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## EXPERT MUSICIANSHIP

Edited by **Claudio Jacomucci**

**Wieslaw Ochwat**

**Cinzia Luisato**

**Fábio Palma**

**Iwo Jedynecki**

**Rafał Łuc**

**Izidor Kokovnik**

**Mirko Jevtović**

**Rik Cornelissen**

**Wei Bijun**



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MODERN ACCORDION PERSPECTIVES #4

**EXPERT MUSICIANSHIP**  
selected articles of emerging accordionists

edited by

Claudio Jacomucci

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### Introduction

The fourth publication of "Modern Accordion Perspectives" series is entirely dedicated to the writings of nine young emerging accordionists who were selected in 2018 through a call-for-papers. Since the first publication MAP has encouraged the dialogue and the comparison between experienced professionals and professionally engaged students to develop a critical spirit through the study. Students, concertists and teacher may confront on an intellectual level as well as the performative one.

Many of these nine articles are extracts from master and doctoral dissertations. They show us how much academic preparation has grown in recent years. It is in fact thanks to the academic studies that accordionists have been able to emancipate in musical and artistic environments, really different from those belonging to the aficionado and amateur accordion world. The topics have been chosen by the authors and match some of the discussion topics that MAP has dealt with and will deal with in future publications.

The articles by **Wieslaw Ochwat**, **Rafał Łuc**, **Mirko Jevtović** illustrate projects of particular innovation, of which not only have they overseen the realization but, through commitment, curiosity and particular interest, have made possible the ideation, the commission of the works to the composers as well as their publication. We have already remarked that many young people nowadays collaborate with composers and develop the original repertoire, rather than passively draw from the lists of academic programs or those of competitions, which offer a limited and standardized choice of the original literature.

Both in academic studies and in competitions, candidates must demonstrate their ability to interpret music from the Baroque period. However, there are few students (and teachers) who study the "Historically Informed Performance Practice of the Baroque Era". It is no longer at the dawn of the classical accordion repertoire, when the audience was amazed that we were able to play Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D minor. We can no longer content of transferring the organ or harpsichord on the accordion, without taking into consideration the teaching of the great specialists of ancient music such as Harnoncourt, Gardiner, Koopman, Bruggen, Savall. **Izidor Kokovnik** and **Cinzia Luisato** take us back to the origins of keyboard literature, with a careful analysis of the Frescobaldian writing and a reflection on the nature and physiology of the instrument in relation to ancient and contemporary music, while **Iwo Jedynecki** sheds light on a nineteenth-century repertoire for harmonium and piano now forgotten but absolutely worthy of being rediscovered. An argument that certainly deserves further study in the next publications, with essays on transcription and on performance practice.

Dutch accordionist **Rik Cornelissen**, jazz accordion teacher at the Arnhem Conservatory, talks about his experience as a jazz musician. A reflection that questions why jazz accordionists are not attracted to the visions of Bill Evans, Egberto Gismonti, Brad Meldahu, Pat Metheny, Chick Corea, Jan Garbarek, Miles Davis and do not seek a modern identity style that follows the evolution of jazz, rather than tracing the footsteps of musicians - albeit admirable and exceptional - as Richard Galliano, Franck Marocco, Astor Piazzolla. Very few are in fact those who manage to undertake a different path from musette, tango, manouche, dixieland, swing, bebop.

A country that is experiencing an incredible and rapid evolution in teaching and in musical emancipation of accordionists is undoubtedly China. **Wei Bijun**, a musician trained in China and Austria, has a clear vision and manages to give us a historical overview, observing the progress both from within and from outside of her cultural context.

**Fábio Palma** leads us into the world of theater, speaking about his experience in various theatrical productions, dance and poetry, infects us with his enthusiasm for one of the most creative sectors, the musical theater. Here the accordion amalgamates with other media. A territory that is still very little explored or even absently snubbed by many musicians.

It would be interesting, and here I relaunch some topics that will interest the next publications, to talk about the revisitation of folk. There are regions of the world that have an extraordinary wealth in popular music (Romania, Serbia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Greece, Ireland, Scotland, Brazil, Colombia) where style, phrasing and ornamentation change from village to village. There are even traditions that include accordion tuned to quarter-tones (Brittany, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Egypt). A few years ago, Stian Carstensen, a Norwegian accordionist and multi-instrumentalist, instead of continuing his academic studies, used a Norwegian scholarship to study traditional music in Bulgarian villages and African-Celtic music in rural American communities, on the Appalachian mountains. Contemporary music, ancient music and jazz (not to mention

commercial genres or those of low artistic value) are not the only resources for accordionists. The rediscovery of traditional music, its actualization has been taking place since the times of Bartok and Stravinsky, passing from the countless "stylistic contaminations", and the accordion still has a voice and an indelible mark on many of the world's music.

It would also be interesting to talk about improvisation, not necessarily associated with a genre or style. The ability to compose extemporaneously is not just about jazz. Bach was also an improviser, an extemporaneous contrapuntist, just as Haendel, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt were also improvisers.

The purpose of the next publications will be to deepen the themes, through the cooperation between expert professionals and advanced students, with essays and articles that talk about research, studies that can contribute to form what we have called in this publication "the musician expert".

Claudio Jacomucci

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**Wieslaw Ochwat**, Poland

PhD

### **Individual Creative Conceptions in Polish Solo Accordion Music**

Performing musical pieces, belonging to modern music in a broad sense, is an inseparable part of a musical path of every “classically” educated accordionists. The reason is short history of the instrument and its dedicated literature, which originated not sooner than in the first part of 20<sup>th</sup> century. It has to be emphasised that the most important works were created in the second part of the century and the number of them has been still increasing. The most important instrument development has taken place due to them and they are the basis of the repertoire of the majority of modern performers.

Importantly, contemporary composers’ attitude towards to the accordion, the knowledge of the instrument and the way of composing have been significantly transformed since the accordion appeared for the first time in the current of classical music. This is connected with the constant evolution of the instrument itself, which, over the years, has changed, expanding its capabilities and adjusting to the growing expectations of following generations of composers. Although the model of the modern accordion, which is to be encountered in concert halls nowadays, was created about seventy years ago, its process of evolution and exploration of its expressive capabilities has been not completed. On the contrary, thanks to many modern composers’ attitude, enriched by valuable experience of their predecessors, its vast potential is still being developed. Unexploited or even unknown capabilities of the instrument, in terms of sound, colour, sonic effects, as well as composition language and techniques, are being explored all the time. Such dynamic development of the accordion and literature created for it has been the major motivational factor for me to investigate the phenomenon.

The article is the outcome of several years of my research regarding Polish solo literature which originated in recent years. The motivation of my research was my doctoral studies at Music Academy in Cracow. The knowledge I have gathered as well as my cooperation with composers have enable me to gain valuable material in the form of seven compositions for the accordion solo or accompanied by electronic media. They were recorded as a CD and DVD and they were also extensively described in my doctoral thesis.

The goal of my dissertation was to present and describe individual creative conceptions in Polish solo accordion music of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as well as to show its influence on the development of the instrument’s expressive capabilities. An important aspect was also the opportunity to present new tendencies and trends in Polish accordion literature.

The article is a short summary of part of my doctoral thesis. It presents and describes briefly the titled creative conceptions of Polish composers, showing new and fresh aspects of the accordion, mostly unknown.

#### **1. Krzysztof Olczak – Chanson for accordion and electronics**

Year of origin:	2008
Date and place of premiere:	Gdańsk, 15th December 2008
	Gdańska Sztuka Interpretacji Muzyki Akordeonowej
Performer:	Paweł Zagańczyk

The composition was written by an outstanding accordion music composer, Krzysztof Olczak. The composition proves that the perfect command of the instrument combined with vast experience of the composer as well as his openness to musical modern trends brings surprising results. The composition dazzles with the variety of color sound effect, obtained thanks to the combination of the accordion sound and the capabilities of the electronics. As the author says in the work description:

The composition mixes two genres: music for the solo instrument and the soundtrack, as well as electronic music performed live. The basic musical intention is the confrontation of the austerity and restraint of the old music and the vividness of the effects offered by electronics. Precisely this is the clash of the 16<sup>th</sup> century chanson style with the sound of the accordion and the capabilities of modern electronic. The intention of the composer is based on a few quotations and canons realized by the accordion interacting with the computer, which refers to polyphonic technique. The immediate inspiration was the 16<sup>th</sup> century chanson published around year 1530 by a Parisian publisher, Pierr Attaignant<sup>1</sup>.

Chanson for the accordion and electronic media is one of the first examples of Polish compositions for accordion solo which applies live electronic technique. The composer, using contemporary electronics for processing the sound of the accordion creates almost unlimited expressive possibilities of this instrument. A wide range of effects, such as: reverb, flanger, delays and choruses overlap the accordion sound. It transforms the accordion, blending it into the futuristic sounding tape. By clashing electronics and motives of the 16<sup>th</sup> century chanson the composer creates a fusion of the two distant music worlds, seemingly impossible to combined.

Example No. 1, Chanson for accordion and electronics, p. 9, systems 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>

One of the most interesting moments of the composition is applying contemporary electronics capabilities to present composing technique of the old époques. This is the canon, one of the oldest polyphonic measures, based on strict imitation. The composer, using live electronics, enables a three-voice canon. He makes it by putting a double delaying layer on to the accordion sound. Thanks to that the material performed by an instrumentalist gets repeated precisely by a quarter note and half note delay. To create the theme of the canon the composer uses a quotation taken from the 16<sup>th</sup> century chanson. The above mention extract is the only place in the whole composition where, apart from the electronics generated live out of the accordion sounds, there is no other soundtrack. This is live electronic at its best.

<sup>1</sup> Krzysztof Olczak, *Chanson for accordion and electronics*, score comment, Stanisław Moniuszko Academy of Music in Gdańsk 2013, p. 5.

Example No. 2, Chanson for accordion and electronics, p. 17, system 2<sup>nd</sup>

Chanson for the accordion and electronic media is characterized by strong connection and close dependence on the accordion sound and the tape. Almost all the time the instrumentalist interacts strictly with the soundtrack which, a.o., conducts a dialogue with him, indicates entries, influences articulation and tempo etc. Such constant interplay of the two parties gives the work chamber music features, wherein synchronizing and fitting of the two becomes the main performing issue. A composition planned in such a way develops considerably the performer's listening and time management abilities. The application of live electronics techniques becomes another challenge for the instrumentalist. The interference into accordion sound expands its expressive capabilities making the performer master a new way of playing, which enables to produce so far unknown sound effects, characteristic of different kinds of electronics sounds.

Krzysztof Olczak's work is a very attractive repertoire position, which, thanks to the 16th century tradition reference, introduces the listener into the colorful world of contemporary electronics. The composer plays with the listener in a way which is characteristic of postmodernism by confronting the two distant music worlds. This confuses the audience and makes them accept new rules of perceiving seemingly ill-fitting musical occurrences.

## 2. Wojciech Blecharz – Hypopnea

Year of origin:	2010
Date and place of premiere:	Breslau, 12th May 2010
	Musica Polonica Nova 2010
Performer:	Maciej Frąckiewicz

The composition created by Wojciech Blecharz is one of the most interesting examples of Polish accordion solo music. It owes its uniqueness to a particularly interesting conception, which refers to an unconventional way of generating the accordion sound. In one of the interviews the composer says:

In the middle of my research in San Diego I understood that my doctoral studies would be devoted to identity research. Following Lachenmann I stopped composing off the top of my head and I started creating being in touch with the instrument. It means that when I write for the bass flute, clarinet and cello I simply take them home and fiddle with them. I look for the sounds inside the body of the instrument. By searching the sounds which are natural for me, but not necessarily for a classically educated musician, I get the feeling that these sounds belong to me<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Ewa Szczecińska, *Wojtek Blecharz – interview* (online version), <http://www.glissando.pl/wywiady/wojtek-blecharz-wywiad/>, (access: 15.07.2017).

The quotation explains the origin of Hypopnea. Through experimenting with the instrument the composer found a new characteristic sound, which helped him create his individual language of expression. The inspiration for writing this piece turned out to be his own health problems. Blecharz suffered from breath dysfunction. His illness-related experiences encouraged him to re-think the breathing phenomenon. Translating his conclusions into musical language resulted in the perception of the accordion bellows as lungs, in this case disfunctioning, defected ones, which have to struggle for every breath. The composer started experimenting with the instrument looking for an effective way how to omit regular tuning of the accordion in order to imitate dysfunctional shortness of breath. The effect was obtained by specific "inappropriate" usage of the chin registers. By pushing and combining in the right proportions (40-60%) two registers the composer acquired a surprising sound effect, which resulted in something like chocking, gasping, wheezeing, panting and snorting of the accordion.

Picture No. 1. Registers setup according to Wojciech Blecharz



The procedure involves the slots of the reed box inside the accordion being half-open. In consequence the air flow for reeds gets limited, which disfigures the sound of the instrument. Operating this type of "out of tune" instrument generates additional performing problems. The stability of the sound gets disturbed, there appear uncontrollable noises and microtonal glissandi. The instrument starts to gasp, wheeze and snort, reacting in a totally uncontrolled way. Activating the reed becomes problematic, as well as the beginning of the sound appears not necessarily when the instrumentalist wants it to be. The same refers to the attempt of obtaining forte dynamics, which gets heavily limited. Blecharz, transforming the accordion into a defective, quasi-asthmatic organism, makes the performer abandon traditional ways and learn to accepted a new manner of playing. This becomes a record of fault and dysfunction.

The encounter with Wojciech Blerzarz's Hypopnea means for the instrumentalist encroaching on a new performing area, which imposes new rules, forcing the performer to change his traditional ways. The sheer preparation of the instrument for playing breeds problems. It turns out that combining two registers in order to obtain the intended shortness of breath is very individual for each instrument. It needs a lot of time to feel which position of the pressed registers will allow to obtain the most proper "out of tune" sound.

**Hypopnea**  
for accordion solo

Wojtek Blecharz  
(Wojtek Blecharz)  
2010

right hand acc

7 = 60

out of tune

simile

7 (ad lib.)

7

acc

a tempo

(both hands)

simile

7 (ad lib.)

7

out of tune

Example No. 3, Hypopnea, p. 1, systems 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>

Wojciech Blecharz creating *Hypopnea* attempted to omit regular accordion tuning. His conception contradicts the whole modern tradition of the instrument. The piece stands out not only due to an original conception and surprising, innovatory approach to the sound of the instrument but also due to a perfectly planned construction with unquestionable artistic merits.

### 3. Paweł Janas – Sonata Infinity

Year of origin: 2013  
 Date and place of premiere: Katowice, 24th October 2013  
 Studio Koncertowe Polskiego Radia w Katowicach  
 Performer: Paweł Janas

*Sonata Infinity* is an extraordinary example of revelatory and unseen usage of the contemporary concert accordion sound possibilities. The composer, as an acclaimed accordion master, by experimenting with the instrument, worked out a unique performing technique, which enabled to create an attractive and impressive solo composition. Paweł Janas's work is a cyclic composition, consisting of four parts. Each of them is titled by an individual composing conception. This enables the composer to present various innovative and surprising sound possibilities as well as expressive capabilities of the accordion.

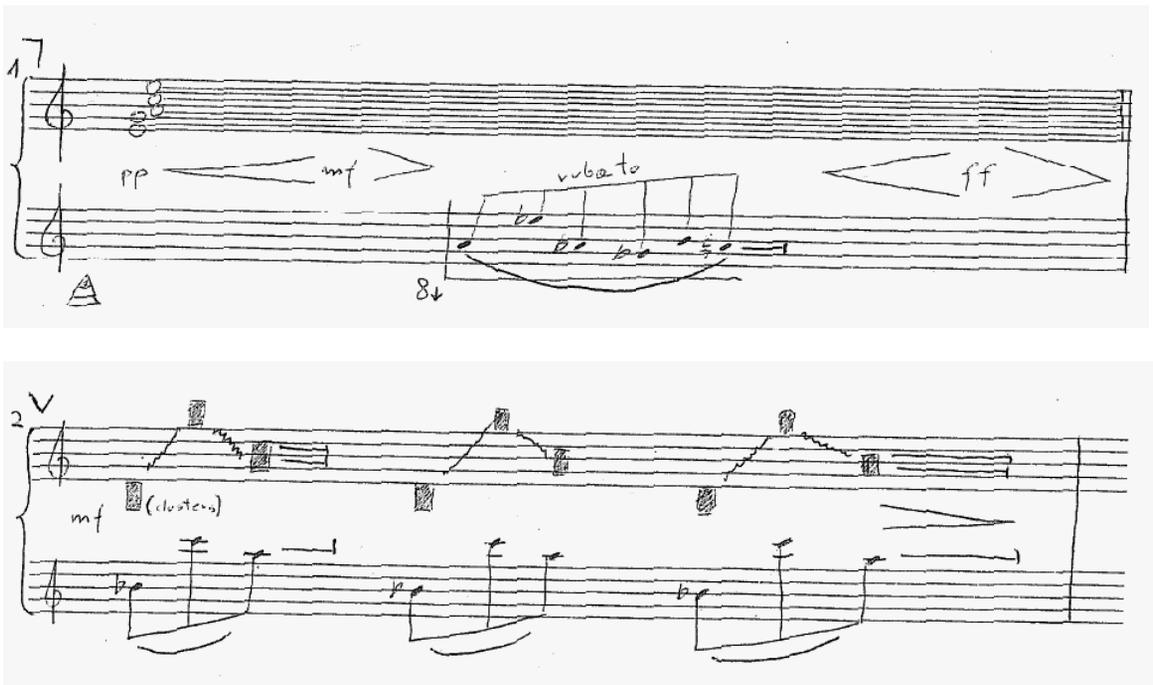
The first part *Multifonic*, as the title suggests, embarks on the phenomenon of the multifonic. The effect, associated mostly with wooden wind instruments, transferred on to the accordion, needs a different way of performing. However, the very idea of splitting an individual sound into its components is preserved. In order to gain the required sound phenomenon it is necessary to prepare the instrument before the performance. It involves specific repositioning of the register bolts, which open and close the air flow to particular reeds. The task of the performer is pushing the outstanding bolt almost till the end, in such a way that it gets almost leveled with the remaining ones with one millimeter difference. The process is presented below.

Picture No. 2. Process of instrument preparation for the performance of first part of Paweł Janas's Sonata Infinity



The procedure makes the air bolt almost entirely closed, limiting the air flow. Consequently, the sound of the right hand becomes significantly modified. Some of the voices do not sound at all, the others get out of tune and in the case of another ones there come quasi-sounds and multi-sounds. The pitch is hard to define and the sound effects change their shape according to the pressure of the bellow being opened or closed. Another important aspect is the accidentality of the multiphonics, which brings for the same procedure a different final sound effect. Moreover, each instrument reacts differently to the same preparation.

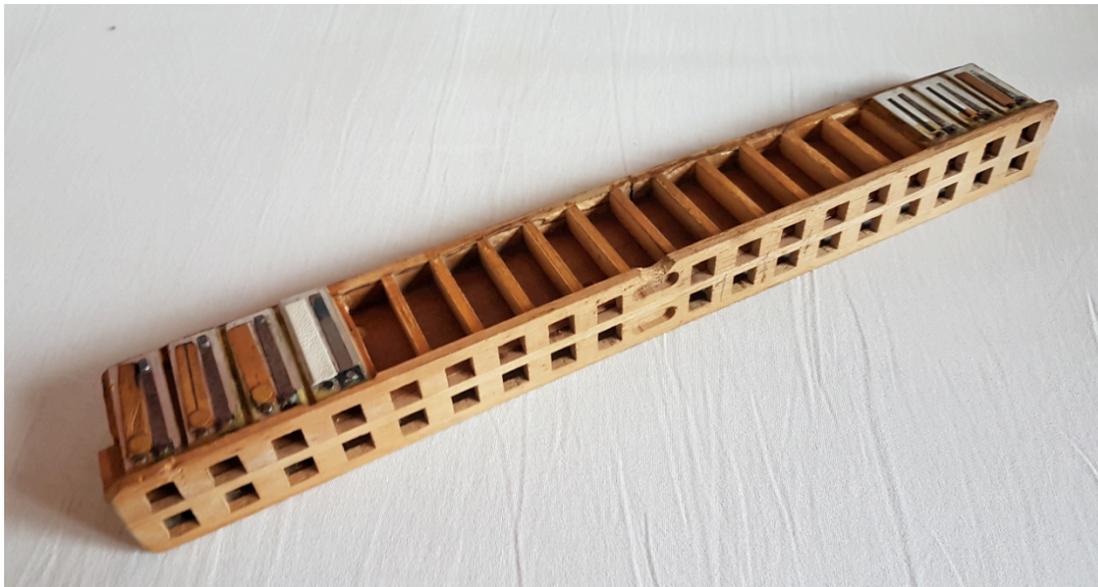
To realize the composer's conception in the right way it is necessary to focus on the effect of the multiphonics, which, in this case, takes over the note record. Thanks to this the part acquires a characteristic color, expanding the expressive capabilities of the instrument. The work gets filled with a mysterious and intriguing climate, which renders the sound aura of electronic music.



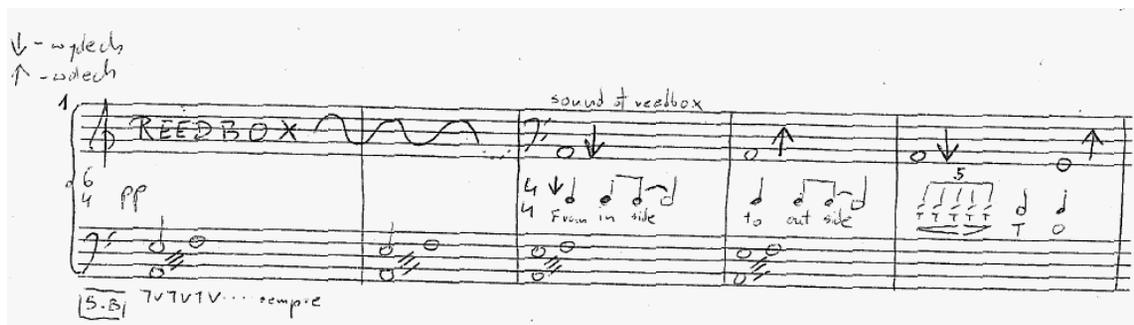
Example No. 4, Sonata Infinity, part I - Multiphonics, p. 1, systems 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>

In the second part, tilted Inside-Outside, the composer uses the reed box in a unique way, which means, it is taken out of the instrument. The performer realizes the sound material similarly to a mouth organ. Noticeably, apart from the music score, there is also a spoken text written above the stave.

Picture No. 3. Reed box



The specific character of the instrument part used in this way generates unusual performing problems, as the correct performance of so called "reed box part" involves mastering techniques unknown for the most accordionists. They are related to breathing and dedicated to only some of the wind instrument. Additionally, implementing the reed box makes the performer realizing at the same time two separated part and operating two instruments, which may be complicated.



Example No. 5, Sonata Infinity, part II - Inside – Outside, p. 2, system 1<sup>st</sup>

Inside – Outside part is particularly emotionally charged due to the expressive power of the human voice combined with the sound of the accordion. The composer's innovative idea expands considerably the instrument sound capabilities by revealing a completely new side of it.

