy and pleasure.

However, when we think about, say, a cheerful piece of music, we do not usually think of it in terms of leaping melodies, rising intervals or light major progressions in a dancing tempo: we simply remember its happy nature. Sometimes we can be aware of how this particular piece made us feel better; we can even identify with the person who composed that same piece, recognizing the feelings aroused in us by the music he/she created. But our main focus is still on the impact the piece has had on us, not on the distinctive qualities of its harmonic or rhythmical structures.

Since it is agreed that music manifests emotions, and admitted that particular music features are usually associated with the particular emotions music is expressive of, the question we are interested in is *why* the emotion *is* in the music? For what reason some music is tragic while other music is joyous? How does musical expressiveness serve its purpose, and what purpose does it serve? Considering that particular musical features are supposed to express a particular mood or emotion, should we think of them in the context of the creator or the creation?

In this thesis I will argue that alongside all the other functions, the main purpose of music is the purpose of communication between the composer and the listeners – an understanding between a person who desires to share and the other who is willing to hear. In general, communication is a dialogue. It comes to life when one has something to say to someone else. A composer, for example, wants to send a message to his/her listener, which he/she usually does via a performer. It should be remembered that composers and listeners, as well as performers, are subject to various processes taking place in their lives: today their life is hard, tomorrow their life is good, the day after they enjoy it, the week after they struggle with it, and

so on. When we listen to a piece, we usually want more than mere entertainment: through making sense of it we wish to relate to it. Moreover, we often aspire to grasp the essence of a composer's goals; sometimes we even want to decode how the creative process operates in his/her mind, soul and spirit. Is this achievable? Yes, by studying musical communication on psychological, sociological and cultural levels.

The communicative device of a composer is a set of notes that symbolically represents his/her inner thoughts and ideas. Such ideas are either expressed spontaneously or as a result of a lengthy reflection. Music, through its physical immediacy plays the role of a correspondent which makes it possible to transfer these same inner ideas to his/her listeners. These ideas – the text – have an innate capacity to be understood in various ways; fortunately, that capacity is not exhausted with time. A composer's aims and decisions should be perceived and explained in light of his/her intentions which, in turn, can be better comprehended through some insight into his/her personality. Without the certainty of shared knowledge even linguistic communication will always include a degree of ambiguity. This – to a much greater extent – applies to musical communication. Therefore, I believe that knowledge of a composer's life can shed light on his/her music. Otherwise, how deeply can we perceive what lies at the core of a beautiful work produced by a talented craftsman? How well can we understand what it implies?

Certainly, the listener's perception and interpretation of a piece often is taken for granted, for the meaning of the piece cannot be limited to an ideal (i.e. projected by the composer) reception: it emerges in the performance and gets further formed by the audience through the process of listening, experiencing and understanding. Individual interpretations, varying according to the listener's interests, presuppositions and purposes, may even reconstruct a work. The relationship between the work and its understanding by listeners is a broad subject of discussion that will be given some attention in the following chapters. However, our main focus is the link between the creator, his/her creation and his/her audience.

This research project is divided into four chapters and uses different tools in the form of analyses of relevant theories, oral discussions and biographical interpretive methods (the life

stories and the questions are presented in the context of the main purpose of this study: to explore how and for what reason works of art come about). It has to be highlighted that the ultimate goal of this study is not to prove how our assumptions can be applied to any composer in general. It is rather a desire to illustrate the significance of human communication through the comparative investigations of the lives and works of two representatives from the world of music composition.

The first chapter, *Theories*, deals with the theoretical issues related to composing; this forms the background to my subsequent discussion of music written by Ståle Kleiberg and Misha Alperin in Chapters 2 (*Ståle Kleiberg*) and 3 (*Misha Alperin*). The theories introduced assist in analyzing composition from several perspectives that are confined to the topic of communication: *Maslow's Theory of Self-Actualization* treats an individual as the central communicator; *The Issues of Identity and Belonging* is concerned with the idea of authenticity; *Theories of Communication* discusses human interaction in its variety; and *Reader – Response Theories* considers the importance of the complete circle of interaction. Chapters 2 and 3 are two case studies showing the intersection of the ideas presented above. Being a comparative study, one of its purposes is to reinforce the point that cultural, social and psychological aspects influence the fruits of a composer's productivity, which we hopefully will have achieved by the last chapter: *Conclusions*. The choice of the composers stems from my personal interest in a parallel study of two contemporary representatives of two particular cultures (Norway and Ukraine).

To conclude, what this project offers is a pattern of presentation, comparison and reflection. The application of this pattern does not provide any straightforward answers; instead, this biographically oriented research project underscores human complexity. Simultaneously, it yields some thought-provoking insights.

Chapter One: Relevant Theories

Exploring our relationship with music: how can we understand creative minds?

Can music be explained? What would the answer be? “Yes” as often as “no.” We can hear “to a certain extent,” and we can also hear “it’s very difficult to answer this question.” Academics usually claim to understand music in a more profound way than mere music lovers do. They listen and think; they think and read, and think again; they sometimes even feel; they listen and analyze and later arrive at certain conclusions; and this is done for one only purpose: to explain what they hear. Music lovers, on the other hand, come to an understanding of it by grasping, feeling, associating and imagining. They often consider music as a series of events, or a story communicated by melodies. In order to make out what a piece of music is about, a listener would usually listen to the happenings that unfold, develop and succeed each other, paying attention to parts that are stressed as well as those that are subdued – in other words, s/he will follow and get involved with what s/he hears. However, despite the difference of methods, both professionals and not professionals are driven by the same desire – to interpret, to unravel, to disentangle and to sort out what they hear.

Musical notation is an imperfect channel of interaction: it does give us a good deal of textual information, nevertheless it cannot but hint at the emotive message the composer wishes to send. Since there is a world of thoughts and feelings behind the notes, it is significant to make sense of this world: thereby a performer may recreate the music just as the composer contrived it, while the audience will be able not only to enjoy it, but also to learn to empathize with its creator. It is not without reason that Beethoven wished: “Coming from the heart, may it go to the heart.”

It has to be noted here that I do not assert that in their works composers express the particular feelings they have during the process of composing: I believe that as creative artists, they use a

number of structural factors and techniques, as well as knowledge of manipulating them, in order to achieve desired expressions that may have nothing to do with their current feelings but are oriented at the specific results. In other words, they enwrap their emotions into compositions, thereby treating the former musically. However, I defend the view that composers do express their feelings, impressions and ideas – only they do this retrospectively, recalling them from a distance – after the events by which they were evoked.

But where from comes the need to explain music? I think it is triggered by our need for interaction. With its capacity to interpret emotions and experiences by means of melodies, harmonies and rhythmical patterns, music seems to grant us our wishes. It enables us to see ourselves and our world reflected in one or another composition. Although it is impossible to interpret music precisely – because of an inevitable gap between the world of a composer and that of a listener – we can still have a taste of its challenging (or even reinforcing) our identity. However abstract music might be we can always hear something we identify with or relate to. It is a well-known fact that all great works of art are capable of multiple interpretations: that is the reason we keep returning to such works – their depth and richness can continually feed and inspire our searching souls. Obviously, even in the same work of art there may be found a number of contradicting meanings, but this will never stop us from further attempts of grasping them – it simply aligns with the truth of how complex we are.

Creativity as a phenomenon has always interested scholars and academics. The history of theories of creativity is long, varied and fascinating: it embodies an array of attempts to understand this aspect of human nature. A number of dissimilar approaches focusing on creativity and giftedness range from viewing the phenomenon as characteristic features of an individual to the interaction between the individual and his/her environment. Interestingly, some leading psychology schools (i.e. structuralism, functionalism, behaviorism, etc.) have not studied creativity at all, while others (i.e. gestaltism) showed little interest in the subject. Evolutionists believe that the very same methods employed to the study of the evolution of organisms can equally be applied to the evolution of ideas. Pragmatic approaches are more concerned with developing creativity rather than understanding it (see Osborn, 1953); mystical

approaches view it as a spiritual phenomenon (see Kipling, 1985); psychodynamic approaches (starting with S. Freud) explore giftedness resulting in creative works as a way of expressing unconscious desires in an accepted manner; cognitive approaches examine creativity as the result of mental processes, in which case it is treated as part of intelligence, not a distinct unity (see Lubart, 2000-2001); socio-cultural studies view a person's environment as an essential source of his/her creativity (see Eysenck, 1993).⁴

As we can see, all the mentioned perspectives treat creativity and giftedness differently: some claim that an individual's intrinsic motivation is central, while others maintain that the essence of creativity should be viewed in the social and cultural contexts. It seems to be obvious (as well as natural) that no single theoretical approach can adequately describe and explain creativity. L. Wehner, M. Csikszentmihalyi and I. Magyari- Beck put it well in their article "Current approaches used in studying creativity: an exploratory investigation":

We touch different parts of the same beast and derive distorted pictures of the whole from what we know: "The elephant is like a snake," says the one who only holds its tale; "The elephant is like a wall," says the one who touches its flanks.⁵

The more researchers attempt to explore the phenomenon of creativity, the more evident it becomes that there is no fixed comprehension of it. However, a rich assortment of approaches provides us with many constructive and valuable insights. Consequently, our understanding of creativity and giftedness requires a multidisciplinary approach that can view a part of the whole as the whole.

⁴ Alex Osborn, *Applied Imagination* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons), 1953; Rudyard Kipling, "Working Tools," in Ghiselin (ed.), *The Creative Process: A Symposium* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 1985;

Sigmund Freud, *Collected Papers* vol. 4 (London: Hogarth Press);

Todd I. Lubart, "Models of the Creative Process: Past, Present and Future," in *Creativity Research Journal*, 13, 2001;

Hans Eysenck, "Creativity and Personality: A Theoretical Perspective," in *Psychological Inquiry*, 4, 1993.

⁵ Lucille Wehner, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi & Isyvan Magyari-Beck, "Current Approaches Used in Studying Creativity: An Exploratory Investigation," in *Creativity Research Journal*, 4, 1991, p.270.

It was found that life stress and illness sharpen and strengthen degrees of musical originality.⁶ As a psychological phenomenon, stress creates a particular emotional state a person finds himself/herself in, and for a composer, such a state influences his/her creativity. Since the thematic material of the composer's works is very likely to communicate to the listener his/her emotional life during the period of composing them, this life can literally be experienced in the heightened originality of his/her music. Moreover, research shows that melodic originality of works a composer created during a period of afflictions, influence listeners' emotional response – as if they sympathize with the composer's difficulties and challenges. It was also found that the thematic originality of numerous melodies appears to be built on the foundation of various life experiences – whether stressful or traumatic – which, in turn, implies that such inventiveness helps a composer to express his emotions. I am convinced, such conclusions are not surprising: trials, problems and conflicts are very likely to motivate a person to create a far better world – the perfect world that exists in his/her imagination.

It is worth pointing out here that personality of a gifted individual along with the person's experiences play a significant role in the development of his/her uniqueness. Stronger personalities handle stress and various crises well: they turn their incidents and trials to their own benefit, re-channeling their negative energy into positive force. In short, they are capable of sublimation.⁷ They penetrate the depth of their own spirits and, in their attempt to precisely describe the variety and singularity of human experiences they challenge themselves to the limits.

This being said, not every creative artist can be original and productive under the pressure of crises. Weaker personalities may need plenty of positive experiences for the growth of their

⁶ Research shows that there is a positive correlation between a composer's life stress and the originality of his/her melodies. For detailed information, see Simonton's articles "Thematic fame, melodic originality and musical activity," 1980, and "Emergence and realization of genius," 1991, in *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, no.38 and 61 respectively.

⁷ According to S. Freud, sublimation is the transformation of any unacceptable/negative impulse into a productive form. For example, someone with a great deal of hostility may become a hunter or a football player, someone suffering from anxiety – a scientist, whereas a person with powerful sexual desires, an artist. Curiously, Freud considered all positive, creative activities to be sublimations, predominantly based on the sex drive.

talents; otherwise they become incapacitated – the unexpected turns of life negatively influence both quality and quantity of their output. At times, the lack of support (both intellectual and emotional) and understanding by others, make these people experience some kind of breakdown. In their search of the unknown, in their desire to find their own voice, such individuals always need someone to keep them on course. If not, a fear of misunderstanding, combined with that at the prospect of negative reviews, at least diminishes zeal for creating – the worst cases end up with suicide. Therefore, it is significant to understand that such creators are in need of assistance: to enjoy their achievements, it is necessary to be willing to nurture and support them, as well as accept their personal weaknesses and shortcomings.

I have always been interested in motivation as a substantial driving force of a person's creativity and growth. I believe that this force initiates, guides and maintains our major decisions and important actions. The sources that lie beneath motivation may be different: biological, emotional, cognitive, as well as social, cultural and spiritual. In her research psychologist Theresa Amabile has shown a strong correlation between motivation and creativity. She emphasizes the importance of the intrinsic motivation – motivation caused by a person's own intrinsic reasons, rather than extrinsic rewards – in creative performances.⁸

According to her, internally motivated people tend to manifest more creativity as compared to when they are aimed at a certain external reward, such as money, fame or position. Among a variety of theories that try to explain motivation, I find Maslow's theory of self-actualization (a desire to fulfill one's individual potential) most inspiring, interesting and relevant to this study.

Maslow's Theory of Self-Actualization

Abraham Maslow, a humanistic psychologist and self-actualization theorist developed a motivational theory based on the ideas and thoughts on motivation. According to this theory, people think, feel and act in certain ways, being influenced or pulled by different goals. The theory's pinnacle is *self-actualization* – a need for growth and the realization of one's full

⁸ Teresa Amabile, *The Social Psychology of Creativity* (New York: Springer), 1983, pp. 91–136.

potential. Maslow maintains that human needs are hierarchically organized. This hierarchy is divided into five levels, ranging from lower-level needs to higher level needs.

To this study which investigates the phenomenon of music communication (with the emphases on the composer being a sender, compositions – the communicative device, and the listener – a receiver), Maslow's theory is particularly relevant: it adds an important perspective on a message transmitter as the indispensable element of the chain of interaction. Having several times interviewed the composers I worked with in this project, I surmised that they both were self-actualizers. To affirm my assumption, I turned to Maslow's theory (being specifically interested in the typical for self-actualizers characteristic features), and found out that the character traits described by Maslow matched those of Ståle Kleiberg and Misha Alperin. In order to verify the found information, I presented the topic to the composers; in the following discussions based on the given characteristics and my observations, I received the data that confirmed my hypothesis.

Let me now introduce Maslow's hierarchy of needs. To start with, there are two important points I would like to mention. Firstly, we have to satisfy the lower needs in order to be capable of satisfying the higher needs: when there is lack of food or a person is in danger, s/he is very unlikely to feel the need for respect from others. This being said, we can find some exceptions to the rule (e.g., artists who in order to better express themselves in their art would rather continue starving themselves). Secondly, the lower needs are more intense and powerful than the higher needs. Lack of food or safe shelter will be pressing an individual harder than, for example, his/her need to be seen by others as a gifted and competent person. In addition, people usually attempt to satisfy multiple needs at the same time. Nevertheless, the intensity level with which we work at satisfying different needs is different: at different times, with different people.

Maslov maintains that our basic needs are the *physiological needs*. These are primary needs, vital to our immediate survival – the needs for water, food, air and sleep. The need for sex is also included into the category of human basic needs, as sex is indispensable to the long-term survival of human race. The next level includes the *safety needs*: everyone needs a place to live

where s/he feels safe and free from danger. For Maslow, a wish to build an orderly and predictable life also belongs to the safety needs. The third level of the hierarchy – *belongingness needs*. Every single individual possesses a strong need for belonging: either to small units (a family) or bigger groups (clubs, teams, churches, etc.) This kind of need is more of a psychological nature: it mirrors human desire to communicate. On the fourth hierarchy level are *esteem needs*. These needs are responsible for the urge to feel good about ourselves as well as a desire to be approved, respected and admired by others.

On the top of the hierarchy is the *need for self-actualization*. For Maslow, self-actualization is the full, joyful and creative use of a person's talents, capacities and potentialities. According to the psychologist, the need for self-actualization differs from all the other needs: it does not stay content when it is fed – on the contrary, it then grows. Self-actualization is not a static state – it's an on-going process: much of the reason we do what we do is based on our need to grow and become whom we are meant to be. Despite the fact that it can be a difficult task for an individual to find out his/her life direction, it is not a problem for self-actualizers: these people seem to know what life has prepared for them and what road they should take. Dedicated to their call, self-actualizers are known for commitment and perseverance. They see life clearly, not allowing fears, emotions or their own desires to distort their direction. Yet the world is not packed with individuals of this kind: Maslow, at some point, suggested only two percent of the entire population.

The question becomes, of course, what exactly Maslow means by self-actualization and which characteristic traits a self-actualizer must possess. To answer this question, the psychologist used a qualitative method which is called biographical analysis. He chose a group of people – some of the great history figures as well a few successful individuals he knew – and described their personality qualities as well as their ways of living. Abraham Lincoln, Eleanor Roosevelt, Albert Einstein, Thomas Jefferson were included to the list together with his contemporaries whom he decided to keep anonymous. The people Maslow studied had greatly contributed to science, politics and the humanities. But it is important to point out that Maslow did not

confine the need for self-actualizing to successful achievers: according to him, both ordinary and extraordinary persons can be self-actualizers.

On the ground of the found information the psychologist looked at the common characteristics of his subjects. One of the most distinguished phenomena – typical of all of them – is so-called *flow*: a state of one's total engrossment into an activity to a point of forgetting him/herself. In such states, it is found, a person functions at his/her fullest capacity. The flow experience is a very powerful force that strongly motivates an individual to achieve his/her goal. The following characteristics are taken from Maslow's case studies:

1) *Efficient perception of reality.*

Self-actualizers do not allow their own wishes and ambitions influence their perceptions. As a result, they are able to detect the hypocritical and the false.

2) *Acceptance of themselves, others, and nature or fate.*

They realize the fact that no one is perfect, and accept it. They also acknowledge natural events as part of life.

3) *Spontaneity.*

As much as they trust their impulses and intuition, they behave with simplicity and honesty—not feeling a need to create an effect.

4) *Problem-focus.*

They are not interested in minor and trivial issues, for their concern and involvement lies in the larger philosophical, moral and ethical problems.

5) *Affinity for solitude.*

They are comfortable being alone.

6) *Independence from culture and environment.*

They prefer to follow their own interests, rather than those of a crowd.

7) *Continued freshness of appreciation.*

They possess a special ability to appreciate and cherish the usual, the ordinary; every new event is experienced as if for the first time ever.

8) *More frequent peak-experiences.*

The term was invented by Maslow in order to explain profound and powerful emotional reactions to various phenomena. Compared to an average individual, a self-actualizer experiences these moments more intensely and more frequently.

9) *Genuine desire to help the human race.*

All self-actualizers, according to Maslow, sincerely and deeply care for their fellow humans.

10) *Deep ties with relatively few people.*

Despite their appreciation to communicate with people in general, self-actualizers tend to have only few close friends.

11) *Democratic values.*

They are known for their respect and consideration for all people; they do not judge others on the grounds of superficial characteristics such as race, religion, sex and age.

12) *Ability to discriminate between means and ends.*

They enjoy doing things for its own sake, not driven by thinking about the goals of the activity they hold.

13) *Philosophical sense of humor.*

They do not like making fun of people; what they do enjoy, are stories about human foolishness in general.

14) *Creativity.*

One of their distinct characteristics is the ability to see and experience things in a way no one saw and experienced before. Their creativity stems from their gift to be excited about even ordinary things.

15) *Resistance to enculturation.*

Self-actualizers tend to be detached from culture-bound rules. They do not mind to be seen as outsiders, often appearing different and acting differently from the crowd.

To explain profound and powerful emotional reactions to various phenomena Maslow invented the term *peak experiences*. Closely associated with the earlier mentioned *flow, peak experiences* are generally interpreted as the happiest moments in one's life. Based on the fact that various activities, such as fine arts, music, reading and sport, are capable of evoking strong emotions in a person, the psychologist studied the phenomenon in depth, paying specific attention to music's ability to evoke states of ecstasy in people.⁹ Maslow's major ideas have been supported by recent studies, and although not all of them adhere to his theory, much research has been made in order to test his main tenets. The findings confirm and verify his statements.¹⁰

As mentioned above, after lengthy talks with the two composers, I concluded that they both were self-actualizers, and presented them with the idea. During the following discussions we came to an agreement that the typical for self-actualizers traits described by Maslow in his theory applied to them both. However, the two of the composers commented that the theory itself was not without flaws: for all its merits, it was incomplete – one-sided.

Alperin: "Tell me, what kind of research showed Maslow that there are only around two percent of self-actualizers in the entire world? There are plenty of them, but the problem is that we don't hear about them all. Let me tell you a story. Completing our field work, we once visited a woman in a distant Russian village, who sang for us – first alone, and after, with her friends. Their repertoire included very advanced polyphonic pieces, and the quality of singing was breathtaking. Struck with reverence and admiration, I asked her: "How can you sing like that? None of your group is a professional singer, nor had a basic music education." Her answer was rather thought-provoking: "One has to learn to get along well with people around."¹¹

⁹ Abraham Maslow, "Lessons from peak experiences," in *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 2, 1962, pp. 9-18.

¹⁰ For further information see Frank W. Wicker, Gail Brown, James A. Weihe, Anastasia S. Hagen and Joy Lynn Reed, in the article "On Reconsidering Maslow: an Examination of the Deprivation/Domination Proposition," in *Journal of Research in Personality*, 27, 1993, pp. 118-133, and Ed Diener, Jeff Horowitz and Robert A. Emmons in the article "Happiness of the Very Wealthy," in *Social Indicators Research*, 16, 1985, pp.263-274.

¹¹ It has to be noted that the root of the Russian word "ладить" (getting along) the woman used is "лад." One of the word's definitions is a musical term "mode," and it also translates as "harmony," "accord." The significance of

I believe that if Maslow encounters such women (or men, for that matter), he will realize that his truth is only half truth. There is one thing that I know for sure: these village folks understand wholeness much better than all the city academics doing their research with focus on parts. Maslow is a good illustration: for instance, he didn't point out the fact that talented folks are often known for being very egoistic, self-admiring, jealous, emotionally unstable, childish and pessimistic. In other words, what he says is true, but his truth is incomplete: a human being is much more complex than a listed down enumeration of positive character traits. Maslow is right, but one should not forget that self-actualizers are also human beings. Art people want only one thing – to stay alive; being alive includes all positive and negative together.”

Kleiberg: “What I react to, is the hierarchical structure of Maslow’s theory. I believe that the needs every individual has are of different nature and, therefore, different levels. It is obvious that a starving person won’t be seriously interested in the amount of admiration and esteem people have for him. However, that’s an extreme situation. Having food is a prerequisite for having life, yes, but even a brief isolation will make a person realize that communication is one of the basic needs as well. The drawings of our predecessors are simple, but they still are pieces of art. In other words, people don’t need to be fed and physically satisfied in order to express themselves – these go in parallel. Likewise, say, lack of security can also enable one to produce art. The theory is good yet somehow simplified.”

What agrees with Maslow’s theory is the fact that developing one’s gifts and talents is a difficult process. In order to ripen the fruit of originality and uniqueness, one has to be willing (as well as able) to make breaks that are often very painful and frightening: those from one’s teachers and models and also from the accepted practices and standard thinking. These challenges are faced by every talented person – s/he will always have to choose either following someone or standing alone. Drifting is easy: one just relaxes and follows the path of least resistance. But going against the stream requires constant awareness and diligent effort. Thus a decision to

the woman’s reply lies, therefore, in the play of these words: as long as you can live in harmony with people around you, you will be able to create a perfect harmony of sounds.

become an outstanding creator will always imply one's restraining from satisfying the conventional expectations of those around him/her.