Part three, Stereophonic, exposes another characteristic property of the instrument. The title clearly says that the composer concentrates on the stereophonic phenomenon, which is obtainable on the accordion thanks to two independent manuals of the same registers.

The fourth part, Finale, as the author wrote in the work commentary, is a real accordion virtuosity show. This statement perfectly describes the character and function of the last part, which completes the four-part cycle in an spectacular way.

#### 4. Artur Zagajewski – TR13 for accordion and electronics

Year of origin:	ver. 2014
Date and place of premiere:	Łódź, 4th December 2014
	Studio Komputerowe Muzyki Eelektronicznej
Performer:	Eneas Kubit

Artur Zagajewski's composition is for sure the most enigmatic of all the ones described in this article. It results, first and foremost, from the application of a very limited and homogeneous sound material, both in the tape and the accordion part. The soundtrack, which accompanies the performer, is composed of one long sound, didgeridoo, which was recorded and then slightly modified in order to isolate sound components. The accordion part is made of long interwoven sounds constituting slow motives. The sound material is written in a traditional way on the staff. However, instead of the music metre the composer places timing information at the beginning of each tact. Because of the overall homogeneous character of the sound, the time given is approximate, as well as individual tact entries are realized in an intuitive way. The two parts combined in this way create slow narration, which can induce in the listener a state of trans.

The composer makes use of a characteristic property of the accordion being the only harmonic instrument which enables to perform very long sounds or multiphonics that can be modulated while playing. This particular feature of the accordion makes it perfectly fit the trans character of the composition as well as the spectral diversions, which appear in the recorded part of didgeridoo. The author wrote, giving some tips for performers:

The accordion part should be performed in a restrained, minimalistic and static way. It should not be treated as a solo part. It should melt into the tape part. The whole of it is supposed to sound in a homogeneous way. At unisono places (C-sharp sound in the left and right hand) detuning and tuning can be applied gradually. Each sound should be started softly (fade in) and end in a similar way (fade out)<sup>1</sup>.

The above description shows a considerably limited function of the accordion, which, in this case, does not have solo ambitions and does not aspire to a leading role. On the contrary, it becomes a consistent, but not distinctive, homogeneous completion of the electronic sound layer.

Example No. 6, TR13 for accordion and electronics, p. 1, system 1<sup>st</sup>

Artur Zagajewski's composition is a particular example of exploring unconventional sound possibilities of the accordion. The work, despite the heavily limited sound material, is a real performing challenge for the instrumentalist. It includes: performing pitch bending in piano dynamic, generating legato sound and motives in quiet dynamics on the border of the reeds reaction and realizing the accordion part on a very wide bellow. The limitation of composing means to the necessary minimum as well as placing the accordion part in such a static and homogeneous context reveal a new, interesting and mysterious side of the instrument. It gets transferred into a trans and permanent sound medium, which brings associations more with an electronic sound generator than an acoustic instrument.

<sup>1</sup> Form private correspondence between the author of the article and the composer Artur Zagajewski, 29.05.2016.

5. Maciej Zimka – Between Paths

Year of origin: 2015  
 Date and place of premiere: Cracow, 2th October 2015  
 Concert of the Premieres of Accordion Works  
 Performer: Wiesław Ochwat

The best description of the creative conception by Maciej Zimka is the title of the piece: Between Paths. It refers to the idea of the artist who makes use of the two melodic manuals of the accordion, differing slightly in volume and color, to create two independent soundtracks. On the basis of his knowledge and experience the composer generates sound structures which expand the existing range of the instrument expressive capabilities. To reach this goal there come two key factors: the possibility of simultaneously generating sounds of the same registers in two different manuals, the usage of extreme instrument registers as well as the possibility of unlimited modulation of the sound while it still lasts.

An interesting sound effect has been applied in the very composition introduction. The composer succeeds in obtaining a delay effect in an acoustic instrument. It happens due to the application of the left hand part, which every time repeats the same sound arrangement as the right, but with a little delay.

The image shows a musical score for the piece 'Between Paths' by Maciej Zimka. It consists of two systems of music for the accordion. The first system starts with a tempo marking of 360-400 and a dynamic marking of *fp* (fortissimo). The tempo is marked as *molto libero*. The score includes a 'quasi delay' effect where the left hand part repeats the right hand part with a slight delay. The second system starts with a measure number of 5 and continues the melodic development. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like *B.B.* (Basso Continuo).

Example No. 7, Between Paths, p. 1, systems 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>

After an interesting introduction the material develops on the basis of the motives presented earlier. The narration starts as a one voice part, which is divided into the right and the left hand manuals. They take over the oncoming sounds and process them continuing the narration at the same time. After a while it can be observed that the titled tracks start to overlap and interfere trying to get detached from the common part. The moment comes when both hand parts get completely separated and each one realizes an individual, however equally important, sound material. The difference in color and dynamic of the manuals makes the flowing sound layer get blurred. The interwoven and complementary motives of both hands start to slope. It seems that the narration is conducted by at least two independent sound sources, which are situated at different places. This sound phenomenon presents the unique stereophonic accordion sound capability in a new and fresh way.

Example No. 8, Between Paths, p. 2, systems 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>

The juxtaposition of the two independent soundtracks becomes the idea how to realize the “slow part”. In the foreground there come the sonic properties of the instrument, which emits piercingly high pitched tones as well as low rumbling pitch bending tones. This brings association with electronic music.

Example No. 9, Between Paths, p. 8, systems 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>

The piece ends up with spectacular toccata, which refers to the toccatas by the Danish composer, Ole Schmidt. The right hand in the foreground realizes the virtuoso part, composed of complicated semiquaver motives. Built mostly of wide intervals, they lack any performing scheme and flow swiftly all over keyboards. Mastering them is a real technical challenge even for advanced instrumentalists.

Between Paths by Maciej Zimka is a coherent composition of unquestionable artistic merits. The work is written in a contemporary language characteristic of the composer. It explores the sound capabilities of the instrument and reveals its electronic side. The creative usage of the two melodic manuals and their technical imperfection bring an unexpected result. The composition surprises and reveals a new outlook on both melody and rhythm matters.

## 6. Przemysław Scheller – Winter for accordion and electronics

Year of origin:	2016
Date and place of premiere:	Gorlice, 24th April 2017 Contemporary Music Concert during XVII Gorlickie Konfrontacje Akordeonowe
Performer:	Wiesław Ochwat

This is a programmatic work whose title clearly indicates its source of inspiration. The composer says:

While writing this part I had before my eyes the whiteness of the snow sparkling in the sun, its apparent homogeneity, constancy and stillness. It is enough to alter the angle of perception for the constellation of flashes and light reflexes to change just like in a kaleidoscope. What kind of life fills the space when the surface of the frozen snow is touched by a gust of wind! The multi-colour whiteness, dancing sparkles of snow and life flourishing in apparent stagnation have become my inspiration<sup>1</sup>.

The composer creates the aura of the frosty season in a very picturesque way. To do so he uses a clash of two media – the accordion and the electronics. The author applies live electronic techniques due to which the electronic layer of the composition is created in a real time of the performance by processing live the sound generated by the instrument. This combination renders sound effects impossible to be achieved by traditional, acoustic expressive means. Thanks to the application of live electronics in the interaction between the accordion and the computer the role of the instrumentalists becomes dominant and the electronics is subjected to the performer. The accordionists can focus on realizing the interpretation freely.

In the context of the presented composition it is worth discussing the phenomenon of acoustic illusion. The composer uses it to consciously play with the perception of the audience. He defines the phenomenon of acoustic illusion in the following way:

Every time our perception is tried and it turns out that the perceived picture of reality does not comply with facts we experience discomfort. We get an irrefutable proof that our empiric and rational recognition may differ in their conclusions. Acoustic illusions are based on this cognitive dissonance<sup>2</sup>.

In his composition Przemysław Scheller uses two kinds of acoustic illusion. The first one is Melody of Silences.

When a static multi-sound is presented and its components gets interrupted, our perception starts to group these pauses. When composed in the right way they create a melody. This is actually the negative of the melody. The end of the pause and not its beginning is perceived as the component of the melody, which makes it not possible to control the length of these pseudo-sounds. (...) It is necessary for the illusion to perform and maintain the multi-sound. Next the individual sounds have to be broken in such a way that the pauses compose the desired melody line. There are few instruments whose capabilities enable the task. For sure this is the organs and the accordion<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Form private correspondence between the author of the article and the composer Przemysław Scheller, 20.04.2017 r.

<sup>2</sup> Przemysław Scheller, *Artystyczne wykorzystanie iluzji dźwiękowych*, typescript, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Ibidem, p. 5-6

Example No. 10, Winter for accordion and electronics, p. 4, systems 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>

Next illusion is based on the tendency of our perception to group similar notes in terms of frequency, even if they are in conflict because of their special position.

It assumes at least one melodic line and at least two independent sound sources. Despite the special conflict the melody is received and the sounds are grouped in to a whole (...) Additional interesting effect is the ambiguity of the direction from which the melody comes. Although the sounds are generated interchangeably from two distant sources, the listener interprets the source as a single one<sup>1</sup>.

Example No. 11, Winter for accordion and electronics, p. 5, systems 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>

Winter presents perfectly the great potential of the combination of an acoustic instrument and electronics. With help of the sound of the accordion processed live the composer creates his winter conception in a colorful and vivid way. Having almost unlimited sound possibilities he puts forward his ideas and interesting solutions, not resigning at the same time from exploring the instrument itself and its musical expression. The characteristic features of the accordion construction turns out to be unquestionable merits enabling a rare kind of acoustic illusion, which the composer uses to play with the perception with the audience.

<sup>1</sup> Ibidem, p. 7

**7. Piotr Peszat – Jenny’s soul. Or Dirk’s? #2 for quarter tone accordion, audio playback and video**

Year of origin: 2017  
 Date and place of premiere: Kraków, 3rd October 2017  
 Concert of the Premieres of Accordion Works  
 Performer: Wiesław Ochwat

Piotr Peszat’s composition Jenny’s soul. Or Dirk’s? #2 for the quarter tone accordion, audio playback and video stands out even before listening to it and getting acquainted with the content. This is mostly due to the media contributing to the effect of the work. Although each of them may not be a novelty in music, their combination is rare and intriguing, especially taking into consideration the existing Polish accordion literature.

The first interesting aspect worth developing is the sheer conception of the quarter tone accordion. The intention of the experiment was not creating the instrument with only a quarter tone scale but exchanging only three out of six reed boxes in the right hand manual, which replaces two out of four choruses by quarter tone scale. Thanks to this the performer has the possibility of using the traditional scale (half tone), the quarter tone one or combining them both in the right hand manual. This allows to use the traditional instrument possibilities as well as enriching them with new ones due to a non-standard octave division.

Table No. 1. Tones system on a halftone keyboard and quarter tone keyboard

	A	A <sup>+</sup>	c	c <sup>+</sup>	d <sup>#</sup>	e <sup>+</sup>	f <sup>#</sup>	g <sup>+</sup>	a	a <sup>+</sup>	c <sup>1</sup>	c <sup>1+</sup>	d <sup>#1</sup>	e <sup>1+</sup>	f <sup>#1</sup>	g <sup>1+</sup>	a <sup>1</sup>	a <sup>1+</sup>	c <sup>2</sup>	c <sup>2+</sup>	d <sup>#2</sup>	d <sup>#2</sup>
	F <sup>#</sup>	A	c	d <sup>#</sup>	f <sup>#</sup>	a	c <sup>1</sup>	d <sup>#1</sup>	a <sup>1</sup>	a <sup>1</sup>	c <sup>2</sup>	d <sup>#2</sup>	f <sup>#2</sup>	a <sup>2</sup>	c <sup>3</sup>	d <sup>#3</sup>	f <sup>#3</sup>	a <sup>3</sup>	c <sup>4</sup>	d <sup>#4</sup>	f <sup>#4</sup>	d <sup>#4</sup>
G <sup>#</sup>	A <sup>+</sup>	H	c <sup>+</sup>	d	d <sup>+</sup>	f	f <sup>+</sup>	g <sup>+</sup>	a <sup>+</sup>	h	c <sup>1+</sup>	d <sup>1</sup>	d <sup>1+</sup>	f <sup>1</sup>	f <sup>1+</sup>	g <sup>1</sup>	a <sup>1+</sup>	h <sup>1</sup>	c <sup>2+</sup>	d <sup>2</sup>	d <sup>2+</sup>	d <sup>2+</sup>
E	G	A <sup>#</sup>	c <sup>#</sup>	e	g	a <sup>#</sup>	c <sup>#1</sup>	e <sup>1</sup>	g <sup>1</sup>	a <sup>#1</sup>	c <sup>#2</sup>	e <sup>2</sup>	g <sup>2</sup>	a <sup>#2</sup>	c <sup>#3</sup>	e <sup>3</sup>	g <sup>3</sup>	a <sup>#3</sup>	c <sup>#4</sup>	e <sup>4</sup>	g <sup>4</sup>	g <sup>4</sup>
G <sup>+</sup>	A <sup>#</sup>	H <sup>+</sup>	c <sup>#</sup>	d <sup>+</sup>	e	f <sup>+</sup>	g	g <sup>+</sup>	a <sup>#</sup>	h <sup>+</sup>	c <sup>#1</sup>	d <sup>1+</sup>	e <sup>1</sup>	f <sup>1+</sup>	g <sup>1</sup>	g <sup>1+</sup>	a <sup>#1</sup>	h <sup>1+</sup>	c <sup>#2</sup>	d <sup>2+</sup>		
F	G <sup>#</sup>	H	d	f	g <sup>#</sup>	h	d <sup>1</sup>	f <sup>1</sup>	g <sup>#1</sup>	h <sup>1</sup>	d <sup>2</sup>	f <sup>2</sup>	g <sup>#2</sup>	h <sup>2</sup>	d <sup>3</sup>	f <sup>3</sup>	g <sup>#3</sup>	h <sup>3</sup>	d <sup>4</sup>	f <sup>4</sup>		

Legend:

+ – raising the pitch by a quarter tone

NOTE ABOVE in the same cell: tones system on a quarter tone keyboard

NOTE BELOW in the same cell: tones system on a halftone keyboard

Before explaining the conception of the piece it is worth outlining the areas of interests of the composer. It will enable better understanding of Piotr Peszat’s creative conception, which goes beyond the traditional image of a music work. To realize his creative conception the composer often uses the vast possibilities offered by modern digital media as well as the ubiquitous Internet. This is the outcome of the composers interests, who, in his works, have been developing the conception of Conscious Music. The composer in his doctoral thesis explains the phenomenon:

Conscious Music is a notion corresponding to the term Conscious Hip-Hop, a kind of Hip-Hop concentrating on social issues. In case of conscious music the titled consciousness has two aspects: the composer’s one and the content one. When talking about the composer’s consciousness the author means its specific dimension and it does not anyhow denies the artist’s possibility of treating the creative process freely. On the content ground the consciousness is the development of the notion of the composer’s consciousness. The aim of conscious music is not looking for novelty in terms of the material but the novelty expressed by the content or attitude, which means the message. The message is an outcome of critical analysis of a certain aspect of reality and its aim is to generate in the listener reflections on the work. Opposite to the opinion that the archaic perception of avant-garde gives the composer unlimited liberty of artistic choices, the modern composer needs consciousness, self-consciousness as well as creativity<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Piotr Peszat, *Realizacja koncepcji Conscious Music na przykładzie cyklu Erwachsenen-Szene*, Doctoral thesis supervised by professor Marek Chołoniewski, The Academy of Music In Cracow.

The extensive and extraordinary music media which the composer applied in Jenny's Soul. Or Dirk's?#2 makes it entirely inter-medial work, tapping into non musical ways of conveying the message. To perceive the composers intention in the right way it is not enough to listen to the work carefully. It has to be watched, recognized, considered and finally understood.

Thanks to the video layer the composer proposes a new and expanded role of the performer who, apart from realizing the instrumental part, becomes an actor as an co-creator of the audiovisual performance. The function of the instrumentalist takes on new meaning.

Picture No. 4. Jenny's Soul. Or Dirk's?#2, robot-like fragment



In his composition Peszat starts from an extract from a film found on YouTube, in which the British comedian Sascha Baron Cohen, known as the comedy character Ali G, interviews Donald Trump. The comedian asks Trump a very important question: "What is the most popular thing in the world?"

Trump answers: "Music!"

Unfortunately, according to Ali G, music is not the most popular thing in the world. And it is...?

The answer is not explicate, at least, is not included in the composition. However, it can be deduced from the narration, which consists of the soloist part, audio playback as well as video. The composer suggests changing the meaning of the word "popular" in to "the most important". Now the question sounds: "What is the most important thing in the world?" – And this is what the composition is about.

- What is the most popular thing in the world?
- Music.
- No.
- Tell me [...]"

Picture No. 5. Jenny's Soul. Or Dirk's?#2



Piotr Peszat's *Jenny's Soul. Or Dirk's? #2* is unquestionably one of the most original concepts in the modern accordion literature. It shows in a very interesting way the possibilities offered by the combination of the accordion and modern digital media. The whole becomes even more exceptional and outstanding due to the usage of the accordion with a quarter tone scale, which opens undiscovered sound and expressive capabilities of the instrument. Proposing new kind of stage performance involving the conception of the work physicality Peszat brings about a new kind of music expression, which is a mix of the instrument expressive capabilities, an actor's play as well as the audio and video layers accompanying the performer. In this context the instrument gains a new and unrepeatably expressive quality, which makes it even more versatile and seemingly unlimited.

Both, this article and the doctoral thesis were created hoping to promote among contemporary artists and composers valuable compositions for accordion solo. These compositions, apart from presenting unquestionable artistic merits, perform as well an important function in the process of the instrument and the discipline future development. The article aims to present the above mentioned compositions and thanks to them highlights the exceptional instrument features, which show its vast and unexploited potential.

The recordings of the compositions are available by email: [wieslaw.ochwat@gmail.com](mailto:wieslaw.ochwat@gmail.com)



**Wiesław Ochwat (b. 1990, Poland), accordionist, educator**

His musical education started at the age of 10 in the accordion class of Wiesław Kusion. He continued education till graduation in 2014 at Academy of Music in Cracow with the highest honors in the class of Prof. Janusz Pater. After that accomplished PhD studies and defended his doctoral thesis in 2018, supervised by Prof. Paweł Paluch. Between 2014 and 2016 participated in The Italian Accordion Academy – prestigious studies project dedicated to advanced classical accordion directed by Claudio Jacomucci and Kathleen Delaney.

Wiesław Ochwat is a laureate of over twenty prestigious international accordion competitions in Poland, Slovakia, Italy a.o.: Castelfidardo International Accordion Prize, International

Accordion Competition Poprad, Andrzej Krzanowski Accordion Competition, International Accordion Music Festival in Przemyśl, etc. Furthermore, attended to master courses conducted by: Mika Väyrynen, Claudio Jacomucci, Teodoro Anzellotti, Alexander Dimitriev, Yuri Shishkin, Bogdan Dowlasz.

The accordionist performs contemporary, classical and entertaining music (including jazz, ethno, tango, folk music). However contemporary music is core specialty in his career. He has experience in premiere performing of many compositions written for accordion solo or various chamber ensembles. His repertoire contained many works of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century composers.

Wiesław Ochwat cooperated with many musicians creating with them ensembles such as: Jascha Lieberman Trio with Jascha Lieberman and Roman Ślęzyk, Ochwat&Zimka Duo with Maciej Zimka, Trio Tanguedia with Magda Lechowska and Stanisław Słowiński, AccoCreationStage with Paweł Kusion and Łukasz Cebula and also "Glyptos Ensemble"-performing contemporary music. Experienced on international stage by performing in many countries a.o., Canada, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Ukraine,

In addition to instrumental activities, musician is actively involved in organizing cultural events as: Cracow Accordion Festival and World Premieres Concerts of Accordion Compositions in Cracow.

The musical experience of this young instrumentalist has been already appreciated in various schools and academic centers in his native country. Conducting numerous instrumental workshops for students and lectures at scientific and artistic conferences in many academic centers in Poland by Wiesław Ochwat proves his advance status as an accordionist and educator.

**Cinzia Luisato**, Italy  
MA

### A Possible Counterpoint

In recent times, many branches of research and study, are paying close attention to the contemporary repertoire and new accordion productions, compositions that can keep up with the progress of the instrument itself: from the materials, to the technical characteristics and to its phonic potentiality; the process is in itself absolutely logical, in fact, if we were stranded to study only the repertoire after World War II it would mean a large asphyxiated closure of the accordion world. What is surprising is the failure to convey of as much energies to study the large slice of Medieval and Renaissance music production with the accordion. In spite of the centuries of distance, what has come from those times, proves to be very close to us, more than is believed, and its study and its deepening, in the opinion of the writer, is essential for the accordionist.

The first objection that could be raised is that the first polyphonic repertoire, from the Gregorian Chant, is a vocal and non-instrumental product. Of course it is so, but first of all it should not be forgotten that in order to play, it is necessary to be able to sing; for this reason, juggling on *Graduale Triplex* does not constitute a harmful exercise. There is a big discrepancy between pedagogical publications, which insist on the necessity and importance in the first musical training, especially at an early age, to sing any kind of repertoire<sup>1</sup> and the reality of the academic musical study path in which voice is not dedicated much time or if it is considered essential, it is always a repertoire restricted to the needs of the study. How fundamental it is for an accordionist to approach the ancient repertoire<sup>2</sup>, practising singing and making the instrument sing, is revealed by the accordion itself. One of its characteristics that you are not beware so much or that is probably taken for granted, allows you to grasp the particular voice-instrument connection: differently from most western instruments (excluded voice) that are anthropomorphic sound artefacts, accordion is an organicistic instrument; the accordionist finds himself playing an instrument that constitutes itself a vocal apparatus to be sung. In fact, as the history of music teaches, many of the instruments, already present in the most remote antiquity, still in use today, were born as a re-enactment of human forms, for example the stringed instruments whose resonance box recalled somehow the maternal womb, and with each of these the performer has a relationship, that may be called, essential: the winds instruments need the air column to be created, the stringed instruments need an arc that is something external to them, the percussion need to be beaten and so on. The accordion<sup>3</sup>, on the other hand, recalls the human being in its operation. The respiratory system is represented by the bellows, through which passes the column of air that makes the reeds vibrate, which resemble, almost more than the strings of an arched instrument, the vocal cords in tension. Similarly, as in the living beings the respiratory and phonatory apparatus are disjointed, even in the accordion it is possible to pass the air without the reeds vibrating: to which accordionist has never happened to have the instrument on the thigh and notice that the bellow opens little by little with the weight of the left chest, without pressing any button?

Even the performers who take into more account the Baroque keyboard literature, Bach and the next generation of musicians, should not snub the repertoire of previous centuries, because it is necessary to keep in mind that all the instrumental forms were born from the vocal forms and for this reason, in the period in which the music for instruments alone was conquering its independence, to understand what

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<sup>1</sup> E. g. *Didattica della musica e percezione musicale*, ed. J. Tafuri, Bologna, Zanichelli, 1988.

<sup>2</sup> This adjective includes musical literature of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

<sup>3</sup> Nowadays, with this name, we mean a modern instrument with precise characteristics, but the idea of a portable organ, as it is known above all from iconographic sources, dates back to the Middle Ages and not to the Modern Age. In this article we talk about accordion but, in reality, almost all the instruments belonging to the harmonic family can be said to be organicistic (Cf. [https://www.academia.edu/15991305/Il\\_Mantice\\_Armonico\\_sguardo\\_alla\\_terminologia\\_generale\\_della\\_fisarmonica](https://www.academia.edu/15991305/Il_Mantice_Armonico_sguardo_alla_terminologia_generale_della_fisarmonica), last visit carried out on 03/23/2018).

staff would perform a certain piece, the expression "(Music)<sup>1</sup> da cantar" or "(Music)<sup>2</sup> da sonar" was coined.

About the usefulness of devoting oneself to the study of the first polyphonic practices and pre-Baroque literature, at least in a period of time sufficient to acquire the fundamentals, there are other motivations. It is known that, among the group of allographic arts, music takes on a particular importance for its very essence, that of being the art of sounds, the art of the invisible that arrives at the ear unlike, for example, the painting that is concretized in our eyes. The sound, as a main element, however, does not have to completely eclipse the aspect that turns out to be a fundamental work: the score, that is the realization on a support of the composer's idea. Just think of a comparison between some contemporary<sup>3</sup> scores of the last century with a production of the XVII century: sometimes the same musical ideas are expressed with different graphic signs from epoch to epoch and comparing them becomes very interesting. For this reason, it is important to consider all the variables that make up the complex system that goes under the name of Music, not only the aspect referred to the heights or to the sound in a generic way. In particular, the deepening of ancient music can not be separated from the graphic aspect. Everything related to the polyphony before the Baroque must be studied on the original score or, better, on the copies of the original that came to us, as it is usually to do when one deals with historical materials. Ignoring the original writing is like to eradicate the artistic product from its context, something that is completely unnatural and meaningless. It should be noted that graphically there is an abysmal distance from modern notation but this helps to stop in order to think note by note (especially after having identified both in name and height) the movement of polyphony lines; secondly, doing this kind of study helps the accordionist to immerse himself in the context in which the work was conceived and to master the style of the era, something that writing is able to help doing, providing a kind of direct contact. Since many tricks on the interpretation were not wrote in the score, even if probably the musician performs flowerings and dynamics automatically, in the same way only with an intense exercise on the original source it is possible to approach the comprehension of the ancient mechanisms. J. Blacking<sup>4</sup>, regarding human musicality, believes that the music is articulated in two layers, one in depth and one on the surface, the latter "costituito invece dalle concrete forme udibili assunte dalla musica, che sono al contrario peculiari di ciascun contesto culturale". The pre-polyphonic and ancient polyphonic repertoire is part of our cultural context, it is a western peculiarity that is worth knowing; on the other hand, even today in literature Dante is read in the original version and only afterwards paraphrase helps everybody to understand, it would be appropriate to operate in the same way also in music.

Last, but not least, dedicate yourself to the study of ancient music with the accordion is an excellent gym that should not be underestimated for one's own creativity. Having to do with scores that are mostly bare of indications represents a sort of invite for the musician to perform himself a search, on his own instrument, that allows him to make his interpretation appealing; hence the study to get a sound appropriated to the piece and to focus attention on the detail. In short, it is an extraordinary material to implement the three behaviours outlined by François Delalande<sup>5</sup> and it does not constitute only a good exercise. Moreover, the pieces of this repertoire can be performed in concert, in spite of those who talk about music that can not be spent, and open the way to the next musical production: how many quotes are found in the music of Buxtehude, Bach or later authors? Luigi Nono in his *Écrits*, published in 2007, cites exactly the terms "Musica da sonar" and "Musica da cantar" as a source of inspiration for the musical idea that the production of those centuries involves, that is a sound sought that enhances the details of what has been written in the score, whether or not it is, and can bring out the contrapuntal aspect of the voices. There is a direct link between ancient music and "contemporary" music, not only true for the author mentioned but extensible to the whole repertoire of the Twentieth century and beyond.

<sup>1</sup> The parenthesis is obligatory because usually, instead of using the term 'music', reference was made to the specific piece that was intended to be performed.

<sup>2</sup> The parenthesis is obligatory because usually, instead of using the term 'music', reference was made to the specific piece that was intended to be performed.

<sup>3</sup> The adjective 'contemporary' used in this article refers, even though improperly, to music composed from the Twentieth century to the present day.

<sup>4</sup> F. Delalande, *La Musique est un jeu d'enfant*, Parigi, Buchet Chastel, 1984 (translation into italian [ed. G. Curti] *La musica è un gioco da bambini*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 2001), pag. 12.

<sup>5</sup> F. Delalande, *La Musique est un jeu d'enfant*, Parigi, Buchet Chastel, 1984 (translation into italian [ed. G. Curti] *La musica è un gioco da bambini*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 2001).

Rediscovering and re-evaluating music literature of centuries ago offers great advantages because in addition to the effect of timbres and blooms, allows you to put into practice a real exercise of free execution and improvisation, anticipating the times of jazz. Very often today's scores are rich in details, agogic indications, pulsations of reference, sometimes the fingerings are also marked; the performance must be very precise and the space left for personal interpretation is almost marginal. On the other hand, being tête-à-tête with a composition without any clarification makes the game more interesting because it is necessary to characterize what is read in total freedom, extrapolating as much as possible from the notes provided by the author, depending on the executive choices that you intend to accomplish. All this, as outlined above, is very close to contemporary music that calls the exploration of phonic possibilities, going beyond musical notes and grammar, expressing the nature of performers through sound with the name of "extended techniques".

Therefore, the perspectives of the accordion may be renewed not simply in the chronology of the productions but also in a qualitative re-evaluation of what already exists.



Graduated in Accordion from the Conservatory "A. Steffani" of Castelfranco Veneto under the guidance of Ivano Paterno and graduated in Archeology at the University of Padua, **Cinzia Luisato** has worked steadily as an accordionist with the CorOrchestral A.I.S.M. (first Italian choir of the Italian Multiple Sclerosis Association). She has recorded "Anoci V" in collaboration with Simone Faliva; "1518 Balocchi", a work in homage to the deads of the First World War in which Olga Scalone also worked, a piece of which was broadcast on Radio Rai3 and she played on the album "Nova Compagnia del Careteo" published by EMI.

She performed together with the orchestra "La Rejoussan", conducted by Elisabetta Maschio, in Rockquiem and with "the Orchestra della Speranza ONLUS" conducted by Luis Lanzarini.

Other events of note concern the contests supported, the "Bruno Serri" in Serramazzoni (MO), the "Giovani Talenti" in Pianello Val Tidone (PC), the selection at the Call for Papers announced by the Nuovo C.D.M.I. and the numerous workshops in which he participated, including: "Constructive Technique, Maintenance and Accordion Tuning" held by R. Spadari, "New paths of ensemble and soloist literature for accordion and recorder" by I. Battiston, D. Bellugi, "Concert Accordion, from self-training to teaching" by P. Angeloni and "Improvvisazione" by S. Zanchini.

**Fábio Palma**, Portugal

MA

### **Accordion playing and drama: the development of a new artistic approach**

As we all know, the accordion has been earning a lot of respect in the music panorama, as an instrument of great potential, capable of being inserted in virtually all musical genres. Of course, its emergence and subsequent development was - and continues - associated with very deep social contexts. Today, we see the instrument associated not only with folk music but also with musical genres as distinct and complex as jazz and contemporary music. The intrinsic combination of all these social contexts and musical genres has made the instrument evolve a lot in terms of mechanics, to correspond to the diverse refinements of creators and listeners. Following all this evolution and some other interesting experiences I had, I hereby propose a different approach to our instrument, relating it also to the other performing and non-performing arts through dramatic expression. I propose the creation of a performative bridge between the accordion, the interpreter, the concept to develop, the space it inserts in and, possibly, the public.

Like many music students who ended becoming professional – in teaching and/or performing - I too have explored the instrument technically and artistically as much as I could for years, in my case, following after conservatory, bachelor and master degree. Alongside this development, I also explored a bit of other artistic areas. Literature (poetry, novels) and theatre/cinema have always fascinated me a lot. Before, I have always enjoyed these areas as independent arts, merely. It was since 2014 that I began to think how interesting it would be to relate them, to unify them in some way. Obviously, this isn't a novelty at all. The idea reminds us to the nineteenth century and the German romanticism of Wagner and the Gesamtkunstwerk – total work of art -, a movement that combined music, theatre, singing, dance and fine arts in one artistic/dramatic moment. Therefore, and after a brief retrospective of the evolution of our instrument, I noticed that there are many possible artistic ramifications to create. The fact of being a portable instrument, of having different registers which allow it to create varied sound environments and of being a totally harmonic instrument, easily allows it to be inserted in other artistic scenes. That same year I had the opportunity to attend the Accademia Fisarmonicistica, oriented by accordionist Claudio Jacomucci and dancer Kathleen Delaney, where I took the first steps in this new way of thinking the accordion and music. Below, I highlight some of the most significant experiences following this approach.

#### Osservazioni del vento, dell'aria, della terra e della volta celeste

Translated into "Observations of the wind of the air of the earth and of the heavenly vault", this performance took place in the Church of Santa Maria Maddalena (Pesaro, Italy), in a circular space, and was accomplished by three accordionists and a contemporary dancer. Claudio Jacomucci composed a piece for the event – Vortex – made upon a video-sound setting of an observatory. The public was invited to stand freely outside the circle, listening and watching the scenario. This artistic moment was my first experience of mutual connection between performers of contemporary music and dance. The dancer reacted to the sound and scenery, and the musicians reacted to the dancer. Visually, the instruments looked fantastic in the scene, due to their resemblance with "wind and air" and with the mechanical graphics presented on the video. The spectators were able to get an experience of pure relationship between sound, space and visuals.

#### Fraternità Solare

Translated into "Solar Fraternity", this performance consisted in the integration of accordion sound with recited poetry, within the context of acoustic spatialization. The moment took place at the Raffaello Sanzio Theatre (Urbino, Italy) and featured poetry by Mariangela Gualtieri (own recitation) and Claudio Jacomucci's music for six accordions. The musicians stood in cabins at the top of the theatre, in a semicircle placement, where they played written "landscaping" musical ideas submitted to the recited text. The musicians needed to be in constant integration with their individual parts, with the ones

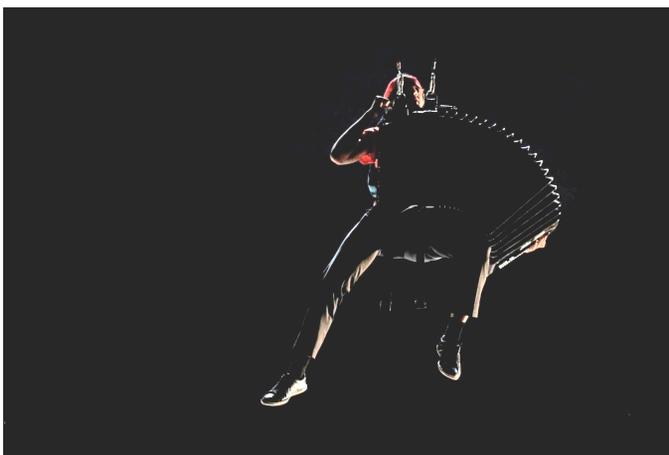
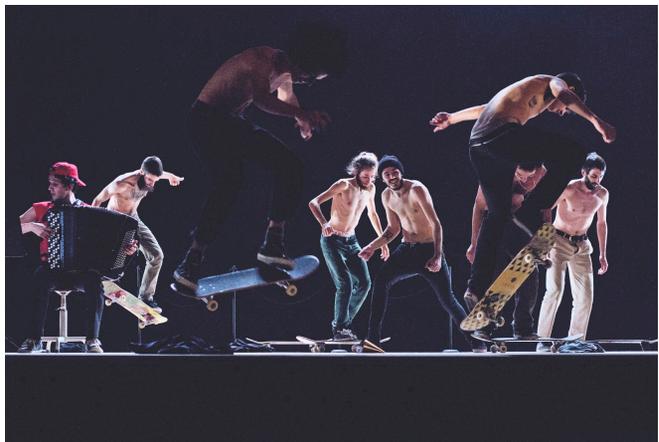
performed by their colleagues, with the poetess and with all the created environment around them. Like the performance previously described, the public was also able to feel sound and space as a unit. The visual part gives place, in here, to a more “inner” context experience, related to the self-understanding of the text. Textures and resonances were created that allowed the echoing of words and instigated the eruption of the imaginary.

These kind of performance projects show us the embellishment capabilities of the accordion towards other artistic creations. They require a more complete performer, proficient in other concepts outside his area. The concept of music becomes just another tool for the expression of the artist and the manifestation of the art.

Following this process of artistic rediscovery and performative integration of accordion and other subjects, I got, in the same year, one of the highest expressive and liberating experiences in my artistic path, which deserves great emphasis.

### Teorema

Teorema is a creation by Portuguese stage director John Romão, inspired by the film of the same name by Pier Paolo Pasolini, and presented in several Portuguese theatres. John Romão's version was performed by himself (as the main actor), 12 skaters and an accordionist. The last two, understood as urban, social and profane representations of today, became contemporized, in an attempt to reconfigure the sense of the sacred. As in Pasolini's work, the actors socialize in an environment of tension, domination and submission, always towards an erotic and sacralized atmosphere. Here, participants are more like actors, taking on communicative roles, clearly out of their usual performing behaviours. The accordionist is also a pizza deliveryman who invades John Romão's space and leaves him a message. From there, sonata Et Exspecto by Sofia Gubaidulina comes through the accordion, characterizing and sacralizing the whole surrounding scenario. At one point, in a moment of great apocalyptic ferocity, the musician is raised above the ground by strings, while playing.



At this point of our journey, we're already facing a total reconfiguration of the musician's role, assumed now as a character of dramatic roles, in a full involvement with the act. The spectator no longer looks at him as the musician but rather as the individual, relating him directly to the other artists and integrating him with the act, with the scene and with the whole story.

It's interesting how this reconfiguration of the musician happens not only in the live show itself but also during rehearsals, which extend for days in a row. These were moments of immense artistic experimentation and improvisation, where one spends more time interacting with the actors than playing. Even during playing time, one was constantly encouraged to disassociate himself from performance by paying attention to the surroundings

and reacting (or inhibiting reactions) to different external stimuli. It was essential to stare the director in the eyes not as a director, but as an actor, as a story character. So, this break from the musician's comfort zone was what, in fact, over time, more embraced me to the very artistic creation. One can say that there was a space belonging to John Romão, Pasolini, incognito to me at first, but to where I was invited. To accept this invitation meant to deliver myself to such an unknown environment, in any possible way, be it artistic, personal, social. It's curious how this kind of "submission", for days on end of rehearsals plus show, causes an individual to become so attached to the creation that to leave it becomes a rather disturbing and disconcerting mental process, bringing an emotional sensation of withdrawal. Being part of such a staged unitary creation astonished me quite positively, due to the musician's and accordion's capabilities to successfully integrate this sort of performances and to conceivably embark on an artistic career in that direction.

Gradually, I started to realize that the musicians' abilities to express themselves can extend beyond the music itself. Artists don't need to restrict to the concept of music learnt throughout their studies nor the concept of performance implanted on them. Artists can try and explore other areas in an attempt to create more complete performances, full of identity, for themselves and the viewer. Following this process, I began experimenting the integration of words and poetry reciting in my own accordion practice and solo presentations.

#### Solo project: accordion, declamation and dramatic expression

This individual project, still in its initials, seeks to find a state of coexistence between music, poetry reciting, singing, among others, in a dramatic performance given to a particular theme, idea. The musician stops being a "musician" and becomes a character, a channel of expression. He wears a white button shirt, black trousers and a white contact lens in one eye, so as to depersonalize himself and obtain merely subjective characteristics. The main goal is a total commitment to the art that is unfolding throughout the performance. The idea came from a whole culmination of ideas like the ones already described until this point. The project was already presented and performed to a small public, and was completely grounded to the life and work of famous 20<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese composer Fernando Lopes-Graça. The text was fully written and recited by the performer, mentioning relevant moments of the artistic and political path of the composer, also marked by a spirit of rebellion against the authoritarian regime Estado Novo. Here and there, the performance was embellished with some acoustic effects and musical excerpts alluding to his work, integrating the voice and the instrument. This type of performance demands quite some psychotechnical training, especially for those moments requiring declamation and music playing simultaneously. The nowadays classical accordionist is accustomed to using the instrument as his voice. The act of transitioning that voice to a secondary role and embodying his true voice while performing is somewhat challenging and requires a great deal of interiorization from all domains. This kind of artistic approach also focus on domains like physical presence – appearance, attitude – and interaction (or not) with the public, aspects which also have their peculiarities and cares. However, as in Teorema, I consider them to be essential performative aspects, that gradually become part of the artistic "us". As Fernando Pessoa said, "Primeiro estranha-se, depois entranha-se.", which roughly means "First you strange it, then you ingrain it."

Currently, the project is still under development, with emphasis on poetry and music of my own. Themes are related to aspects of everyday life, acknowledging and questioning different states of mind, philosophies and visions of today's society. The project also considers integrating the performance with the public itself, placing it at a very similar level as the artist, so that the perception and understanding of the art can have different stimulating means. This can be achieved through simple ideas as, for example, changing the position of the chairs, positioning the artist and/or the audience back to each other or leading the spectators to follow a path throughout the performance. There are many ways

I conclude this little creative "journey" with an invitation to the musician reader to try these types of approaches and to verify the sort of modifications they bring to instrumental playing. There is already a considerable number of performances of this genre around the globe with other instruments. I have no doubt that the accordion, as in the singular world of music, will also have a positive mark in dramatic production.



**Fábio Palma** is a Portuguese accordionist. He began his musical studies at the Academy of Music in Lagos. In 2013, he acquired his Bachelor's Degree in Music with professor Paulo Jorge Ferreira, at the Superior School of Applied Arts in Castelo Branco. In 2016, he finished his Master's Degree in Music Teaching, in the same institute.

He attended several Portuguese and international competitions, as soloist and in chamber music, obtaining good results, namely in Folefest (1st prizes in solo and chamber music), Young Interpreters Competition in Caldas da Rainha (1st Prize ex-aequo), Castelfidardo International Accordion Competition, Italy (2nd Prize in chamber music) and Prémio Jovens Músicos (2nd Prize in solo accordion).

He has performed solo, in chamber music and in orchestra in renowned concert halls such as Sala 2 and Sala Suggia of Casa da Música (Oporto), Palácio Foz (Lisbon), Rivoli Theater (Porto), São Luiz Theater (Lisbon), Raffaello Sanzio Theatre (Urbino, Italy), Bimhuis (Amsterdam, The Netherlands), among others, with live broadcasts on Antena 2 radio.

He attended several workshops and masterclasses guided by renowned performers, namely Geir Draugsvoll, Friedrich Lips and Mika Väyrynen. He also attended an annual accordion and Alexander Technique course in Italy, with Claudio Jacomucci and Kathleen Delaney.

His multipurpose artistic perspective has allowed him to explore different areas of music, within classical and contemporary, jazz, folk, world music, fusion and movie soundtracks. He also explores other artistic areas, individually and in groups, such as poetry recitation and dramatic representation.

He premiered various pieces in groups or as orchestra soloist, namely "Ti'Anita" by Nuno Sequeira Rodrigues, "In Extremis" by Paulo Jorge Ferreira (with his All Libitum Trio), "Vortex" (with contemporary dance) by Claudio Jacomucci, "Fraternità Solare" (with poetry recitation) by Claudio Jacomucci. He also participated in the dance and contemporary music festival "Il Fiore delle Mille e una Nota 3", held in Amsterdam and Urbino. In Portugal, he made part of a series of performances of "Teorema" by Portuguese stage director John Romão, founded on the work of Italian film director Pier Paolo Pasolini.

Throughout his career, he has been invited to participate in some national and international CD recordings.

He currently teaches accordion and chamber music at the conservatoires Canto Firme in Tomar and Jaime Chavinha in Minde.

**Iwo Jedynecki**, Poland

MA, PhD Student

### **Re-discovering the forgotten gems: accordion in XIX Century Duos for Piano and Harmonium**

Accordion is not only a top-notch instrument for solo performances, it is also capable of being a valuable part of various chamber ensembles. In the most common combination of a duo, the second chosen instrument is most often a single voice one – violin, cello, saxophone, clarinet etc. It should not come as a surprise, because of the advanced polyphonic possibilities that an accordion possesses, which can connect undoubtedly well with the above mentioned instruments. Moreover, these settings are in disposal of a rich original literature, which aided by transcriptions of the pieces from earlier periods of music can easily form an interesting and varied concert programme. A less popular kind of duo combination is the one with a different polyphonic instrument – piano, cembalo or harp. It may be due to the fact that the division for „melodic” and „accompanying” instrument is less obvious, that there is less original literature for these settings, or because the will to perform transcriptions from piano duos is put in jeopardy due to the inability to maintain the integrity of sound between two instrumental parts (which is not the case for example with the accordion duets). From all these duo settings there is however one that stands above the others, especially in terms of possessing a unique original literature of different characteristics and undoubtedly highest standards. It is a piano-accordion duo. Although the repertoire that is the case here is not strictly dedicated to this combination, we should acknowledge the fact that we have a special member in our free-reed, accordion-like family of instruments – the harmonium. Today harmonium may be a forgotten and unused instrument, but the similarity in sound and performance possibilities with today’s accordion makes it an extremely valuable predecessor of our instrument. Moreover, it carries a plethora of highest quality original pieces by masters of the Romantic Period – Cesar Franck, Camille Saint-Saëns, Ferenc Liszt, Antonin Dvorak to name a few. The instrument that was combined with the harmonium the most was the piano. It could be connected to the fact that at that time piano and harmonium had been the two most popular instruments found in the houses of middle- and higher-class society members. But obviously this combination of piano and harmonium appeared interesting to composers, as a setting of two instruments of similar possibilities, but completely different sound qualities. Various smaller and greater pieces dedicated to piano-harmonium duo had come to life in the second half of the XIX Century, most of them in France. In the latter parts of this article I will try to present my experience with some of the fascinating pieces of music that I had an opportunity to explore, prepare and perform during concerts and competitions in Europe. To be able to speak about them in an appropriate manner, first we need to give an answer to an important question – how similar are the sound and technical possibilities of the harmonium and the accordion? Are they so close to each other that the pieces dedicated to the harmonium could be considered as original literature for accordion? A comparison of both instruments is needed at this point.

Accordion was constructed and patented in Vienna in 1829 by Cirill Demian. It was a simple instrument which one characteristic was innovative at that time – a full chord consisting of three tones could be played by pressing just one button. Accordion in its primal form was not therefore prepared for performing complex, elaborate music, yet this is the point that accordionists often consider being the most crucial in history of their instrument. We often tend to forget about other branch of free-reed instruments, connected to the accordion by the sound source and not by appearance, that were far more popular in the XIX Century Europe and more importantly caught the eyes of the greatest composers and performers. The most important instrument of this group was undoubtedly the harmonium. Built in 1842 in Paris by Alexandre Debain it quickly gained its recognition as an organ-like instrument for smaller churches, as well as a piano-like instrument for household music-making. From the beginning of its existence, the harmonium was considered a valid concert instrument by the most prominent composers at that time. The capability of forming and bending the melodic line on course of its duration on a keyboard instrument was a novelty. It became possible with the introduction of a bellow that, if skilfully used, gave the performer a possibility to create the dynamics in a manner that bore resemblance to today’s accordion.