Breaking with traditions tends to result in solitude which demands a person's strength to handle – it is natural for us, humans, to belong and to share. Besides, it is stimulating for an individual to be heard and discussed (whether it is praise or blame). By and large, people of art possess the need to share their ideas with/experience the impact of those on others; they greatly value the nature and flow of human interaction. One of them, Virginia Wolf, masterfully depicted this in her novel *To the Lighthouse*:

What is the meaning of life? That was all – a simple question; one that tended to close in on one with years. The great revelation had never come. Instead there were little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark; here was one. This, that, and the other; herself and Charles Tansley and the breaking wave; Mrs. Ramsay saying, "Life stand still here."... In the midst of chaos there was shape; this eternal passing and flowing (she looked at the clouds going and the leaves shaking) was struck into stability.¹²

In other words, revelations of meaning occur in "little daily miracles" experienced by people that are connected through communication; everyday trivial events are capable of nurturing and retaining profound insights that mirror significant truths. An artist is always interested in recapturing such moments and conveying them to the other: a writer – by fitting words, a composer – by discovered melodies, a painter – by colors and shapes, a performer – by his/her unity with the instrument. Ståle Kleiberg calls it "an urge to write and share; a desire to find someone in the crowd who is on the same wave." According to him, the reason for creating is to handle loneliness. "Sometimes you do find them, he adds, which makes this worthwhile."

¹² Virginia Wolf, *To the Lighthouse* (Oxford: Oxford university Press), 2000 (1927), pp. 240-241.

Theories of Communication

Very many people today are lonely; they seek company, because they are tired of addressing themselves all the time. All our modern communicative devices are created with a purpose of uniting people: a person that hardly ever leaves his/her home is still connected with dozens and hundreds of friends via emails and phone messages, via *Facebook* and *Twitter* – all these different systems of communication make our social life not only possible, but also practical and joyful. The world is based on communication. Several dictionary definitions of the word *communication* – the exchange of information or ideas between people, a message, a statement, contact, interaction, and consultation – may serve as a starting point for our discussion of the theories of communication.

Communication is an inherent as well as indispensable social activity. It has enabled the world to grow, develop and change. In the process of this evolution the development of human language played a tremendous role. How do we communicate? We do so by transmitting signals or signs. Human speech is one of the most profound means we use; writing, another. Certainly, there are additional ways for getting our ideas across: gestures (various face expressions, handshakes, kisses and hugs enable us to convey the most subtle messages that are difficult to transmit by means of uttered or written words alone). We also have economic systems of communication (in terms of goods and services), a variety of conventions that have evolved with time, communicative rules and etiquette, and previously mentioned technical means, such as Internet and phone.

It has to be indicated at this point that the root of communication does not lie in the method of transmitting a message, but in the relationship between the transmitter of the message and its receiver. As Colin Cherry put it in his book *On Human Communication*, “we do not *send* signs; we *share* them, for if I tell you something, I still got that something in my head. We now both have it – shared. Furthermore, you could tell it to somebody else, and so on. Whereas goods

are sent or exchanged, messages are always *shared*.”¹³ The author’s conclusion is that we communicate only when we share, and as much as we can share. Not surprising, considering that the Latin word’s original meaning was *to share*.

The academic study of communication embraces the fields of science, arts, literature, mathematics, biology, business and political science. The subject is approached differently by different departments: psychologists are interested in communication as a kind of behavior motivated by various psychological processes, sociologists view it as one of the most important social factors, whereas anthropologists are keen to see it as an aspect that influence cultures. However, as long as the above domains are likely to consider communication as one of the main human activities, the scholars in the discipline of communication locate it at the centre of human experience. Despite the varieties of communication theories in different parts of the world (with a focus on its social side in America vs. an interest in its cultural methods in Europe; with Eastern theories centering on wholeness whereas Western concentration is on parts), there is an abundance of the theories’ similarities that vastly overweight the differences. Nevertheless, it is significant to pay attention to the fact that the diversity and broadness of the subject as well as a multiplicity of perspectives make it unreasonable (if not impossible) to unite all of that which communication comprises into one and the same theory.

Theories of communication are concerned with the basic elements of communication:

- *Information source*
- *Sender*
- *Message*
- *Channel*
- *Receiver*
- *Feedback*

¹³ Colin Cherry, *On Human Communication: a Review, a Survey, and a Criticism* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: the MIT Press), 1980, p. 9.

These key elements include those who share the message, and the methods and forms the message takes. A person who communicates a message is a *sender*. According to the communication theory, the effectiveness of the *sender* is determined by two important factors: the attitude of the *sender* and his/her choice of meaningful symbols. Positive attitude along with the appropriate symbols for a given audience or individual establish an atmosphere conducive to understanding a communicated message.

Information source/ Message/ Channel: the diverse elements of the same unit of communication: they all focus on the *message*, with its forms, methods and contents. We usually send a *message* by writing, symbols or speech. Importantly, in order to convey the exact meaning of a *message*, we need to remember that the full meaning of a word or a sign appears only in its context. In addition, the situation in which the words are uttered or written, the relationship between the *sender* and the *receiver*, their knowledge of the language in which the message is sent as well as their use of signs or gestures are also very important aspects that help to fully transmit the *message*.

Receiver: someone who simply receives the message, understands it, and translates it into meaning. Since the entire purpose of communication is mutual understanding, the successfully communicated message is the one that evokes the *receiver's* reactions identical with the *sender's* intentions. In the book *Meaning of Meaning* Ogden and Richards draw the reader's attention to the emotive (poetic) and symbolic (scientific) uses of language, with the former being intended to obtain a strong emotional response, whereas the latter aims at communication of specific meanings by using of symbols. It is used to identify things, actions and relationships in, for example, mathematics or logics. Significantly, the two uses of language are mutually inclusive and enriching.¹⁴

An interesting article written by Solomon Markus on the differences between scientific and emotive languages, lists the 52 usually asserted differences which the author proves partially or

¹⁴ Charles K. Ogden and Ivor A. Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., London), 1949.

entirely wrong.¹⁵ I would like to mention a couple of them. The first difference on the list is an assertion that scientific communication is rational while poetic communication is emotional. Markus maintains that the statement is false by drawing the reader's attention to the fact that only lyrical poetry is dominated by emotion, while there is also a variety of emotions which have nothing to do with the poetic communication. His argument can also be supported by a psychological approach to the relationship between humans and their use of language as a means of communication. Born as multi-dimensional beings (composed of body, mind/soul and spirit), more often than not we are incapable of confining ourselves to a single mode of communication – be it emotive or symbolic. In the complexity of our being we are designed for interchange, interconnection and intercommunication: we switch modes fluidly, without thinking – grabbing the tool we need when we need it for our purpose. As the human mind and soul are inseparable, so is our choice of communicative means – it is usually all-embracing and all-inclusive.

Likewise, the opposition no.46 – high degree of predictability vs. low degree of predictability – makes a basic difference between scientific and poetic communication. The author's point is that we expect poetry to be different and metaphorical. Reading a poem, we normally anticipate its semantic complexity, figurativeness and suggestiveness. However, poetry also tries to get across a message, and helps the reader to understand what has been said and invites him/her to fill it with personal content: it should not be too literal. In other words, poetry is very "tight" semantically. So, we expect poetry to be unpredictable, but the way it creates meaning is not necessarily unpredictable: poetry breaks the rules of grammar in order to create special effects and surprises, but there is more attention paid to semantic information and coherence than the reader may realize, and this actually creates predictability. To put it differently, the expectation of predictability has the power to make the expected things predictable. For the sake of argument, it can be added that language is mostly used according to its assigned purpose: while it is hidden in scientific writing (for the purpose of focusing on its

¹⁵ Solomon Markus, "Fifty-Two Oppositions Between Scientific and Poetic Communication," in *Pragmatic Aspects of Human Communication*, ed. C. Cherry (Dordrecht – Holland/ Boston – USA), 1974, pp. 83-96.

content and meaning), it stays in the centre of poetic writing. Besides, every poem is significant in the context of all the other poems by the same author or in the same tradition. Possession of certain knowledge and competence makes the reader understand a poem's traditional and conventional meaning to a greater degree, by which it heightens the level of the poem's predictability. This leads us to the conclusion that poetic communication is not always unpredictable – it follows its own inner logic or the logic of the heart.

The reason for including a brief discussion of Markus' article in the thesis is this: while dealing with communication problems in music, over the course of decades, a number of musicologists developed various ideas and structures. Scholars usually disagree as to what they mean by communication and how the communication is carried on. One of the popular views was (and still is) that music with its symbolism is one of the most effective means of communication. Music operates on many levels as well as does poetry: independently and within its traditions. However, some scholars (e.g., see Allan Merriam, 1964) separated a symbolic function of music from the communicative one, which completely agrees with the opposition between scientific and poetic language.

Merriam further separates music's communicative function from the functions of enjoyment, entertainment, physical and emotional response. According to him, our general understanding of what/by what means music communicates is very vague and limited. Despite the radical change in the research climate since Merriam made his assertions, there are still challenges in dealing with the issue of communication. A considerable amount was written on the topic during the last several decades, including musical research and nonmusical disciplines (such as psychology, sociology, studies of reception, linguistics, philosophy, aesthetics, semiotics and others). However, although all the information available at the moment is tremendous and diverse, the challenge still lies in the controversial (and often contradictory) conclusions and results. Fortunately, the communicative approach to music has undergone a shift – from considering music as an entity comprised of different parts (hence the division into a number of functions it performs) to viewing it as an "entire phenomenon," a complex organism, as a

whole.¹⁶ Such a holistic approach supports the idea about the interchangeability and mutual inclusivity of multiple modes of communication and the existence of many levels of meaning (and thus many possible interpretations) of each musical work.

When it comes to the preceding discussion of the basic elements of communication, it is important to point out the significance of a *receiver* fully grasping the intended meaning of a *sender*. Furthermore, the *receiver* will usually play the role of a *sender* as well: his/her reactions to the given message will in turn become the messages of a new *sender*.

Feedback: a reaction from a *receiver* of a *message*. *Feedback* can be verbal and non-verbal, external and internal. Since communication is a two-way process, *feedback* helps the communicators to better understand each other as well as be more effective in message sharing. Without it we could never know whether the message we send across is understood. If we are the ones sending a message, it is our responsibility to make sure that it was received by the other side and understood according to our intention.

As far as the theories of communication are concerned, there is a substantial point to be made: every possible kind of communication can be disrupted, transformed or even stopped. A *barrier* can occur at any time during the process of communication. There are two types of *barriers*:

- internal (such as tiredness, fatigue, poor listening skills, a receiver's negative attitude towards a sender, negative feelings (fear, mistrust, anger, irritability), lack of concentration due to past experiences or present problems, lack of interest in a given message, etc.);
- external (including noise, environmental distractions, a sender's wrong choice of symbols, technical problems, bad connections, time of day, etc.)

¹⁶Doris Stockmann, "Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Study of Musical Communication Structures," in B. Nettle & Ph. V. Bohlman, eds., *Comparative Musicology and Anthropology of Music* (The University of Chicago Press, Ltd., Chicago & London), 1991, pp. 318-342.

Barriers keep messages from getting through. That's why for the communication to be effective, a sender has to be aware of them, trying his/her best to adjust, so that the message reaches its destination.

It is noteworthy that there are three main types of communication:

- one-way communication, which is centered on the *message* and the means of getting it across to a *receiver*. This type of communication has no way of knowing that the message is shared between a *sender* and a *receiver*;
- two-way communication, that recognizes the importance of a *receiver* as much as that of a *sender*. This communication type is *message* centered, and it acknowledges the role of the *feedback* that makes it possible to see if the *message* is correctly understood;
- transaction – the most effective and complete type of communication, where the communicative process is applied and carried out efficiently. A *sender* passes on a *message* to a *receiver*; the latter gives *feedback* to the former, which clears up all the possible misunderstanding and gives the *sender* a chance to ensure the effectiveness of the communication. It has to be remembered that efficient communication involves not only speaking and listening, but also observing. Acquiring effective communicative skills is a must for every single individual: all of us want to be understood and correctly interpreted.

How does this apply to composers? They use all the three mentioned types of communication. They do not always get feedback, yet they keep sending their messages out into the world, in an attempt to share with others what is so important to them. Reaching out to people who understand is a characteristic feature that defines every artist. Arne Nordheim, a contemporary Norwegian composer, put it this way: "I see myself as a telegrapher who sends messages from the ocean. I am alone and lonely, but at the same time I communicate with others, regardless of where in the world they are."¹⁷ I believe, however, that these messages are not mere

¹⁷ Cited by Ståle Kleiberg.

messages, but fully developed stories, naturally grown out of the life experiences of the sender. Therefore, sending them from the ocean is nothing less than the eagerness to address issues of being and meaning, about which they care most intensely. The composer's reference to the ocean is significant: it denotes unlimited vastness and depth. At the same time it suggests the inner state of an individual, his/her core strength and stability as opposed to a variety of external manifestations of feelings. The lower waters of the ocean are calm and peaceful, despite the surface ruffles and turbulence. Regardless of the circumstances, the main purpose and strongest desire of the composer is communication.

Different theories of communication have been adopted in music studies. Different models of music communication have been proposed by scholars of music – most of them influenced by the information-transmission communication model, initially proposed by Shannon and Weaver in 1949.¹⁸ In short, this model is based on the view that a sender uses a channel in order to send a message to a receiver; all the components of the chain can vary in their form, but the message always goes in one direction: from the sender to the receiver, and not vice versa. Later Kendall and Carterette proposed a three-stage model, in which they show how an encoded by a composer message gets across to a listener via a performer.¹⁹ According to the authors, there are two different processes of decoding inherent in the transmission of a message: one by a performer, and the other – by a listener. For each of these processes the shared knowledge of all the participants in the chain is vital. Besides, they are influenced by the environment and the context within which the steps are taken.

It has to be noted that, in general, models of communication have been made with a reference to professional musicians: skilled performers play music created by professional composers – whether in concert halls or recording studios. However, some researchers (see, e.g. D. Hargreaves, R. MacDonald & D. Miell)²⁰ go beyond this approach: according to their view,

¹⁸ Claude E. Shannon & Warren Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* (University of Illinois, Urbana), 1949.

¹⁹ Edward C. Carterette & R. A. Kendall, "The Communication of musical Expression," in *Music Perception*, 8, 1990.

²⁰ Dorothy Miell, Raymond MacDonald & David Hargreaves, *Musical Communication* (Oxford University Press Ink., New York), 2005.

musical communication can take place even when a composer and a performer are not necessarily trained and skilled musicians, and the place where the musical communication happens does not have to be confined to traditionally defined spots of music performances.

An interesting approach to applying the communication principles in music was proposed by a Swedish musicologist Ingmar Bengtsson.²¹ His first model of the musical communication chain introduces a structured system of several related to one another elements

Composer—Notation—Performer; Instrument—Sound Progress —Listener

Out of the six elements, the three of them denote people in the process of communication. *Composer* creates a piece of music that is read, interpreted and performed by *Performer* in order to convey it to *Listener*. The other three, however, are the means by which it is possible to communicate the message of *Composer* to *Listener*, and they are called *codes* (visual, auditory, verbal, symbolic etc.). Interestingly, the third and fourth components – *Performer* and *Instrument* – are more closely linked to each other than the others.

It is important to note that the model at its core represents the relationship between *Composer* and *Listener*, where the first three components belong to *Composer* and the rest, to *Listener*. However, Bengtsson makes a point that every single link of the chain is related to the others. Besides, he asserts the importance of the feedback. For example, *Listener's* feedback may influence both *Performer* and *Composer*. Likewise, being also that of a *Listener*, *Performer's* feedback may affect *Composer* and *Listener*.

In addition, the author maintains that all the six components belong to different phenomenon areas. Since *Composer/ Performer/ Listener* are human beings, various psychological and physiological factors should be considered in the communicative process. Further, *Instrument* is an object, while *Soundtrack* is an acoustic phenomenon. An *Instrument's* quality, as well as that of *Sound Progress* will definitely affect the responses of *Listener(s)* to the piece written by *Composer* and played by *Performer*.

²¹Ingmar Bengtsson, *Musikvetenskap: en översikt* (Stockholm: Esselte stadium), 1997.

According to Bengtsson, the first model of musical communication should be considered in historical and geographical contexts: in some cultures music is produced collectively, (by the same people that perform and listen to it – which implies that the *Composer/Performer/Listener* links should be put under the same category), or is based entirely on the oral tradition (in which case there is no need for *Notation*), or can be composed/written down/performed by the same person. Therefore he refers to a variety of the model's shortened versions. Yet the entire point of the first communication chain model is to mirror the relationship between its most significant constituents. Yet, with time this model has been elaborated, developed and filled out by other important communicative aspects: social surroundings, traditional and historical factors, as well as a variety of feedback processes were also taken into account.

Considering the importance of communication effectiveness, I believe that a social constructionist model of communication should also be included in our discussion of communication theories. According to this model, communication is not a mere transaction of views and thoughts on a specific topic (i.e. a piece of music, a performer(s), or composer(s)), but rather a means of construction of the world and the self within.²² In other words, conversations about music are viewed as an integral part of music communication: they serve a number of important psychological, social and musical functions.

The social constructionist model of communication considers dialogue as a vital tool of social action. In the above mentioned book *Discursive Psychology*, Edwards and Potter argue that people are able to achieve certain personal and social results through their talking. For example, musicians improve and develop not only practicing but also interacting with other musicians. Performers gain much through communications with their colleagues, with whom they discuss performances, compositions, albums, and music in general. At the same time, they may be provided with interesting insights from their listeners – not limited to other performers or professional musicians, but also amateurs.

²² Derek Edwards & Jonathan Potter, *Discursive Psychology* (London: Sage Publications), 1992.

Moreover, through conversations about music people establish their own position in their circles of friends as well as in their communities – they both construct and claim their identity. For instance, sharing preferences for a particular group of musicians or a musical genre/trend, people not only describe their tastes and interests, but also position themselves in relation to other people. It especially applies to young people. Throughout their teenage years they establish their identities via belonging to one or another music sub-culture as associated with one or another peer group. Alongside their wish to be viewed as belonging to a particular group, there is a need to express individuality, to be distinguished from the crowd. In other words, young people prefer to listen to music that is liked only by their own immediate social circle. By so doing, they automatically reinforce a sense of belonging that is significant for the creation, shaping and presentation of their identities.

The Issues of Identity and Belonging

In his book, *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*, Maslow discusses the identity issue:

"What do we mean by the discovery of identity? We mean finding out what your real desires and characteristic are, and being able to live in a way that expresses them. You learn to be authentic, to be honest in the sense of allowing your behavior and your speech to be the true and spontaneous expression of your inner feelings."²³

We tend to consider our identities as fixed, reliable and long-lasting. Some identity features we believe to be inherited, while others – acquired throughout life, and under the influence of various factors. For us, the sense of who we are is created by blending our own view of our identity and the view of others. As a result, we either conform to the expectations of those around us, or we oppose and resist them. Naturally, we believe in the possibility of a moderate change of the sense of who we are. Yet it is the idea of the natural, authentic and non-changeable self that we regard as an important sign in our comprehension of identity: we often

²³ Abraham Maslow, *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*, (New York: Arkana), 1993, p. 176.

feel confused experiencing its unexpected changes followed by, say, a traumatic experience or religious conversion. Similarly, we get affected by changes in close relationships: births, deaths or other major life events such as marriage, divorce or migration. Sociologists, on the other hand, view identity as more variable and capable of changing – something that is constructed by social relationships and shaped by cultural influences. Social processes, characterized by active involvement of people, require much from an individual. Relationships take time, and there are negative as well as positive emotions in them. Nevertheless, people tend to develop bonds with others; they seek to foster their friendships and associations, doing so by different means – music being one of these.

Thus, a sense of identity is strongly attached to a sense of belonging. It is very important that we can identify with other people. We need to be part of smaller units, such as families, as well as bigger organizations – on local, national and even international levels. One of the reasons is our need for emotional and intellectual connection with others. However, the contemporary world is so changeable and unstable, that we cannot build our identity merely relying on a sense of belonging, i.e. in the constellation of relationships: we should continually construct our self-identity, analyzing and understanding ourselves.

The process is not very easy, considering our lack of knowledge in this regard. In general, people find it difficult to focus on their inner self – there too many things and problems to take care of in “the real world.” This applies especially to extroverted people, who, according to Carl Jung and his typology of personalities, get their energy and motivation from other people. They need to be heard and stimulated by others, at the same time as they also need to express their feelings. The focus of introverts goes inward: it is directed towards concepts, ideas and emotions. These people get easily overwhelmed by external stimuli and prefer quietness and solitude, so they can tune inwards. Stereotyping extraverts and introverts as opposing extremes would be incorrect: in reality everybody possesses characteristic features of both categories, to lesser or greater degree. Everyone needs another soul with whom s/he can share thoughts and exchange feelings. Although modern societies liberate individuals from traditionally defined norms and rules in the social construction of identity, although we are given greater freedom

for understanding and inventing ourselves, we nevertheless have to adapt and adjust: with numerous choices and opportunities we are put under even a heavier burden of worry and insecurity – and we still need to find out who we are.

Reading for this project, I came across an interesting and, I would say, rather extreme, explanation of identity – presented as a collection of masks chosen for various social encounters.²⁴ According to this view, there is no such a thing as authenticity: the true self does not exist. It is all about performances and making an impression. Yes, I agree that our physiology and psychology strongly depends on the surroundings we live in: place and time are vital factors of influence. Moreover, sociologists and anthropologists assert that understanding of a person's thoughts and actions calls for knowledge of his/her background and environment. However, I believe that as much as we become products of our surroundings, we are, at the same time, unique individuals, each possessing a soul – the self that differs from any other in the entire world. The soul yearns to be accepted, understood and valued for what it is; every living individual longs for the freedom of genuine love and acceptance – without masks, without disguise. Still, although very one-sided and extreme, I find the first opinion above relevant and valuable, as it calls attention to the way in which artists communicate with their audiences.

Music is strongly associated with identity – whether it is national, ethnic or individual. The idea of the links between authenticity and music was brought by the Prussian preacher Johann Herder in the late 18th century.²⁵ According to Herder, language makes us human, and it keeps us in community, since it has to be learned socially. Each language represents a set of distinctive values and ideas; no language can be superior or inferior to any other. Because we think in a language we speak, our thoughts become products of the community where we are settled. Since the concept of language is extended to music, music also becomes part of a collective spirit. Thus, Herder maintains, the ultimate goal of music is the expression of the

²⁴ Richard Jenkins, *Social Identity* (London: Routledge), 1996.

²⁵ Richard Tarushkin, "Nationalism," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. 17, pp. 689-691.

collective. In other words, the collective is a symbol of a distinct culture, and expressing different cultural values and ideas becomes a marker of one's belonging to it.

This notion gave rise to the idea of authenticity as loyalty and faithfulness to one's roots and basic identity as a member of society. What does it mean to be authentic? One of the earliest collectors of folklore (it was he who coined the term "folksong"), Herder states that authenticity belongs with the people: folklore music is the true, authentic music of a nation. Misha Alperin concurs with him, adding that folklore's existence has no beginning or end – it is timeless. Folklore is an indispensable part of nature, and it also integrates us into society:

Everyday life presents us with problems, challenges, joys to which we react. It does not only apply to the present, but also to the past, which is sometimes very painful. Folklore has always existed in the context of something — this art stems out of human needs: a drought is followed by one song, a flood — by another; when we are tired, we sing in rounds, when we are happy, we express it in songs.