The common features of harmonium and accordion are: the same sound source (free reeds), the same way of creating the sound (setting the metal reeds to tremble with airflow by simultaneously

pressing the key/button and moving the bellow; the latter is pumping the air respectively in and out of the instrument), very similar sound (minor differences due to the materials used in reeds, its size etc.), the ability to perform polyphonic music, the presence of various registers that slightly alter the sound within the instrument, and many more.

Apart from the outlook of both instruments (piano keyboards for both hands in the harmonium), there are just two major differences between them. One is the fact that in accordion we have the ability to play chords by pressing just one button in the left hand (when switched to standard bass). However it is obvious that this would be only a disadvantage for the harmonium, if we wanted to perform pieces dedicated to the accordion on it. The other way round – trying to perform pieces dedicated to the harmonium on accordion – it is therefore not an issue, as long as we are in disposal of a concert accordion with the convertor mechanism. Another difference is the fact that the harmonium keyboard is the same as in organ or piano, so the sound is integral on the whole range of the instrument. In accordion we have two keyboards, each dedicated to one hand, which always slightly differ in sound. It is not however such a major difference that would discourage from performing pieces dedicated to the harmonium on accordion, if we also take into consideration that many of the harmoniums had the possibility to vary the sound for the left and right hand (for example the ones with two keyboards). Moreover, in most of the harmonium literature it is simple to distinguish the leading and accompanying voices, so dividing the material for both right and left hand manuals will not represent a big challenge.

The way of operating the bellow in accordion (by hand) and harmonium (by foot) should also count as an important difference. The accordionists' moves can be more precise, so his abilities to regulate the dynamics on the course of even the shortest motifs are higher. On the other hand, the harmonium player can easily maintain a static, continuing, organ-like sound. Of course an accordionist can also achieve that, it just requires caring more about steadiness of the bellow movement and skilful changes of its direction.

All of the above thoughts lead me to the point that the accordionists can easily perform pieces dedicated to the harmonium without fear of not being able to process a sound that was intended by the composer. They could also offer something new and even better to these compositions, and that is due to the fact that the accordion possesses much more technical and sound possibilities, and that nowadays we have much more world-class accordionists than musicians playing the harmonium as a profession. How would the history of pianists look like if they had not considered the keyboard pieces by J. S. Bach, written long before the birth of a modern piano, as their original literature? Where would the cellists be today if not for the Sonatas for viola da gamba? Which piece would have a chance to become such a „hit“ in concert halls around the world, opening the doors to international careers for many of the great clarinetists, than Mozart's clarinet concerto, dedicated to a different, earlier version of the instrument? More and more examples of this kind can be found in the history of music. One should also notice that while thinking of the greatest performers and the best recordings of the aforementioned pieces from the past eras, names such as Glenn Gould, Andreas Schiff, Mstislav Rostropovich come to mind. The vast majority of artists of this rank play the modern instruments, not their earlier versions which the composers dedicated their pieces to. This is hardly a surprise – instruments are constantly being modernized, as everything in history of human evolution, so the ones that we are in disposal of today are just the most perfect tools for performing the timeless art that is music. That is why in my opinion playing the pieces dedicated to harmonium on accordion is not only welcomed, but also highly recommended, because this is how we can preserve a somehow forgotten, unique and valuable part of XIX Century music. We will also be able to connect ourselves firmly to this amazing period, taking advantage of the masterpieces of the Romantic era in our everyday will to evolve as musicians.

From the literature for piano and harmonium that I was yet able to explore, one composition has a most prominent place. It is the Six duos for piano and harmonium op. 8 by Camille Saint-Saëns. Great composer, big, versatile and unique piece demanding highest technical and musical abilities from the performers – these are just a few characteristics of this composition which in my opinion should be holding a different position in world's music literature and awareness of the performers and recipients of classical music.

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921) was a child prodigy, showing his extraordinary musical abilities from the youngest age. „It is not generally realized that he was the most remarkable child prodigy in history, and that includes Mozart!.“ In a short period of time he was named a piano virtuoso and an

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<sup>1</sup> Schonberg, Harold C. "It All Came Too Easily For Camille Saint-Saëns", The New York Times, January 12th 1969

outstanding organist, long before writing his first opus. As a composer, Saint-Saëns was known for his love for contemporary music of his generation (Schumann, Liszt). However, respecting the tradition of the Classical and the Baroque had the most influence on his work. Since he was a little boy, he was an aficionado of Johann Sebastian Bach, who, at that time, was not that commonly known in France. As a student of Paris Conservatory he was already an expert in counterpoint. In his earliest compositions Saint-Saëns showed great interest in harmonium. His first piece that he had considered mature and entitled it with „opus 1” was *Trois morceaux* for harmonium.

Bearing in mind the aforementioned facts – Saint-Saëns’s virtuosity as a pianist and his interest in harmonium’s sound we could state that the composer’s strengths and preferences in the early period of his works and are both present in *Six duos* op. 8.

Unlike most of the chamber music pieces with harmonium from the XIX Century, Saint-Saëns treated the combination of piano and harmonium in a somehow symphonic way. It becomes clear even at a first glance when we look the diverse dynamic and timbre markings, which are one of the attributes that make the *Six duos* op. 8 an all-round concert piece.

Six parts – Fantasy and Fugue, Cavatina, Chorale, Capriccio, Scherzo and Finale present a wide spectrum of sound capabilities of piano and harmonium, as well as taking full advantage of the potential of this original combination of instruments.

Fantasy and Fugue from op. 8 is mainly a virtuosic piece, aiming to present high technical abilities of the performers – mostly in the piano part, which does not come as a surprise given the composer’s sophistication in playing this particular instrument. When we add the counterpoint mastery in the Fugue and the fact that the author exploits the dynamic capabilities of both instruments to its limits, in Fantasy and Fugue we are presented with an expressive, powerful opening of a big cycle.

The second movement – Cavatina, comes as something of a relaxation after a thunderous number one. Here the accordionist can show his musical and especially phrasing abilities – the form of this movement is clearly divided for a leading (accordion) and accompanying (piano) voice.

Chorale is the most elusive part of the cycle. In its first half we hear both instruments presenting their solo sections – constantly moving, tumultuous piano passages versus calm, chorale-like episodes in harmonium part. After that both players lead a narrative to its emotional climax, after which the music gradually fades away until reaching a complete stop in Chorale’s most beautiful section. This part creates a special atmosphere, which puts the listener in a state of complete devotion to the sound sensation and a willingness to receive new impressions in the latter movements. For here he will come across a complete change – Capriccio is the most delicate movement of the six, presenting the virtuosity of both performers equally in a very gentle manner. Playing this particular part can be a real challenge for the accordionist. Some of the skills gained while working on Jurger Ganzer’s Fantasy 84 may be helpful. Articulation and the length of the tones both in the right and the left hand have to be as close as possible in order to produce an exceptional, stereophonic sound.

Scherzo op. 8 is a glamorous piece in the style of tarantella. Although playing it requires lightness in articulation, it bears a different kind of emotion than Capriccio. The composer again implicates *al niente* after the culmination point to wrap up the piece, with the last two chords delicate and silent, as if located on the horizon of listener’s perception. This final part is an apotheosis of scherzo – „a musical joke”.

The Finale is the cycle’s second most elaborate movement (after Fantasy and Fugue). The bombastic octave motives in both instrumental parts show us the role of this movement in the whole six-piece composition. Although the middle parts of this movement are mixed in character, the opening and closing sections are what Finale is all about. A beautiful and mighty coda strongly resembles Modest Mussorgsky’s „Great Gate of Kiev” – the bell-like octave passages in the piano part in particular. Taking into account that the *Pictures at an Exhibition* were written sixteen years after the *Six duos*, we can’t rule out that if there was any sort of connection between the two composers and these two pieces, the inspiration may have come to Saint Petersburg from Paris and not the other way round.

The work demands great technical and musical abilities, which makes performing the whole cycle a real challenge even for the most advanced musicians. As a performer of Camille Saint-Saëns’s *Six duos* for piano and harmonium I can state that it is very often a programme favourite of the audience. This is how an American music journalist, Alexandra Ivanoff, described the performance of Fantasy and Fugue<sup>1</sup> by Duo

<sup>1</sup> First movement of *Six duos* op. 8

Jedynecki/Krzyżanowski during the final concert of Festival Academy Budapest in Ferenc Liszt Concert Hall in 2016:

(...) Later, the two played with considerable bravura "Fantasy And Fugue", the first piece of a six-part suite for the same instruments by Saint-Saëns. The duo has unearthed more original scores for piano and harmonium and looks forward to being the first musicians to record them. Based on their captivating performance here, I would say it's a recording worth waiting for!<sup>1</sup>

Prelude, Fugue and Variation op. 18 was written in 1860-1862, when Cesar Franck was working as an organist and choir master at the Basilica of Saint Clotilde in Paris. He had a wonderful modern organ at his disposal there, built by Aristide Caville-Coll, with whom Franck worked for many years and to whom he dedicated some of his works for organ and harmonium (including the Pastorale op. 19). Franck had been so inspired by the instrument that shortly after taking the position in St Clotilde he wrote one of his major works – Six Pieces pour Grand Orgue. Prelude, fugue and variation is a part of this book. What is worth noticing, apart from the organ solo version, the composer dedicated another release of this piece to the piano-harmonium duo. The transcription was not solely based on dividing the complex organ material between two instruments. In many sections the composer enriched the texture and enlarged the sound by adding new structures and tones to both the harmonium and piano parts that the organ version did not possess. Mostly these changes mean adding the higher or lower octaves to the existing tones (piano part in the Fugue), but sometimes we are facing a major change (like adding a previously non-existing passages in the piano cadenza between Prelude and Fugue, or putting long chords in the lower staff of the harmonium part in Prelude and Variation to increase the sound and alter the colour).

Taking these facts into consideration, it becomes clear that the composer's version for piano and harmonium is much more complex than in its primal, organ form. Surely it is due to increasing the executing possibilities by having two performers instead of one, but it may not be the only factor. We should herein underline the fact that the version for piano and harmonium is the only release of this piece by Cesar Franck himself, in contrary to the most popular transcriptions for piano solo and other settings. Performing Prelude, Fugue and Variation in piano-accordion duo could therefore be, apart from playing the organ version, the solution that may come closest to fulfilling the composer's final intention. It is hard to disagree when we listen to this setting's performance – two completely different sound sensations of both instruments combine and blend perfectly well. Beautiful cantabile phrases can be brilliantly performed by an accordionist thanks to the capability of changing the intensity of the sound within a single note, which could not be achieved with an organ that provides a static sound, whereas the piano is a perfect accompanying instrument, in this case being equally important as the lead voice. Its unique, noble sound appears in the foreground while playing shorter notes (quavers and semiquavers) in the final sections of Fugue and especially in the Variation, fully exposing the beauty and complexity of this amazing piece of music.

Prelude, Fugue and Variation op. 18 is very popular among accordionist, being probably the most commonly performed piece in a duo with piano. The fact that we are playing one of the two existing original versions of this piece is not that common yet, and we should not expect other musicians and the classical music society in general to be aware of that. Despite the fact that there are plenty of recordings of Prelude, Fugue and Variation available to listen on CDs and on the apps such as Spotify and iTunes, we will not find a single one played by a piano-accordion duo. Bearing that in mind I think that it is essential to start taking actions to change this common knowledge. It could be done simply by performing the piece and putting an appropriate information in the concert programme, recording CDs with a proper build-up, and presenting the subject at lectures, conferences and publications where we would connect the XIX Century music to today's accordionists activity.

The last piece that I would like to present is Alexandre Guilmant's Scherzo capriccioso op. 36. Written in 1873 and dedicated to Camille Saint-Saëns is by far the most advanced and complex of the three pieces for duo piano-harmonium by the composer (Pastorale op. 26 and Marche Triomphale op. 34 being the other two). As it was with Cesar Franck, Alexandre Guilmant was connected to Paris and another of the biggest temples of this city – the Trinity Church. Guilmant held the position of the main organist there for 30 years since 1871. As a composer he dedicated most of his works to the organ, completing great multi-volume books such as Pièces dans différents styles and L'organiste pratique. Following his works step by

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<sup>1</sup> <https://bachtrack.com/review-solti-hall-kurtag-july-2016>

step we may notice that his second most-loved instrument was the harmonium. The inspirations deriving from organ sound are visible in his amazing Scherzo op. 31 for harmonium solo; this and other pieces by Guilman are far more elaborate than the compositions for solo harmonium by other authors from the XIX Century, where we sometimes can get the feeling of treating the harmonium as organ's younger brother. Harmonium part in Scherzo capriccioso op. 36 also requires much more work from the accordionist than the above mentioned pieces by Cesar Franck, and even the Six duos by Camille Saint-Saens (apart from the Capriccio, which presents an unusual challenge from the technical point of view).

The piece is divided into several inner sections and forms a rondo, where the main theme appears three times. Two trios are in strong contrast. The first being an apotheosis of scherzo, the second – more lyric, showcasing the composer's ability to write beautiful melodies, which Guilman was known for<sup>1</sup>. The final coda, held in a very high tempo, is an ultimate presentation of the technical abilities of both the pianist, and the accordionist (in our case).

The piece is highly impressive and ideal for being the final piece of a recital of a piano-accordion duo. Its inner contrasts, the fact that both instrumental parts are treated in an equally virtuosic manner, and the piece's running time of about 7 minutes makes Scherzo capriccioso a perfect piece also for a shorter performance, where a duo is about to be situated between other instrumental groups. The composition is very distinctive and impressive for every audience. It is also worth noticing that it had not been recorded yet in the original setting of harmonium and piano, let alone in the duo of piano and accordion. It can stand as another proof for the statement that the XIX Century music for harmonium is mostly forgotten, and how much the accordionists can do to fill this gap.

All of the aforementioned pieces dedicated to the set of instruments of piano and harmonium are very rarely performed nowadays. The cons of this situation are not difficult to spot. One is the fact that these works are not commonly known even in the classical music environment, let alone today's accordionists, and one could be baffled given the fact that they were written by some of the leading composers of the 19th Century. Although few recordings of the pieces by Saint-Saëns and Guilman exist<sup>2</sup> and are quite easily accessible on the Internet, they can be mainly treated as a bow to the history of „ancient“ instruments such as the harmonium, not considering the aforementioned works as genuine concert programme's focal points deserving its place in concert halls. This niche could well be filled by accordionists and chamber ensembles including the accordion. The lack of awareness about the connection between the accordion and harmonium has another bright side to it, too. I see it personally in the effect of a hugely positive surprise for the audience every time they listen to these pieces for the first time, having in mind that they are familiar with other works by especially Saint-Saëns and Franck. What amazes people the most is the fact that the combination of accordion and piano is a sound sensation deriving from the 19th Century. As accordionists – musicians being in disposal of an instrument of a same sound source as the harmonium, we are in a great position to re-discover and present some of the forgotten gems of the Romantic Period to the world. It is also, in my opinion, another step that may turn out to be essential in our constant efforts to put the accordion on par with instruments of greater and longer history in classical music. Changing the mindset about the accordion by connecting the instrument to the most prolific period of tonal music, and doing so with strong historical, technical and musical evidence, is something that in the future may result in seeing our instrument much more often in concert halls all around the world.

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<sup>1</sup> Archbold and Peterson, ed. (1995). *French Organ Music: From the Revolution to Franck and Widor*. University of Rochester Press

<sup>2</sup> Thanks to composer's version for organ solo and various arrangements, Franck's „Prelude, fugue and variation“ gained its deserved popularity among the audiences around the globe



**Iwo Jedynecki** (b.1991, Poland) is one of the most promising accordionists of the young generation in Poland. He was studying accordion at the Frederic Chopin University of Music in Warsaw with prof. Jerzy Łukasiewicz and dr Rafał Grząka. In 2014 he was an Erasmus student of Conservatorio Superior de Música de Aragón in Zaragoza (Spain) in the class of prof. Iñaki Alberdi. Currently he is undergoing a postgraduate "Konzertexamen" course in Hochschule für Musik in Detmold (Germany) in prof. Grzegorz Stopa's class, as well as pursuing his doctoral degree at the Feliks Nowowiejski Academy of Music in Bydgoszcz with prof. Jerzy Kaszuba. He is a prize winner of competitions in Poland, Italy, Lithuania, France and Austria.

As a soloist he performed in Poland, USA, Singapore, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Austria, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, France, Ukraine and Hungary.

Apart from his activity as a soloist, he often performs in chamber ensembles. Together with violinist Karolina Mikołajczyk he received numerous first prizes at international music competitions and performed on three continents, in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Warsaw Philharmonic, Youth Theatre in Hanoi. The ensemble recorded a first ever album with contemporary music for violin and accordion – „Premiere” (2016 Requiem Records, Opus series), as well as premiered the Double concerto for violin, accordion and orchestra written and dedicated to the Duo by Marcin Błazewicz.

Alongside pianist Aleksander Krzyżanowski he received prizes at international chamber music competitions in Poland (including the 19th International Kiejstut Bacewicz Chamber Music Competition) and Austria (Hammerklavierwettbewerb FORTEPIANO+) and performed i.a. in Franz Liszt Music Academy in Budapest, gaining recognition for performing the 19th Century pieces for piano and harmonium.

[www.mikolajczyk-jedynecki.pl](http://www.mikolajczyk-jedynecki.pl)

Rafał Łuc, Poland  
PhD

### New Polish music for accordion&viola dedicated to Duo van Vliet

Duo van Vliet is an accordion and viola ensemble founded by myself and Ian Anderson, Scottish musician. We met at the Royal Academy of Music in London where we both studied. We have been playing together since seven years, from 2011 and have performed dozens of recitals in such venues like Bridgewater Hall (Manchester), St. Catherine Church (Vilnius), National Portrait Gallery (London), Glasgow University, National Forum of Music (Wrocław), Grażyna and Kiejstut Bacewicz Academy of Music in Łódź, National Symphony Orchestra of Polish Radio (Katowice); and festivals such as Podium Festival in Esslingen (Germany), St Magnus Festival (Scotland), International Contemporary Festival Poznań's Musical Spring, International Contemporary Music Festival Warsaw Autumn. Duo van Vliet emerged by a little accident; the viola player I was supposed to play in the Academy competition had to go abroad and Ian Anderson was recommended by him. Our co-operation was so enjoyable we decided to keep playing together, which lasts until now.

In our early collaborations we had very little knowledge about the original repertoire for accordion and viola so we were performing works by John Sebastian Bach and Astor Piazzolla. We also tried to arrange repertoire for the violin and piano or accordion and cello. But it around our interest in two British composers – John Dowland and Benjamin Britten – that we really began to find our voice. Therefore we decided to use them as the focus around which we would build our album.

Our debut CD, *Lachrymae ReVisited*, was released in June 2017; it contains five chamber pieces and two solo works. Two of the compositions were originally written for accordion and viola. One of them is *ReVerse 2* by Adam Porębski, a young Polish composer from Wrocław, who is also an academic lecturer at Karol Lipiński Music Academy in Wrocław. The piece was awarded the First Prize ex aequo on the National Composer's Competition in Poznań in 2013, with the world premiere took place during the International Contemporary Festival Poznań's Musical Spring 2014. The score is published by Ignacy Jan Paderewski Academy of Music in Poznań.

The composer wrote in the programme note:

"So what is the meaning behind the 'reverse' of the title? Does it refer to the reversing of the traditional hierarchy of music, in which melody and rhythm persist, but only in articulation, density and harmonics of sound? Or maybe it is about the reversing and reflecting of instrumental sounds, like in a mirror — either combining to form one homogenous tissue, or refracting and dispersing? Possibly *ReVerse 2* should be interpreted less literally, as compositional aesthetic metamorphosis? Or maybe *ReVerse* is a violent change of the composer's outlook?"<sup>1</sup>.

Rafałowi Łucowi  
Ianowi Andersonowi

## ReVerse 2

na altówkę i akordeon/ for viola and accordion

Adam Porębski

Example 1: Adam Porębski - *ReVerse 2* b. 1-8

<sup>1</sup> Adam Porębski, *ReVerse 2*, programme note in: *Lachrymae ReVisited*, Orchid Classics ORC100069

## MODERN ACCORDION PERSPECTIVES #4

ReVerse 2 is a single-movement composition constructed with five phases. The piece begins in the highest register of accordion and viola, and musical material is based on sound penetration between instruments.

After a short transition of cadence character, phase two is situated in the lowest register. There are many glissandi (tone glissandi in the accordion part) throughout that section. The next section's material brings further sound deformation, in the accordion part with the help of the mixing of registrations, and also by adding the air valve sound.

Example 2: Adam Porębski - ReVerse 2 b. 81-88

In the viola part, this destruction of tone is achieved through scratching in the beginning (the use of too much bow pressure on strings) and later by sul ponticello technique. "Percussive" material dominates in both parts in phase four, with only occasional pitches occurring. The playing techniques are familiar to contemporary music. In the accordion part the following techniques are used: air valve, register clicks in the right and left hands, quiet glissandi played on the keyboard, and a „guiro" effect performed on the grill of the instrument. These elements are mixed up with each other.

Example 3: Adam Porębski - ReVerse 2 b. 158-164

The end of the piece is based on long notes in the accordion part, settled first in the lowest register and which move gradually towards the highest register. In the foreground, the viola plays moving "fragmented" melodic contours, analogically as the accordion in the low register in the beginning moving gradually to the highest, harmonic register. Dramatically the piece gradually calms down by different means, like evolution in material projection in specified registers and by operating the dynamic factor.

The above techniques and processes, at work throughout ReVerse 2, show how brilliantly Adam Porębski – at twenty three years old – got to know abilities of viola and accordion. Adam consciously pushed both instruments to their extremes: their full ranges, extreme dynamics, and also extended techniques. The piece is a real "journey" through technical abilities of the instruments, and I hope that because of its undeniable quality, it will become standard repertoire for other performers.

ReVerse 2 was written for us in 2013 as we wanted to add a contemporary piece to our concert programmes and album. I think, it was also then when we realized how much we enjoyed working on it, putting it together and most importantly that in order to build an identity for our duo we should have more pieces like that in our repertoire. Therefore we decided to commission more composers.

Another piece composed for us I would like to mention is <<<st)i(l<<< for amplified viola and accordion (2016/2017) by Marta Śniady. She is a composer from Łódź and lately she has been studying on a soloist programme at The Royal Academy of Music in Aarhus, Denmark with Simon Steen-Andersen and Niels Rønsholdt.

She writes in the programme note: " <<<st)i(l<<< is rough, brutal, primitive, dirty. The key aspect to understand the piece is the way the title is written. <<<st)i(l<<< starts where most stories end, in the climax. Strong feelings in the beginning are decreasing with time. Viola and accordion aim to a common point, in which it seems the emotional quivering finally lets out but with one sound, familiar smell, taste, suddenly touched sense wake up repressed and muted emotions. <<<st)i(l<<< is also a technical study, an attempt to achieve maximum possibilities from a single decreasing motive, which is determined by different aspects: tempi, accents, colour, articulation, volume, rhythm intensity. I am interested in overlapping different, contradictory processes e.i. rhythm density with height and volume descent; processes which co-operate against their natural instincts, against each other"<sup>1</sup>.