As it is, hopefully, becoming clear in the process of reading this chapter, one of the main concerns of this study is human communication and its means. I share a broad view that humans create art in order to interact with other humans. Music is a significant channel of communication. Composers write music because they want to share their emotions, intentions, ideas and thoughts, whereas listeners listen to music because they want to experience, discern and discover emotions, intentions, ideas and thoughts. Considering that music as a phenomenon is "inherently ambiguous,"²⁶ we easily come to an understanding that its meanings are numerous and various. They range from political, religious and commercial messages to personal signals and deep emotional states as well as different states of consciousness and complex ideas. Taking into account social, cultural and psychological

²⁶ Ian Cross & H. F. Stobart, "The Andean Anacrusis? rhythmic structure and perception in Easter songs of Northern Potosi, Bolivia," in *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, 9, 2000, pp. 63-94.

contexts will certainly help to develop and enrich our perception of the complexity of musical meanings.

Dialogue implies exchange between two or more people. Although the next two chapters will focus on composers and their messages, the communicative process cannot be fully covered without considering listeners' response. Thus, I would like to round this chapter off by including a discussion of the variety of responses to music, based on approaches to literature that explore the diversity and divergence of readers' responses to literary works. These approaches are incorporated into a body of literary criticism known as reader-response criticism.

Following the lead of the major proponents of reader-response criticism Stanley Fish, Norman Holland and Hans Robert Jauss, I will argue about the importance of the relationship between music and listeners in the context of the communicative process between composer and listener. As much as literary meanings are transactional and dialogic, so are musical meanings: originated by the composer, their potential is fully realized only through their interaction with the listener.

Reader – Response Theories

According to reader-response criticism, the reader is a producer rather than a consumer of meanings of a text. In this sense, the reader helps the writer to create: the process is alive and on-going as long as there is a connection between the former and the text. So, literary meanings are dialogic – they are created by the contact of the two parts: the reader and the text. Stanley Fish put it as follows: "Meaning is a product of the interaction between text and reader." Therefore, objective meaning cannot be found – interpretation will always be subjective. David Bleich and Norman Holland suggest that responses of readers are motivated by personal and psychological needs, rather than led by the text. When we read, we identify ourselves with the characters, we experience their situations through the prism of our worldviews, and we work out our own characteristic patterns through the text. In other words, we replicate ourselves by using literary works. If this assumption is true, then, I believe, reading

can teach us a great deal about ourselves – it can give us a better access to insight and self-awareness.

Norman Holland greatly values the reader's personality as fundamental in respect of his/her responses to a text:

Rather, each reader must give the words meaning, and he can only give them *the meanings they have for him* (italics mine). It is he who fills in the outlines to give characters appearances, ages, manners or personalities.²⁷

According to the critic, responses to the same text will vary due to the readers' different personalities. He introduces the so-called "identity theme," an expression denoting that our personalities and experiences color and impact our perception of what we read. Due to the variety of "identity themes" responses to the same work will vary. Holland argues that an individual's "identity theme" is permanent: its pattern is formed during the earliest phases of his/her life. As we develop and mature, certain changes in our "identity theme" may take place. Yet its core will remain, shaping and molding our perception of the world and life in general. Thus, what we read into a work of literature is regulated by our "identity theme." In the process of reading our hopes and fears, expectations and fantasies get established. If they are being fulfilled by the text, our response to it tends to be positive. Otherwise, we respond negatively or do not respond at all.

This also applies to our relationship with music. Our responses to a specific music piece are influenced by personal characteristics and experiences as well. In 1991 Barbara Lewis and Charles Schmidt held a study which focused on the relationship between listeners' personalities and their responses to music. The researchers examined the correlation between subjects' personality types (based on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, MBTI) and their perception of music (cognitive, emotional, physical, etc.).²⁸ The results of the study showed that listeners'

²⁷ Norman Holland, *5 Readers Reading* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 1975, p. 43.

²⁸ Barbara E. Lewis & Charles P. Schmidt, "Listeners' Response to Music as a Function of Personality Type," in *Journal of Research in Music Education* 39, no. 4, 1991, pp. 311–21.

personalities influence their responses to music: those who had a high magnitude of responsiveness to music, were likely to be found on the “intuition” end of the MBTI. Likewise, the subjects with a lower magnitude of responsiveness to music tended to be positioned closer to the “sensing” end of the scale.²⁹ The findings of this particular study clearly support the idea that we as listeners (with our backgrounds, psychological/social and cultural make-up) play an active and important role in the reception of music to which we listen. Identical to when we read and experience the introduced to us imaginary world through our own lenses of reality, we also listen to a piece of music subjectively and respond to it in our own characteristic way. We usually incorporate our own emotions, thoughts, personalities and identities into the process. As a result, these factors will determine not only how we respond to a work of literature/music, but also what aspects of this work we will emphasize. To put it differently, we tend to focus on the elements that are significant in/relevant to our own lives. Furthermore, historical and cultural factors should also be taking into consideration. The German literary critic Hans Robert Jauss points to the importance of the “horizon of readers’ expectations:”³⁰

The notion I am alluding to is that of horizon, which constitutes all creation of meaning in human behavior and in our primary understanding of the world both as historical limitation and as the condition of possibility of any experience.

He maintains that readers in the same culture share a common “horizon of expectations.” Due to similar history and culture, they are likely to respond to works of literature in much the same way. In addition, our history and experience as well as cultural heritage will determine how our horizon develops and functions. The critic acknowledges the importance of the author and

²⁹ According to the MBTI, sensing and intuition are the main information-perceiving functions of a person. Individuals that prefer sensing are more likely to trust concrete information of the present that can be perceived by the five senses. For them, facts and details are significant, whereas hunches and inklings are not to be trusted. On the other hand, those that prefer intuition tend to rely on the flashes of insight the sensing people distrust. More abstract or theoretical information seems to be trustworthy, in contrast to that understood only by the five senses.

³⁰ Hans R. Jauss, “The Identity of the Poetic Text in the Changing Horizon of Understanding,” in Ph. Goldstein & J. L. Machor (eds.), *Reception Study: from Literary Theory to Cultural Studies* (New York: Routledge), 2001, p. 7.

his/her biography. Nevertheless, he argues that the reader's time, history and experiences, rather than those of the author, govern his/her reception of a particular work. Naturally, through the course of time and historical development, responses to a work of literature are likely to change. Besides, when we read an old text, we look back into the past, with certain knowledge about it and about the development between the past and the present. This knowledge will affect our response and influence our interpretation. Moreover, it will make it impossible for our responses to resemble those of a writer's contemporary readers:

The very history of effects and the interpretation of an event or work of the past enable us to understand it as a plurality of meanings that was not yet perceivable to its contemporaries. The past event cannot be understood without taking into account its consequences, the work of art cannot be separated from its effects.³¹

It should be noted here that there is a distinction between readers'/listeners' response and their interpretation of a particular work. Whereas *response* is one's thoughts and feelings in the process of reading/listening, *interpretation* is a way in which a literary/ musical work is understood. (Interpretation can often be expressed more logically or rationally). While response consists of ideas and emotions provoked by the text we read or piece we listen to, interpretation is what summarizes and exposes the aesthetic force and artistic logic of these. Therefore, while a response may involve an emotion, an interpretation can only refer to the significance of such an emotion. Certainly, response and interpretation overlap to some extent. An analogy to the above described interconnection is the relationship between music and listeners. If communication between listener and composer is to be successful, the text has to originate and influence the listener's activity. Communication will be initiated in the listening process: the listener is invited into the "events" of a music piece to supply what is meant but not uttered by words. Meanings of a particular piece are given out to the listener in form of hints and implications – therefore their significance is likely to be received in the context of the

³¹ Ibid., p. 7.

relevant ideas or events of the listener's life. As these implications come alive in his/her imagination, they become profound and heartfelt, and, consequently, the ideas sent across by the composer are shaped and established in the heart of the listener. In other words, it is not the text itself that forms a life, but its active interconnection with the listener: the imprinted into the listener images hang together in a sequence, and this sequence, in turn, makes the meanings of a music piece come alive in the imagination of the listener.

To sum up, the theories presented in this chapter have set a direction in which I want to proceed in relation to my further work with Ståle Kleiberg and Misha Alperin. In my view, they broaden and diversify our understanding of the major aspects of human existence such as intercommunication and the processes of maturing and growth. The issues of identity and belonging direct attention to the essence of the individual – one's own self, while Maslow's theory of self-actualization focuses on the individual's development and maturing. Communication theories along with reader-response criticism emphasize the inherent in humans need for communication with others, as well as point to the importance of one's environment (social and cultural) and milieu.

Choosing to take a holistic approach to the individual, I am interested in chronicling the facts of his/her life as well as understanding each personality in depth. For this reason I delve into the biographical details of Kleiberg's and Alperin's lives. Psychological and sociological perspectives, on the other hand, equip me to view these artists not only in and of themselves but also as representatives of some of the ways an individual can develop and excel. If possible, I also aim to discover whether there are any patterns that generally describe the relationship between composers and their creations, or whether there may be keys that unlock the hidden inner lives of extraordinary people. Both Kleiberg and Alperin are very talented individuals with unique personalities who live in two unrelated worlds of ideas and sounds. Therefore, the following two chapters will differ in manner and style of portrayal of the respective composers: their biographical details as well as their thoughts are perceived as those of self-actualizers and examined in the light of this fact. In this thesis they will be described in terms of their relationships to their respective domains – Kleiberg as a Norwegian contemporary composer, and Alperin as a Ukrainian Jewish jazz composer – and also in terms of their relationships with other artistic domains.

CHAPTER 2 STÅLE KLEIBERG

Biography

Childhood years

Born in 1958, Ståle Kleiberg grew up in a house filled with music: for the most part, jazz. The family had a great respect for the arts inherited from its predecessors: Ståle's great grandfather on his mother's side, Theodor Dahl, was a well-known writer whose stories were read and told in the home, and from whom most likely stems the composer's ardent love for literature. His grandmother on his father's side used to sing beautiful folksongs that literally enchanted him and powerfully drew him towards music. Although not a professional musician, his father was a gifted singer, a member of the "Abraham's singers" group. From his early days Ståle was nourished on art and culture. This is how he remembers his childhood set: in the close-knit circle of family and friends who spent evenings singing, playing the guitar and the harmonica, and discussing poetry, literature and politics.

His first musical instrument was the trombone, which he started playing at the age of eight. A year later the family bought a piano, and Ståle began taking private lessons. While practicing the instrument, he often dreamt of writing a little piece himself; at around the age of ten he did so; his first composition untitled. A number of short pieces followed; however, for many years they remained hidden away. Much of his time he also spent playing in various musical groups, his passion for music fast becoming all-absorbing.

From the age of eleven Ståle was strongly drawn to the town library which gradually became his cherished spot of learning, and where he spent a significant amount of time during his teenage years. Alongside the Stavanger symphony orchestra venue which he started attending on a weekly basis, the library became a centre of culture and knowledge for him – a place which harbored possibilities and opportunities for his future. There he listened to all kinds of classical music. Piano music, four-hand music, chamber music, and orchestral music not only awakened

his yearning to be a part of the world of music, but also reflected his readiness for interpersonal communication.

At the age of twelve, the future artist went to Bergen to visit the home of Edward Grieg, whom he absolutely adored. The trip confirmed his intuition: he now knew that he was going to become a composer. His library visits became even more frequent and much more purposeful: besides listening to music, he read about composers, studied theory and harmony, and when it was time to leave, he borrowed different scores to study at home. Beyond the fostering of the dialogue with the Self, music offered the boy new possibilities for cultivating acquaintances and friendships: he enjoyed spending time in the company of schoolmates that played musical instruments, he also attended school band rehearsals, and his general discourse was filled with the topic of music.

His friend's father, who at the time was the conductor of the town philharmonic orchestra, encouraged the young composer to attend the orchestra rehearsals, from which he learned not only a considerable amount of music, but also the rules of orchestration, as well as various interpretations of given compositions. He took the rehearsals seriously, considering them a valuable opportunity for learning, and kept attending for about five years, despite the time clash with his school lessons. Besides, being given the information as to which piece the orchestra would work on next, he prepared for the rehearsals, borrowing the scores from the library and studying them. The time and energy devoted to this activity paid off well: he learned about the orchestra, about the sound, and about the colossal range of the expression. Watching the orchestra and simultaneously reading the scores made the music he heard powerful and real. Moreover, it filled him with a variety of ideas that he used for his own compositions.

He applied the knowledge he attained to his writing practice. Always fascinated by poetry he worked on a set of compositions in 1970-1971, inspired by Norwegian 19th century verses. He found the poems in his grandfather's library, which he frequented and where he took refuge from the dullness of the outside world (especially during tiresome family gatherings accompanied by endless talks and discussions). In the library, the poets Jørgen Moe,

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson and Vilhelm Krag were presented to him as tantalizing masters of the art of the word. Great figures of the previous century, these writers strongly impressed and influenced his young soul. Moreover, he felt that the poems were so lyrical that it was only natural to add a piano accompaniment and turn them into songs. “No sooner said than done” – the songs were named after the poems that inspired them.

Curiously, despite his reservation about showing off, he was quite happy to introduce the written songs to his school audience. On the last day of the school year some time would be devoted to artistically inclined students. The idea was to give all the various budding talents an opportunity to perform. Ståle was also member of a school band at that time. He was responsible for setting the programs; and since there were several singers who needed accompaniment, he often played the piano. He also sang duets with a friend – performing in different groups, rather than by himself, made this a very positive experience that he greatly enjoyed.

At the age of sixteen, he switched piano teacher, an excellent professional, who created an open and friendly teacher-pupil relationship. With growing confidence the young composer showed her his written pieces – she was the first to see them. Her genuine approval and encouragement provided stimulus and inspiration for her student who kept composing – intensely and passionately.

As mentioned above, Kleiberg began composing in 1968, at the age of 10. But his public career can be dated from 1977, when a number of his compositions were performed by his friends and himself in the Stavanger Art Gallery – the town’s spot for chamber concerts and performances. He thought of a concert where his music would be presented, and began making practical arrangements. The Art gallery’s director, the painter Roland Lengauer benevolently proposed to lend the arena free of charge. Only then did he share the idea with his parents who wrote it off as crazy. However, this didn’t stop the young man, and he continued the concert preparations, led by his intuition. The concert turned out to be a huge success. The musicians consisted of an oboist, a saxophonist, a cellist, a drummer, a double bassist and a pianist. Therefore, the pieces included “The First Act for Piano and Oboe,” and compositions for the mentioned instruments

in a variety of combinations: duos, trios and quartets. Several poems written by a friend were also read (and accompanied by the young composer's improvising on the piano).

The audience received all the performed music with warmth and enthusiasm. It was then that his name was first mentioned in the press as that of a composer and a pianist. For the young musician, the concert was a mark of approval. His dream of becoming a composer was transferred into the realm of reality: the music that he wrote at that time was approaching the standards of what he thought satisfactory. The concert's success strengthened and reinforced his conviction of his call. From this time on, music literally filled his mind, heart and emotions.

Even as a teenager, he felt that he was different from the people around him. At the same time he did not feel the need to identify with others: following his calling to compose was fundamental to his self-identity. Conforming to the expectations of the crowds was not an option for him – his preference was to present them with his own ideas on life. His personality emerged in the form of protest against the established values of his town – a materialistic approach to living and the importance of the comforts of life. On the other hand, additional pressures, such as family issues and encounters with various representatives of differing political and religious ideologies, vied for his attention, challenging him with distraction, yet strengthening his determination to keep striving. Already then he chose his path, and this formed the basis of his identity.

As a secondary school graduate, he devoted all his time to music – studying it and writing it. Going against the mainstream is never an easy task, yet the young composer was determined to swim upstream. His future economic situation as an artist (uncertain income coupled with psychological insecurity) along with the fear of failure were sources of anxiety. His interest in psychology, philosophy and literature offered a bright and secure alternative: a plan "B." However, being an artist was his only desire – he was therefore willing to sacrifice the comforts of life and economical security, moving on and fighting fear and distraction along the way. Without the support of his parents, who in all sincerity believed his next step to be a tremendous risk, he moved to Oslo in 1978 to become a professional.

Three years later the first of his works appeared in print. The work I refer to is a cycle for voice and piano, “Haugtussa,” which he was commissioned to write for Arne Garborg’s 130th anniversary in 1981. The performance of “Haugtussa” received a warm welcome in his home town as well as in national media; newspaper articles and comments were encouraging and supportive. What is interesting and impressive, is that although being Kleiberg’s first large-scale work (about 35 minutes long), the cycle was already put under the pressure of having a predecessor – a work by Grieg whose cycle had made both “Haugtussa” and its creator, Arne Garborg, well-known and famous. Meeting this tremendous challenge, the young composer proved himself masterful: in this work a new level of his achievement and potential became apparent. Moreover, the comparison to Grieg’s “Haugstussa” did not reduce the value of Kleiberg’s cycle, but enhanced his development as a composer.

Answering the frequently asked questions about his work in relation to that by Grieg, he placed the emphasis on the different perception of the texts and places that are described in them:

“Jaeren both fascinates and enchants me. The first thing I do whenever I get back to Stavanger, is to borrow my parents’ car and drive to the Jaeren beaches which appeal to me in a powerful way; through my fascination with the place I became interested in Garborg’s writing. Besides, the theme of my cycle is the victory over the evil, whereas Grieg’s focus is on the love story between the main characters. The poems I have chosen differ from those Grieg did – repeating what he had already done would be sheer madness.³²

The idea of writing the cycle was introduced by Egil Lejon, then a publisher of Norwegian literature, who heard Kleiberg’s other cycle of songs written to poems by Sigbjørn Obstfelder in 1979. The fact is worth mentioning, because Egil Lejon was one of those whose enthusiasm and sincere interest supported and furthered some of Kleiberg’s works. Besides, through him the

³² The expert is taken from one of the interviews with Kleiberg, related in “Afterposten,” 1981.

composer met a poet Helge Torvund, in 1981. At that point Torvund already had published a couple of books, and was becoming known as one of the “new” Norwegian poets.

The poet happened to be from Jaeren – the place Kleiberg speaks of in his above comment. It lies in the Stavanger region, and its beaches – the longest sandy beaches in Norway – are considered the most beautiful in the country: white sand, rolling sea waves and wind create an unforgettable experience for anyone deciding to take a walk alongside the shore. For creative people the place is even more significant – it is their muse, a place of inspiration, insight and revelation. Kleiberg loves walking along the coast; the memories have become valuable and meaningful to the composer. There he first experienced being a part of the world and first learned the freedom of the spirit – how forgetting about himself and absorbing in the outside world feels.

Fascinated by Helge Torvund’s poetic works, Kleiberg set off to create a cycle *Lyssmeden (The Light Smith)*, for voice, piano and oboe. Torvund’s poetic images aroused vivid musical associations, and the imagined world of love and hope found a new way of expression through Kleiberg’s musical language. The composer considers this work very important for his personal and professional growth: not only the applied compositional methods were fresh and original to him, but also the message of the poet strongly resonated with his principles and beliefs. Moreover, it became his personal credo:

“—Mitt ansvar er
å bera lyset I min kropp
lik ein sirene
eller lik hestehovar
under mine augnelokk

Mitt ansvar er
å vera kjærleik
der ikkje kjærleik

finst..—”³³

He continued composing and performing his music, giving a number of concerts in Oslo and Stavanger together with his close friends, the oboist Erik Waldejer and the soprano singer Kirsten Landmark Mæland. The three of them also performed for several NRK radio recordings. He later wrote *Two Movements for String Orchestra*, (an orchestra version of the *String Quartet no.1*) performed by the Stavanger symphony orchestra in 1985.

Literature and music as two most significant spheres of Kleiberg’s life

Always keen about literature, he started studying it professionally at the university in 1982. Not surprisingly, the distinct feature of this period of the composer’s life the use of literature as a source of inspiration for his compositions. He read a great deal of poetry – his main literary interest. Poetic images and structure are treated musically by Kleiberg in various genres: he composed *Three Shakespeare Sonnets*, *Sonatina for Piano* and *Sonata for Oboe and Piano* in 1982, *Keplers Lovsang*(for choir and organ), *Sonata for Piano*, *Vandring ved Havet* (for two pianos), *Vindu I Februar*(for guitar), *Stilla*, and *First String Quartet* in 1983, *Sonetto di Tasso* (for choir and organ), and *Solo Sonata for Oboe* in 1984. All of these works were inspired by literature.

Here it would be appropriate to draw a parallel between the two domains of art (which are the two most significant realms of Kleiberg’s existence) – literature and music – and to highlight key aspects of their correspondence. The reason for doing so is my intention to include an analysis of two works under the same title *Vandring ved Havet* – Kleiberg’s piece for two pianos and Gill’s poem which inspired it – as an illustration of the relationship between literature and music in Kleiberg’s life.

³³ Helge Torvund, *Lyssmeden*, (Gyldendal Norsk Forlag: Oslo), 1983, p. 24

There is a number of analogies between music and poetry, but I would like to focus on one of them – the relationship between form and content that can be equally applied to poetry and music. It is generally known that a good work of art always implies a correspondence between form and content. This can equally be said about a poetic work and about a music piece. Form and content can match in differing respects: mood, tone, pace, or degree of order. In other words, the two elements must be in balance, neither one dominating over the other. When the form prevails, the meaning of an art work will be weakened. On the other hand, with dominant content the reader's/listener's interest will be hindered.

It is also known that the same content, given a different form, can be given a very different meaning. While form is the physical manifestation of a synthesis of artistic vision, expression and communication, content reveals the thoughts and ideas of an artist.³⁴ Although a personal interpretation is ultimately unique, a great deal of art works convey specific meanings. However, any work of art can be understood more thoroughly through comprehension of the significance of interconnection between form and content.

Poets and composers often turn to each other for inspiration, and over centuries their dialogue has proved to be beneficial. Composers have often been inspired by literature – the large number of compositions based on Shakespeare's works alone hints at the influence of writers on musicians. The benefit is mutual, of course, for writers and poets seek inspiration from music as well. As we here contemplate the relationship between poetry and music, I would like to pose a couple of questions that interest me. Would it be possible to reconstruct the poem from the instrumental composition built upon it, without actually reading it? In other words, would the meaning the composer reads in the poem resemble the meaning we retrieve when listening to the composition based on that poem? Considering this unlikely, would the title of the given composition make a difference? If so, does the music piece simply echo the poem, presenting the listener with yet another form of the same meaning? In view of the relationship

³⁴ Context should be mentioned as well, as the various circumstances in which a work of art is created or received/interpreted by audiences, are also very relevant to understanding of it. However, our focus is mainly on the two elements of art – form and content.

between form and content, does the composer dwell on some verses/symbolic meanings of the poem, ignoring its other aspects? And if he/she does, what is the explanation?

A possible way of answering these questions would be through an analysis of closely related works of art that are inspired by one another. Hence is my choice of *Vandring ved Havet*, Kleiberg's piece for two pianos, written under the inspiration of Claes Gill's poem "Vandring ved Havet."

According to Bengtsson's communication theory chain described in Chapter 1, [idea — composer (his inner world) — composition — performer (his inner world) — instrument(s) — listener (his inner world)] an idea of a composer is transmitted to and received by a listener. Underway, however, it undergoes transformation, due to a variety of factors that determine how the listener responds to the composition intended to convey the composer's idea. I would like to illustrate the processes that take place from the moment when an idea is conceived to the moment of its perception by the listener. For practical reasons, I will confine the chain of communication to its four basic elements: idea — composer (his inner world) — composition — listener (his inner world), personalized as follows in the given example:

Gill's poem "Walking by the Sea" — Ståle Kleiberg — his *Vandring ved Havet* — Inna (myself).

The poem

Walking by the Sea

Summer-blue sea coolly washing foam

on the shore the wind hastens through desolate blades of grass

and dead shells, wildly restless, pale as a summer's night

sighing brightly in the white funnel of the convolvulus.

We are in the power of divine madness.

Washed by the waters of time the land rests in dream.

Around the rocky torso gentle darkness sinks tenderly

*towards the crevice's deadening breath of warm barberry
and sweet earth by the light of the moon's seventh phase.
You tremble! Spread out in mute ecstasy.*

*The ringing quivers; an eternal unrest in the south
dark echo of distant stormy summer seas
and lightning from hotter heavens in rapid glimpses
low to the south-west the raised sting of the Scorpion.
Death is the lot of divine madness.*

The poem is impressionistic, filled with a variety of images and symbols. It addresses human life experiences. The author contemplates the significance of varying human emotions and the value of relationships. At the same time, this poem is about the complexities of nature and the constancy of the life cycle. Moreover, in the last stanza we are introduced to the idea of the connection between our small existence and that of the grand cosmos.

The beginning of the poem is a detailed description of the scenery along the shore. The first line is filled with positive images of summer experience: *summer-blue sea* speaks of sky, water, warmth and light. But these images are instantly countered by the picture of *the wind* hastening through *desolate blades of grass* in the second line. *Coolly washing foam* of the sea stands in contrast with *desolate blades of grass* and *dead shells, pale and restless*. *Gentle darkness* around *the rocky torso, the land washed by the waters* of the second stanza, and *dark echo of distant stormy summer seas and lightning from hotter heavens* of the third add to a sense of conflict. On the other hand, the combination of these elements allows us to see this particular setting as part of a totality: the land, the sea and the heavens indicate the unity of the world as a whole creation – each of these parts needs to be seen and comprehended in relation to each other.

However, the poem should be appreciated not only as an image of the splendor of nature by the sea-shore in the evening, but also as an illustration of the significance of human

emotional/sensual experiences, and, finally, as a more universal dramatization of the cycle of life. All of the elements are viewed as interdependent. For example, the expression *divine madness* combines life, poetry, love and sexual relationship.

- We can read it as a symbol of life that comprises the different, the opposite, and the incompatible: “divine” is something transcendent that gives meaning, while “madness” suggests the destruction of meaning; love and intimacy are life’s qualities, they also indicate the beginning of new life.
- It is an expression that characterizes poetry in general – poetry has sometimes been compared to “divine madness,” which can especially be applied to Romantic poets, i.e., Keats or Wordsworth, who saw poetry as a kind of force that occupied them. For instance, in his “Ode to the West Wind” Shelley asks to be inspired – to have the breath of the spirit (something mystical and mysterious, suggesting a divine and supernatural source).
- Love is often referred to as a kind of madness. At the same time it is usually described as something divine, heavenly and transcendental.
- Sexual intimacy is not only joyful, pleasurable, but also meaningful and life-giving. Yet, love and sex compel us – we are not fully in control: this kind of compulsion is biologically inherited and passed on.

The abundance of alliteration, “s” sounds (that create the poem’s internal rhyme), repetitions, and celestial imagery make this poem very sensual. *Lightning from hotter heavens, the raised sting of the Scorpion* can be understood as representing both sexual pleasure and death – literal and figurative (in Elizabethan culture dying was a euphemism for orgasm). The waves/ shore interrelationship implies the physical sensations of the lovers’ bodies, and wind suggests human emotions. Yet even here we see the ambiguity, since darkness is usually associated with death and destruction, and the moon/ its phases reflect the phases of a person’s condition on earth, and symbolize immortality and eternity. What Gill seems to indicate is that we are privileged to be alive, although we cannot escape death, for it is the fate of all natural elements: one goes through the cycle of life, enjoys its pleasures and endures its pain, but this will inevitably come

to an end – *death is the lot of divine madness*. The theme of death progresses throughout the poem, it takes up more and more of the poet's consciousness. By the end, everything is brought together: pleasure in nature, pleasure in language (not only the meanings of the words but also their sounds), and erotic pleasure is experienced only for a while – this is the order of life.

Kleiberg's perspective

The above poem is an inspirational source of Kleiberg's *Vandring ved Havet*. The composer's interest was evoked by the title itself; for him, it represented inner experiences and certain moods associated with his own walks along the shore. The setting symbolized his adventures out in nature, and alone with it. He remembers wandering for hours, nonstop, regardless of weather, despite solitude. In fact, he wanted to be alone: it was then he gained understanding of himself, while reflecting and brooding over life and his place in this world. These walks helped him to mature, to grow as an individual and a composer; the insights and ideas received during such tours became his driving force – an insatiable urge to continue composing.

Thus, the composer's reading of the poem is strongly connected with his own feelings and experiences. For him, the poem is about human existence, with its every verse presenting different images of the same meaning. The sea is a symbol of life: static yet in motion; restless, calm, and sometimes uncontrollable; where death is also present. The wavelike motions of the sea, the moon cycles, and the wind movements (coming from the sea and bringing life to the dead shells/grass blades) represent the returning movements of life. They are essential – everything moves in cycles.

***My reading of the composition*³⁵**

In his music piece Kleiberg obviously transfers the poem's symbolic character into the piano's opulent and lavish textures. The variety of wave-like motions so characteristic of the poem also

³⁵ The compositions analyzed in this thesis are attached in a CD format.

provides the structure of the composition. This correlation clearly shows in how the composer handles the development of individual motifs and phrases: throughout the work he expresses a wide range and depth of emotional states. The beginning mirrors the poem's first stanza. The bass line – ostinato – against the vibrant accompaniment in the higher register visibly imitates the sea and the wave sounds. Simultaneously, the opening melodic motif – the upward movement of a poetic tune that rests on G sharp – develops and evolves throughout the piece, introducing us to various moods connected not only with nature, but also with human experiences. The composer's use of both the diminished and the augmented fifth in relation to the motif's initial sound, suggests some kind of ambivalence and diversity of meanings (corresponding to the different images shown in the poem's verses). Circular phrases enhanced by register width, tempo alterations, and wide upward intervals suggest the desire to live and to love, to learn, to experience and to understand. In one of our interviews Kleiberg said:

For me, it's about the experience of, understanding of and reflection about life (the basic existential facts of life) per se. The pure existence of Man and Nature as well as the relationship between the two, is felt and experienced in an extraordinarily strong way when you are alone with nature – a seascape, like the one described in the poem, is a place where everything superfluous and superficial is stripped away. The piece is a musical expression of this feeling.

Organized along the lines of a structure of oppositions, *Vandring ved Havet* allows us to grasp the atmosphere, rather than experience a logical development of an event. Its ambience gets intensified and escalated, yet the essence remains the same: it can be compared to a slow moving wave that cannot be stopped even though it is not violent in nature. The triplets' motion softens the somewhat sharp and penetrating syncopated accompaniment, bringing out the work's rhythmical flexibility and simultaneously enriching its tone. Kleiberg's lyricism effuses the solitude frequently sought by him; at the same time, passion and intensity are convincingly expressed through the work's textural palettes.

Although the composer is very careful when it comes to direct references, an attentive listening presents us with a union of the two: ardent emotions in the melody against the stable reliable chords of the accompaniment as well as a melody in the bass line followed by tight chords in the upper voices imply constant interaction, ongoing communication – contraries are held together in an experience of a variety of sensations. Alternately approaching and flying apart from each other, supporting and contradicting one another, the two voices form a dialogue characterized by a diversity and depth of emotions: fused together, they imply the composer’s artistic revelation of the significance of communication.

In terms of form, Kleiberg establishes coherence between the parts and the whole. Even though his “truth” is a subjective matter, our encountering of it is collective: there are three dimensions of meaning we can find – at one level, we may see the beauty of the landscape, but a deeper search may also result in our experiencing an erotic dimension, and the dimension of life. We are offered a possibility of a powerful and unforgettable experience – to feel how the force that moves the sea can simultaneously move us, the listeners. For the composer, the sea image is most significant in the poem. In life, as in the sea, there are many hidden wonders – either gifts to treasure or problems to defeat – that cannot be found unless one embarks upon the journey. The ability to discover both treasures and challenges is as significant as self-discovery and self-comprehension. Life’s voyage, then, is much about one’s own experience: the initial motif, altered and evolved in the course of the piece, is heard also in the concluding measures. Although transformed, it nevertheless retains a characteristic upward-soaring movement; and now accompanied by the open fourth chords in the higher register, it seems reminiscent of the constancy of the essential aspects of our existence – as individuals as well as part of the outside world.

As much as the poem is delineated by numerous contradictions, so is the piano work characterized by powerful contrasts. Melodic development against the close and fast intervals or tight chords; a variety of piano textures that enables us to see white and pale as well as navy and sapphire; portions injected with lyricism and passion, skillfully conveyed through the richness of the instrument’s colors and shades – these sound structures are employed to

communicate what the composer reads into the poem. As Kleiberg puts it, his desire was to express the complexity and the depth of an experience:

I have always been fascinated by poetry that treats the primary lyrical subjects (love, death and the sea), and back then I was almost obsessed by that kind of poetry. Claes Gill's "Walking by the Sea" is obviously such a poem. At the same time it is written in a symbolic style, which I find fascinating. The words reflect each other in a way that evokes different – and even contradicting – emotions at one and the same time. I have attempted to do something similar to Gill, but using purely musical terms.

Isn't it in human nature to yearn for something that speaks more profoundly, deeper, or at a level of higher consciousness? For many of us music belongs to this something: it provides us with a place where we can feel comforted and understood, encouraged and calmed down, sympathized with and reenergized. At the same time it gives us a possibility to hear someone's heart, to listen to their story, to feel what the person wants to share, and to empathize with him or her. For Ståle Kleiberg, music is all about expression. Moreover, it is his tool of expression:

As a child, one doesn't learn to communicate in a profound and a sufficient way. One learns a language, which is not sufficient when it comes to expressing oneself. Music is much more precise than words. It always offers the exact utterance of my innermost feelings and thoughts. If it wasn't for a need to express myself, I would never continue composing. What does the phrase "to express myself" mean? It is finding the foundation of our existence. How? In my case, via composing, that is synonymous to meditation and reflection. Sharing music with others is the result of the composing process.

Summary

The intention of including the analysis in this biography stemmed from a desire to present the reader with an illustration of the relationship between music and poetry – the two most important art domains in Kleiberg’s life. The study of the two closely related works of art – Gill’s poem and Kleiberg’s piece for two pianos – shows that they can be regarded as two different tools of the same expression. The poem inspired Kleiberg to write a piece of music evoking familiar emotions, thoughts and associations. His response resulted in a composition, which, in turn, triggers the listener’s reactions and responses. It has to be mentioned that in his composition copy, the poem is printed under the title of the composition, which indicates the composer’s desire to share his message concurrent with that of the poet. This suggests my second point – expressing the same meaning by different means will ultimately result in responses that are different yet narrowed down to the same topic. In other words, an experience at the seashore that both artists share with audience will be perceived in a number of ways – listeners’ personal experiences, their backgrounds, personality types, cultural environments and individual characteristics will determine how much/what parts of the message they receive – but “walking by the sea” will be everyone’s main subject.

Considering this assumption acceptable, how close are these two works in terms of affecting audiences? Returning to the above stated questions: Is it possible to reconstruct Gill’s poem from Kleiberg’s composition, without reading it? Does the title help? Regarding form and content, does the composer dwell on some verses/symbolic meanings of the poem, ignoring its other aspects? And if he does, what is the explanation?

Given the same basic atmosphere in these works, they will likely have similar effect on the readers/ listeners. Every poem usually possesses a certain mood that has to be evoked by a composition (or any other work of art) based on it. However, being inspired by a poem suggests much more than mere imitation: it points towards the entry into another person’s world, with its enrichment, influence and modification. Therefore reconstructing Gill’s poem from Kleiberg’s composition would be a difficult task. Obviously, the title helps – it gives us a direction. However, concluding that his work is a reverberation of Gill’s poem would mean

restricting the composer's creative powers and intentions. As far as the form/ content relationship is concerned, the two works harmonize. At the same time, their correspondence in no way affects their distinctiveness and individuality. Based on the three-stanza-poem, the piano piece reveals and unfolds the story in its own terms: it offers the listener an original perspective, a fresh vision, a different approach, all of these resulting in a new experience. As a result, Kleiberg's "walk" is very different from that of Gill, and it is only natural that he focuses on the verses and the symbols that captivate his interest. For him, Gill's poem is only an incentive to originate and develop his own thoughts and ideas, to express his own emotions and to share his own dreams and desires.

Interestingly, *Vandring ved Havet* was written in two versions: not only as a piano composition, but also as a work for symphony orchestra. Naturally, his treatment of the range of music aspects in these pieces vary; no need to be a professional musician to hear and experience the differences between a piano piece and that for orchestra. Besides, as discussed above, there are as many "hearings" as there are listeners. Nevertheless, these two works convey the same idea, inspiring the listener to live through basically the same happening – that is, walking by the sea.

Works of art imply multiple interpretations; otherwise they cease to be art works. It is generally known that the more abstract art is the more meanings it contains. Music is very abstract; it thus generates numerous responses and interpretations. I would like to underline a difference between the listener's perception of a music piece and his/her interpretation of it. By interpretation I mean the way in which a piece of music is understood, when referring to response, I mean the listener's feelings and thoughts evoked or provoked by the piece during the process of listening. While we listen to music, freedom of imagination helps us to create an absolutely amazing world of individual experience, but this does not necessarily imply coming close to the composer's intentions. We may appreciate the music we listen to, but not always understand it – again, the reason lies in the distance between the world of a music-creator and that of a listener. Consequently, in our reception of a composition we usually stay within the confines of our lives and cultures, whereas concerning understanding, it should be based not

only on our own psychological, socio-cultural and personality aspects, but also on those of the composer.

To sum up, even though Kleiberg's and my own readings of the poem are similar, and my interpretation of his work is close to his intentions, it turned out impossible for me to precisely describe or explain his music. Despite similar perspectives on certain issues treated in the works, we nevertheless have different understandings of these, due to the difference in our personalities and life experiences. Believing that composing is a matter of creating contexts, rather than simply an invention of interesting sounds, I think that the listeners' reception and comprehension of these contexts is strongly tied to their own experiences of them.

Consequently, possessing knowledge of music and understanding of the composer along with shared similarity of experiences is a great benefit to everyone who desires to fully appreciate and understand any piece of music.

The years of studying

After this short detour, I would like to return to Kleiberg's life narration, to the years when he continued his studies. In the early 80^s there were not many options for studying composition in Norway: entering the so-called "Diploma" program was the only possibility. Only conservatory and "hovedfag" graduates qualified for the entrance examination, and since Kleiberg's dream was not about becoming a concert pianist but a composer, he decided to study music at the university, in order to complete the major requirements. This was a good choice – it offered a number of interesting courses given by the composers Knut Nystedt and Maj and Gunnar Sønstevoid who had a powerful impact on the young artist. However, the following two years as a "Diploma" student evoked the composer's ambivalent feelings. On the positive side, these were efficient years of studying, writing and social interaction. At that time his circle of friends expanded; he spent time with writers, poets and musicians whose influence is manifested in his works as well as in his life. Composing was his main activity; he also arranged numerous concerts with his compositions performed at the Munch museum. More of his music was heard on the radio, some was played in church – Kleiberg's name was now becoming recognized. The

scholarship that he won, in addition to a teaching position that he held at the University of Oslo from 1983 helped to release his creative powers: he had both the time and the energy to devote to composing.

Yet it was also a challenging period in his formative years as a composer: the leading figures of the Academy staff adhered strongly to the principles of the aesthetic modernistic standard of postwar European music, expressed by the French poet-symbolist Arthur Rimbaud – “il faut être absolue moderne” (“it is necessary to be absolutely modern.”)³⁶ In a strict modernist sense, creating anything and everything new meant that music had to be constantly rethought. Each musical element had to be used in an absolutely new way, according to the strict rules of serialism. Not only musical structure and expression, but also pitch, dynamics, texture and rhythm were undergoing the process of complete transformation. (This classic modernistic practice was not the ideal at the academy in those years, but the modernist ideal of constantly renewing the arts was a clearly articulated demand). The traditional interaction between melody and harmony was regarded as offensive and distasteful: atonality was a must, whereas the eloquence of tonal music was considered inappropriate. Understanding the music tradition of the past was necessary only in order to break it. In other words, finding solutions to compositional problems during that period looked more like research: the main perspective was not about expressing oneself, but about breaking new grounds in composition techniques and musical structures.

This modernistic idiom of expression influenced the leading Norwegian composers in the 60s, 70s and early 80s. The majority of music critics and teachers passionately promoted it, which in a way predicted the position and status of the outsiders – composers that did not embrace the modernistic ideology. Their choice was considered wrong; even to the extent that their call as artist was put into question. Kleiberg was one of the latter. His musical language, comprised of tonal lyricism and expressivity, differed from that of his contemporaries; his compositions

³⁶ This statement, taken from his extended poem “A Season in Hell,” written in 1873, sums up Rimbaud’s major life points.

exhibited melodic beauty, harmonic richness and rhythmic flexibility, which seemed out of place. Although very interested in modernistic music, he did not find himself at ease in its pulse. He strongly felt that one could and should relate to the music tradition, not as its destroyer but rather as its perpetuator. For him, studying the music of Boulez and Stockhausen, while ignoring the great masters of all times did not make any sense. Interested in all kinds of classical music, he was under the influence of many traditions, including jazz and folk music that fused and blended into something new – a distinct individual voice. In his music one can hear echoes of different musical elements, with the influence of the French tradition predominating. However, his personal style reflects the impressive ability to draw upon these various sources, merging diverse materials into a cohesive whole.

While completing his “Diploma” studies, Kleiberg spent several months in England (London and Devon), studying composition under the supervision of Nigel Osborne. During that time he expanded the circle of his social associates, communicating as much with his colleagues as with practitioners of other arts. The composer’s unquenchable thirst for interaction with various representatives of art as a whole, his firm attitude regarding the significance of such interaction, as well as his belief that inspiration evolves from the total variety of artistic sources seems to be one of his distinguishing personal characteristic features. He sought as much contact with writers, poets and painters as he did with composers and performers. Until today the circle of his friends is not confined to his fellow musicians, but includes thinking and creative minds of a mixture of professions and occupations.

In England he completed *Stilla*, a work for a high vocal register and symphony orchestra, based on the text by the Spanish poet Federico Garcia Lorca. He admits that this music is much influenced by Debussy and Ravel: working with the piece, he studied the scores of the composers’ orchestral music. This, in turn, opened him up for a new dimension in the sphere of orchestration and its methods. Having finished the piece, he felt that the material had much potential ready to be developed in his further works.

By the end of his “Diploma” studies, Kleiberg submitted a number of his works for the final exam. Several of them were earlier performed by Erik Waldejer, Kirsten Landmark Mæland and

the pianist Sigmund Hjelseth in various concert halls, while others were presented as his debut pieces. Around that time debut concerts were usually arranged for instrumentalists embarking on their performing careers; the main venue was the University Aula. As unusual as it was for composers, Kleiberg had his own debut concert there as well. The event was covered by media, and brought him a broader recognition.

Convinced that artistic integrity should never be compromised, Kleiberg always kept to his principles and beliefs. He refused to write what was expected of a “serious” composer at that time, believing that only a synthesis of a personal expression and the traditional musical idioms can make a work of art original. Nor did he compose music for financial gain – he has avoided commercial jobs during his entire career: “Having finished my studies, I needed to think about ways of getting an income. I was occasionally asked to write commissioned works, but it wasn’t enough. At some point I came to a crossroad: I knew I was capable of taking on some commercial jobs with sufficient earnings, but I still didn’t want to compromise.” Consequently, his inner resistance against providing entertainment confined his music to fewer listeners. Here Kleiberg’s personality clearly emerges – remaining true to his ideas and beliefs is crucial; thus he prefers the understanding of the few to the noisy cheering of the crowds.

Such a pragmatic approach to the career of composer somewhat affected Kleiberg. Yet, he has never doubted his calling: he values quality and has always believed that his works are meaningful. His ravenous hunger to create only grew. To this day, he craves composing so much that he never stops: “If I, for one or another reason, cannot compose, I immediately get obvious symptoms of depression.” Teaching as well as administrative responsibilities steal much of the composer’s time and energy, leaving him with an unfulfilled longing to write. At the same time, however, he greatly enjoys teaching. Moreover, together with composing, it has helped to balance Kleiberg’s inner stability and increased his growth and maturity. His teaching career started in 1986 when he was offered a teaching position in NTNU, Trondheim. Giving Kleiberg a possibility of combining teaching and composing, this offer overrode another invitation, from the Music Academy in Bergen. Thus his choice was made; he holds the post until today.

The present

In 1991 Kleiberg composed *The Rose Window*, a work for the narrator, organ and sinfonietta (an ensemble that is larger than a chamber orchestra but smaller than a full-size symphony orchestra). Commissioned by the St. Olav Festival, the work implied a limited number of instruments. However, fascinated by colorful, vibrant sonic images or intriguing sound textures and effects, and willing to create those, Kleiberg decided to add harp, melodic percussion and celesta. The work was to be premiered at the Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim, an acoustically good arena where the used instruments produced a wide variety of tune bells: "I have always been interested by sound; this work was a great possibility to expand the boundaries, so I set off with immense enthusiasm and used the experience in some of my later compositions."

The text is written by Stein Mehren; it is a collection of seven poems which focus on two fundamental aspects of human existence – darkness and light. Kleiberg relates:

The text is pervaded with metaphors, thus both the poems and the music represent an array of points and ideas: the light bringing a full variety of colors to our lives, the light penetrating our souls, the light desired by an individual, and so on. My fantasy was kindled and fired up, I wanted to transfer and translate all these images into music. This work is important to me, for several reasons: the treated in it questions are significant to me, and in the process of composing I come nearer possible answers; also, I was breaking a new ground in terms of form and orchestration; plus, in relation to the following composition *Dopo* which was written a year after. There is a connection between these two works – they treat the same topic of the light shining through stained glass windows, references to which one also finds in the texts by the Italian poet Montale that inspired *Dopo*. Only his images are very dark: he focuses rather on lack of light. I read his poems when the modern stained glass windows – the TV screens – were darkened by the featured events from former Yugoslavia. All of a sudden, the idea of ethnic cleansing was a reality happening nearby – the World War II genocide was repeating itself. 'Dopo' means 'after.' It follows *The Rose Window*, just like the cruelest

points in history go after each other: times and places change, but atrocity and violence remain.