According to the programme note, Marta Śniady's piece is a study of many extended techniques, both for viola and accordion. Opposite to Adam Porębski, she begins her work in extreme registers (lowest in the accordion part and highest in viola part); climax (of anti-climax character) is set in the middle range of instruments and the piece finishes in the highest register for both instruments.

The main feature of an accordion part is use of different registers setup which change fluently. Apart from untuning and distorting the sound, it also gives the rough and dirty character mentioned above. The composer often strengthens the process with a use of tone-glissandi or air valve sound on top of it.

Score

<<<st)i(l<<<

marta śniady  
2016/17

AMP 70%

♩ = 70

Accordion

Viola

Acc.

Via

Example 4: Marta Śniady - <<<st)i(l<<< b. 1-12

Except for the extended techniques used throughout the whole piece like key clicks, "guiro" effect, air valve there are also standard elements being used like clusters, bellow shake, ricochets, vibrato, repetitions.

<sup>1</sup> Marta Śniady, <<<st)i(l<<<, programme note

The viola part is extremely demanding and a performer can find all the spectrum of different techniques like harmonics, bow-scratch effect on strings, use of bow in different directions and its different parts. Moreover, part of the bow is meant to be prepared by sticking some tape on the wooden part.

Example 5: Marta Śniady - <<<st>>(ll<<< b. 103-108

These performance techniques are played mostly in the highest range of viola which is not really common for the instrument and demands practise time. From our experience we can admit they are worth challenge because with the enough spent time there are totally possible to achieve and the final effect is very astonishing.

The score delivered by the composer was precisely annotated and did not lot leave much freedom to the performers. However, in the end there is an improvised section which accumulates bits from previous parts of the piece. Each performer can choose the order they appear and density of that section.

Example 6: Marta Śniady - <<<st>>(ll<<< b. 204

It is also the moment where amplification plays an important role and starts to be more noticeable. Within the whole duration the piece is meant to be slightly amplified (around 70%) in order to bring up some details which could be inaudible if the piece was played acoustically. Of course, the amplification level depends on many factors, especially venue acoustics. In the improvised section from Example 6, the amplification increases to 100% in order to let those details fulfill an independent role and come to the foreground.

Healing Nature & Joy of Music is a piece written (2016) by Jacek Sotomski for accordion, viola and video. He is a graduant of Agata Zubel class in the Karol Lipiński Academy of Music in Wrocław. In order to understand the essence of the composition I need to quote Jacek Sotomski on meeting Jennifer Walshe and changing of his style:

"After [course] Ostrava I stopped being interested in autonomous pieces to be lived hedonistically. I started to be interested in more critical things, directed on social or cultural aspects. Maintained in a trend

of relational aesthetics and new conceptualism, which show more with music being supported by media like video or theatre... Just then I decided I am not interested in writing for clarinet, piano, violin and cello. There are hundreds of pieces like that (...) and in some of them someone may come up with new clarinet multiphonics or other extended performance techniques. I am more interested in meta-narration."

"Post-Internet is an aesthetics in which I can realise myself after I decided, camp (daub) is dead. Post-Internet draws from the things which are around us, Internet, but in a very meta and contextual way. The term post-Internet was created 10 years ago in visual art and funnily enough, straight away it stopped making sense. (...) Post-Internet was meant to look after things we do in real life after we have spent some time on the Internet, but nowadays we are all the time on the Internet. There is no such thing like life after Internet and this is very interesting... (...)"

As the composer explains *Healing Nature & Joy of Music* is his first post-Internet piece. For the first time he uses the video in his art presenting non-conventional medicine treatments.

Musicians' role is to perform mainly extended techniques which are in some sense the soundtrack to the video layer. The accordion part is a mix and accumulation of sounds like air valve, "percussive" effects played on bellow, keyboard, grill, converter, registers (some of the are performed with a bank card), ricochets, and clusters. The viola part is based on extended string techniques; for a short period of time the instrument is also prepared by putting a rubber band on a tailpiece. In the whole piece there are only 13 bars with determined sound heights.

Example 6: Jacek Sotomski - *Healing Nature & Joy of Music* b. 26-29

The composition is a comparison of the extended performance techniques (as a symbol of the contemporary music language) with the video presenting non-conventional medicine which according to the composer neither work in music nor in a real life.

The last piece which has been written for our duo I would like to mention is Mikołaj Laskowski's *Deep Relaxation Vol. 1: Viola & Accordion DNA Delete Mode* (2016) for accordion, viola and electronics. World premiere took place in Podium Festival in Esslingen in May 2017. Mikołaj Laskowski studied in Wrocław with Grażyna Pstrokońska-Nawratil, later he continued his education in The Royal Conservatoire in The Hague with Yannis Kyriakides.

The programme note introduces the idea for the piece: "Deep Relaxation is a series of products from Musax corporation whose primary goal is to enable consumers to make conscious and artistically refined musical choices, answering their evolving needs and supporting the well-being of families throughout the world. We consistently invest our resources in the process of perfecting existing products and developing new ones. The Deep Relaxation series combines the latest technology with ancient (or at least as old as the internet itself) knowledge about so-called solfeggio frequencies. Each part of the cycle is based on carefully selected frequencies, aimed at improving various life parameters, enhancing well-being, and unlocking energetic centres responsible for various ailments on the physical, psychological, and purely existential level. However, deep transformation is impossible without destruction, thus exposure to solfeggio frequencies must begin with DNA Delete Mode."

## ***DEEP RELAXATION VOL. 1: ACCORDION & VIOLA DNA DELETE MODE***



Mikołaj Laskowski  
2016

Example 7: Mikołaj Laskowski - Deep Relaxation VOL. 1: Accordion&Viola DNA Delete Mode - title page

As the composer explains, the piece is a part of a series ironically connecting to the relaxation music. The composer created a fictional company (not for the first time) which produces music on demand/request and treats it as a merchandise. The genre of relaxation music, which mostly has a functional character is transferred to concert venues.

Polish music critic, Monika Pasiecznik, wrote about the composition: "Title Deep Relaxation sounds quite provocative in the musical avant-garde context, which aimed to shock the listener instead of make him relax. In Mikołaj Laskowski's music, which we try to input in that context, irony and nostalgia, electronical daub and refined instrumental sounds, omnipresent sampling and Internet plunderphonics are combined with satirical connection to New Age aesthetics. As we remember, this culture grow out of belief that humanity crushed in a deep crisis is at the turning point between two eras. Isn't it a contemporary music situation, suspended between still alive post-Lachenmann avant-garde and new generation experience which is digital revolution and Internet? Mikołaj Laskowski's music is a reflection of schizophrenic consciousness of his generation."

Composer usus preparation for both instruments. The viola part is performed on the instrument lying flat on the table in front of the performer. There are long magnetic VHS tapes are attached to strings symbolizing DNA. Musician performs gestures rubbing the tapes with fingers and moving a little piece of paper on the strings; it is not a part to be performed in a traditional way. The accordion is prepared with thin pieces of paper placed under the set of right hand reeds, they aim to block the movement of the air within the instrument. Preparation gives the effect of distorting the sound and does not allow the performers to play smoothly on the instruments.

The piece does not present any traditional sounds of instruments, the whole material is manipulated with electronics. In addition composer uses such effects like tone glissandi, key-clicks and extreme registers of both instruments. One of the highlights of the composition are reed harmonics which are achieved by preparation of the accordion.

Of course, in our repertoire there are more pieces written for our duo, also by composers from older generation like Rafał Augustyn or Cezary Duchnowski. But in this article I wanted to present the youngest generation of composers. Adam Porębski, Marty Śniady, Jacek Sotomski and Mikołaj Laskowski are artists who are around 30 years old and already have a big concert experience, many performances in the most important festivals of Polish contemporary music (Warsaw Autumn, Musica Polonica Nova,

Poznań's Musica Spring), awards, commissions and co-operation with fantastic ensembles, conductors and performers specializing in the contemporary music. They belong to the millennial generation, speak fluent English, travel abroad for concerts and festivals as active members (Darmstadt, Ostrava, Radziejowice) and study composition in prestigious schools with most important composers or during summer courses. Because of that they do realise what is happening in a contemporary music world nowadays.

In the past, when there was no Internet and real borders (especially in Europe) existed in order to find out what is going on in music one would have to go to Darmstadt and every two years you could verify the situation of the contemporary music.

It is also possible right now and many young composers do go there but with Internet, youtube recordings and performances of so many concerts the access to music is basically unlimited. The youngest generation of composers know the newest trends and styles and often they try to put these ideas into practise in their compositions, which I do hope pieces mentioned above prove.

Every of the composition described above is written in the individual style, representing the character and musical language of every composer. Of course, the content of the piece, narration, using different means on instruments vary but it is noticeable how many of the techniques, the ways of producing the sound are similar in each of the pieces. From the accordionist point of view, all of them include the use of air valve, key-clicks on the keyboard, tone glissandi, some of them use mix of registers and standard accordion techniques. The only differences between them are what these aspects mean and symbolize within an individual composition, ideas behind them and how they were placed in the context and used.

Every piece was written in the close collaboration between composer and performer. In some of them the research process was longer than in others. We were lucky enough to have been working with three people (Adam Porębski, Jacek Sotomski, and Mikołaj Laskowski) who had composed for an accordion before. The only person who had to learn how to write for an instrument was Marta Śniady. Adam Porębski had a very clear idea for the piece and delivered almost finished material to us. We experimented little bit on high passages in the viola part (which were moved mostly to harmonics), accordion registration (register mix), spent some time on tone glissandi (trying to make them similar to viola sound), and percussive section which was meant to be independent in a character but varied by used means in that section.

In Marta Śniady's piece we experimented with tapes (unsuccessfully for the accordion but they stayed in viola part on the wooden part of the bow), and percussive elements. The aspect we put the major emphasis was accordion registers as what the composer imagined did not really worked while played on the instrument. She wanted to have the registration changes as smooth as possible and hardly inaudible and in the end we managed to achieve it.

With Jacek Sotomski we experimented mainly with the percussive elements, density of the textures. Process of searching for these features was pushed to the limits so composer had a base of elements to chose from and only some of the most interesting made it to the piece. Jacek also spent time with Ian, checking how much time it takes to put comfortably an elastic band on the viola.

The longest creating process took place with Mikołaj Laskowski. Both of the parts are based on creative elements and had to be carefully checked with the performers. Mikołaj and Ian met up in Berlin once in order to work on video tape bits and card movement on the strings. It was important for them to find the right gesture for tapes and proper card material for strings. Composer obviously had an idea about what he wanted but final performance technique came up in a collaboration with the violist.

I also spent quite a lot of time with Mikołaj on the accordion preparation which was not an easy process. Mikołaj wanted to prepare an instrument in a way the sound gets slightly muted and distorted, he did have an instrument to experiment himself so he managed to find out morels what he wanted. We focused and experimented with blocking blocks of reeds with different material like cotton, kitchen foil but eventually very thin pieces of paper only worked and gave us a satisfying effect.

Working on a new work is always a fascinating process. To be able to play the instrument which is young and lets musicians experiment, work closely with composers makes me feel a privileged person. I am also very grateful to have been partnering with Ian Anderson, viola player who loves new music and brings his own perspective and ideas into our collaboration. That is also very beneficial for me and I learn a lot from him. Our future plans are connected with recording these four works (and more) for an album featuring Polish compositions for accordion and viola. We also plan like to gather a group of pieces by British composers (or based in the UK) to show other styles and totally different musical world.



**Rafał Łuc,** BMus (Hons) LRAM, graduated at the Royal Academy of Music and the Karol Lipiński Music Academy in Wrocław studying classical accordion under the direction of professor Owen Murray and Zbigniew Łuc. He received a first class degree and Lady Theodore Holland Prize for the 2nd Highest BMus Graduated. Currently he is a doctorate student in Wrocław and he studies privately with an Italian accordionist, Claudio Jacomucci.

His very active concert life first began at age ten and he has since performed many recitals, including a concerto debut with Wrocław's Philharmonic Orchestra at age fifteen. Rafał made his London debut in the Purcell Room, Southbank Centre in January 2009 as a Park Lane Group Young Artist, in which he performed the world premiere of 'Squeazy' by Giles Swayne. He received a most favourable review by 'The Times' labelling him as a highly mature artist who performs with deep engagement, showing off all the potential of his instrument (Neil Fisher).

During his residence in Great Britain he has also performed in high profile venues such as St. Martin in the Fields, Barbican, King's Place, Collston Hall in Bristol, twice in Wigmore Hall as a finalist of YCAT auditions and Patron's Award; and in Symphony Hall (Birmingham) with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and the Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra from St. Petersburg under the direction of Valery Gergiev.

Rafał was a prizewinner of IBLA Grand Prize competition in Ragusa, Sicily being awarded a concert tour in the United States including making his debut in Carnegie Hall, Weill Hall in 2011. Couple of months later he recorded a CD with Korean cellist Hau-Eun Kim with works of Bach and Piazzolla released by

Universal Music.

Rafał is actively engaged in performing chamber music. He regularly performs with cellist Jessica Hayes and with violist Ian Anderson (Duo Van Vliet) with whom he just won International Chamber Music Competition in Jawor (Poland) and reached the final of the Chamber Music Section of the Royal Over-Seas League competition.

He has also worked in a variety of ensembles including BBC SO, London Sinfonietta, London Contemporary Orchestra, Rambert Dance Company, and Wrocław's Opera House.

He cooperates with composers on new accordion repertoire. The most recent world premieres he has been involved with have included works by Julian Philips, Gavin Higgins, Cezary Duchnowski, Paweł Hendrich, Aleksander Nowak, Jacek Sotomski, Mikołaj Laskowski, Rafał Zalech and Adam Porębski.

Rafał has taken part in many masterclasses with leading International and Polish accordionists including: Friedrich Lips (Russia), Matti Rantanen, Mika Vayrynen (Finland), Vojin Vasovic (Serbia), Claudio Jacomucci (Italy), Raimondas Šviackevičius (Lithuania), Joachim Pichura, Bogdan Dowlasz, Jerzy Jurek (Poland). He also took part in a masterclass with the trumpeter Reinhold Friedrich and workshop with the group Motion Trio.

For his achievements Rafał was awarded scholarships and awards from the Minister of Culture in Poland, the Local Government of Lower Silesia, Crescendum Est – Polonia Foundation, and the Solti Foundation.

He has also worked with many respected conductors both as a soloist and orchestral musician: Valery Gergiev, Pierre-Andre Valade, Baldur Brönnimann, Lionel Bringuier, Alexander Walker, Christopher Austin, Ernst Kovacic, Mieczysław Gawroński, Łukasz Borowicz, Szymon Bywalec, Jan Walczyński, Wojciech Rodek.

He plays on a brand new Pigini Sirius Millenium accordion made for special order purchased with the help of Ministry of Culture in Poland and the Royal Philharmonic Society.

[www.rafalluc.com](http://www.rafalluc.com)

Izidor Kokovnik, Slovenia

MA

## The Influence of Girolamo Frescobaldi on Keyboard Music

Girolamo A. Frescobaldi (born 1583 - died 1643) is regarded as one of the first major keyboard composers in the first half of the 17th century. He was born in September 1583 in Ferrara, Italy. Frescobaldi was a child prodigy, being an exceptionally good singer and being able to play various instruments. He excelled in playing keyboard instruments. At age of sixteen he was a virtuoso organist. He was born in the late era of the blooming musical culture in Ferrara, which was under the patronage of the Duke Alfonso II d'Este<sup>1</sup>.

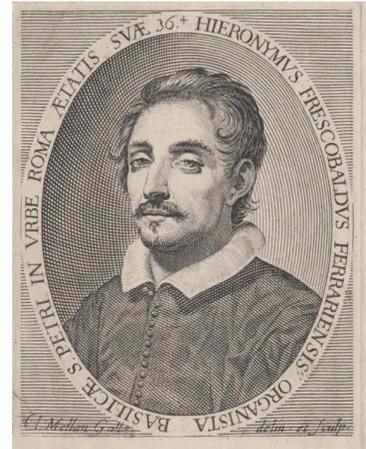


Figure 1. Girolamo Frescobaldi. Taken from: Wikipedia contributors. (2018, March 1). Wikipedia, L'enciclopedialibera. Retrieved, 15:09, April 19, 2018, from [https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Girolamo\\_Frescobaldi](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Girolamo_Frescobaldi)

Under the Duchy of Ferrara the city of Ferrara grew into an international cultural centre and Alfonso II d'Este continued with the work of his ancestors. So it was nothing unusual that by the year 1601 Ferrara was visited by great musicians, such as Orlando di Lasso, Claudio Monteverdi, John Dowland, Giulio Caccini, Claudio Merulo, Carlo Gesualdo. They were united under the patronage of the Duke working together on collection of madrigals.

After Ercole Pasquini, Frescobaldi was appointed as a Ferrara organist. He was only fourteen years old, but he managed to attract two patrons, Enzo and Guido Bentivoglio, who were members of Bentivoglio Family<sup>2</sup>. It was on the recommendation of Guido Bentivoglio that Frescobaldi became an organist in the Basilica of Santa Maria in Trastevere, a church in Rome. Frescobaldi travelled to Brussels with Guido Bentivoglio and stayed there for about six months. If it was not for Guido, Frescobaldi would never travel outside Italy. In Belgium he met with musicians, who came from England, Spain and Flanders and was greatly impressed by them. He then returned to Rome. Frescobaldi was elected to the post of organist for the Cappella Giulia<sup>3</sup>, the resident body of musicians at St. Peter's Basilica. Frescobaldi experienced his most productive period between 1615 and 1628. In that time he was moving back and forth between Rome and Mantova. Major works from this period are the following instrumental pieces: A Second Version of the First Book of Toccatas (1615-6), Ricercars and canzonas (1615), The capriccios (1624), The Second Book of Toccatas (1627), and A Volume of Canzonas for One to Four and Basso Continuo (1628). In the years from 1628-34, he worked in Florence, where he was the best paid musician at the court of Medici, and then in 1634, under the patronage of the Barberini family<sup>4</sup>, he returned to Rome and remained there until his death. He again served as an organist in St. Peter's Basilica. During this period, Frescobaldi's financial stability improved significantly and at the same time he became very popular in the elite circles. His patrons were among the most prestigious art supporters of the time and many praised him. Patrons as Banchieri, Giustiniani, Mersenne, Bonini, Superati, Liberati and Della Valle were the ones that supported Frescobaldi. He

<sup>1</sup>House of Este is a European princely dynasty. They were a family of patrons of the art. They were the rulers of Ferrara from 1240–1597. The younger branch of dynasty ended with Alfonso d'Este.

<sup>2</sup>A great noble family after the House of Este.

<sup>3</sup>Pope's choir that sings when there are church ceremonies. Choir preserved a long-standing tradition until 1979, when it was dismissed.

<sup>4</sup>The then-reigning Pope Urban VIII was a member of Barberini family.

was harpsichordist for the better part of his last years and his name spread across the borders of Italy, France and Germany. He died after a 10 day illness, in March of 1643.

Frescobaldi's music was greatly influenced by the tradition of Franco-Flemish school and its vocal polyphony. He got acquainted with it under the mentorship of Luzzasco Luzzaschi, who was valued as one of the greatest organists of the time. His role models were also Claudio Merulo and Ercole Pasquini. In his early works, in fantasies and toccatas, he relied mostly on the stylus phantasticus, on which he built the basis for his strict construction of music, from the motif that he constantly develops with the processes of variation. His imagination, his style is to be found in the madrigals of his early work. The influence on his imagination is to be found in the music form of the time, seconda pratica, where the emphasis is on affective music, expressing words and phrases with music.

MENSURAL NOTATION

In order to understand and correctly perform music, we must be acquainted with the mensural notation that was used in Frescobaldi's time. However, early form of mensural notation was first described and codified in 13<sup>th</sup> century by Franco of Cologne. He defined it and wrote about it in his work *Ars cantus mensurabilis*. According to him, the first derivation of the black mensural notation is called Franconian notation.

Black mensural notation was used within the time frame between 1230 and 1430. The Franconian notation assigned specific durational values for the first time to specific note forms. The most important notes were longa and breve. Longa had a length of three breves (perfect - perfect longa). If longa had a length of two breves, it was incomplete (imperfect longa).

The following figure shows all the notations of the Franconian notation:



Figure 2. Black Mensural Notation. Taken from: Wikipedia contributors. (2018, April 4). Wikipedia, Die freie Enzyklopädie. Retrieved 15:45, April 19, 2018, from: <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mensuralnotation>

In the 14th century imperfect prolation was recorded in addition to perfect prolation. Perfect prolation has three minims per tactus. In this way the compositions are proportionate (4/4, 2/4). Through new terms, which are major and minor, new rules of notation were established.

The division of maxima into longas was called *modus maior*. It can be either ternary or binary. The division of the semibreve into minims was called *prolatio*, that of the breve into semibreves was called *tempus*, and that of the longa into breves was known as *modus*. The division of the maxima into longas was called *modus maior*. The two types of *prolatio* were also known as "major prolation" and "minor prolation". *Tempus* and *prolatio* could be signaled by a set of mensuration signs at the beginning of a composition. *Tempus* refers to *mensura*, more specifically to duration of *brevis*. A circle for *tempus perfectum*, a semicircle for *tempus imperfectum*, each combined with a dot for *prolatio maior*, or no dot for *prolatio minor*.

There is a religious symbolism behind the terms *perfectum* and *imperfectum*. Perfect prolation has three minims per tactus, number 3 symbolises the Holy Trinity (Father, Son and the Holy Spirit). Moreover, the circle symbolises perfection, so it is sacred and perfect.

Tempus	Prolatio	Sign	Semibrevis	Minims	Modern
perfectum	major	⊙	○○○		1:4 1:2 1:1 9/8 9/4 9/2
perfectum	minor	○	○○○		3/4 3/2 3/1
imperfectum	major	◐	○○		6/8 6/4 6/2
imperfectum	minor	◑	○○		2/4 2/2 2/1

Figure 3. Mensuration signs. Taken from: Wikipedia contributors. (2017, November 1). Mensural notation. In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved 20:41, April 20, 2018, from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mensural\\_notation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mensural_notation)

A semicircle (4/4) and semicircle with vertical stroke through the sign, also known as “alla breve” are the ones in use today and originate form mensural notation.

The choirs had only one copy of the written composition before the invention of printing press and music and notation printing. As the choirs grew bigger, the demand for bigger size of the notes grew stronger, so that everyone could see. In the 15th century parchment paper was substituted for a finer paper. Because of that composers began to use hollow note shapes or “white notation”. It was a practical resolution really, since the black notation used coloured notes and the thin paper that substituted parchment soaked through. The use of white notation caused the expansion of the division into smaller note values.

		13th	14th	15th	17th
<b>Maxima</b>	<b>Mx</b>				
<b>Longa</b>	<b>L</b>				
<b>Breve</b>	<b>B</b>				
<b>Semibreve</b>	<b>Sb</b>				
<b>Minim</b>	<b>Mn</b>				
<b>Semiminim</b>	<b>Sm</b>				
<b>Fusa</b>	<b>F</b>				
<b>Semifusa</b>	<b>Sf</b>				

Figure 4. Note values and rests. Taken from: Wikipedia contributors. (2018, April 4). Wikipedia, Die freieEnzyklopädie. Retrieved 15:45, April 19, 2018, from: <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mensuralnotation>

The music notation today is easier to read; since it is printed in a way everybody can understand. This was certainly not the case when Frescobaldi was composing. There were two types of notation for

keyboard instruments. One was Italian tablature and the other was sheet music (Laukvik, 1990, p. 109). In sheet music each note is written in its own line and staff consists of five horizontal lines.