Among Kleiberg's works written during the last twenty years there are several calling for close attention: *Trio for Violin, Cello and Piano* (1994), *Symphony no.2* (1996), *Concerto for Double Bass and Orchestra* (1999), *Piano Trio no.2* (2003), *Violin Concerto* (2005), opera oratorio *David & Bathsheba* (2007), and *Hymn to Love* (2009). But his trilogy consisting of *Dopo* (1993), *Lamento: Cissi Klein in memoriam* (2000) and *Requiem for the victims of Nazi persecution* (2001) is considered to be pivotal in the composer's production: it includes three important to him music pieces that strongly emphasize the connections between nowadays events and the European history of 1930-1940s. Their relevance determine and establish their significance – Kleiberg's desire was not only to express and communicate his attitude towards the matter, but also to challenge and inspire his listeners to take a stand against human cruelty and heartlessness. Despite the time span between the first and the last trilogy works, they are united by the same idea – the tragedy of war – and invoke in the listener the same feelings of pain, grief and sorrow. All three works are frequently performed in Norway and abroad; *Requiem* was also played in National Cathedral in Washington D.C. on September 11, 2004, on the Memorial Day for the terrorist attacks. It was broadcast in the US, recorded with Washington National Cathedral's choir and chamber orchestra, and has since been given numerous international performances.

Lamento: Cissi Klein in memoriam was written in 2000, and first performed in 2001. "It all started three years earlier," recalls the composer. "In 1997 Trondheim celebrated its 1000th anniversary, a huge event for which I was commissioned to write a work for symphony orchestra. With absolutely no interest in the topic of Norwegian Vikings, I still looked for something related to the town's history. The idea to write about Jews in Trondheim came to me, yet it needed another three years to mature."

Much of information Kleiberg received from Julius Paltiel, a survivor of the Auschwitz camp, where he was brought simultaneously with Cissi Klein. Paltiel was around fifteen at the time; he managed to escape the gas chamber by lying about his age – young men over sixteen were not

killed but turned into slaves. Having hidden the dreadful memories in his heart for many years, he started talking of the events when he grew old: by revealing the truth of unspeakable inhumanity of fellow men, he thought it his mission to teach younger generation vital life lessons.

In one of our interviews Kleiberg shared some information about the work:

The music material that inspired me included remembered from my childhood Yiddish melodies as well as songs by Mordechai Gebirtig³⁷, in particular, 'S'brent,' which I added to the work. Cissi Klein, a thirteen year old girl, was deported from Trondheim to the gas chambers in Auschwitz. One autumn day of 1942 she was picked up at the Kalvskinnet school and transported – together with other Jewish women and girls – first to her apartment and then to a concentration camp. This is a very tragic story, which I attempted to pass on as an orchestral work. My focus was not a detailed story; I wanted to let a range of emotions into a dramatic form driven by inner musical logic.

The relationship between the composition and its title is very close. For example, the work opens by the violin solo, built on the melody of the 'S'brent.' This theme is not treated traditionally; its short melodic motifs rather lay the foundation for the entire composition, which gives the work a sense of Yiddish character. Towards the end of the piece I incorporate some unusual for the symphony orchestra sounds – six different musical toys, attached to the basses or cellos, resonate and produce a cacophony of the sounds of simple songs for children. One by one, the toys stop playing, until the last song, 'I am tired and going to bed,' ceases. The effect of the toys played simultaneously is far from idyllic – it reminds of something broken or twisted, similar to sweet innocent objects in a cruel setting.

Kleiberg's desire to communicate to audience relevant and important truths is also present in his opera-oratorio *David & Bathsheba*. He comments:

³⁷ Mordechai Gebirtig is a Polish/Jewish poet and song writer who was executed in 1942 in Krakow ghetto.

The Biblical story about David and Bathsheba is as relevant today as it was when it was written. This is a story where personal emotions are blended with political acts and consequences. Therein it touches a number of fundamental ethical issues on both micro and macro levels. Moreover, it shows how these levels interconnect. My version of the story does not focus on David's violence against his victim, but rather my story is that of a mutual attraction between the two main characters. The librettist Jessica Gordon and I agreed that we didn't want a one-dimensional narrative about violence. Instead, focusing on the intensity of both characters' emotions, we have attempted to create a psychological drama that is relevant for many. *David & Bathsheba* was premiered in 2008, since then it has been performed both in Norway and abroad a number of times. In February of 2013 the opera will be for the first time performed on stage, in three towns in Holland, which I greatly look forward to.

Yes, there is much to be expected and anticipated: the Dutch premiere of *David & Bathsheba* in Utrecht, Leeuwarden and Groningen, the TV production from München – a concert of Kleiberg's music, as well as the Swiss premiere of *Requiem* taking place in Zurich and Bern in May. Besides, *Requiem* will be performed as part of the Brighton Festival in England, also in May. The composer is now working on a large scale work for piano, and planning another composition for symphony orchestra. In other words, Kleiberg is as dynamic and fruitful as ever and he still has much to say to us, his audience.

Closing comments

To summarize, I would like to indicate the most important features that characterize Kleiberg's compositions. While writing this thesis, I have heard the majority of his works, several of them repeatedly. I have also read a number of reviews about them. However, the following conclusions are based on my own understanding and interpretation of his music.

It is well articulated and precise; his intentions and ideas are clearly coming across. Its stylistic distinction makes it possible to identify and appreciate his lyrical tone – a voice that blends the poetic lyricism with boundless expressivity. Whatever the genre, his music exhibits the same

harmonic richness and rhythmic flexibility. Whether he writes a piece for two instruments or for symphony orchestra, it retains the same variety and depth of emotion, equal intensity and a sense of drama. His themes develop and evolve, narrating stories and unfolding ideas. His works reveal that certain elements, such as inspiration and expression, and form and melody as well as richness of harmony are still indispensable elements of music. In fact, the wave-like motion, typical in his music, suggests ties between the immediate present and the remembered past. Their interaction is achieved through emphases on both sides: where the present action recedes, the memories become more poignant and tangible.

His “signature” tone-speech is his chosen instrument of communication. His music conveys the realities of human existence, with emotional depth, the excitement of experience, and confrontation of the unknown. The tension between past and present, the conflict between expectations and life realities, and the friction arising between the inner and the external is masterfully interweaved, to the point that it enables his listener to react, to respond, and to discover. The atmosphere of ferment and change pervades his compositions – all his works have an expressive appeal.

Kleiberg’s desire to stay authentic despite occasional unfavorable reception or harsh critiques helped him to become his own critic. Throughout his career he learned to listen to his inner voice, rather than allowing the outside world to assess the value and significance of his work. He once said: “If an artist tells you that he doesn’t care about reception of his work, don’t believe him – he is lying. Everyone gets affected by the public’s response, but a true artist sees beyond it and continues doing what he believes in.” Avoiding focus on external evaluation is a challenge for any composer (every creative person, for that matter); publication, rewards and critical acclaim are usually addictive, and they may have a harmful and unfavorable effect on creativity. In order to escape this pitfall, Kleiberg keeps his inner orientation as his home-base. Writing for its own sake coupled with his ambition to write well, helps the composer to stay focused and achieve his own goals.

Kleiberg’s belief is that music empowers us to see, to understand and to express ourselves. For him, music reveals the deeper complexity of human nature and it helps us to communicate

truthfully: where words prove inadequate, it gives us an alternate mode of communication. What enhances the listener's understanding of Kleiberg's music is the composer's attention to the detail – his stories resonate in our most intimate sphere of thought; they seem to echo our most cherished memories and dreams. I believe it happens because his deepest desire is to connect; the depth and expressivity of his language – most powerful tools of his music – make it possible for the listener to identify with what they hear. Also, several of his works (i.e. *Dopo, Requiem, David and Bathsheba*) form his complex response to the need for communication outside the private domain: there his voice is blended with the multitude of souls that translate the message and pass it on by their responses.

To conclude, throughout our numerous interviews and discussions I found out that Kleiberg's music is a very natural for him device that not only communicates his ideas, but also mirrors and reflects who he is. It is not limited to conveying his thoughts or illustrating specific events: it rather points towards the individual that creates it. In other words, he has invested his entire complex identity into the process of composing. For him, the concept of self cannot be divided between his composing and other aspects of his life – his individuality is echoed in his works as much as it is manifested in his words and actions. To put it differently, Ståle Kleiberg's music identifies Ståle Kleiberg as a person.

Questions & Answers

- 1) *They say there are two great days in a person's life: the day he is born and the day he discovers why. Tell me about your day of discovery.*

Kleiberg: "It is a difficult task – singling out one particular day: the awareness of my calling was gradual, but one of life's decisive moments was visiting Grieg's *Troldhaugen* house, now a museum, at the age of twelve. Walking around the area with the image of the great master as my companion, and feeling the atmosphere of the place where the composer lived and worked

absolutely enchanted and fascinated me, to the point of complete assuredness that I wanted to do exactly what he did – from that day on, I was certain that I would write music.”

2) *What does composing mean to you?*

Kleiberg: “Being a composer is an attitude; it’s a way of living, rather than a profession. I cannot do without it. Nor can I choose not to compose – it is a necessity, a must. The process can be compared to that of writing ideas down linguistically. Yet it is not limited to finding the “right” notes: it is an unending search for the best expression of my soul. The driving force – is to remain true to myself, to stay authentic.”

3) *In one of my interviews with Misha we discussed the importance of one’s roots. What is your take on it? Do you think environmental factors influenced you as a composer? If so, then in what ways?*

Kleiberg: “For me, the roots are significant. Much of my inspiration comes from my home town and its surroundings. When I studied in Oslo, I was homesick. In fact, for many years I believed that I wouldn’t be able to live in any place other than Stavanger. But life goes on, bringing about changes in us and also in our perspectives: I don’t feel that way any longer. Certainly, it’s very nice to go back and to experience the town or the walks along the seashore again, but it is not as important to me now as it was thirty years ago. I think that belonging to a place is vital. Trondheim is now my home. I enjoy travelling and experiencing familiar and unfamiliar places, but I wouldn’t want to settle anywhere else (not even in Paris where I often stay and work). The reason, I believe, has to do with my roots, the importance of which is not even cultural, but personal.

The roots control, affect and eventually decide our individual growth and advancement. Many of a person’s first-time experiences are usually attached to specific places, the revisiting of which draws him/her back to significant happenings in their lives. Such experiences don’t have to be limited to events; I can, for instance, recall meetings with my friends at the age of ten – not the particular happenings but the mood of those. Remembering how things were gives us a glimpse into a long past that will always stay with us, no matter where we come from. At the

same time, it helps us to better understand ourselves, not only in relation to our personalities, but also regarding our hopes, dreams and aspirations.”

4) *Can you recall any particular circumstances that inspired any of your compositions?*

Do you experience new ideas coming to you during sleep?

Kleiberg: “Yes, I can. My 1st symphony is based on a story revealed by my grandfather. His dad once went off to the sea, in order to help some people who worked there. He never returned, because the ship hit a mine. The story had a tremendous impact on me – I realized how fragile and uncontrollable life is. But what amazed me even more was the fact that despite the tragedy my family remained joyful and happy: it shaped me as an individual. In our house my own room was in the attic, where I could see the ocean through the window. I spent hours reading, thinking and looking at it – I then felt the limitless in the limiting and limited surroundings. Such experiences might be compared with those I had during my walks along the seashore, where I experienced nature in a very profound way: I remember the feeling of the freedom of my spirit, and that of security, which is crucial for me.

The feeling of transcendence also makes me reflect upon life. It’s a feeling of going deeper and of reaching something overpowering, which is extremely difficult to describe by words but very possible by music. Life is all about experiences; many of them are so significant that they simply make you think what they represent and what their meaning is. So, for me, music is coping with life – it enables me to live life. Working with music gives my mind enough space. In other words, I survive and thrive by writing music.

Talking about ideas coming during sleep, they do come, very often; especially during periods of intense work on my compositions. Sometimes I wake up clearly remembering them, other times I lose them. But even then it’s helpful: nothing coming to one’s head gets lost. Honestly, sleep is usually a much underestimated resource. Sometimes I have plenty of options I need to choose among. Then sleep becomes sort of an assistant that pulls down the walls and breaks the fences that are built in the wakeful state. When I am worn out mentally, sleep helps me work out ideas, since with sleep comes freedom we cannot always afford while awake.”

5) *Your sources of inspiration? How do extra-musical factors, such as literature, visual arts, theatre affect you?*

Kleiberg: "Fine arts in their full variety have always interested me. Apart from reading, I am also fascinated by visual arts. I remember visiting my great grandmother as a child; the walls of her house were covered by paintings (after her death we inherited some of them). I recall the sensation of standing before those paintings in astonishment and amazement. We also used to visit my parents' friends, painters. The atmosphere of their studio, the unfinished works stirring my imagination, the smell of the paints – it all excited and stimulated creativity in me. I loved art galleries, where I always felt the freedom of the spirit – these are the spots where fantasy is not only possible but sought after. With time I learned to value and respect the visual arts, especially the kind that extols feeling and imagination above rigid rules and traditions.

The feeling of liberation and freedom of thought, as well as emotional resonance are some of the main characteristics of all the arts. That's the reason for my intuitive attraction to the arts from an early age. An inescapable part of an individual's growing up is learning how to adapt and to adjust. Sadly, the process of acquiring such skills usually implies the choking of one's natural creativity. Art does the opposite job: it enables us to think, to feel, and to live above the down-to-earth realities of everyday life. In other words, it releases hidden powers and gifts, which, in turn, enriches, affects and improves our existence."

6) *Who played the most significant role in your career?*

Kleiberg: "A very good friend, with whom I studied in Oslo. A mutual passion for music resulted in countless talks and discussions, intellectual stimulation, and ultimately, development of my potential. Our dialogues carried great weight; they were multi-layered, thought-provoking, satiated with inspiring energy and a full spectrum of color: in our search for meaning and value we dug deep and yearned for more. This friendship (that continues even now) immensely influenced and shaped me both as an individual and as a composer."

7) *Do you believe that peoples' musical tastes in a sense represent who people are?*

Kleiberg: “My response to different composers comes *because* of who I am. What affects me is the connection to the ideas of another person. There is lots of music I am interested in from a professional perspective; I listen to Schubert (my soul brother), Mozart, Debussy, Schoenberg, Shostakovich, and Britten – to mention only a few. I pay attention, I get revelations – I learn from all of them. My first love, as I said earlier, is Grieg and his music.”

8) Some people see a very strong connection between the body/mind (intellect/soul) and the spirit. What is your take on it?

Kleiberg: “I certainly don’t think in those terms. I view a human being in his/ her entirety that cannot be divided. For me, a person is an intact creature whose distinct parts are interwoven and interconnected – I can’t imagine one piece without the other.”

9) Do you regard your compositions as simply your works, or do you see them as an extension of yourself?

Kleiberg: “My works are an expression of myself. They convey various elements of my personality by representing my emotional state and/ or my perspectives on anything important to me at different periods of my life. The relationship between me and my works is very tight: I know all of them and remember them well even much later after they were composed. Each one is a personal offshoot – unique and very special to me. So, yes, in a way, my compositions are extensions of myself.”

10) Looking at the process of composing from a different perspective: do you consider yourself as the originator of ideas or as a channel of contemporary cultural/social/spiritual climate?

Kleiberg: “It would be wrong to state that I am not influenced by the cultural, social or spiritual climates – such influences are simply unavoidable. Nor can I claim that I am a channel of my environment: while popular culture mirrors a general cultural state, my music does not. However, stressing that everything originates within me is incorrect: no one can stay unaffected by their surrounding milieu. I am definitely influenced by the people I associate with as well as by the natural world around me. Nevertheless, the way I express myself differs from

widespread and conventional expressions of the time – the expression emanates inside of me. In other words, even though I am played upon by these influences, the expression remains my own.”

11) Can you please generalize the process of creating?

Kleiberg: “The process of creating is being in a state of mind that welcomes various ideas. It opposes a course of action towards a set goal and the steps of its achievement. Being creative implies openness to a range of impulses and thoughts as much as elimination of all kinds of restrictions and boundaries. It’s a synthesis of intellectual and emotional processes taking places within. The ultimate aim of a creator is to bring all these parts of the package into a whole. The process is not systematic, it’s rather chaotic. Therefore it is difficult to generalize it – one can never predict one’s next step. Certainly, experience and knowledge help to find appropriate strategies at hand, but even this is restrictive: the strategies only help the creator understand what s/he wants to express. Besides, there is no rule that would always work towards the same or similar outcome. In other words, creating is a nonsystematic process which the creator strives to systematize along the way. Yes, structuring it helps a lot.”

12) Can you delineate the characteristic traits of your composing? What is the most important factor in music for you?

Kleiberg: “I am always aware of the formal stretch. For me, coherence is vital – regardless of the form. I want to write music where the listener senses a path towards the point of destination; “narration” is the term one can think of in this respect. I never use any formative schemes, but work on total coherence of any piece I write. Working with traditional means, I am conscious of the dangers of clichés, therefore I try to balance my use of recognizable elements in order not to fall into banality. Such balance is very difficult to maintain: on the one hand, there is a risk of clichés, and on the other hand, there is a chance of miscommunication of the ideas to the listener. The same principle goes for all the other factors: melody, harmony, tonality, etc. The use of traditional means aids reaching across to people, whereas the exploitation of nontraditional devices often creates a breach between the narration and the audience. I always

welcome fresh and unconventional ideas, but at the same time I recognize the need for stability and proportion.”

13) Do you ever think in terms of audience and its preferences or is your sole motivation always the desire to share your own story?

Kleiberg: “I don’t think about the audience, but I *am* willing to reach out to other people; however, not in a sense of giving up my principles and beliefs in order to access the crowds. Sharing what is important to me does imply the audience though. What creative people share from the depths of their hearts is familiar to many. At the same time, we, humans, are very different: not everyone wants to go far or to dig deep – one needs a certain kind of curiosity about life, a willingness to look for hidden meanings and truths. Understanding this, I don’t focus on the figures and numbers. That said, the positive reception of my music by many encourages and pleases me. However, what I care most about is the right expressions of the right things.”

14) How can you describe the difference between creating commissioned music and music which arises out of a need to express yourself?

Kleiberg: “There is not much of a difference, I think. Of course, there are certain limits to deal with practically (such as, for example, suggested genres or instruments as well as deadlines, that put one under a great deal of pressure.) Other than that, I am allowed the luxury of freedom. They can ask for, say, “a large-scale work performed in the Cathedral in a year’s time,” but it’s usually up to me to decide on the themes and topics, on its length and structure. Whatever music I write winds up having my indelible signature. Whether it is commissioned or personal, it is a mix of formal demands and personal outpouring.”

15) “Good music resembles good speech.” Would you please amplify this statement?

Kleiberg: “Yes, the parallel between music and language is a way of describing music. However, it’s not the only way. From the medieval times music has not been looked upon not only as a language, but also as a metaphor for the universal structure in search of the essence of life. Of the arts, music has long been particularly prestigious, because of its similarity with natural

sciences. For me, music does resemble language; examples are Baroque rhetoric figures or musical “conversations” of the Classical period. Nevertheless, not all music is about talking. In other words, regardless of time periods, there is plenty of music in which the ideas expressed are solely musical. That said, my music is talking music (although not all of it). If we draw a parallel between literary genres and those of music, we can find a number of similarities between them (i.e. poetic music, epic music, dramatic music, etc.) For example, poetic language and poetic music have one thing in common: both are filled with metaphors that evoke a variety of associations.

My 1st symphony *The Bell Reef* is inspired by a true epic story, but my goal when creating it wasn't to tell a story by means of music. I was rather interested in dwelling on certain aspects of the image of the bell ringing from the bottom of the sea. The symphony's title is poetic; it gives me several connotations and opens a spectrum of sounds – it makes me want to meditate on this image in order to reveal its many hidden elements. Likewise, the image of the sea is treated poetically, as a metaphor – not to depict the natural phenomenon of the sea, but to evoke the implications of being a human.

The first movement is called Departure. Yet it is not a story of a particular departure, but the idea of departure as such. The second movement, Shipwreck, I also understand metaphorically. The third movement has the title of the symphony; it represents the image of the cathedral bells ringing, although the idea was to reach beyond the immediately reachable aspects of human existence.

To sum up, some of my music is very close to spoken language, but not all of it. I believe in two different ways of approaching composition: epic/dramatic and poetic.”

CHAPTER 3 MISHA ALPERIN

Biography

Upbringing

It is quite amazing how different sources ascribe varying heritages to Misha Alperin. According to Wikipedia and the ECM record label, he is a Ukrainian composer; JARO Music Company refers to him as Moldovan and Norwegian, whereas other sources either call him Russian or emphasize his Jewish roots. He has been moving from one place to another for most of his life: into his teens, he lived in the Ukraine, then moved to Moldova, then – to Russia, and, finally, to Norway. Bearing the cultural baggage of the countries where he lived, he moved not only geographically, but also through the various genres in which he wrote. With time, he developed a very personal jazz music which is a combination of styles as well as a fusion of times. The mix of folk music(s) of Slovenian and Balkan countries, in addition to Jewish folklore and elements of Nordic music reflects the crossing of territorial boundaries of the countries that are close to his heart. Moving from place to place has been paralleled by the expansion of Alperin’s jazz explorations. He believes that boundaries – whether those of genre, style or place and time – limit us as individuals, stagnating creativity and restraining expressivity.

Born in 1956 in Kamenets-Podolsk (one of the Ukrainian ancient cities), Misha was still an outsider – a Jew living amidst a gentile and largely anti-Semitic society, he experienced hatred and cruelty already as a young boy. He learned then that in order to survive, he had to be a success: “I remember my first experience of racial discrimination. I was seven then; I played tennis at the school yard with a Ukrainian girl of my age. I was winning, and she was becoming upset. Her father, who stood there, observing the game, saw this and said: ‘Stop playing with that ‘zhidenok!’³⁸ The girl left. I never heard the word before, so I decided to ask my mom

³⁸ “Zhidenok” is a variant of another derogatory and mocking Russian word “zhid” (a Jew), that denotes a Jewish child.

about it. When I told her what happened, I saw tears in her eyes: 'I would rather you never knew the meaning of the word, but I know that sooner or later you will. I'm afraid, you will hear people calling you so more than you imagine. That's why you should pay attention and learn: if you want to be accepted, you have to be way above them all – only then they won't be able to belittle and dismiss you.'

He began his formal education at the age of five, with his mother – his parents intended that Misha should become a professional musician; from then on his life was directed towards this goal. When he was seven, he started singing in a school choir. Due to the distinct sonorous qualities of his voice (it was reminiscent of that belonging to Robertino Loretti, a Soviet Union star of that time) Misha performed frequently and all widespread. He now admits the importance of his singing as a child: "I sang and performed until my voice broke when I was fourteen. With time, I have come to understand that singing forms the foundation of my music, even though the music I write is for the most part instrumental. I am led by the voice; the voice knows the answer to my dilemma, while I am still looking for it. I have never trusted my fingers, nor have I relied on my wits. But when it comes to the voice and intuition (they always work in synchronicity), I totally yield to their authority."

From the age of nine Misha took private composition lessons. He recalls: "I played the piano and composed some songs, but had very little theoretical knowledge. My father, seeing a composer in me, introduced me to a teacher Vasiljev who not only taught me about composing, but also shared some philosophical truths. Yet his tuition was stopped after a while, simply for being too kind toward the naughty me: I quickly learned how to manipulate his kindheartedness and made him do most of the work for me."

Misha's older brother also believed in Misha's talent. Alongside his studying, he played drums in a restaurant to earn money for Misha's higher education. It was he who introduced the young boy to the world of rock; under his guidance Misha included rock music on the list of classical compositions he usually listened to. "Actually, he says, when I look back at the path I have taken I get amazed, for it is very peculiar. In my home town I never heard classical music in live performances – I guess, our town was too provincial for such cultural extravaganzas. My

friend recently called from Tromsø, sharing how impressed she is with the town's politics regarding this very same issue – children and culture. The local government does everything possible to keep their people tuned into culture. In my case everything was different. I can hardly understand how I became a musician in such a culturally remote place: I absorbed music against all odds.”

At fourteen, he enrolled at the music high school, from which he was expelled two years later, due to biased opinions of the teaching staff. This made a devastating impact on his parents: not professional musicians themselves, they nevertheless sensed Misha's talent and were terrified at the thought that it would be wasted. The young boy, however, looked at the matter differently; even now he is grateful for such a turn of events – otherwise, he says, he would have never become a musician he is.

Having started with classical piano, he then became immensely interested in hard rock and heavy metal. His fancy for fusion of different styles and tools of expression was becoming apparent already at his young age. At fifteen he performed Haydn's *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in D*, accompanied by the chamber orchestra and a rock group. At around the same time he played dance music in a club; much of the repertoire consisted of Western Ukrainian folklore blended with Western Ukrainian blues. Later, through encountering the music of Charlie Parker and John Coltrane, Misha was introduced to jazz. However, classical music has always been essential: “As I said before, I became passionate about music when I was nineteen. By then I played the piano for fourteen years, studying at the music school and obtaining the higher education in music. I played lots of classical music – even gave solo concerts – but I was not infatuated with it. The turning point was me hearing Krainev perform Rachmaninoff Piano Concert no.2. I cried and thought: that's why they love music.”

In order to complete his secondary school education, Misha moved to northern Moldova; in a little while his career began in a band that accompanied both Moldovan and Jewish weddings. As he recalls in one of our interviews, the job had a number of challenges: the musicians were expected to play for 30-40 hours, in the chilly open air, with but very few breaks, and only two hours of sleep. Besides physical exhaustion, the band was exposed to continuous stress: for

example, the musicians had to play “the repertoire of thousands of dances and songs on the spot, without any rehearsal.” These songs included those of The Beatles and ABBA, Stevie Wonder and Elvis Presley, and everything in between. Similarly with dances: fancy, rapid-fire Balkan folk dances in 7/8, 9/8, 11/8 or 13/8, alternating with up-tempo, complex folk tunes from the entire Eastern Europe. “Most of the music I never heard before. For a classical musician, this is an enormous challenge, but at the same time, it was an incredible education.”

He also played in one of Kishinev’s restaurants, for money. He says: “Every single day we encountered crowds of drunk criminals who threw knives into the drums while ordering specific songs according to their tastes. Every single day I thought: ‘I won’t continue doing this,’ and every single day I kept hearing: ‘Humble yourself!’ This went on for seven years. I was depressed, for I dreamt of and longed for self-expression, but was forced to play pops. I remember once visiting my cousin and telling him: ‘The day will come when I will turn into a real musician. I will go around the world, performing my own music.’ To this oath I got this reply: ‘Don’t stuff your head with petty things. Instead of dreaming about the unattainable, be appreciative of what you have.’ I still remember the overwhelming feeling of pain and bitterness, with which I left my cousin’s place. Walking home, tears rolling down my cheeks, I considered how my entire environment was against my aspirations: my mom believed I would be fine teaching at the music school, my colleagues found my ambitions weird, and my band players thought I was being self-centered. No one wanted what I did. I knew that I was alone, but a voice from within kept telling me: ‘Don’t give up, don’t give in.’ So, I followed my voice.”

The musician’s search

Elaboration of Alperin’s personal style dates from 1983 – the year when he moved to Moscow, into the realm of the capital’s professional musicians. Alperin and Shirman were invited by Alexey Kozlov to join “Arsenal,” a group that played American jazz rock. Kozlov gathered high quality musicians from over the entire Soviet Union – performing in the band was considered prestigious and portentous for one’s future career. The "Arsenal" worked with rock stars; it gave around fifteen concerts a month, and always filled up concert halls. Alperin acknowledges

that dreaming of anything better at the time would have been foolish. Nonetheless, the thought of quitting came to him and his companion not-before-long, and in two years time they left the band – they could adapt neither esthetically nor stylistically. He felt affection for his Moldovan roots; simultaneously he became interested in Russian folklore. This is how he explains his association with the people of the nations amongst which he lived: “For me, being a Moldovan, or a Norwegian for that matter, does not mean inconsistency or disagreement with the inner self. We all belong to the same family of human beings; the more I understand others, the richer I myself become. I believe that such an understanding is partly a result of the influence of the ‘great and precious’ Soviet Union, my multi-national homeland. Everyone loved Georgian and Moldovan wine, Russian gingerbread, or Ukrainian ‘borscht’ (red-beet soup). Armenian people living in Moldova were considered ‘better’ Moldovans than Moldovans by birthright! Back then we were united, rather than divided – a huge country that included fifteen sister-nations. That is one of the reasons why it is not difficult for me to ‘go native’ anywhere I live.”

His interests led him away from the established jazz community of the time. "Back then, to play the music of Duke Ellington and Bill Evans was the passport to the jazz world of Russia," he says. However, his own understanding of jazz was much broader; he saw it as a synthesis of jazz, folk and classical music:

I was a white crow, here as well. They wanted me to play anything apart from my own; they wanted me to be anyone but myself. It was hard to resist and persist all the time without seeing any results. For this kind of fight a very strong personality is needed indeed. I am convinced that my father’s death at the age of 52 was caused by heart failure due to the enormous social and political pressures on him, a teacher and writer. I am stronger. I always have been a rebel, and as a rebel, I at times have felt lonely, but also proud – proud to be able to do my own things.

They used to ask me why instead of performing American jazz I played Jewish-Moldovan music – back then it was both unpopular and unacceptable. We would often be invited to play at a festival, only to find out later that our names were deleted from the list of

performers. This wasn't easy; participating at certain events implied funds needed to provide for our families. Besides, the public's reception was always twofold. I wasn't understood, my music was disliked, but deep inside I knew I was doing the right thing: I felt I had something fresh to offer. I believe one has to be uncompromising and obstinate in his/her search. In the beginning of the 90s, if I remember correctly, I was young, energetic and still trying to find my own voice. I created a kind of private dream world, where I could express my own romanticism, melancholy and joy of life. Music for me was almost the only channel for the whole spectrum of feelings: my passion, my sorrow....everything.

Together with a friend from Armenia, Alperin opened the "Blue Bird Cafe" in 1985 – a jazz club that provided a venue and the freedom to work intensely on his own music. He composed during the day, and at night he performed. The audience included painters, diplomats and musicians; also, frequent guests from the States. This cafe has become a laboratory where Alperin tried out all his programs. He recalls: "I exploded with enthusiasm. Every single evening Arkady Shilkloper would come to the cafe after his work in 'Boljshoj,' and we would work, work, work. We had to make money too, so we started a business: twice a week at the railway station we would meet a freight train filled with Moldovan tomatoes and organize their distribution. This duty implied heavy physical work, but I was thoroughly immersed in my dream, so I didn't mind."

From 1987 Alperin and Shilkloper started traveling abroad as a duo; in 1989 they performed at their first Western Europe jazz festival, in Norway. At their return from the States in 1992 they found the 'Blue Bird Café' closed down: the place was desolated, and the grand piano, rented from the Union of Composers, had been stolen. This signified the end of an important period in Alperin's life – seven years of dramatic growth as a musician and composer – and the beginning of a new phase: another step towards making his dream become true.

Alperin continues:

Life took another turn, this time towards the West. In Poland I played in a Jewish café; simultaneously, at a market place I sold huge and heavy 'Ruby' TV sets brought from

Moscow. I dreamed of buying a synthesizer and needed the money for it. The 'Ruby' TVs didn't really sell well, but I was determined. Once, a Pole approached me and promised to buy one of my enormous 'machines,' if I deliver it to his place. The day after, all eager and excited, I brought a 'Ruby' to his kitchen, where he sat at the table on which I saw an impressive gun. He then asked: 'How much?' My wife, who was with me at the time, took the gun and said: 'How come it's so dusty? No wife?' At this point I didn't lament the lost 'Ruby' – I wanted out. The 'Ruby's' new owner obviously had the very same feeling, so he roared: 'Get lost before I get mad!'

Back then my life was unpredictable, but I had a drive that kept me going. I remember my meeting with Kshistav Penderetsky in Krakow. The owner of the café where I worked once came to me and said: 'we'll have some important people tonight – you'd better be good.' In a while the staff started manifesting both heightened interest and particular service. The important guests turned out to be Penderetsky and his friends, who came to the cafe after the premiere of his opera "The Black Masque." Their arrival was both spectacular and grand: in a cart, driven by three horses, it was also loud and rowdy. In a while, Penderetsky approached me and asked in Russian: 'Would you like to play on a festival in Krakow? I can arrange that.' After my assenting reply he said: 'tell me something: when will your bloody communism croak?' To this I answered: 'Do you want a precise date?' Such arrogance was hardly expected from someone in my position, so he left without uttering another word.

Alperin's aspiration led him to Norway, the country where he trusted his originality would be welcomed by Norwegian lovers of music. He says that Norway is his harbor of rest. Norwegian serenity, its peacefulness and light, its pauses and gaps, provided him with all he had been longing for. Yet he admits that growing up in this country would have spoiled both his individuality and his career: "Norway gives you a lot of options; it helps you realize your dreams. In other words, there is no outside resistance. For me, this wouldn't work: as lazy as I am, I would do nothing but relax. There is a spirit of rebellion in me – this is the truth, which, I believe, would apply to any creative person. So, having all of my needs met and desires fulfilled

doesn't stimulate me as an artist – I cannot live without resistance. My method of working is either hit or miss.”

The Norwegian way of life deeply influenced the composer: his music is often characterized as pensive and thoughtful. As he explains it, “the silence and the unpredictable weather, the space and the richness of the light, make me more introverted and meditative, which, in turn, inspires me to compose. Still living in Moldova,” he continues, “and later in Moscow, I intuitively gravitated towards the North, with its moderate pace and explosive silence. George Russell, the American composer and trombonist, once said that he likes Norwegian jazz players because they not only send a sound far into the mountains, but also patiently wait for its return. Having lived in Norway for several years, I endorse Russell’s metaphor. When we free our minds from the boundaries between genres, epochs and territories – if that ever happens – maybe then we will understand why Jan Garbarek called one of his albums *All Those Born With Wings*.”

Additionally, Alperin truly believes in the existence of strong links between Russia and Norway, as well as in the necessity to foster this relationship. In one of his interviews he speaks of his intention to cultivate and promote the historically established ties: “Russia... Norway... They say that our people were so close that at one point in time there was even a mixed Russian-Norwegian dialect, with its common vocabulary. But it got lost...” By his choice of collaboration with Vegar Vårdal, Norwegian violinist and dancer, he supports the idea that the cooperation between Russia and Norway goes much deeper than the correspondence between Tchaikovsky and Grieg. He wonders: “What if we eventually find the unity and common essence?”

The composer arrived to Norway in 1993, to work as a pianist in a bar. There he was heard by Torgrim Solid who later offered him a teaching position at the Academy of Music in Oslo. Misha had with him his three-and-a-half-year-old daughter (from an estranged relationship), but he took the challenge in stride – the dream of granting her access to a bright future overshadowed the harshness of reality, in which the burden was enormous.

Despite the odds, Alperin moved towards his dream. For the first three months Ksenia was looked after by her grandmother; then, as he puts it, “ordinary weekdays began.” The first year was most difficult: with no place in a kindergarten, Alperin taught classes while Ksenia played

under his table, spilling juice and scattering cupcake crumbs across the floor. When he performed, she usually sat on his lap.

She either hung on me or clutched herself to me – she never let me go. I remember a solo concert I once gave. I had arranged for someone to look after her during the performance, but from the clamor heard backstage within minutes after I began playing I understood it wasn't going so well. Then I saw Ksenia approaching me. She held a jar of jam that she played with, and was determined to sit with me. Unexpectedly, the jar lid opened, and the jam spilled over the keys. I had no choice but improvise with the left hand, while wiping it off the keys with the right. The audience was thrilled – they thought it was part of the program. I felt wretched.

Yet I had a dream. I knew what I wanted – I visualized it to the point of seeing it with my very eyes. I believe that our dreams ought to be precisely articulated in our minds. There are two standard approaches to dreaming: it is possible to dream simply by toying with an idea, and it is possible to actively move towards the materialization of one's dream. For me, it is not enough to be a person of a vision – the power lies in the vision's realization. I see no point in indulging in fantasy; for me, all the energy, time and potential needs to be invested in achieving whatever it is we desire.

Alperin and composing

Alperin's dream is about self-expression and communication. For him, composing means storytelling. Before playing his solo concert called "The Stories for Piano Solo" in Moscow, he said: "I don't know what I am playing is called. I am just telling stories. Stories for piano solo, stories that are sad or funny, but they are stories. I suppose I will keep doing this until I am retired. However, with time stories change." Indeed, his compositions can be perceived as stories. They seem to be narratives drawing on his numerous experiences and reflections, depicting profound as well as trivial moments of his life. Although his stories are short, they are characterized by a range of choice details. The principles of fusion and of combination establish

the stories' inner diversity: his pensive compositions are charged with the spirit of life, whereas his heated pieces also touched with tenderness.

He believes that emotions enable us to be in contact with others, to understand and appreciate them more profoundly. "Creating music, we, musicians, tend to appeal not to a person's mind, but to his/her unique inner world of feelings, fantasies and unpredictable moods. This world exists within all of us, and demands due respect." He thinks that his love for storytelling is inherited from his father, a teacher of literature.

We, humans, have a predilection to analyze and classify the world around us. We want to make sense out of things – here from stems our desire to divide the world into physical and biological realms, to break relationships into phases, and to split music into styles, genres and epochs. Likewise, we tend to identify and label emotions. According to Leonard B. Meyer, we recognize different emotional states by associating them with a feeling evoked in certain natural or cultural circumstances.³⁹ For example, we characterize a poem as a love poem because of awareness of and identification with specific feelings in the poem we associate with love. In other words, we respond more to the human relationships implicit in the poem, than to the richness of metaphors and alliterations. The same goes for our music experiences: through the dynamics of the music we hear, we arrive at a feeling it evokes – say, of joy, sadness, anxiety or calmness; and then we transfer these emotions back into the piece. In other words, the audience completes the process of communication initiated by the author.

Alperin's intention is to present the listener with stories s/he can find her/himself in, with themes s/he would be able to relate to, and moods – to associate with. His particular talent centers in an ability to unite and manipulate improvisational possibilities, musical genres, styles, instruments and performers. His goal is to elevate us, his listeners, to another dimension of understanding and appreciation of such unity and synthesis. Expressing himself in a nonverbal and ambiguous way, he invites us to interpret his utterances and get actively involved in the

³⁹Leonard B. Meyer, *Music, the Arts and Ideas* (The University of Chicago Press: Chicago & London), 1967, pp. 273-274.

process. In my experience, listening to his early albums for a sustained period of time evokes a tangible feeling of sadness and unhappiness. Reflecting upon this comment, Alperin then shared the following story. The vocalist, Sergej Starostin, who initially refused the composer's request to sing a certain song (written in the state of wretchedness and despair), finally gave in and agreed to perform it... which turned out to be a bad idea after all, for during the performance, when the song reached its climax, the singer collapsed – the emotional impact completely overwhelmed him. "It's funny, he says, but this particular song was performed only a couple of times – musicians refuse to play it. I don't insist any longer, for now I know better."

The following illustration – Alperin's account of one of his composing experiments – will give the reader an idea about the composer's understanding of communication. Inspired by one of the great masters of improvisation, Keith Jarrett, he once decided to compose in front of an audience of two thousand. He was then giving a concert in the Tchaikovsky concert hall in Moscow. It was not his first concert there, but definitely his first (and, so far, his last) performance of that kind. The idea was to approach the instrument and start composing the way he does it at his favorite grand at home. The entire purpose was to find out whether or not he could compose while performing. The experience was powerful and unforgettable; he recalls being excited and engrossed in the activity, without any traces of fear present. Certainly, he was delighted to have achieved the goal – and proved masterful.

Interestingly, although motivated by Jarrett, Alperin sees a significant difference between Jarrett's method of unfolding a story and that of his own. His description of this difference is very imaginative and colorful, yet clear: "It seems to me, Jarrett believes that a journey starts at a point A, but he doesn't really know where he goes. Therefore he turns back to the same point, only to start it all over again. When it comes to my ways, I start at the same point A, not knowing where to go – just like Jarrett. But I keep going, trying to figure out the direction along the way. In other words, while Jarrett's focus is on the journey itself, I am more interested in the *story* of my own journey." In other words, Alperin's love for stories and his desire to share them with us lie at the heart of his composing experiences. Through his music Alperin aspires to reach out to his audience, inviting to different modes of perception, interpretation and reaction

that may equally depend on the stories heard as well as on the listener's own experiences. Alexander Gelfand, a music critic for *Forward*, a New York Jewish newspaper, points this out when reviewing the composer's album *Her First Dance*:

"Introverted' and 'meditative' are both words that apply to *Her First Dance*. So, too, do 'playful,' 'virtuosic' and 'enchanted.' Joined by cellist Anja Lechner and long time collaborator Arkady Shilkloper who plays French horn and flugelhorn, Alperin unfurls a series of compositions that are essentially un-placeable: impressionist harmonies and spiky modernist melodies share space with tricky, tripping rhythms and passages of subdued lyricism. Yet there is remarkably little sense of pastiche here; instead, everything seems to operate in service of surprisingly coherent and cohesive voice. Though not, [according to Alperin], an unchanging one."

My reading of two works from the album *North Story*⁴⁰

In analyzing the means Alperin uses to tell us his stories I choose to focus on two compositions from his album *North Story*, recorded in 1995 together with the drummer Jon Christensen, the tenor-saxophonist Tore Brunborg, the french-horn/flugelhorn player Arkady Shilkloper and the bassist Terje Gewelt, and released in 1997. To Alperin, this album is an "imaginary reconstruction" of the force of life that permeated Norwegian jazz of the seventies, a period of the discovery and rediscovery of the northern musical heritage. His intentions were to fuse together Nordic and "ex-Soviet," giving the soloists the freedom of expression in the process of interaction and exchange of ideas. The album confirms his enthusiasm for cross-cultural dialogue and his desire to remove existing borders and boundaries.

⁴⁰ I believe that not only do these works differ in terms of genre and character, but also they may be viewed as representing two contrasting aspects of Alperin's personality: a fusion of southern passion and northern calmness. Therefore, I have intentionally chosen two different styles of analysis. The description of *Psalm no. 2* is based on my personal response to the music – which invites us into a world of thoughtfulness and reflections, while *Etude* is approached from the perspective of its musical characteristics and development.

Most important, though, was his desire to pay a tribute to Scandinavian music that he loved and listened to through EMC recordings while still in Moldova and Russia: “This kind of European northern music has always attracted me. A huge fan of the EMC, I wanted to express my devotion to this company as well as communicate my love for the music they experimented with in the 70s. In a way, the idea was quite nostalgic – my homage to the music I loved and to the country I dreamed of. Interestingly, I saw, felt and experienced this world and its atmosphere while living in southern countries. Pushkin comes to mind again – it’s possible to draw a parallel between him and his relationship with Spain (the country he dearly loved and often referred to in his writing, but never had a chance to visit), and my love for Norway and the way it influenced and shaped me back in Moldova and Russia.”

The compositions reveal Alperin’s originality, exhibited in his ability to not only join together unique and independent voices, but also give each of them space and the opportunity to direct and conduct – to be in charge of constructing and creating a composition in its wholeness. He combines folk, modern classical and jazz music. The set of compositions is well balanced, shaped by contrast, ranging from minimalistic simplicity in “Morning” and “Alone” to the atonal salutes of “Afternoon,” to the lyrical yet compelling phrases of the two-part “Psalm,” to the rhythmically complex, folk-inspired melodies of “Etude,” to the beautifully meditative and sparse motifs of “North Story,” and to the jumpy and darting patterns of “Ironical Evening.” The album’s epilogue is an arrangement of a piece selected by Alperin: “Kristi Blodsdråper (Fucsia)” by Harald Sæverud. The titles give us a deeper and wider understanding of each piece’s vision impressed upon the listener in ever-growing detail.

Psalm no. 2

The first piece analyzed, *Psalm no. 2*, features Alperin, Brunborg and Christensen; it can be described as a music of silences and nature references: deep and meaningful, clear and beautiful, thought-provoking and even mysterious at times. Pondering and reflection are its main modes – the piece exemplifies the influence that Norwegian quietness and tranquility has

on the composer, who finds himself truly at home in a space so different from that of his background.

The *Psalm's* theme was born in the studio, emerging out of the group's discussion of the album. Upon Alperin's request for some extra time needed for working with the piece, the manager Manfred Eicher replied: "Of course! You still have a couple of minutes, don't you?" Spontaneity, one of his character traits, came in very handy – he just started composing.

Psalm no. 2's beginning invites us into the atmosphere of the North, producing the effect of a cold Norwegian landscape, with snowy roads and windy evenings. Therefore a clear sense of tonality in this piece seems more important than the effects of interesting harmonic transitions and twists characteristic for the album's other compositions. The initial passage, which consists of descending motifs in a high register against the slow upward movement of the base line, is played by the piano accompanied by the tenor saxophone that imitates the howling and screeching of the wind. The piece is based on a single melodic idea that starts off as a short 4bars' motif which develops and extends every time it is carried out. The composition's structure mirrors its context. According to the composer, it "grows out of the emotions and is built according to them." This explains the double climax of the same intensity – towards the end of the first part and in the end.

The theme's two first appearances are followed by the initial passage, offering a sort of pause – to convey a sense of inner freedom: this time is appropriately devoted to reflection and meditation. The melody is captivating and absorbing, and every time is shown from a different angle – it varies in length, character, sonic aspect and key. Intensity is added to its every run. In the second part, the theme is transferred to a higher register and is compressed to 6bars' tune, repeated 4 times under the saxophone improvisation. The change of key, the clarity of the intervals in addition to structural precision expose the theme's delicacy, sensitivity and thoughtfulness.

The characteristic feature of this composition is a sequence of call-and-response solo exchanges between Alperin and Brunborg: a meaningful conversation takes place on two different levels – not only between the composer and the listener, but also between the soloists performing the

piece. Towards the end of this *Psalm* there is a return of its initial passage, subdued and ended in a sort of question, as if not finished but frozen in a state of contemplation. This is not a display piece; it directs towards an inner state of an individual, his/her thoughts, aspirations, yearnings and needs. "When I wrote the *Psalm no. 2*, and heard it performed, I felt that something was missing: it lacked one more voice – not any voice whatsoever, but that of a praying priest (performed by the french-horn). I regretted not having added this voice to the piece when it was recorded, and improved the situation by inviting Arkady to imitate the praying voice with his french-horn in the concerts. That's what did it – the piece has become complete."

Etude

Etude is the opposite of *Psalm no. 2* that fully reflects another, totally different side of its creator. It is an energetic and lively upbeat duet with Arkady Shilkloper, based on the sparkling and animated exchange between the soloists. The structure of the piece is clear and straightforward: *Etude* consists of three appropriately divided sections. It starts off with an introduction, where the french-horn initiates a line, which is joined into by the piano. The rhythmic accompaniment of even eight notes at the onset of the piece gives way to the syncopated ostinato format, carried through the rest of the composition. The base line plays an important role in maintaining the fused rhythms. Moreover, it helps to create fascinating intensity as opposed to monotony. The tune itself has plenty of forward pulsating movement indicated by the collection of short upbeat figures and the beautifully shaped melodic motives. The latter instances overlap in the style of call-and-response: characterized by immediate repeats of the lines, by sequences, and by the use of breaks that give way to new ideas, this section appears as an engaged banter, full of jokes and wit.