In the preface to the collections he issued, Frescobaldi explained that he intentionally used partiture (sheet music) to note music<sup>1</sup>, since he felt it was neglected. He also used this pedagogical principle in the work of Fiori musicali.

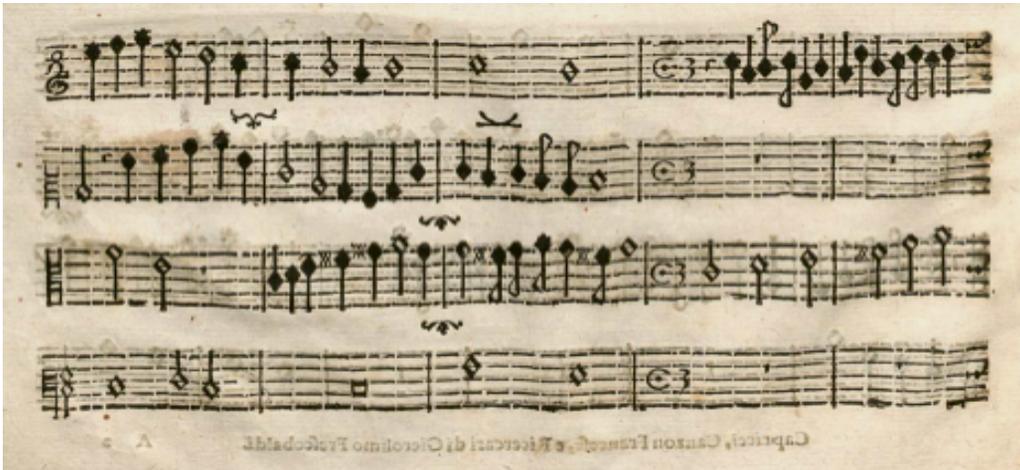


Figure 5. A case of partiture (sheet music)- Capriccio sopra Ut, re, mi, fa, sol. Frescobaldi, Girolamo (1626). Il primo libro di capricci, canzon francese e ricercari, Venice: Alessandro Vincenti.

Italian tablature is somewhat different from modern music notation. The uppercase consists of 6 lines and lowercase consists of 8 lines. Tablature is also harder to read, perhaps that is why there has been a change in a form of additional lines. There are also other kinds of tablatures, such as Spanish tablature<sup>2</sup> that used numbers.



<sup>1</sup>Use of Partitures (Sheet music) in 16th century raised questions in musicologists. They questioned whether there are more instruments or only one.

<sup>2</sup>Antonio de Cabezón used Spanish tablature for his compositions.

Figure 6. Italian Tablature. Il secondo libro di toccate, canzone, versi d'hinni, magnificat, gagliarde, correnti, et altre partite francese e ricercari, Rome: Nicolo Borbone, 1637.

#### FIRST INSTRUCTIONS FOR PLAYING MUSIC IN HISTORY OF MUSIC

The introductions of Frescobaldi's music collections contain instructions on how to play keyboard instruments. These instructions can be found in his First Book of Toccatas (Toccate e Partite, Primo libro) published in 1615. This edition was immediately followed by another revised edition (1616). So a year later (in the second edition or reprint) this preface is even more extensive. The preface appears in all reprints and following editions (Toccate II in 1637).

Even though Frescobaldi recognizes and respects the merits of the performer, he gives friendly advice to the performer on how to play pieces of music he composed. He acknowledges that playing with melodies and various passages is very popular; nonetheless he adds the following tips to the collection:

1. The way of playing should not be subject to the Tactus, as we see applied in modern Madrigals, which (although they are difficult) are facilitated by means of the Tactus, beating it sometimes languidly, sometimes quickly, and even sustaining it in the air, according to their [the Madrigals'] passions, or the sense of the words.
2. In the toccate I took care not only that they should be full of different movements and passionate effects: but also that each of these movements can be separated one from another, so that the player has no obligation to finish them all, but can stop wherever it seems convenient to them.
3. He recommends to spread the chords (arpeggio) in order not to leave a void in the instrument. Toccatas should also be performed in a slow manner. If a sound dies away, it is allowed to strike the chords again or notes of the chords.
4. On the last note, both of trills and of passage-work that moves by leaps or by step, you have to stop, even if that note is a quaver or semi-quaver, or dissimilar to the following note. This pausing will avoid any confusion between one passage and another.
5. The cadences, although they might be written fast, can appropriately be somewhat sustained; and as you approach the conclusion of passage-work or cadences you go sustaining the tempo more adagio. The separation and conclusion of movements is when you find a consonance in both hands together, written in minims.
6. When you find a trill in the right hand, or the left, and simultaneously the other hand has passage-work, you should not synchronise these note by note, but just try to make the trill fast, and carry the passage-work less fast and passionately: otherwise there will be confusion.
7. When you find some movement with quavers and semiquavers together in the two hands, it shouldn't be taken too fast: and the hand that plays the semiquavers must play them somewhat dotted, that is not the first, but the second [note] should be dotted, and so on all the way through, one no, the next yes.
8. Before you play a 'double movement' where both hands have semiquavers, you should stop on the previous note, even if it is 'black' (i.e. short: crotchet, quaver, semiquaver); then resolutely play the passage-work, so that the agility of the hand will be so much more apparent.
9. In the Partite (variations), when you find passage-work and passionate effects it will be good to take the tempo largo; you should observe this also in the toccate. The other [variations] without passage-work can be played with a somewhat allegro Tactus, leaving the good taste and fine judgement of the player to 'drive the tempo'; in this [driving the tempo] lies the spirit and perfection of this manner and style of playing« (Frescobaldi Rules, OK? /andrewlawrenceking.com/2015/10/23/frescobaldi-rules-ok/)

It is interesting that notes inégales can be found in Frescobaldi's compositions. He gives good practical advice to take these movements at a steady tempo (some modern performers treat them as a race for an Olympic speed record). So whilst one hand moves in quavers (taken normally, and in steady Tactus), the semiquavers in the other hand are given a gentle 'reverse swing' in 'Lombard' rhythm (short-long) (Lawrence-King, 2015). This style is familiar and it has roots in Spanish renaissance, more specifically in Arte de tañer fantasia (1565). Later it can be found in French Epoque de Classique (Jean Baptiste Lully, Jean Phillip Rameau)<sup>1</sup>.



Figure 7. Toccata Nona (Bk.II/09). Il secondo libro di toccate, canzone, versi d'hinni, magnificat, gagliarde, correnti, et altre partite francese e recercari, Rome: Nicolo Borbone, 1637.

Apel writes that "this preface is originally intended for the first collection of toccatas and that Frescobaldi only copied the instructions to another collection" (Apel, 1967, p. 461). Perhaps he overlooked emphasis in Toccata nona. However, Toccata Nona ends with Frescobaldi's comment: »Non senza fatica si giunge al fine«, which means: "the end is not reached without fatigue". This brings us to the conclusion that Frescobaldi did not make a mistake. He only implies that this particular Toccata demands high level of performance skills.

Frescobaldi mentions that Capricci is more difficult to perform than Ricercar and that he tried to compose difficult and easy pieces. The interesting fact is that the performer is allowed to stop playing in the middle of the composition. Beginnings of compositions should be played adagio, so that music resonates powerfully and lively. Cadences, although they might be written fast, should appropriately be somewhat sustained. With the notation 3/1 or 3/2, but either way, long notes (three semibreves) you should play fast; short notes (three minims) go faster. If you have a 6/4 section, this goes very fast. When dissonant notes are played, you should wait and play arpeggio. (Dissonance was a very strong way of expressing oneself). Frescobaldi concludes that he relies on the good taste and fine judgment of the performing artist, but with all due respect he adds his remarks which are not obligatory to follow.

Trills<sup>2</sup> should be performed where there is letter t above the note. Trill applies to the current note. In some places where notes are played above and towards "t" marked note, the trill could also be performed as a mordent (Laukvik, 112). In later works another symbol to change tempus is added. Adagio (Frescobaldi: Adasio) should not be understood only as slowly, but "above all as free" (Laukvik, 120).

<sup>1</sup>Known for notes inégales

<sup>2</sup>In the 17th century trill applied to the note indicated by letter t.

## INFLUENCE AND IMPORTANCE IN HISTORY OF MUSIC

»Like few composers before him, Frescobaldi took on the challenge of creating a substantial musical narrative not carried by a text – an endeavour that continued to engage him through more than three decades of creative activity. In each of his works a unique plot unfolds against the setting of a particular genre, instrumentation, mode or tonal type,

Musical ideas stated at the outset serve as central characters and are taken through a succession of episodes in which they may undergo repeated transformations. In these episodes Frescobaldi availed himself of a wide range of styles, often borrowing from other genres.

In the 1630s his experiments with extended narratives included, in addition, the joining of different dance forms, either as separate pieces or bridged by transitional passages.

Particularly novel was his use of dramatic tempo changes between successive sections. Although some changes are achieved by accent shifts (metric modulation) or mensural proportions, others are no longer mediated by tactus continuity but governed by the expressive affect of each episode. Indeed, at the end of a section the sense of a tactus may be wiped out entirely by an extended cadential flourish. Thus, many tempo changes are not prescribed with mathematical precision;

Tonal areas and modulations tend to play a secondary role in the structuring of Frescobaldi's narratives. In his later works the range of the alterations widens, allowing for such previously uncommon tonalities as E minor, with D $\sharp$  leading notes« (Silbiger, Oxford Music Online).

In Frescobaldi's Canzoni we find the origin of fugue, which was developed and perfected to the highest artistic level by Johann Sebastian Bach a few years later.

Frescobaldi is regarded as the most important composer for the keyboard instruments before Bach. He influenced important composers such as J. J. Froberger, J. J. Fux, H. Purcell. J. J. Fux wrote the famous pedagogical and theoretical work *Gradus ad Parnasum* in 1725 and used *Fiori musicali*<sup>1</sup> as a model for the strict-style compositions. Johann Sebastian Bach<sup>2</sup> studied Frescobaldi's compositions; he himself had his own transcribed work of *Fiori musicali* with Frescobaldi's signature and date 1714. In this same year he performed this work in Weimar. C.P.E. Bach, J. Kirnberger, J. Forkel and many others found origin for their work in Frescobaldi's compositions. *Stylus fantasticus* was very much present in Frescobaldi's early work. In late 17th and 18th century, it can be found in toccatas, preludes and fantasias.

Frescobaldi influenced the work of B. Bartok (20th century) who made a piano adaptation of *Toccata Quinta*<sup>3</sup> from "The Second Book of Toccatas". György Ligetti, who also studied his works, also stands out. He dedicated the last sentence of *Musica Ricercata* composed for the piano (*Andante misurato e tranquillo, Omaggio a Girolamo Frescobaldi*). To conclude, it is safe to argue that Frescobaldi's influence is wide-reaching.

<sup>1</sup>*Fiori musicali* ("Musical Flowers") contains three organ masses.

<sup>2</sup> C.P.E. Bach refers to Frescobaldi as a composer who influenced his father.

<sup>3</sup>*Toccata Quinta* was composed for the organ (pedals).



Figure 8. Capricci. Il primo libro di capricci, canzon francese e ricercari, Venice: Alessandro Vincenti, 1626.

This Capriccio contains a special instruction: “Obligo di cantare la quinta parte senza toccarla sempre di oblige del soggetto scritto si placet” (it is necessary to sing the fifth voice without playing it, always following the soggetto exactly as it is written, if you please). Frescobaldi chose not to specify when the melody should be sung. He leaves that to performing artist's good taste and fine judgement.

**CAPRICCIO**  
 Capriccio di oblige di cantare la quinta parte senza toccarla sempre di oblige del soggetto scritto si placet

In diesem Capriccio kann nach Belieben eine fünfte obligate Stimme nach dem angegebenen Thema gesungen und nicht gespielt werden.

Figure 9. Capriccio-modern music notation. Das erste Buch der Capricci, Ricercari und Canzoni : 1626 = The first book of capricci, ricercari and canzoni : 1626. Gesamt ausgabe nach dem Urtext herausgegeben von Pierre Pidoux, 1949–55.

## CONCLUSION

Historically informed performance of Frescobaldi's compositions for keyboard instruments relies heavily on his instructions, which serve as the first official document on how to play his compositions. Even though Frescobaldi gives advice on how to perform, the artist has to rely on their own good taste and fine judgement. This directly shows Frescobaldi's pedagogical qualities:

- music notation handwritten in a form of partiture (poor reading of partitures).
- developing musical taste: restriking of chords if the sound dies away and toccata, and passacaglia can be terminated at will of the performing artist.
- promoting the creativity of musicians (Capriccio<sup>1</sup> obbligo di cantare la quinta parte senza toccarla sempre di obbligo del soggetto scritto si placet)
- respect and recognition of the performer's taste.

Some of the things listed above are still relevant today and are expected of students. In the framework of historically informed performance Frescobaldi's instructions can therefore be an important guide in the performance of other Renaissance and Baroque works. If we paraphrase Christian Thielemann words, he once said that: "historically informed performance means to listen with today's ears, but not to lose sight of the past. It also means to understand what is noted in relation to given possibilities and to be able to transfer and apply effect to today's circumstance. Understand what it says and, in relation to the given possibilities, realize and transfer the effect to today's circumstances. "

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(Translated: Anamarija Potočnik; Slovenia, 15.5.2018)

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<sup>1</sup>Capriccio means mood



**Izidor Kokovnik** started his first accordion lessons when he was 14 years old. He enrolled in the music school in the Slovenian town of Velenje. After studying music under Prof. Zmago Štih, Kokovnik went abroad to study under Prof. Ivan Koval at the Liszt School of Music Weimar, Germany. He graduated in 2008 with a diploma in education and continued his studies in art education under Prof. Ivan Koval. In October 2010, Kokovnik resumed his studies at the Academy of Music in Ljubljana (Slovenia) with Prof. Primož Parovel and two years under Prof. Luka Juhart until receiving his master's degree.

Some of Kokovnik's most important performance are the concerts under the patronage of Jeunesses Musicales International of Slovenia, his re-creation of *Rej* (the composition by L. Lebič) at the *Župančič Award*

Ceremony where composer Prof. Lojze Lebič received the *Župančič Lifetime Achievement Award*, his solo recital at the *Nei Suoni dei Luoghi* international music festival (Italy) and his solo recital in Velenje –*MADE IN VELENJE-* (in the context of the European Capital of Culture Maribor 2012).

He performed with the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra (conductor Loris Voltolini) and he played at the *Composer's Evening* event of Uroš Rojko and Slavko L. Šuklar (Vienna). Kokovnik performed at the *World Première* of compositions by Marianne Richter (with the Ensemble for Contemporary Music Weimar, Germany), Prof. Wolf-Günter Leidel and Slovenian composer Blaženka Arnič-Lemež. He played first Slovenian premiere of piece *SPIN* for accordion (2001/2014) by composer Uroš Rojko.

Izidor Kokovnik has attended several seminars by accordionists such as Matti Rantanen, Iñaki Alberdi, Teodoro Anzellotti, Stefan Hussong, Hugo Noth, Margit Kern, Roman Pechmann, Corrado Rojac, harpsichordist Egon Mihajlovič, composer Alan Bern and others.

He presents the accordion as a concert instrument; he performs solo, in various chamber ensembles and with an orchestra. He has performed throughout Slovenia, Austria, Germany and Italy. His repertoire includes compositions from the Renaissance, Baroque and Classical periods, as well as late Romanticism and contemporary – original – music for the accordion. He loves exploring music, which is why he is no stranger to other musical genres.

Izidor Kokovnik has been teaching in Slovenia on the conservatory Fran Korun Kozeljški Velenje and on the music school Lasko-Radece since 2010.

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MA

*To Pedro Berardinelli, with gratitude*

## **A Reflection on Dario Buccino's Body-centric Music System and its HN Notation through "Finalmente il tempo è intero n° 1" for accordion and resonating surface (one performer)**

### **Abstract**

This thesis deals with the parameterization of the performative process controlled by Dario Buccino's HN System®, which is based on the experiential intensity (perceptual and self-perceptual) that occurs at the confluence of sound and the required actions of the body, through sensations lived by the interpreter.

This system, consisting of techniques of composition, notation and performance, is presented through the example of the composer's latest piece, Finalmente il tempo è intero n° 1 for accordion and resonating surface, written in 2017.

The accordion is an instrument which is extremely sensitive to physical movement and is thus functions as an excellent amplifier of bodily action, a characteristic which attracted the composer in the first place.

### **Introduction**

I met Dario Buccino at the Summer Course for New Music in Darmstadt in 2016. The privilege of performing one of his works led me to the idea of commissioning a new piece for solo accordion. To my great satisfaction, Buccino accepted this challenge.

The relatively unknown composer, based in Milan, has been engaged in extensive research and development of a musical system over the past thirty years – which he called the HN System®. While not widely recognized, his creativity and artistic depth has nevertheless attracted some important musicological figures that closely follow and study Buccino's work, such as Heinz-Klaus Metzger, Stefano Lombardi Vallauri and Marco Crescimanno.

The following reflection on Dario Buccino's Body-centric Music System and its HN Notation through Finalmente il tempo è intero n° 1 shows a new approach to accordion performance, regarding the materials employed and one's artistic expression.

### **Biography of the composer**

Dario Buccino, born in Rome 1968, is an Italian composer, multi-instrumentalist, vocalist, music theorist and designer of musical instruments.

In the period between 1987 and 1993 he studied composition at the Conservatoire "Giuseppe Verdi" in Milan with teachers including Irlando Danieli, Adriano Guarnieri and Sandro Gorli. After finishing his composition studies, Buccino studied electronic music with Alvis Vidolin and music analysis with Gianmario Borio at the "Civica Scuola di Musica" in Milan. As a student he attended many master classes with well-known composers, such as John Cage, Iannis Xenakis, Helmut Lachenmann, Gérard Grisey, James Tenney, Brian Ferneyhough, Toshio Hosokawa, Wolfgang Rihm, György Kurtág, Christian Wolf, Sofia Gubaidulina, Salvatore Sciarrino and many others. Amongst his vast studies with some of the most important figures of the contemporary music scene of the last half-century, the composer notes some that made a particularly significant impact on him:

"If I had to make a choice among the artists who I met personally and were more important to me, I could name Iannis Xenakis, John Cage, Brian Ferneyhough, Toshio Hosokawa, Walter Zimmermann, Irlando Danieli, Mario Garuti and Rena Mirecka (who is not a composer but an actress of the Jerzy Grotowski's Theater Laboratory). I'm choosing these names only among the persons I have studied or discussed with. There are many more among them who were important to me, I've just chosen the most impacting on me. There are also many others I have heard speaking in seminars and master classes who were deciding as well, but with whom I did not have a direct personal discussion".<sup>1</sup>

Since 1991 he has been developing the HN<sup>2</sup> System, a new musical system consisting of composition, notation and performance techniques, with the purpose of translating physical and psychical performance experiences into a compositional method of creating sound. Buccino has applied his system to the voice, acoustic and electronic instruments as well as to pieces ranging from solo to chamber and ensemble works.

In 1994 he was invited as a teacher at the International Summer Course for New Music in Darmstadt and presented his HN System, which was defined by the German music critic and theorist, Heinz-Klaus Metzger, as a "surprising artistic invention", capable of "parameterizing pain"<sup>3</sup>.

Buccino regularly performs his own music as a soloist or with the Ensemble HN, which he founded in 1993 and which is devoted to the performance of compositions written using the HN System. Following the idea of presenting the HN System as best as possible, he designed the HN Percussion<sup>®4</sup>, a specific set of musical instruments which involve the performer's entire body in a process of sound creation and which are, according to the composer, perfect for using the principles of his musical system. As a free improviser, his work has led him to collaborate with figures such as Tristan Honsinger, Tim Hodgkinson, Jean-Marc Montera, among many others.

He gives lectures, master classes and conducts workshops based on the HN System in conservatories and universities, as well as in kindergartens, elementary, secondary and high schools, both for music teachers and for the general public.

His music has been the focus of many academic papers by figures such as Heinz-Klaus Metzger, Paolo Emilio Carapezza, Stefano Lombardi Vallauri, Pietro Misuraca and Marco Crescimanno, and presented in *fora* such as the University of Palermo, the Teatro Massimo of Palermo and the EuroMAC – 8th European Music Analysis Conference in Leuven, Belgium.<sup>5</sup>

### HN System<sup>®</sup>

The irresistible desire to create an operative approach even more than an aesthetic musical style was Dario Buccino's main impetus for the investigation of a new musical system in the early nineties. Inspired by unforeseen life circumstances<sup>6</sup>, he draws his music from his views on the world and his personal attitude to life.

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<sup>1</sup> Information provided by Dario Buccino in a Skype interview made on June 5<sup>th</sup> 2018.

<sup>2</sup> HN is the acronym of the Latin locution *hic et nunc* – here and now.

<sup>3</sup> Crescimanno, Marco (2014) *Dario Buccino: per un'etica della percezione*. Festival Nuove Musiche 2014.

<sup>4</sup> HN Steel Sheet<sup>®</sup>, incCubo<sup>®</sup> and Grande incCubo<sup>®</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Dario Buccino's Biography  
<http://www.dariobuccino.com/creative/bio/dario-buccino.html> (accessed 5.6.2018)

<sup>6</sup> "In 1986, at 17 years of age, I was diagnosed with thyroid cancer. Life expectancy: two years, maybe one. I learnt to live within the pure present. No future, no past, no expectations, no regrets, only the ignition of the moment [...] Many long weeks later, suspended in the fragrance of eternity, the doctors told me that they had been mistaken. I didn't have cancer. The new revelation was even more devastating than the previous one. I was condemned to live anew within time that flows, which consumes itself with each passing year, a time within which one must construct existence and not only make it pulsate." Buccino, Dario (2014) *The HN System<sup>®</sup>: Hic et Nunc*.

"My musical imagination tends to proceed not through the creation of sound images but rather through the creation of irreducible units of sound images and performative images. I am not interested in the acoustic fact in itself; I am not interested in the executive act in itself. I am interested in the dynamics of the relationship between these two"<sup>1</sup>

Buccino sets priorities for himself. Instead of giving detailed instructions regarding how to produce a certain sound, he gives instructions on how to perform the physical action that is prescribed by the parameters expressed in the score.

"I felt the need to define a way of creating music which would enable me to compositionally organize, directly from the written page, not only sound events but also the experiential intensity with which to tackle these sound events at the moment of their performance"<sup>2</sup>

When Buccino mentions experiential intensity, he is not referring to expressivity. The composer sees experiential intensity as the irresistible consciousness of the performer regarding his performative activity, but in addition to his own and, above all, the listener's receptive concentration.

The performer's activity, in order to achieve the necessary intensity, must not be associated with any kind of theatricality. Every artist in total performative »nudity« approaches the execution of material in a unique way, namely from a starting point that can be common to everyone: a certain type of ecstasy, meditation or ritual movements, in order to release the desired energy and address the complex energy directly to the audience.

Visibility of the physical actions is not the goal of the composer or the composition itself. Physical actions are the means and language of the performer, not with the audience but with their creative being.