The main portion of the piece features the solos of piano and french-horn, joined together by the short presentation of the duo's introduction material. The piano solo is an elaboration of pulsed melodic phrases, built on the accompanimental ostinato that is maintained throughout the piece. Improvisatory in nature, it is sharp and pointed, yet enveloped in a veil of warmth.

The following virtuosic interplay of the soloists that ensues, incorporates certain features derived from Balkan roots – brusque but not harsh. Characteristic of the genre, this interaction sounds easy and natural, irrespective of burning rhythms, unexpected syncopations and dense textures. Effortlessly, the french-horn takes the lead, toying with the thoughts given. Expressive and intensified towards the end, the french-horn solo is both individual and collaborative. This aspect of Shilkloper’s interpretation of Alperin’s ideas reveals the knowing of the insider – something that reflects a long-term friendship and collaboration.

The piece closes with the exquisite coda, distinctive in its character: fervent pulse and enthusiastic drive are elegantly merged with soft plasticity, gracefulness and delicacy of outline. As for the form, Alperin skillfully creates a design, in which the focus is on a balance between repetition and variation. The introduction and the coda together play the role of binding segments: the material of these parts stylishly connects the solos as well as it enhances and finalizes the main ideas.

I believe that my reading of these particular compositions as reflections of Alperin’s diverse individual qualities, supports the position that strong links between fundamental traits of personality and artistic output should not be overlooked. Therefore, I think, the presentation of an artist should never be dogmatic or simplistic, but many-faceted: rich and subtle at the same time. In both *Psalm no. 2* and *Etude* Alperin reveals his basic inclinations and some fundamental aspects of his character; additionally, the significance of interaction in its full spectrum is shown. These stories are also tales about life: their simplicity does not diminish life’s complexity, while their genuineness adds to our understanding and knowledge of its realities.

Artists versus critics

Alperin once said: “You know artists hate academics and critics; always have and always will.” This comment reveals the composer’s differentiation between the artist’s creative mode of being and the critic’s analytic mode of thinking. For an artist, a hidden part of himself/herself comes out and forward, either through, say, writing and composing, or performing. Yet for a critic, that hidden part of his/her personality remains in hiding, because it does not fit into the

world of criticism: critics have a tendency to believe that criticism should be abstract and impersonal – disconnected from their personality as much as from their private life. In other words, artists and critics exist and function in two separate domains, hence the feeling of antagonism and misconception.

When studying American literature, I came across an essay “Me and My Shadow”⁴¹ by Jane Tompkins, whose key message to the academic world is: “nurture the individual, not just the intellect.” In this essay the scholar testifies to the confusion she experienced when attempting to separate her professional work from her own personality. According to standard literary criticism, she says, writing about feelings or being influenced by them, was considered self-indulgent and unprofessional. Professional writing and personal life were seen as two strictly separate spheres. The author confesses that speaking personally in a professional context felt embarrassing. Yet, for her, it was very difficult to write and pretend that what she said had nothing to do with her life.

I fully agree with the critic’s idea that the texts under study should be perceived on a personal level as well. Such readings embrace individual impressions and appreciation, besides mental power and sophistication. After all, literature works – in all their diversity – tell us stories, describe events, and examine situations that concern us as people: writers and readers alike. Therefore, reading and writing on literature that teaches about life, but only in a professional manner – disconnected from one’s own life – is often experienced both as dull and exhausting.

For an artist, being strictly formal and impersonal is not natural either – precisely because of the individuality as well as the uniqueness of background and experience that generate and characterize their art. This confirms Alperin’s statement about artists not liking historians, critics and journalists – which he later clarifies: “The reason is simple: they don’t want to be polished and perfect, nor do they want to be viewed as beautifully crafted fairy tale characters

⁴¹ Jane Tompkins, “Me and My Shadow,” in Leitch, Vincent B., ed., *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. (New York: Norton), 2001, pp. 2129-2143.

– they are real people, living in the real world and expressing themselves and their reality through art.”

Alperin maintains that an artist’s key desire is to be fully alive, and this implies a combination of the positive and the negative. The composer once said: “It is often said that spontaneity is a kind of luxury. I don’t completely agree with this statement: at times it can be harmful. What really matters, I think, is how one feels in the process of his/her achievement, rather than *what* the person has achieved. I remember the intensity of emotion I was swayed by, upon watching a documentary about the legendary Richter. Not long before his death, this great self-actualizer, who during his life time was elevated to the status of a deity, sits in his chair crying and exclaiming: ‘I dislike myself!’⁴² This declaration made me very sad. I kept thinking: why? It seems to me, the reason for such remorse lies in the man’s unawareness of the connection between himself and the eternal.”

Reflections by the artist ⁴³

As long as we do not recognize our own uniqueness and originality – even if our feelings resemble the feelings of others – until then we will not be able to become adults. Music is more important than the musician. It is not about artists’ biographies: history, evaluations, reviews – that’s all like lifeless museums. What matters, is the mystery of living emotions here and now: for they are far removed from cold facts and information, from craft alone and the noise of crowds. Behind all this distraction it is easy to forget the essence of the poetry of sound. Music offers the closest access to our purification and to meditation. An Eastern saying goes like this: “do not be a dancer, (don’t keep

⁴² The documentary is made by Bruno Monsaingeon, French filmmaker, musician and writer, who has interviewed and made a number of films about famous twentieth-century musicians.

⁴³ The following section introduces a selection of Alperin’s thoughts and ideas that address a number of important esthetic and moral issues faced by artists. Fully aware of the fact that such a lengthy excerpt may seem unfit for the standard model of an academic writing, I nonetheless choose to include it into the thesis. I believe that the composer’s reflections well illustrate the key points of this paper – the composer’s self-expression and self-actualization through communication. Moreover, this way of presenting his thoughts – not interpreted by the researcher, but paraphrased and addressed directly to the recipient – will give the latter deeper insight into the inner world of the artist.

dancing) but become a dance.” I agree with this statement. We all know that in order to achieve something we need to possess talent and to work hard. However, I do not believe this is enough: if we want to get a result, we need to be passionate about what we do. A person, who understands the difference between being a dancer and becoming a dance, knows what passion is. Without passion is impossible to forget oneself. Without forgetting the self is impossible to create something valuable.

Music mirrors our thoughts and inspirations. Every human being is unique. The problem is that not every one of them is able to express his/her distinctiveness; all of us want to do it, but not many of us can – we often stumble over finding the methods that would apply only to us. We have to cherish and nourish our individuality, as much as we need to work on it. It’s not easy, I know, but it is possible. It is significant to be a competent professional – such standards we must all aspire to – but reaching the ‘standards of the other’ is not the best way to go: copy, imitation and pretense lead us astray from the path that is most excellent. I am now working on a new album that I want to record and release together with the Russian accordionist Evelina Petrova and a drummer, I want this new project to sound fresh, innovative and new-fangled. I do realize that it will not be necessarily liked by the crowd, but that doesn’t bother me: I am searching for new ways of expression that would be natural for me. We all have the potential to achieve and even to excel, I believe. Choosing the right way to realize that potential, though, is vital. How do I know what is mine? By intuition, I guess. This project is a synthesis of folklore, chamber music and jazz: I love ideas and phenomena that have no borders.

Why would it do us good to free ourselves from thinking in terms of borders and boundaries? Simply because it would put the things around us into a different perspective: we would be able to experience the world more fully, deeply and brightly. Tulips and roses look different and smell different, but they still belong to the same classification – they are flowers. Likewise, when we, humans, feel that it is impossible to split off one culture from another, or to draw boundaries between the societies,

languages, genres and styles, we experience a sense of belonging to the same picture, just like different pieces of the same puzzle.

Why do we always look for differences? What is more important, I think, is that which is mutual. What do distinct cultures, languages, fairytales and costumes have in common? For me, they are all part of the same symphony. Usually, people don't want to see this, for it is easier to talk about differences. They use to say in the East: "Human mind is capable of only two functions: to memorize and to divide." I think, this explains our need to look at the world in terms of parts, fractions and aspects: we see it through the prism of our mind, and the more we train the mind, the more it becomes capable of division.

We are part of evolution: we constantly aim at progress – that's the way we are wired. Evolution is a natural process, but our mind wants way too much: it can never wait; it demands all it desires now, at this very moment. I attended a conference some time back; the main topic of discussion was, "The Musicians of the Future." I thought: "What about them?" We always want to go further, but where to go? Everything is old; everything has been under the sun – exactly as King Solomon stated this in his reflections. The only thing that will never be old and repetitive is an amazing individual originality of a person with his/her associative world. So, where should we go? Should we align ourselves with the wish to perfect and impress? To go further in whatever we have managed to achieve? Yes, I agree that we should strive for all of these, but only to a certain extent, for there always has to be a balance.

We *have* to understand the need for a search from within. Looking inside is vital – that's where progress comes from. We need to learn to listen to our inner voices, for the reality is that we listen to everyone around, but not ourselves. Do you want to know why? Listening to our inner voice implies responsibility – that's why. Then there is no one else to rely upon. Consequently, there is no one to blame for our own failures. Intuition talks to us. It says: "Read and be inspired; do and be encouraged!" Laziness and bad habits reply: "No need to stress yourself out – you can do this tomorrow." I believe

that within ourselves we can find all the answers to the questions and the situations we encounter.

Making the first step towards ourselves, through our openness to the world of sounds, we are faced with an important question: Who is responsible for what flows out of our inner beings? Gurdzhiev⁴⁴ offered us an idea that is very close to my understanding: art should be divided into two categories – subjective and objective. According to him, the subjective group includes most of what we hear and see around us – this is the creativity of one’s heart and mind. Probably 99% of all art belongs in this category. However, objective art will usually be born from absolute emptiness and thus it belongs to the universe. A human mind cannot grasp this paradox. Very few individuals are entirely devoted to this emptiness and have blossomed out of it: very few indeed do not have the need to be heard. These persons can be compared to an empty bamboo stick – through them the universe is able to sing its mysterious song. I believe this song is a song without a single sound. Geniuses may have heard sparks and had glimpses of this emptiness. When it comes to the individual’s mind, it rarely accepts a voluntary departure, which can probably explain why works written even by great masters are so uneven in terms of their impact and inspiration. We, the workers with sounds, have a lot to be silent about.

The main existential problem of the contemporary Western world is that of depression and suicide – the younger generation is overwhelmed with their lives: there is no deficit of anything except love. Lack generates desires, dreams and illusions; it triggers fantasy and vision. Art helps us to release what needs to be released. As I said before, I believe that traveling inside oneself is much healthier than numerous trips into the external. For many, being oneself means being closed for others; they don’t understand that openness is the only key that facilitates being oneself. What I like about art is that it is a mirror that simply reflects all the processes and changes taking place in the artist.

⁴⁴ Georgy Gurdzhiev was an Armenian mystic philosopher.

Music, for example, reveals and replicates the current condition of its maker: it helps us see the creator's tastes and predilections, as well as it makes us experience his/her inner processes (not always straightforward, sometimes even odd and perplexing).

The only goal of art is to find one's own voice, to find oneself. One cannot do it without forgetting/losing oneself. Jesus put it really well in one of the parables. He said: "Unless a seed dies, it will not bear a fruit." Think about the process: it's both time and energy consuming. Unless a seed is put into the cold soil where it has to stay for several months – which, I suppose, is not very comfortable and untroubled – it will not delight us with a harvest. This truth also applies to us, humans, especially to people of art. Attempts at composing ought to be linked with the willingness to leave oneself behind, to forget one's own desires and cravings, and to enter the world of the creation. In other words, creating a work of art is a process of recovering and rediscovering our true selves and the life we live.

Fortunately, in Norway a journey into oneself pays off well. Whenever we travel abroad, my students perform their own music, which for most part is introvert. The reaction of listeners is always the same – that of surprise and bewilderment; it's not very usual for modern young people to meditate and reflect while travelling inside of themselves, which they communicate via the music they compose and perform. So, when teaching musicians (as well as people of art, for that matter), we need to place our entire focus on imagination. To teach imagination is pretty impossible – it's a result of our associative world, which can only be developed individually. My particular emotional reaction to the Ukrainian language is a good illustration of the point – that's the way we are created.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ During our first phone conversation Misha overheard me speaking in my native language with my mother. He later described his reaction, which was almost physical: he felt very uncomfortable and uneasy – the feelings triggered by associations with his own childhood/adolescence times in the Ukraine – difficult phases for a talented boy from a Jewish family.

With age we become less adequate, because we get scared of the things that didn't scare us earlier in life: we get scared of life itself. We often hear that old people are wise people. Not necessarily, if you ask me. Old people are sometimes wise, but more often than not they are filled with misconceptions, suspicions, superstitions and irrational dogmas. Therefore Jesus taught us: be like children. He didn't want us, grown people, to become children, but only to resemble them in their willingness to understand and accept, in their openness and sincerity of expression, and their openness to seek and find.

We, grown-ups, should be open to learning and changing until we die. I have always taken my job very seriously: every single concert was performed as if it were the last in my life; after each of them I was a dead man. As a group leader, I excelled in encouraging people, but couldn't really trust either them or their judgments. Such 'irresponsible responsibility' continued until 2003, when I got seriously ill. Through this illness I learned a number of vital life lessons: it made me learn to trust people, to appreciate and love them more, as well as to value life itself, rejoicing and delighting in its every single moment. Life is an art of balancing. I finally realized that I was wrong in regarding it as nothing more than a break between the concerts.

Confronted by the challenge of physical survival, I realized the significance of my choices. Music likewise confronts us with the question of survival – the survival of an artist. When this question becomes less dire, our inner fire dampens. The comforts of life lull our natural curiosity. In order to reactivate it, we often need to experience crisis and calamity, however unpleasant and undesirable they may be – this is one of the principles affecting a person's inner evolution. Practically speaking, the process is demanding and tough: one needs to get rid of one's habitual way of living and thinking. When the answer to the question we face is either 'yes' or 'no,' when it is a matter of life and death, we cannot approach it casually. In my case, it was a hard challenge. God helped, and so did people. I was told: 'Come on, you can do this. Don't be afraid. Don't

be lazy. Keep your focus on the results you want to see!' I tried and persisted and, eventually, I did see the results I desired.

One of the most significant changes that I experienced due to my illness was my realization that I am not a victim of negative circumstances. In practical terms, feeling like a victim of circumstances is one of the most destructive inclinations of the human mind. Being wretched isn't as hard or demanding as staying happy. I have now understood why there are lots of people who prefer being sick to staying healthy – it is easier that way. An unhappy person is loved and treated kindly by everyone, while a fortunate individual meets a considerable amount of hatred, jealousy and contempt. There are so many points we should consider in life, don't you agree?

In summary, human life demands both contemplation and active involvement, according to Alperin. In the above excerpt, Alperin addresses the topics of human identity and belonging, as well as those of the relationship between music and musician. Sharing his thoughts and experiences as a composer, Alperin also deals with certain pedagogical problems; possibly seeming irrelevant at times, his statements clearly manifest the composer's holistic approach to the individual. His main concerns – the dual focus on the self as well as on the subject matter, and the significance of producing professional musicians in their wholeness – both address the question of raising future artists.

One of the distinctive features of Alperin's teachings is how he gets personal about professional issues. He is not afraid to talk openly about the topics that other scholars want to mock and ridicule. Not quite fitting the image of traditional scholar, he is all the more what we could call an experimental educator. As a proponent of the education of the whole human being – mind, body and spirit – he advocates cultivation of imagination, intuition and the inner life. Addressing the problem of high suicidal rates, Alperin emphasizes the importance of a person's realization of who s/he is and where s/he is in life. According to him, a musician's understanding of his/her call will help him/her achieve their inner balance – an essential ingredient for external accomplishments.

Current years

According to the composer, unless we stop focusing on separation rather than unity, we will not survive. He insists that the only way out is to focus on the mutual, to strive for the communal, and he is continually working in that direction. Contributing to the uniqueness of Alperin's vision is not only his ability to see the wholeness of what many view in parts, but also his desire and ability to bring together and fuse fragments that ultimately belong together. This is vividly expressed in the merging of styles and genres, in the blending of voices and images, and in the juxtaposition of discordant and seemingly contradictory ideas. "The processes of classical improvisation, decomposing or recomposing in my previous as well as existent projects, stem from the same desire to unite what is often considered as unable to coexist. The main idea is a search for seemingly incompatible combinations: the so-called 'reconciliation of irreconcilable' is what I deeply yearn for."

Alperin's first album, *Fly, Fly, My Sadness*, was recorded already in 1995, in Sofia, together with the Bulgarian choir Angelite, the ensemble Huun-Huur-To from Tuva, and the Moscow Art Trio. During the years that followed, this project evolved into a laboratory of further experimentation, where diverse cultural sources, contrasting compositional and improvisational techniques, would meet and merge. Here we experience the fusion of distinct elements belonging to everyday life: a Russian lyrical song becomes a Lamoit's prayer, throaty singing melts into Bulgarian mountain traditions of the Rhodope, and Swiss Alpine horns amalgamate with modern verse improvisation.

Today, the project is becoming a new basis for future experiments. Alperin elaborates further:

Our strongest desire is to find those hidden yet profound links between Europe, Asia and Africa, inviting into this laboratory a range of various artists from around the world. In this search we want to blend the authentic sources of different cultures into a unified prayer-meditation, viewing it from a bird's-eye perspective. In all the richness and diversity of individual cultures there is always a shared essence that is as mysterious, as inseparable and as beautiful as the world itself.

In Norway my music experienced a change I was initially unaware of. I tried to find the reasons – I needed to understand why. Gradually I realized that my zeal was lost, my fervor was gone. I was instead filled with despondency and melancholy – not only my own, but also that of the entire Jewish nation. In this sense, I am very Jewish (which is easier to understand if one is acquainted with the history and culture of my people). We Jews can laugh when things get really tough. Self irony is one of our main means to maintain balance. As a musician, I am capable of reliving what entire generations of my people experienced – that’s how the heavy burden of my heart can be explained. The sadness of Jewish people can be heard in a number of my stories created in Norway. I was liberated from that heavy burden only when I became seriously ill (I mentioned this earlier). Many processes took place within me – I began to think differently, and this resulted in the change of my feelings and sensations. The sadness my present music expresses is of a different quality: it’s a kind of Pushkin’s⁴⁶ melancholy – sweet sorrow.

My life can be compared to a miracle-school, where all the lessons I didn’t learn at a certain point in time, persistently require my attention, until I know them well. I am glad I have learned to respect my mistakes, which enables me to move forward: coming back to the same faults over and over again is an incredibly sad affair. I am growing, I am changing, and so does my understanding of life, and my imagination of beauty.”

The composer continues to work hard, combining teaching at the Academy with concert tours in Europe. He enjoys life and he dreams of new projects to be materialized: he wants to publish his recorded compositions, and to write a book. The book – some biographical facts combined with the valuable insights of a professional musician – will address a number of important issues dealt with from pedagogical, philosophical and spiritual perspectives. Some of the issues treated in the book are the importance of inspiration as opposed to imitation, the value of avoiding clichés and triviality, as well as the application of new approaches to old matters. The motivation behind the book is to help people discover their originality and find their call in life.

⁴⁶ A. Pushkin (1799-1837) is considered to be the founder of modern Russian literature.

Questions & Answers

- 1) *They say there are two great days in a person's life: the day he is born and the day he discovers why. Tell me about your day of discovery.*

Alperin: "Yes, that's true – these two days *are* the most important days in one's life. The statement is very well put, I have nothing to add. (Smiles) But in all sincerity, the day when I listened to Rachmaninoff Second Piano Concerto performed by Krainev, I consider to be my personal day of enlightenment. I remember sitting in the armchair near the gramophone, crying and thinking: 'That's why they love music.' I was nineteen by then; had been playing the piano since five. The fourteen years in between were filled with music, yet at that moment I clearly understood that my relationship with it wasn't intact: something profound was missing. All of a sudden I saw vividly what it was – that day my passion for music was born."

- 2) *What does composing mean to you?*

Alperin: "Glenn Gould once wrote that the most tragic happening that gradually took place in the world of music 200 years back was a gradual separation. Previously, there were no 'composers,' 'performers' or 'choirmasters' – all of them were called *musicians*. It did not of course mean that all were like Mozart or Beethoven, but they all were taught and qualified to do practically everything: to compose a fugue, to play many instruments, to conduct the orchestra or a choir. Therefore, the general attitude towards music was different from what it is now. I personally think that when the division into conductor/performer/composer took place, that music, in a way, lost some of its sense. In his article 'The Secret of Richter,' in 1961, Heinrich Neuhaus commented: 'His secret lies in his being a composer. Richter never composed, but I believe that there are two types of composers: active and passive. We all know the first type of composer. Due to various reasons, passive composers did not activate this latent talent. Both Horowitz and Richter were encumbered by this, for every great performer carries in him/herself a capacity to compose.' I totally agree with Neuhaus. An ordinary

performer is like a soldier: s/he cannot understand the overall strategy of the whole. A musician, on the contrary, is not a soldier – it's someone who, playing only one note every fifth minute, still sees the connection with the whole of the orchestration. We live in the time of 'homecoming.'

In the Academy where I work a subject 'intuitive people' is taught. Many uniting processes Glenn Gould dreamed of are going on there – they improvise, conduct, they compose and perform. This concept resonates with me – I don't like divisions, I gravitate towards the whole. Working with students, I try to release musicians in them. My jazz pianists do play not only jazz music – they also learn to understand music from Debussy to Schnittke and Arvo Pjart. My only goal is to help them find their own voice. My passion is music in its entirety. When I see that a performer is more interested in music than in actual performing skills, I immediately see a huge potential in him or her.”

3) In one of your interviews you talked about the importance of one's roots. You have lived in four different countries; considering the difference of the countries' cultural heritage, how did it affect your art? Can you see a correlation between the countries where you lived and the music that you created there? How do you think environmental factors influenced you as a composer?

Alperin: “Wherever I lived, I was inspired by that country and its traditions. Inspiration is vital. Inspiration, mind you, not imitation. To imitate one's own roots, and to be inspired by them, are two entirely different things. I never wanted to imitate, so I searched for what would help me stay out of that. I found the secret, which I can gladly share with you: one simply needs to feed on folklore as a source. Folklore is strongly identified with personality. Not every artist is capable of expressing his/her roots. It is not enough to find them; much more difficult is to express them through one's own voice. One of my conversations with Stian Karlstensen can well illustrate my point. A very talented musician, this fellow has been playing Bulgarian music long enough to understand it. A Norwegian, he has lived in Bulgaria for quite a while, he has learned the language well, and he is now accustomed to the county's traditions, but his roots

are Norwegian. When I asked him: ‘Why do you never play Bulgarian sad music?’ his answer was: ‘You can learn to play the virtuoso music of a foreign country, but you will never play its downhearted and unhappy songs very well – to be able to do so you would need to have your roots in the country.’

Folklore mirrors the simple person without inner conflicts who accepts life the way it is. We, city folks, keep asking the same question over and over: ‘Why?’ Passed on word of mouth by our grannies, songs and ballads sung by parents – we were taught important lessons even through our first encounters with it. Roots help us to understand everything that is beyond our time-span, they lend us insight into the past as well as premonitions about the future. Our roots are the guides that enable us to build a fundament of our lives. A person without roots drifts aimlessly: s/he is very likely to be heavily influenced by society and its norms. There is a huge difference between a country’s traditions and its roots: putting on a Muslim hat won’t make you a Muslim. In other words, when it comes to rituals, they are insignificant regarding the issue of roots. Jewish roots are not only Jewish, for any roots belong to the same family, just like any flower belongs to the same garden. Likewise, all the folklore sources belong to the same lineage. It is significant to understand this, which happens when you come to a realization that yours is not yours any more, but part of eternal values that are independent of the time in which you live. That’s why folklore is so important: the world will remain without yet another jazz festival or individual composer. But without spiritual absorption of an individual into the eternal it will cease to be.

When it comes to the influence of environmental factors on me as a composer, I admit they have an important role to play. There is much that is Norwegian in my music, even though I come from the south. There are two reasons for this: I adore this country, and I have lived here for about eighteen years. Norway is a country of space and light with its hidden abundant colors and subtle shades. In other words, it’s a country of mysteries, and mysteries always attract and excite an artist. At the same time, in many of my works one can easily hear elements belonging to other sources. The explanation is simple: I am a Ukrainian Jew who for long time lived in Moldova and Russia.”

4) *Can you recall any particular circumstances that inspired any of your compositions? Do you experience new ideas coming during sleep?*

Alperin: "I believe that facts are insignificant. The sounds one creates should be capable of reflecting his/her state of being, the so-called emotional biography. But they cannot do this automatically; facts do not directly call for sounds: there is a profound link in between – a person who experiences and feels, then processes, and, finally, conveys it into a musical thought or idea. In general, art is a mirror. It reflects either experiences or rituals, which especially applies to an improviser or somebody who composes on the spot. My works, for most part, are stories of my experiences. To give another example, Stravinsky was always interested in the ritual part of Russian folklore. However, in his works one recognizes that these rituals are presented through the prism of the composer's own imaginative understanding of them. Imitation never works. Why are there so many poor performers in the world? There is no connection between their emotional condition and the instruments they play: they simply imitate what they heard – that's why. To round out, it's not the history of recordable events but their emotional impact that inspires a composition.

When it comes to getting fresh ideas during sleep, yes, I do. But I never stress out trying to remember them or immediately write them down. I am certain that if an idea is good for me, it will always come back. Nor do I bother when it doesn't."

5) *Your sources of inspiration? How do extra-musical factors, such as literature, visual arts, theatre affect you?*

Alperin: "Literature. Philosophy. Poetry. Movies – good ones, of course (by Tarkovsky, Fellini). Also, visual art, although to a lesser extent (Chagal, for example). I was never interested either in theatre, or ballet. But imaginary ballet is exciting. I was commissioned to write a work for the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra, which turned out to be a great experience. This is my last work so far, and it is called 'Village Variation.'"

6) *Who played the most significant role in your career?*

Alperin: "I have to say that I am the result of a merging of various musical, aesthetic and philosophical streams: Bella Bartok and Arvo Pjart, Glenn Gould and Bill Evans, Gurdzhiev and Osho are only some of the influences I can name. In addition, I was always very interested in folklore and jazz of different cultures. However, there is one person who played a major role in my emergence as a jazz musician. His name is Simon Shirman; we met in Kishinev, Moldova's capital. An awesome violinist and saxophone player, he showed me a possible path from classical music to jazz. Nine years my elder, Simon started tutoring me. We worked for days and nights with only short breaks: did lots of programs, spending almost all of the time in improvisation. Together with two other musicians we started a band 'Kvarta.' It turned out that the band was very timely – more and more musicians, fed on folklore, wanted to play jazz. In 1981 we were invited to a jazz festival in Yaroslavl (Russia), which was a huge success: the Moldovan jazz ensemble performed a synthesis of Jewish and Moldovan folklore with avant-garde theatre actions. We thought: that's it; this is the time to create a new kind of music – music with our own roots.

In 1983, together with Shirman, I moved to Moscow, where we played in 'Arsenal.' We were not content though: the music we played sounded so much American, that we eventually decided to leave the band and move to Siberia, another turning point in my education. As a duo, we gave concerts – as many as twelve or thirteen a month, we were determined to survive. While everybody played American (or Americanized) jazz, Shirman and I improvised on Mussorgsky and Tchaikovsky, and performed our own compositions. Life was tough, but I expected a breakthrough. Upon our return to Moscow we agreed to part, and I started giving solo concerts. In my heart, I will always be grateful to the man."

7) *Do you believe that a person's musical taste in a sense represents who the person is?*

Alperin: “It’s a difficult question. First of all, taste has a tendency to change. That’s why the saying goes: ‘Tastes are not to be disputed.’ Today you think that he is a genius, tomorrow you cannot believe you ever thought him so. I believe that musical taste correlates with your growth and development: personal and professional. One’s taste, in general, is an aesthetic reflection of one’s growth. What is more interesting, though, is what exists beyond one’s taste. *Anything* beyond individual taste points to something we all have in common – something that is not subject to cultures, traditions, and aesthetic norms. This something resides in the realm of the spiritual. Isn’t it interesting to observe how that which we consider reality often turns out to be illusory? What we see with our minds is not real. As spiritual beings, we, humans, can also see and experience the world spiritually, and then the music we create would naturally reflect this spirituality.”

8) I see that my next question comes in very handy. Some people see a very strong connection between the body/soul (intellect and emotions) and the spirit. What is your take on that?

Alperin: “As I said, we are spiritual beings. To me, the temporary, the passing and the transitory have never been very interesting. What I *do* find fascinating is the eternal. In general, we view the world through the prism of our intellect that has a tendency to divide and separate all its registers. The more you educate and instruct it the more you enable it to further divide and separate. Tell me, do school teachers teach the children the ways to develop their intuition or express their feelings? Do they explain why people argue and fight? Do they teach their pupils the art of communication? How about including the subject of emotions in the curriculum? That’s what I call schooling. That’s what we, humans, need – much more than filling our heads with known and unknown facts that sooner or later get either forgotten or called into question. God wants our hearts, not our intellects. Having a wise heart is far more important than possessing a skillful/witty mind.

All modern societies aim at perfection. That’s why all those competitions – on different levels, in different areas – have become such an important life ingredient. But what if in the process

you lose your source of motivation? What if competing doesn't inspire you anymore? It happens again and again... It happens naturally, I believe, because competing in itself is totally absurd. For where can we find perfection? Only in the eternal harmony, I trust, in everything that is connected with God. Spirituality is often mistaken for religiosity, whereas religiosity is usually connected with church. It's wrong. It's like limiting music to the conservatory: music has always been, regardless of the existence of institutions where it is taught or of their absence, for that matter. Our spirits seek that connection with the eternal, with God Himself, in order to know and experience that we are not mere by-products of coincidence, but all that happens in our lives has meaning and makes sense. Folklore exists beyond the dimension of time. Therefore it has always been most interesting, intriguing and stimulating source of inspiration for a vast number of musicians and for me, in particular."

9) *Do you regard your compositions as simply your works, or do you see them as an extension of yourself?*

Alperin: "They *are* me."

10) *To look at the process of composing from a different perspective: do you consider yourself as the originator of ideas or as a channel of the contemporary cultural/social/spiritual climate?*

Alperin: "The world is full of mysteries. Talking about them doesn't account for much. I think it is very important to understand that no one can explain them away: their beauty and lure lies in their elusiveness. I often think: where does it all come from? How does this or that happen? Why this way but not another? I think I am more of a channel than the originator. The question is not about whether or not this is good. The question is: how do you handle this? I believe, sometimes you have to let yourself be caught off-guard. Can you put yourself aside, so that something meaningful will be born through you? If you are always alert, if you make your mind working nonstop, you are in danger: then you can't receive and channel any fresh ideas and thoughts. Our minds are so cluttered, that in order to clearly see or experience anything special we need to get rid of lots of stuff. I often work at night, because at that time I am physically

tired, my ambitions are gone, and my mind is ready for rest. I sit by the grand, ready to compose, and tell my mind: 'U can go off to sleep now. Tomorrow I will show you what has happened here.' The album 'At home' was basically created during the nighttime. Usually, people are scared of the word 'madman.' I think that being called 'crazy' is one of the best compliments: it is equivalent to being blessed – it means to devote oneself to the gift given by God. We, humans, need to be able to control ourselves, but only to some extent – otherwise we become unhappy. Creative madness equates passion.”

11) Can you please generalize the process of creating?

Alperin: “Creating is a bridge between one’s life and his/her instrument. When you create, your inner world of associations, emotions and experience is reflected. I believe I have achieved this, although I also know that many don’t share this idea nor they understand my music. According to Anna Akhmatova⁴⁷, poems grow out of litter. The same can be said about creating music. Let me explain this. An academic musician is taught to perceive a music score as a finished product: In his/her mind a composer alone is responsible for his/her creation; only the composer is able to fill the product with content and pack it ready for consumption. An interpreter paints the work with not-too-bright colors, thus humbly worshipping the genius. A jazz musician, on the other hand, sees himself as a trash-collector, constantly digging in the heaps of sound and being accustomed to intermediaries. For him/her, the final result is unimportant.

These two polar-opposite philosophies that share the same essence – both are extremes. Therefore, they seem so close. Whatever I do – consciously and unconsciously, exclusively by intuition – I seek balance, either through drawing them closer, or eroding the boundaries between these extremes. This process has nothing to do with a fusion of styles; it is rather an experiment aimed at interlocking of a random collection of outdated psychologies and habits.”

⁴⁷ Anna Akhmatova was one of the leading Russian and Soviet modernist poets.

12) Can you delineate the characteristic traits of your composing? What is the most important factor in music for you?

Alperin: “The process of creating is often spontaneous. An idea comes to mind easily, but its polishing usually takes a long time. Moreover, it’s not always helpful: sometimes the process of improvement can seriously harm the originally written material. Improvement implies control, which, in turn, hinders friskiness and vigor. Here in Norway, I have noticed that my spontaneity and playfulness give in to control and restraint. There may be many reasons for this, one of them – my being a teacher: I try to verbalize the ‘non-verbalizable’ stuff. Don’t get me wrong: being a teacher is an awesome privilege: lively, passionate and intense discussions about music do, in fact, both enrich and encourage me. On the negative side, the challenge of verbalizing things that can’t and shouldn’t be put into words affects me, and it takes its toll on me.

What interests me most, is music as the object of mysteries. The factors in music are indivisible. Craft as such has no relation to mystery per se, but at the same time it means very much: memory, coordination, control, skills, knowledge – all these things are very important. We cannot get far on intuition alone; we need knowledge. Not only do we need knowledge, but we cannot do without knowledge in its synthesis. In the Academy where I work, I suggested that every student of jazz piano be taught simultaneously by three piano teachers in the spheres of classical music, composition/improvisation, as well as that of different musical styles. The reason of my proposal is simple – I believe in the efficiency of such a synthesis, which is a benefit to students playing any instrument. We are not there yet, but this is our future goal. I am very happy that in this country there is an openness regarding consideration of these important issues. The Academy students are taught to think in terms of improvisation, folklore, contemporary sound effects, and other arts – this way of synthesis is a natural part of our life, I think.”

13) Do you ever think in terms of audience and its preferences or is your sole motivation always the desire to share your own story?

Alperin: “Richter springs to mind again; like him, I never play for the audience. If I enjoy my performing, there are more chances my public will enjoy it as well. If my listeners don’t

respond, I cannot do anything about it. A live concert always implies energetic interchange. I have experienced this so many times: for example, the Moscow Art Trio recordings don't affect the listeners to the same extent live performances do – the things that take place on the stage never happen in the recording studio. How can I explain this? I believe the reason lies in communication. Interestingly, I used to agree with Glenn Gould who meant that perfection is possible only in the place of solitude, and called the audience 'the offspring of hell.'

However, my own experience proves just the opposite. I found out that my audience, as well as energetic communication with it, is vital to me. I never think of the listener when I write. Nor do I care about how many come to hear me perform. It gratifies, mind you, but is not that important. What is absolutely necessary is one's inner security: the psychological and spiritual aspects are simply indispensable. Performing can be compared to stripping off the clothes and standing naked in front of the crowd. So, I believe that the psychological status of the performer extends beyond his/her craft and talents. Therefore, experience plays a significant role in a performer's life. Understanding of the significance of our inner world is very valuable. There are enough artists that don't respect or appreciate their inner world, which usually results in egocentric behavior as a hostile reaction to their own nature. That's why they crave praise and approval. Ljybshin, a Russian actor, put it well: 'We remain on the stage not because of megalomania, but inferiority complex.' I agree that inferiority complex is often a powerful motivational force behind artists' obvious success. It is so important to be content, but at the same time it is very difficult. Therefore there is a small number of satisfied and fulfilled artists who, like A. Rubinstein, manage to retain love for people and passion for art together with respect to their heritage."

14) How can you describe the difference between creating commissioned music and music which arises out of a need to express yourself?

Alperin: "Commissioned music implies deadlines, usually associated with additional pressure, which, in turn, involves the necessity of composing despite the absence of inspiration and stimulus. Is it good? Yes and no. For some, the approaching time limit may be the only force

that keeps them working. For me, it may sometimes help: in such periods my dreams of, say, a vacation give in to the determination to see the achieved results. But there are also times when I simply cannot work without being inspired – Muse is a capricious lady.

I am frequently asked to write for choir, orchestra or an instrument, and more often than not my answer is ‘no.’ The reason is this: I don’t write for instruments, but for the people who play these instruments. There are universal composers – they write for instruments as well as for performers. I am not one of them – I never wrote for an instrument. I am often asked: ‘You play the piano. Can you write a ‘so-and-so’ piano piece?’ My usual reply is: ‘I have no idea how to write for the piano.’ Likewise, people say: ‘You have written many works for the horn. Can you write yet another one?’ To this I say: ‘I never wrote for the horn. I wrote for my good friend Arkady Shilkloper who happens to play the horn.’ I am not joking; that’s why I don’t consider myself a composer in the traditional sense of the word.

Yes, I have composed works for orchestra, but only because in the orchestra I wrote for, there are people I know well. So, I wrote for them. I find it very difficult to compose for a particular instrument – its natural sound hinders me. I am searching for the synthesis of sounds that were never heard or experienced before. A long time ago I realized that I cannot unfold in the traditional music spheres: there is not enough space for freedom. For me, the freedom of experimentation is significant. Therefore, creating music for the ensemble of African and Korean instrumentalists is a heaven to me, whereas composing a cantata for the conservatory choir is a prison. Charles Parker once said: ‘I need schooling in order to forget it. Without schooling I can’t forget school.’ That’s how I feel: I am not a classical composer, nor am I a jazz musician – my works combine elements that cannot be combined.”

15) “Good music resembles good speech.” Will you please amplify this statement?

Alperin: “I like this idea. However, it can only be applied to someone who wants to express his/her unique inner voice. But very often music originates in dialogues and discussions where several voices merge. A good speechmaker is an expert at exploiting the material’s dramaturgical potential: s/he knows how to hold the audience interested. But in art there is usually no place for monologues. Remember Mozart’s experimentations? In his operas up to

ten voices spoke and sang simultaneously! Interplay is a fundamental part of music making, where the focus is on the interrelationship of the voices. For me, good music rather resembles good storytelling: a speech is a monologue, which has only a short life to live at any rate.”

CONCLUSION

Isn't it fascinating, the way we, humans, are created? We are placed into the reality of this world, with an inner reality each of us carries individually. Our intense deep true feelings of one moment don't last until the next one: what is very real now turns out to be a whim or a flight of imagination later; what feels most important today gives way to something even more important tomorrow. The authenticity of our moments cannot be doubted – we experience them, we live through them and often we are not able to forget them. However, with time our feelings change, the intensity of our emotions weakens, and we sometimes even believe that an earlier particular experience we were so engrossed in is absolutely irrelevant to our present condition.

What is this? One of the explanations might be our inability to stay grounded in a specific state, or unwillingness to remain true towards it, that often makes us unsettled and our feelings changed. We are often torn apart by the wish to play the game life presents us with and at the same time to act according to our inner convictions, impulses, and desires. All of us, to a degree, are in search of the absolute truth, certain unalterable standards. Usually this process is challenging and mentally strenuous: it involves a great deal of time, labor and psychic energy. The absolute standard inevitably gets measured against something relative, very individual. Because we cannot avoid subjectivity, we all need access to a variety of perspectives, an abundance of knowledge and an array of experience, found in the collective wealth of our human culture. When we realize that a moment of profound significance has been encountered, we tend to imprint it in our hearts and minds, hoping to keep it alive by sharing its essence and magnitude with others. It becomes so important that we desire to relive it again

and again, and therefore we keep looking for different means to achieve this. That, I believe, is how art is born.

I suppose that any artist – consciously or unconsciously – addresses his/her audience mostly for the reasons of communication: it relieves them of the emotional and intellectual weight of the questions and yearnings that fill their whole beings. At the same time, it gives them the ability to look at a work of art objectively – registering to what extent it authentically reflects its maker’s own truth. Communication through art offers the artist the luxury of addressing the “other” directly, in one-to-one manner. Telling personal stories, sharing special experiences requires intimacy between the two individuals: there are certain things that do not belong in public arena. However, art is capable of elevating intimate matters into another realm, transforming and evolving them in various dimensions. In other words, a piece of art functions as a point of contact, offering the artist the possibility to share and the audience – to receive. When the message comes across, the recipient usually gets struck by its relevance and its application to his/her own life. Iris Murdoch, British philosopher and novelist, clearly articulated this through one of her characters: “Art is the telling of truth, and is the only available method for the telling of certain truths.”⁴⁸

Among a number of theories on giftedness, there is an interesting one by Csikszentmihalyi who believes that giftedness is not simply a personal trait: rather it is total marriage of interaction between an individual and his/her environment.⁴⁹ Moreover, it also fluctuates over one’s lifetime, due to the shifting of cultural demands and expectations. To illustrate his point, Csikszentmihalyi names popular musicians in relation to their career development: whereas there is only a handful, such as, i.e., Barbara Streisand, whose career was impressively long, there are plenty of musicians (bands) that satisfy the demands of the popular audience only for a relatively short period of time (i.e. Bangles). Popular music changes with time: we easily

⁴⁸ Iris Murdoch, *The Black Prince* (London: CPI Cox & Wyman), 2006, p. 81.

⁴⁹ M. Csikszentmihalyi & R. E. Robinson, “Culture, Time and the Development of Talent,” in R. J. Sternberg & J. E. Davidson (eds.), *Conception of Giftedness* (New York: Cambridge University Press), 1986, pp. 264–284.

recognize the distinctly different music styles of the 70s, the 80s and the 90s, each so different from the popular music of 2013. People change; likewise, their tastes, wishes and predilections.

I agree with the theorist, in his assertion that a person's development depends to a great extent on his/her individual context. I strongly support the idea that social factors have a significant impact on an individual's education, advancement and growth. At the same time, I want to emphasize that the transformation and maturity of giftedness has very little to do with the external pressures, such as, for instance, cultural demands and expectations. I believe that the growth of giftedness parallels a person's inner development: creating art (composing, for that matter), entails a good deal of emotional and intellectual work on the part of the individual; some of it includes profound personal experiences; some, understanding and knowledge attained through life. Certainly all of this implies nurturing, adequate human contact and interdependence. However, the importance of being actively involved in shaping one's individual's destiny cannot be underestimated: it is he/she who determines his/her aims, focus and direction.

It goes without saying that an artist will need a basic knowledge of the preexistent tradition in order to create something new. For example, it is a well-known fact that composers study the "old masters" – a long list of biographies will easily illustrate this point. At the same time, experimentation, education and discipline are the indispensable tools for developing giftedness. Although feedback from others is a great benefit in the process of cultivating one's talent, a true artist will always listen to his/her own heart and its promptings, rather than depend on the viewers/listeners' demands and expectations. This has been clearly illustrated in the case histories of Kleiberg and Alperin.

With their distinctive backgrounds and approaches molded by the unique combination of dissimilar traditions, individual character traits and personal habits, Kleiberg and Alperin represent two different cultures. However, clear similarities stand out in the views of these artists:

- Their intense passion for music and for composing.

- Their total dismissal of compromise – both are obsessed with absolute purity of motivation and honesty of artistic expression; despite the vast difference in their voices, Kleiberg and Alperin articulate the same truth – their music transmits their own beliefs in sincerity, integrity, honor and passion.
- Their shared belief in authenticity and commitment as indispensable qualities of an artist.
- Their conviction that by music they share their humanity – in their music we can feel what they have gone through or what they aspire towards.
- Their focus on being, rather than becoming and achieving; they are not afraid of silence, for neither of them believes that silence is a call to inaction: for them it is a state of being open and free – free to hear and understand, to grasp, progress, cultivate and originate. Interested in sharing their thoughts, dreams and desires with us, they constantly concentrate on the close connection between their intentions and achievements.
- Their position as artistic loner and their acceptance of the realities of life, with its pain and joy, its afflictions and rewards, with its disappointments and fulfillment, with its moments of fear and laughter.
- Their innate talents, combined with significant training and professional competence, which on the whole reflects the impact of cultural and environmental factors: in their respective spheres, Kleiberg and Alperin are experienced practitioners and teachers.

These two composers are but two representatives of the world's pluralistic culture, where an array of ideologies, philosophies, aesthetic beliefs, styles, techniques and means of expression do – and will – exist side by side. Simultaneously, they celebrate, and furthermore even symbolize, the uniqueness and the novelty of the individual. One of my main arguments is that a composer expresses his/her thoughts, ideas and emotions in a desire to communicate them to us. I maintain that psychological, social and cultural factors have a great impact on him/her as an individual, and that his/her personal insights and ideas find their expression through his/her individual beliefs, styles, means and methods. My third claim is that self-expression and

communication help an individual in their quest for self-actualization. Desiring to share their inner world with the listener, and aspiring to convey it most effectively, the composer necessarily goes through a process of growth and maturity, both personally and professionally.

My ideas are congruous with the well-known doctrine that the works of a composer reflect his/her individuality, background and context. My initial intention, therefore, was to illustrate how this happens. However, while working on this project I have discovered that there is much more to it: the compositions of a composer not only reveal their creator – but the sounds actually reproduce and replicate the music of his/her soul. In other words, there is an especially close relationship between the intimate aspects of an artist's personality and his/her artistic output.

This project is not designed to test any established methods for assessing the impact of different influences on the composer. Nor does it offer a summary of typical characteristics belonging to composers by and large. Yet, as a comparative case study, through the examination of the lives of two contemporary composers in light of their relationship to their compositions and to the world in general, one of its outcomes is the importance of personal fulfillment through self-expression and self-actualization.

To sum up this thesis as a whole, then: its primary purpose is to stress the human need for interactive communication, as this significantly facilitates the individual's process of development; secondarily, it draws attention to the intimacy between a composer and his/her compositions. Ståle Kleiberg and Misha Alperin have been introduced as two creative individuals thriving professionally and personally in their respective artistic domains. My selection of their biographical facts, thoughts and attitudes is meant to underscore the importance of one's purposefulness and perseverance in living one's life creatively. These representatives – the carriers of a great dream of freedom – pass through this same life with its specifics of time, biology, psychology, as well as its social and cultural structures. However, due to their personal characteristics, they both are determined to realize their potential to its fullest. The path they both have chosen is that of self-expression and self-actualization; and the

achievements they have accomplished are the result of a combination of their talents, determination, perseverance, and hard work. Neither Kleiberg, nor Alperin can be separated from their music – music is their life, and their life is all about music.

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