For a long time Buccino did not call his system the HN System and did not even consider it as a system in general. The idea only came years after he composed his HN Cycle<sup>3</sup>, which he already named. Afterwards, when he wanted to compose something completely different, the AE Cycle<sup>4</sup> – which is based on mental actions – he discovered that the most effective way to articulate it compositionally and to notate it in a way that allowed the freedom and precision as he needed, was to use again the system. It was a different version, but he did not yet realize how coherent it was with the first version of the system.

In his third cycle – the EP Cycle – Buccino tried to rebel against his own system, since he did not want to be trapped in it and develop automatic habits. But yet again, after extensive research he discovered a third version of the system and came to the conclusion that it was the only way to touch the core of what he was aiming for. Freedom and precision can be conceived of in infinite ways but what he was looking for required a balance that only his system could provide.

"Whatever compositional strategy I developed, however, was missing the vital spark of the present moment, and any improvisational praxis, on the other hand, failed to placate my need for the unrepeatability to come to life systematically. I needed to plunge myself into the centre of a crossroads: organize – and channel onto the written page – as much the intensity of the composition as that of the performative experience. After years of cracking my cranium against the wall that separated the two camps, I managed to tear it down and I found my path: the HN System"<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Buccino, Dario (2006) *How the HN System® Works* <http://www.dariobuccino.com/creative/writings/articles/559-how-the-hn-system-works> (accessed 2.6.2018)

<sup>2</sup> Buccino, Dario (2006) *How the HN System® Works* <http://www.dariobuccino.com/creative/writings/articles/559-how-the-hn-system-works> (accessed 2.6.2018)

<sup>3</sup> The compositions of this cycle are "Sempre più ampio il mio sguardo fisso alla morte", "Si nutre del tempo sotteso" and "E allora oggi la mano la scorgo spiegare le linee, ordire pazienza"

<sup>4</sup> One composition of this cycle, "Bastandosi la nuca a scorrere dietro la fronte", does not even require producing any sound, since it is written for solo mind.

<sup>5</sup>Buccino, Dario (2006) *How the HN System® Works* <http://www.dariobuccino.com/creative/works-eng/hn-system-eng/hn-concept-eng/what-it-is-eng.html> (accessed 3.6.2018)

So, little by little, Buccino discovered that automatic habits depend on how one uses one's own tools, leading him to comprehend that what he was looking for was actually a part of himself and that he could not become someone else – even though this part of him required the perpetual renovation of his own goals. Of his goals but not of his deepest being.

Once he understood this, he decided to dedicate his efforts to widening and deepening the system instead of abandoning it. Buccino's desire not to escape from himself had led him to discover that the system was systematically anti-systematic – meaning that the system demands both from the interpreter and from the composer that one does not rely on worn out habits but instead looks inside him/herself to reach a dimension in which ideas and energy flow with a pure quality, as if one is born in that very moment.

Most likely, Buccino's achievement is not a method, since a method has a fixed protocol to follow in order to achieve its goals. Eventually Buccino understood that all the elements of his system could grow, extend and transform themselves to an infinite extent, without ever losing their philosophical, perceptual, musical and expressive core, even when he stretched them to opposite aesthetic extremes. This could also be done without ever losing their mutual connection, a connection that links each single micro and macro element to each other – all of which makes this closer to what one could call a system.

If we want to make a parallel with other composers who in their works introduce or suggest a use of performativity, the Italian musicologist Stefano Lombardi Vallauri offers us a couple of interesting guides.

In his work *The Composition of Experience in the Musical-Holistic Art of Dario Buccino*, Vallauri refers to Dieter Schnebel's piece *Maulwerke*, written between 1968 and 1974, Karlheinz Stockhausen's piece *Aus den sieben Tagen*, written in 1968, Lachenmann's *Musique concrète instrumentale* and Brian Ferneyhough's notion of psychophysical effort. Explaining the above-mentioned works and their core, he also emphasizes Buccino's solidity in parameterization.

“With respect to Schnebel, Lachenmann, and Ferneyhough, the original element added by Buccino as a means for the creation of form is an indication not only of bodily actions, but also global (bodily, mental) experiences. Stockhausen also prescribes experiences, though he indicates them in a generic and intuitive manner, in mystical terms; he does not explain how to translate the mental states in sound-producing behaviors, he only asks for it. With respect to this composer, Buccino adds an exact description of the required experiences, as well as of the physical behaviors apt to produce the required sound results.”<sup>1</sup>

After coming to the more defined conception of his system, the naming of it – “HN” – was not made by chance, but by relating it with the main symbol of his notation system, as well as the name of the very first cycle written with this approach. The coherence of the name is also attached to the implied idea that the system is systematically based on the non-repetitive quality of any moment of life, consequently being systematically based on the impossibility of creating a perfect system. Thus, one should note the deliberate contradiction between the creation of a system and its simultaneous impossibility of achieving perfection and conclusiveness.

### HN notation

The HN notation is not merely about action, it is about the perception, conditions and intention informing the relation experienced and expressed by the interpreter between action and sound. Sound is still the main focus, but the score deviates part of the interpreter's attention to physical and mental stimuli and limits which nurture his/her relation with sound.

It is like putting stones and walls inside and around a river: the shape of the flow will change, and its life will receive stimuli to grow or become more subtle and sensitive, but the flow itself, as much as its original life power, freedom, subtlety and sensitivity, is up to the interpreter. What we hear through an HN score is the interpreter's depth at least as much as the composer's music. If the former disappears then the HN music itself disappears, if on the other hand it shines then the HN music will become one with that

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<sup>1</sup> Vallauri, Stefano Lombardi (2016), *The Composition of Experience in the Musical-Holistic Art of Dario Buccino* <http://ppct.caicyt.gov.ar/index.php/oidopensante/article/view/8035> (accessed 17.6.2018)

brightness.

"In order to compositionally organize such experiential images, I needed first of all to create a notation which did not concentrate exclusively on the audible form of musical ideas. The system of notation I devised in response to this need is the methodological fulcrum in what I then called HN System, a practical platform for the articulation of my compositional imagination as well as my rapport with the interpreter"<sup>1</sup>

Exploring various pieces by Buccino, from solo compositions to ensemble, I noticed some flexibility and adaption in the notation itself. Chronologically speaking, the development of both the system and the notation is obvious – considering that the development is the result of the composer's constant research and self-reflection.

His early works, created in the nineties, have a certain amount of additional experimentalism.

The score of these earlier works is filled with the most minute details and subtleties which require maximal dedication in addition to a certain degree of an external concentration and sterile objectivity on the part of the performers during the preparation phase, while his later works respond with a certain continuum of parameters through a simple organization of the score.

An example of the aforementioned would be Buccino's work *Toccante di Esistere*, which comprises a trio that includes accordion, as well as viola and percussion, composed in 1997.

In addition to the more "standard" parameters, such as duration and intensity, we can find the instructions relating to the right and left manuals of the accordion, as well as to the bellows. Each of the manuals has four different types of complex parameters: pause execution technique<sup>2</sup>, hand positioning during execution on the keyboard, actions to be performed on the keyboard and unnamed parameter<sup>3</sup> (it cannot be named because it refers to the inner subtle dynamics of the physical act); as for the bellows he gives instructions about the direction of opening/closing, as well as the emotional quality (from turbulent to calm) with which to move them.

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<sup>1</sup>Buccino, Dario (2006) *How the HN System® Works*

<http://www.dariobuccino.com/creative/works-eng/hn-system-eng/hn-concept-eng/what-it-is-eng.html> (accessed 3.6.2018)

<sup>2</sup> It is relevant to mention that the instrument requires preparation. Removing the accordion grill that covers the reeds of the keyboard, a strip of adhesive scotch should be placed in order to cover half of each hole of the low pitched reeds. In this way the sound will continuously bend.

<sup>3</sup> "Again we are here in the spiritual realm. With spiritual I always mean something intangible but at the same time extremely tangible, immediate, something we make experience of in every second of the day even if we do not focus it. It is like the chakra's or the subtle body's theories. This parameter refers to such energies". This information was obtained during a Skype interview with Dario Buccino made on June 5<sup>th</sup> 2018.



Unlike his trio, the piece *Finalmente il tempo è intero n° 1* - for accordion and resonating surface (to be played by only one performer), written in 2017 - is presented with a simpler organization of material, balanced with direct and clear instructions for the performer, namely regarding intensity and, most importantly, instructions for guiding the bellows with the aim of highlighting a specific dynamic. It is obvious from the notation that the composer has carried out extensive research into the potential use of the bellows, namely regarding its fundamental function – pumping air. Compared with the trio mentioned above, in *Finalmente il tempo è intero n° 1*, Buccino expresses himself through the whole palette of tone control possibilities, from sensitive moments of silence to barbaric outbursts of energy focused through each tone, thus exploring the entire capacity and range of the bellows.

**Finalmente il tempo è intero n° 1**  
 For accordion and resonating surface (one performer)  
 List of symbols

Dario Buccino

Tempo	
ACCORDION INTENTION	
BELLOW	
INTENTION	
SUPERBALL	

Fig. 2: List of symbols from *Finalmente il tempo è intero n° 1* by Dario Buccino

Nevertheless, in almost all Buccino's works we can find some common aspects when it comes to working with parameters such as durations, intensities and intention, which are the basis, both in a structural and in a performance practice sense.

The parameter duration relates to the experience of time, and thus is not mentioned as a specific duration range such as "more or less 20 seconds", but through the expression of an intention, such as "the shortest and/or longest possible in order to feel and transmit a specific kind of temporal experience".

<u>Tempo</u>	DURATION OF THE BAR
	As short as possible. One minimum time unit   Maximum duration: 20 seconds
	Very short. Intuitively two minimum time units   Maximum duration: 40 seconds
	Short. Intuitively three minimum time units   Maximum duration: 60 seconds
	Long. Intuitively four minimum time units   Maximum duration: 80 seconds
	Very long. Intuitively five minimum time units   Maximum duration: 100 seconds
	As long as possible. Intuitively six minimum time units   Maximum duration: 120 seconds

Fig. 3: Symbols for tempo from *Finalmente il tempo è intero n° 1* by Dario Buccino

The intensity scale, ranging between the extremes of "softest possible" and "loudest possible", is an experiential scale, not an objective one, thus the attention is widened – it ranges from sound perception itself to the perception of one's sonic intention. The c.m.<sup>1</sup> concept indicates something that is measurable in terms of sensations: not only acoustic but emotional sensations. A sound has to be magical, it has to strike the interpreter's ears with its mysterious balance of presence and absence.

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<sup>1</sup> c.m. refers to what the composer calls *contributo magico* - magical contribution

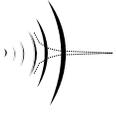
BELLOWS | Volume

$\emptyset$	No volume.
$\boxed{P!}$ c.m.	Softest possible "contributo magico" ("magical contribution"). That is play so soft to keep the sound suspended between inaudibility and the the last possible audibility in relation to the other sounds or silence itself.
$\boxed{P!}$	As soft as possible.
P!	Very soft.
P	Soft.
F	Loud.
F!	Very loud.
$\boxed{F!}$	As loud as possible.
$\emptyset \ \boxed{P!}$	Oscillate between the indicated values. The indicated values are included in the range, and do not imply a preferred direction of the oscillation, which will explore the space in between.
$\emptyset \   \ \boxed{P!}$	Alternate the indicated values. The indicated values do not imply a preferred order of the alternation, which will <b>not</b> explore the space in between.

Fig. 5: Symbols for intention from Finalmente il tempo è intero n° 1 by Dario Buccino

Concerning the parameter intention, it refers, in Buccino's compositional universe, once again, directly to sound, namely to the musical will and to the interpreter's inner perception of sound emission and performative behavior.

INTENTION



Play as if you wanted your sound to **wrap** the sounds produced by the other hand and/or the surrounding silence. The actual acoustic result is not as important as the musical attitude which this effort will give life to, a musical attitude which will be perceivable in incalculable details too subtle to be described rationally but nonetheless deciding.



Play as if you wanted your sound to **penetrate** the sounds produced by the other hand and/or the surrounding silence. The actual acoustic result is not as important as the musical attitude which this effort will give life to, a musical attitude which will be perceivable in incalculable details too subtle to be described rationally but nonetheless deciding.

Fig. 5: Symbols for intention from Finalmente il tempo è intero n° 1 by Dario Buccino

The independent control of pressure and speed of movement of the superball leads the performer to a subtle perception of what he/she is doing in relation both to sound and to his/her muscles.

SUPERBALL | Pressure exerted on the surface

- ∅ No pressure (slightly lift the superball from the surface)
-  Lightest possible "contributo magico" ("magical contribution").
-  As light as possible
-  Very light
-  Light
-  Heavy
-  Very heavy
-  As heavy as possible

SUPERBALL | Speed of the movement

- ∅ No speed (stop the movement without lifting the superball)
-  Slowest possible "contributo magico" ("magical contribution").
-  As slow as possible
-  Very slow
-  Slow
-  Fast
-  Very fast
-  As fast as possible

Fig. 6: Symbols for superball from Finalmente il tempo è intero n° 1 by Dario Buccino

As a stimulus for the performer's artistic creativity, the composer also uses the symbol HN to imply the complete freedom of performance within the parameter to which the sign refers.

Taking the aforementioned into account, one can conclude that Buccino's notation in *Finalmente il tempo è intero n°1* is not focused on the sonic result. One could even say in this regard that the sonic environment of the piece is scarcely attainable and perceivable through the observation of the score. Consequently, it is also reasonable to say that the sound universe, although implicit in the notation of the score, could vary considerably between different interpretations, due both to the notation employed – for example, the notation of the durations, namely the different flexible fermatas – and to the inherent inertia of some of the selected material – such as the control of the superballs, namely of their friction against the surface. Thus, the notation conceived by Buccino is – on an immediate level – concentrated in the actions that should be carried out, and – on a subliminal level – dwells in the intention that should be carried through by the performer. The whole process leads to a specific control of sound by the composer, because each specific sound's psycho-acoustic quality can only be obtained through the specific sensitive motor, perceptual and self-perceptual experience prescribed by the score and to be pursued through utter subjectivity (as, for example, in the theatre, a specific light in an actor's eyes, or serenity in his voice, cannot simply be "done" but has to be achieved going through an inner, personally unique experience, even if guided by a method).

### Dario Buccino's work *Finalmente il tempo è intero n° 1*

In the previous chapter we had the opportunity to take a closer look into the compositional system and its notation, as well as the parameters that stretch through the composer's creative opus. Presenting such a complex work on the concert stage is a huge challenge for the performer, who often has to deal with the problem of how to solve all technical challenges derived from the requirements of the composer. Consequently, the piece should be approached from several angles, such as analytical, practical and intuitive.

The biggest challenge is how to present all the parameters from the graphic score. In addition to the already mentioned standard parameters, such as duration, intensity, intension and pressure, we come across some specific instructions, inherent to performance practice of concrete accordion playing.

In such a context, the indications of the accordion keys to be pressed and how much to press them are not indications of what to play but of the conditions within which one gives life to the previously mentioned complex sound-perceptual-performative-emotional process.

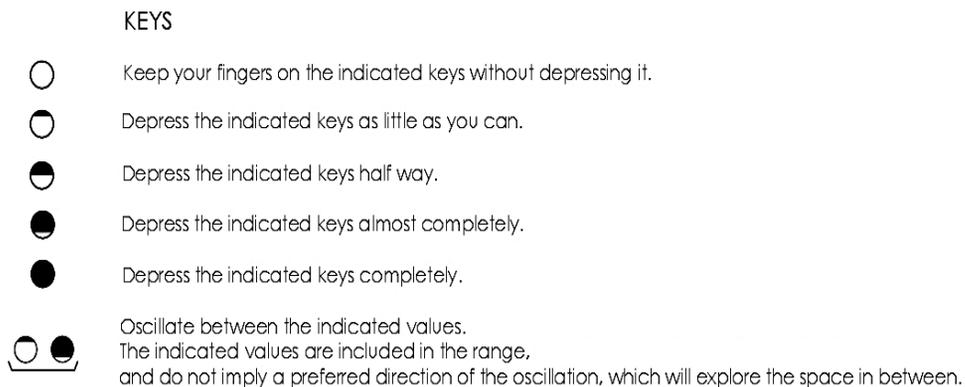


Fig. 7: Symbols for keys pressure from *Finalmente il tempo è intero n° 1* by Dario Buccino

Even when the score requires a specific bellows action – the scribble – it involves something which constitutes much more than a simple gestural fact; it is instead an organic process where the prescribed action is the tip of the iceberg, or better yet, the surfacing side of a dynamic happening, like the outer shape of a tumultuous flow of submerged waves.

**BELLOWS | Scribble**

- 

Produce a scribble, i.e. a complex flow of narrow, quick, spastic movements with the bellows and your own whole body | Perfectly inaudible.
- 

Produce a scribble, i.e. a complex flow of narrow, quick, spastic movements with the bellows and your own whole body | Barely audible.
- 

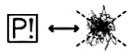
Produce a scribble, i.e. a complex flow of narrow, quick, spastic movements with the bellows and your own whole body | Audible.
- 

Produce a scribble, i.e. a complex flow of narrow, quick, spastic movements with the bellows and your own whole body | Very audible.
- 

Produce a scribble, i.e. a complex flow of narrow, quick, spastic movements with the bellows and your own whole body | As audible as possible.
- 

Oscillate between the indicated values. The indicated values are included in the range, and do not imply a preferred direction of the oscillation, which will explore the space in between.

**BELLOWS | Volume and scribble**

- 

Oscillate between the indicated sound emissions. The indicated values are included in the range, and do not imply a preferred direction of the oscillation, which will explore the space in between.

Fig. 8: Symbols for scribble from *Finalmente il tempo è intero n° 1* by Dario Buccino

The use of the superball in *Finalmente il tempo è intero n° 1* provides a counterpart to the accordion part. This sought duality is also present in the selection of entities or processes in Buccino’s music – for example, in the opposition of body vs. sound or reversible vs. irreversible time.

Thus, the superball shares with the accordion the same sensation of a sound with an almost intangible spatial quality. They are there, but at the same time they are not as physically concrete as, for example, a drum or a cello. The imminence of sound was the link between the two, so that they could hide themselves into each other, becoming the “magical contribution” of the other.

The aforementioned regards the affinity of the shared sonic possibilities produced by the superball and the accordion. Buccino actually uses this affinity to also give depth to their differences, but without alienating the two sounds: if they were of a totally different nature they would not create an intrinsic relation and would instead merely present their lack of relationship, with their differences remaining on the surface of the psychic experience. This can be an aesthetic choice for some, but Buccino, working with fusal relationships, aims to reach the utter psychic involvement of both the performer and the listener.

What Buccino seeks is an inner connection between sounds, which allows an extreme sonic difference between them. So it is not only their acoustic nature (timbre or even more global sound) which links sounds together, but in particular other kinds of “nature”: spatial, articulatory, expressive... but above all spiritual (meaning both the inner presence required to master them and the corporeal attitude prompted by the experience of performing them. For example, screaming requires a physical attitude which is very similar to biting something, even if they do not have any sonic similarity).

Dario Buccino | **Finalmente il tempo è intero n° 1**  
For accordion and resonating surface (one performer)

		(1:04)	(1:32)	(2:23)	(3:07)	(3:57)	(4:45)	(5:26)
		2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Tempo	A	^!	^!	^!	△!	△!	□	^!
ZOO-PROCUA	INTENTION	)))	)))	-	)))	)))	)))	HN
	BELLAWS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	SUPERBALL	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	BELLAWS	P! c.m.	P! c.m.	-	P!	P! c.m.	P! c.m.	-
	INTENTION	)))	HN	HN	)))	)))	HN	-
	SUPERBALL	○	○	○	○	○	○	-
	BELLAWS	P! c.m.	P! c.m.	P! c.m.	P!	P!	P!	-

(The minute:second indications refer to: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Vw0O0h67\\_c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Vw0O0h67_c))

Fig. 9: The first page of Finalmente il tempo è intero n° 1 by Dario Buccino

Thus, Buccino generates a kind of counterpoint through different articulations (static, dynamic, etc.), spatial sensations (close, far away, etc.), musicality (hyper-precise, instinctual, etc.), and so on.

Taking this into consideration one can conclude that Buccino’s view of the relationship between the accordion and the superball consists of two instruments managed by the same body, mind and sensitivity.

The accordion in some ways loses its identity as an instrument and becomes a part of the performer; it becomes part of a more complex story. In this way, we can discover the very essence of the possibilities, both the instrument and ourselves.

### Conclusions

A system based on the performative process and not an explicitly sonorous result presents the symbiosis of composer and interpreter: a union that cannot function with any single missing link. Even if we are allowed the freedom to decide upon a specific action, we still need the composer's idea of a structure and vice versa.

The problem that arises is how to direct and inform listeners so that they can properly understand the idea. An audience could easily connect a performer’s expressivity with theatrical content, which is certainly not Dario Buccino’s goal.

One of the potential solutions is certainly to perform the work in half darkness, preventing the listener from focusing on the visual aspect of the performance.

However, my main conclusion in this thesis is that this work reveals the huge potential in way that the accordion can be used today. In the world of contemporary music new resources are constantly being sought, and this composition, through the unique approach of the composer, gives the instrument an entirely new face and opens the possibility to the performer to expand his boundaries.

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**Mirko Jevtovic** was born in 1989 in Kragujevac (Serbia). Both, Lower music school (class Sonja Nescic and Jadranka Lukovac) and High music school (class Miljan Bjeletic) he finished in his hometown, where he graduated as the best student of his generation. After completing the first year of the accordion studies at FILUM in the class of professor Vojin Vasović, he continued his studies at the Music Academy in Ljubljana (Slovenia) under the supervision of professor Borut Zagoranski.

For exceptional studying successes he received the Prešeren's Award of Music Academy in Ljubljana, while as a member of Duo Furioso was awarded with the Prešeren Award of the University of Ljubljana, which is the most prestigious student recognition in Slovenia.

In 2014, he was selected by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) to participate in the prestigious New Talent 2014 competition within the Slovak Philharmonic Music Festival in Bratislava.

He completed his Master's degree in classical accordion with the highest grade and honors - diploma "Summa cum laude" by the Academy of Music in Ljubljana.

Dedicated exclusively to contemporary music in various projects of solo, chamber or ensemble music, Jevtović collaborates with some of the most prestigious composers of today, such as Rebecca Saunders, Bernhard Lang, Alberto Posadas, José María Sánchez-Verdú, Uroš Rojko and others. He has premiered around 20 new pieces.

As a soloist or invited member, Mirko performed with the RSO Wien, Klangforum Wien, Schallfeld ensemble, RTV Slovenia Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra of the Young Ljubljana Soloists and the Chamber Orchestra of the Music Academy in Ljubljana, led by conductors Nacho de Paz, Beat Furrer, Bas Wiegers, Cornelius Meister, En Shao, Darko Butorac, Simon Krečič and others. He has performed at festivals such as Ljubljana Festival (Slovenia), World Days of Music ISCM 2015 (Slovenia) and Tzliil Meudcan (Israel).

He has been recording several times for the archives of RTV Slovenia, while in 2015 he participated in the recording of the portrayal CD "Poetics of the Gaze" by Spanish composer Alberto Posadas with ensemble Klangforum Wien, published for NEOS Music label.

He attended the masterclasses of renowned accordionists and seminars such as Impuls Academy (Austria) and the International Summer Academy for New Music in Darmstadt (Germany).

As a stipendist of "The Best of South-East" program, he also completed his Master's degree of Performance Practice in Contemporary Music at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Graz (Austria), under the mentorship of Krassimir Sterev and ensemble Klangforum Wien.

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**Rik Cornelissen**, The Netherlands

BA

### **Borders of a musical identity**

Where are the borders of a musical language? What does it bring a musician when you look over the borders? Can it help to develop your own style, language or way of playing?

During my classical study accordion at the Rotterdam Conservatory in The Netherlands I was always searching; experimenting with tango and jazz, improvising, composing and arranging. I already started creating my own language, without knowing where to go. After my studies in Rotterdam I started my study Jazz Accordion at the ArtEZ University of Arts in Arnhem, The Netherlands, and continued my search. And after 10 years I still do.

My motto: check-out everything I like, regardless of style, and try to implement it in my way of playing. Started of with transcribing dozens of Richard Galliano's improvisations and moved on to many different musicians, instruments and musical styles, I try to develop by the new gained information. Little by little I implement the new ideas in my playing; a melodic idea, a harmonic idea, a rhythmic idea ,a groove, an articulation, a technique....it can be anything. Sometimes it leads to a new insight to use, sometimes to a new composition or arrangement, sometimes to nothing in particular. I know my strong points and my weak points and I try to continue my search and keep on developing.

Changing from classical music to jazz was quite a job; not knowing how to develop myself when I had nothing more than an easy tune in front of me, instead of a difficult and technical arrangement of some classical piece. It made me search for a totally different approach of studying, playing and using the instrument. First of all my ears and not my eyes became my most valuable sense. Second of all musical priorities shifted; timing and rhythm became number one on the list, articulation and phrasing number two and the rest came after that. And third: I stopped playing things what I didn't hear in my head, what I couldn't sing. These new set of rules changed my playing immensely and became the basics for my development.

Studying with mostly pianists during my jazz studies made me interested in copying piano techniques and possibilities to accordion. The use of free-bass is a must and gives all sorts of options which are very interesting to investigate. Actually I was quite surprised that this is still such an undervalued concept among jazz accordianists. Bass lines, left-hand voicings, two-handed voicings, countermelodies and so on are all worth to experience and investigate.

### **The language of jazz**

It is difficult and narrow-minded to talk about a music style with a long tradition in general thoughts. For instance classical music means a long period of music, divided in time sections (Early music, Renaissance, Baroque etc), with composers from different countries, with different backgrounds etc. So talking about classical music is often not precise enough; Baroque phrasing is different then Romantic phrasing. And even Bach is different then Handel, so within a particular style period there are differences as well. With jazz the same problem occurs. Although the tradition is way shorter, the development went faster as well. Playing Swing is different then playing Bebop or Cool Jazz. And the countless combinations with classical, blues, pop, rock and different World Music styles makes it even more complex to talk about the style Jazz.

So what makes jazz jazz? In general you could say that jazz is a style where 'communication and the choice of the moment' has more importance in comparison to other styles. That means that phrasing, articulation, rhythm, harmonics of a theme all can change if the drummer decides to use an other groove. So when you play in a band interacting on each others choices is very important. And those choices could be basically anything: phrasing, groove, melody, rhythm, harmony, style etc. All things that could be changes on the spot. And of course improvisation has a key role in this music. It is the moment that you can choose practically anything and make it unique every time again.

### **The four layers**

A jazz band can be divided in four layers: melody, harmony, bass and rhythm. As an accordion player you can contribute to either of these elements. For instance if you have a standard jazz combo (horn player (sax or trumpet), piano, bass and drums) we could be the horn player of the band. Or the piano player. If you play in a combo with no bass (for instance in a duo with a horn player or singer) then you have to cover the bass part as well. And maybe you want to add some percussion at some point. All are different skills which you can develop separately, depending in which groups you work at the moment. But being aware of the different layers and knowing what options there are is mandatory for everything else that happens in the same moment within the other elements. As mentioned before: when the drummer changes the groove, the whole rhythm section, which includes the bass and chord player, has to follow. And that can change the lines of the melody. Or if the soloist chooses a certain scale, then the harmonics have to connect with that. Or if there is a certain rhythmical pattern in the melody, the others can choose whether they will go with it or stay in their own groove...etc...etc. It is all a matter of communication and interacting, which have to happen on the spot. So preparation means in this case: knowing what can happen, so you can react faster when it happens. And therefore you have to know (to a certain degree) what the possibilities of the other instrumentalists and sections are.

### **How to develop your skills First of all: use your ears!**

To be able to function well in jazz or any other improvised music you can't rely only on sheet music, due the simple fact that what is written not necessarily have to be played. If you give musicians freedom, you don't know what is going to happen (to a certain point). So you have to rely more on your ears. Not everyone is born with the same quality of recognizing pitch, but it is a skill that you can train easily. Just write down things you hear and copy them. Play them with recording or with the sound in your memory. Knowing that you should develop this skill, you should make it a fixed part of your study schedule. And by using your ears, checking out recordings and copy other players you can work on different aspects of the music.

### **Feel the groove**

To learn a song you first have to know the style and groove where everything has to fit into. Maybe it is a standard groove what you can use for a first approach, like: medium swing, a jazz-ballad, a samba, bossa nova etc. Or maybe a specific groove that someone (a band member or the composer) wants to use. Try to get a sample/recording of it to play along with. This helps! There are also many samples to buy, apps to use, which make you feel the groove better. iRealPro is a popular application for phone/tablet/pc. Easily you can download hundreds of jazz standards or create own chord progressions, choose your style, tempo, key and instruments and play with the the backing track. Although you don't have any communication, it is a good way to practise new songs. There are also program metronomes where you can create a specific and complex drum pattern to practice with.

### **The horn player**

Common for the accordion within jazz and improvised music is to play melodies. Which means you are functioning like the horn player of the band, so to say. The jazz tradition makes use of the so called jazz standards; songs that are played often and are the fundament of the history of jazz. They are bundled in so called Real books and Fake books. And nowadays almost all the jazz standards are easily to find by just google them. By reading the written melody and chords you have no more than a framework of a tune. The next step is to check out recordings. All recordings are different visions of how to play a tune, based on different grooves, different harmonics, different phrasing etc. By transcribing and analyzing differences you can gather ideas and create your own version of a tune. Or you can copy a version that you like as a goal for practising. You can start with copying melodies (themes) and then expand to copying solo's.

Typical for playing jazz is the use of the bellow. Due the peaks in jazz phrases, the accents that give the line the flavor it deserves, you will need the bellow to copy the sound that the horn players do with their air support. As you all know we have to deal with only one air supply, which means that articulating phrases for left and right is always a compromise. In jazz phrasing and timing are very important, so a very good option is to avoid a compromise and use the left hand only together with the melody or in between the lines. But that is already a next step; first focus on the melody itself and after that you can add chords to it.

Important is to phrase your melody based on a groove. When you play with a recording, you can phrase with that. Other options are to practise with a backing track or samples, as mentioned before. Follow your ears and make it fit. You can work on it by listen to your sound and experiment with touch and bellow to sound like a horn player in the chosen style. Gain freedom while playing the melody; try to change things: rhythm, articulation etc. Or go back to the essence of the melody and skip everything else. Make the melody as strong as possible in all its simplicity and start to add notes bit by bit. Sing it, learn it by heart as fast as possible and play it over and over again to make it as personal as possible. Embrace your own cliches and be aware of them at the same time.

### **The piano player**

Harmonics are also a very interesting element of the music, which consist of many different aspects. Different musical styles have other ways of choosing the chords and by changing the use of the harmonics you can easily manipulate the sound of the whole group. On the accordion chords can be made in different ways: in the right hand, in the left on standard bass (SB), in the left on free bass (FB), complementary patterns between right and left (on SB and FB) and voicings over two hands on FB. All options have their pre's and cons and need a different preparation and knowledge about the voicings of a chord.

When you play a melody in the right hand (RH) you have the option to add chords to it as well. Especially in the 'rest moments' of the melody you can add chord tones below the melody. That could be essential tones of the chord or additions to color the sound, depending on the other things that sound on the moment. While combining with the left hand (LH), you can choose whether the RH chord works together with the LH chord as one chord or work complementary in a rhythmic pattern. In both options it is worth checking out piano voicings; watch out for unnecessary doubles and try if you can cross the RH and LH for a stronger connection in the sound, when possible and eligible.

In the left you can choose to use the SB or FB manual. On SB you have the possibility to combine chords to make them more colorful. Not all combinations are possible and the sound is quite massive and cluster-like, which could be handy sometimes and restrictive on other moments. Important is to be aware of the fact that you can easily choose to add or leave out the bass note, which is rich in sound and most of the time not far off.

When you use FB you will have more freedom in voicing your chord. By using shell voicings (root-third-seven) you have a clear and transparent chord as a fundament for melody, with or without additional chord tones in the RH. This is a good starting point for the use of FB in jazz. There are tons of other possibilities to think of; check out the rich piano tradition to gain ideas!

### **The bass player**

Personally I think the bass function is the most tricky one for accordion. A double bass or electric bass has basically two important functions in a band: it covers the bass note of the harmony and it has rhythmical function within a groove, together with the drummer. The attack of bass is fast, which gives a precise timing. The pitch is no problem for an accordion, but timing of the low bass notes is. An accordion is a wind instrument of course, so the left hand sounds more as a tuba than a double bass. And if you go higher in pitch, the timing goes faster, but the bass function diminishes because you will find yourself in the registry where chords are played.

In slower pieces the timing is often less a problem because you have more time to let the instrument produce the sound. In faster tempi it sometimes could be a solution to combine the bass note with some chords or chord tones in a certain pattern, which gives it in general more rhythmic fundament. I think in general you could say bass lines on accordion is much about giving the suggestion of a full bass part, but

actually give just enough to support the harmonics and rhythm and leave enough space for the other layers you have to cover.

### **The drummer**

Although I never checked out much of it, of course you can use the instrument for percussive purposes as well. With different types of wood, registers, the bellow and other parts of the instrument I can imagine nice drum patterns can be imitated. Especially in solo pieces and smaller formations (duo's or trio's) without a drummer it could be interesting to add. Even if you don't add the percussive elements in the arrangement, it is good to be able to 'drum' the groove. This makes you better aware of the rhythmic fundament of the song and will help to find a suitable pattern for comping.

### **Improvisation**

Personally I think improvisation is the most interesting part of jazz and of course there is much to say about it. Maybe that's why it seems so difficult to start with it in the first place. I think improvisation must be a balance between 'knowing' and 'intuitive playing'. If your knowledge about melody and harmony is not sufficient, many mistakes will occur. But if there is not enough intuition in your improvisation, it will lack spontaneity and personality.

Learning improvisation can start with varying on existing themes; so variate on the melodies of a standard. Then you keep the structure intact, you will get some melodic help by using the important tones of the song and you don't have to invent everything for yourself. By use rhythmical variations you can train yourself to get more into a groove and by changing the melody you will train the melodic and harmonic possibilities of a song. Even if you really improvise it is always nice to make a connection with the song itself by using some elements of the theme of the song.

When you want to improvise you can take a simple chord progression to start with. A good start is to improvise over a dominant and a tonic. On the dominant you are 'on route' and on the tonic chords you are 'home'. Actually the feeling of being 'on route' or 'home' is key to a good solo. It is a game between tension and release; like an elastic. The V-I progression can easily be expanded to a II-V-I progression, which is probably the most important chord progression in jazz. Bit by bit longer and more difficult progression can be learned and practised. And by doing so, cut up the progression in smaller exercises could really help to understand the progression better.

I think learning jazz is much about inventing small exercises to learn a little bit more about a certain aspect of music; a chord, a nice progression, a melodic idea, a rhythm, a groove etc. And by learning step by step your knowledge, possibilities, flexibility, phrasing, improvisatory skills etc will develop more and more.

### **Cross-overs**

Herbie Hancock once said: "Jazz easily morphs, and adapts and adopts various influences. It is so open-ended that we welcome the music of other genres and other cultures". In order to make your music as personal as possible it has always been important to the style to choose for a certain flavor by adding a specific ingredient of your own culture or expand a certain idea or way of playing. So maybe jazz is more about communication and flexibility while using the main principles of music, then about specific melodic, harmonic or rhythmic concepts. This value of the music style makes it easy to be combined with other styles. It makes jazz a kind of common language or state of mind to use when you discover other music, rather than a style itself.

As a jazz musician you work and practise to understand the fundament and additions of melody, harmony and rhythm in order to 'create' on the moment. This makes you working on the essence of music all the time. This flexibility that it creates will be useful in every type of music you will perform. I think I particular like this value of the style, because I prefer to experience and make music with this kind of openness and receptivity.



**Rik Cornelissen** (1984) is a renewing and contemporary jazz and classical accordionist. With his broad education and knowledge of styles he knows how to present the accordion as a modern and versatile instrument. Rik debuted with his solo album *Traveller* in 2014, where he received excellent reviews.

He collaborated with Bert van den Brink, Ramon Valle, Oene van Geel, Teus Nobel, Juan Pablo Dobal, Ben van den Dungen, Rob van Kreeveld, Angelo Verploegen, Miranda van Kralingen, Francis van Broekhuizen, Vincent Houdijk, Egon Kracht, Claudio Jacomucci, Tuur Florizoone, the Radio Filharmonisch String quartet and many others. He was involved with different projects for YoOpera, Opera Minora, Opera Zuid and as session-musician for the movies *Zwartboek* (Paul Verhoeven), *Van Gogh: een huis voor Vincent* (Pim Hovee) and the theater-show *NU! (Mini & Maxi)*.

At ArtEZ, University of Arts in Arnhem (NL), Rik is connected as main subject teacher (professor) Accordion, Band coaching, Methodics and Teaching Practice Development at the Jazz & Pop Department, one of the rare places to study Jazz accordion in the world.

Rik studied Bachelor Classical Music and Argentinian Tango (Codarts

Rotterdam 2006) and Master Jazz & Pop (ArtEZ, university of Arts, Arnhem 2009). After his studies he travelled through South- and Central America for over 9 months and continued his education at the Italian Accordion Academy in Urbino with Claudio Jacomucci.

Rik's debut album *Traveller* (2014) was a search for new possibilities and sounds on accordion within the jazz and Latin-jazz; focusing on and comparing with the richness of the piano tradition he managed to cross musical boundaries and combine classical techniques with improvisation and groove. This is characteristic for Rik's playing; introvert, thoughtful and cogitating and then exploding, powerful, virtuosic and groovy.

In 2015 Rik released with his group Tocar the album 'Birds of Paradise', in collaboration with Radio Filharmonic String Quartet (now: Carezza String Quartet), containing three of his compositions. The reviews where outstanding. In 2016 they where guests at VPRO's *Vrije Geluiden* at the Bimhuis in Amsterdam.

His new trio TRIFID, initiated in 2017 by Rik, is a collaboration with the talented Dutch vibe player Vincent Houdijk and bass player Maciej Domaradzki. TRIFID is an ode to the Universe, their own compositions are mysterious, colorful en serene. Their debut album *Dreamscape* will be released in 2018.

As a composer and arranger his main goal is to create new music for accordion, either solo as for different groups and ensembles he is working with. His compositions are often inspired by Rik's travels and fascination for nature and universe, levitating between styles varying from jazz and classical to Brazilian, Argentinian and other South- American music.

[www.rikcornelissen.com](http://www.rikcornelissen.com)

**Wei Bijun**, China  
MA

### **The Development of Chinese Accordion Art at Home and Abroad and Its Influence in the New era**

This paper follows the development of modern Chinese society, music and their interaction based on historical data. It systematically analyses and describes the formation and development of Chinese accordion art from the perspectives of Chinese accordionists' performances, compositions and teaching activities in several important historical periods.

Though it was always carefully controlled, the opening up of China with reform and relaxation of some aspects of authoritarian government inevitably led to a new intermingling of Chinese and international music culture. With a much more fully-formed accordion culture of its own by this point, however, Chinese domestic music found itself far better positioned to stand alongside (or against, depending on one's perspective) its Western counterpart, allowing for a few less one-sided exchange than had been the case a century earlier. Academic symposiums, the establishment of national and regional accordion societies and various forms of lectures across the country had and have formed a favourable situation for Chinese accordion culture.

One manifestation of this was the popular lectures organised a number of times in Beijing by such luminaries as Zhang Ziqiang, Ren Shirong, Yang Wentao and Shan Yuanchang to name but a few, large-scale affairs often attended by thousands of people. These combined with open teaching methods, teacher training and counselling and the presentation of all this to society as a whole between 1982 and 1985 to significantly raise awareness of the accordion as a viable musical choice in China. The first accordion lecture on television was broadcast on CCTV (China Central Television) in 1978, hosted by Yang Wentao, while the lectures of Ren Shirong were broadcast between 1989 and 1991.



Figure 8. Zhang Ziqiang 's family.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> picture from <http://www.accordions.com/interviews/zhang.aspx> 2017.05.02

An increase in competitions, meanwhile, helped raise levels of performance across the board. Until 1988, the Beijing Children's Accordion Competition proved the premier junior challenge, with a National First Amateur Children's Accordion Invitational Tournament (known a little less eye-wateringly as the Parrot Cup Accordion Competition) set up in 1987. The first Chinese professional accordion competition, set up by a collaboration of accordion institutions, was titled the National Youth Accordion Invitational Tournament and held in the Sichuan Conservatory in Chengdu province. More than 150 competitors attended, with notable performers Yang Yi, Liu Yibo and Cao Xiaoqing the eventual winners. Three years later, the first Chinese national accordion contest, the China Cup, was held on August 5th 1990 in Changchun, with attendance and participation on an unprecedented scale up to this point in China's musical history<sup>1</sup>. Domestic accordion activities laid more groundwork and helped to prepare Chinese teachers and performers for future participation in an international music scene.

In order to help improve the ability of professional musicians, groups of performers were formed with the intention of giving young accordion players the opportunity to perform solo, ensemble and concert pieces in relative security across Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai and other places. These opportunities served newer performers well, and were the breakout moment for one Zhang Guoping, who went on to (and continues to) play with the China Radio Art Troupe and perform on CCTV and the Central People's Broadcasting Station (later China National Radio). He has become known for adept expression of a composer's ideas, boasting rich vocals, superb performance abilities and a wide range, equally comfortable playing Bach and Scarlatti or more modern work like the compositions of Vladislav Zolotaryov and Viacheslav Semoinov, or more home-grown work like the output of Chinese composer Li Yugui<sup>2</sup>.

The first accordion academic journal in China, the "Accordion Garden", was founded in 1985. The editor, Li Weiming, worked in Fujian Normal University (now Xiamen University) as a teacher at the time<sup>3</sup>. In January 1988, China's first academic accordion newspaper, the creatively-named "China Accordion Newspaper". The emergence of this press made and has made a useful contribution to the exchange of accordion information and the promotion of accordion art, encouraging the creation of Chinese works and committed to a particularly national tradition of folk music, the blooming of Chinese cultural elements within and as a part of accordion music.

Alongside these domestic exchanges, the Chinese accordion community has also begun international art exchanges and collaboration activities. Western musicians and educators continue to perform and lecture in China and Western musical materials follow alongside them. In 1983, Prof. Mie Mike, a famous Japanese performer, was invited by Prof. Wang Yupin to Tianjin Conservatory for a concert and lecture on the accordion. She was the first person to introduce free-bass accordion to China, presenting baroque music alongside many modern, original pieces for the accordion. Later, in 1991, one of the most famous Russian players of the modern era, Yuri Shishkin, was invited to China for a similar purpose, a concert and lecture. Activities of these kinds have helped to broaden the perspective of the Chinese accordion industry, and have had a significant impact on teaching methods and instruments.

In addition to the arrival of foreign experts, Chinese accordionists have also absorbed excellent international teaching and performing experience, watching and learning while on trips abroad. In 1987, Zhang Guoping was sent as the representative of the Chinese Music Association to Klingenthal, Germany, the first Chinese player to participate in the International Accordion Competition, the world's most prestigious international accordion competition, and won sixth place, garnering much attention and praise for China in the process<sup>4</sup>.

Prior to the visit of Mie Miki to Tianjin, there were two famous accordion factories- one in the north and one in the south- in China with the required facilities to manufacture free-bass accordions, though only the northern one, the Tianjin Musical Instrument Factory, tried its hand at free-bass piano accordions via a joint project with the Tianjin Conservatory of Music following Mie Miki's visit. The resulting imitation (or homage, depending on your point of view) "Parrot" was a free-bass piano accordion with 185 bass in the left hand using standard-bass and free-bass manuals, and 45 keys on the right hand. One of the first students to learn free-bass, Cao Xiaoqing, was sent to study at the Hanover Conservatory of Music in Germany, earning

<sup>1</sup> Cao Xiaoqing's biography <http://www.accordions.com/xiao-qing/>, 2017.05.02

<sup>2</sup> referenced in Liu Suling Perseverance is kind of force - Interview accordion educator Zhang Guoping, published in Musical Instruments 2015 No. 8

<sup>3</sup> referenced in <http://baike.baidu.com/item/李巍明/89339?fr=aladdin>, 2015.05.13

<sup>4</sup> Zhang Guoping's biography <http://www.musicforaccordion.com/etracks/inform/guoping/index.htm>. 2015.05.13

his Master's degree in 1996. The same year, he was admitted to the Conservatory's Ph.D. course to continue his study, and one year after he took first place in prestigious international competitions in Germany and Italy. In 2002, he was awarded his doctorate, being hired as a professional teacher at the Hannover Music Academy soon after. Cao has accompanied international accordion community celebrities to give lectures and concerts, and has co-organised two "Tianjin International Accordion Master Classes" to work with Chinese accordion industry counterparts and accordion production experts with the objective of exploring the development of Chinese accordion art; Cao is a perfect example of how connection to the wider international community has only benefited the Chinese accordion community.

Since then, following in Cao's footsteps, Chinese accordion players have ventured abroad more and more often, and at even younger ages. Older specialists from China's veteran accordionists have been invited to international events, such as Wang Yuping, invited to serve as a judge at the International Accordion Competition from 1997 to the present day, the only Asian accordionist to hold such an honour.

### **The Creation of Chinese Accordion Music in the New Era**

The modern era for the accordion has been characterised by a widening variety of creative ideas being accepted in accordion playing, a flexibility with regard to genres and techniques and a general greater willingness to experiment. This was evident by October 1989, when, at the first China Accordion Works Awards held by the Chinese Accordion Society, prizes were won by "Golden Songs, "Great Wall Love", "Song of Herdsmen" and other works; "Time Imagine", "I Keep the Bridge for the Motherland", "Miao Ling Love", "Beijin Good News To The Side Walled" and other works received excellent adaptation awards. There were a total of 32 prizes and 28 award winners, most of which were recent works of the 1980s, beginning to move beyond the earlier, "folk song plus harmony" or "theme plus accompaniment" modes of thinking, but also beginning to leave the "transplant" methodology behind, as artists and composers began to more independently develop their pieces as opposed to leave them pegged to previous work.

While many composers continue to persevere with the Chinese traditions of musical composition based on characteristics of national harmony and unity, there are composers are trying new styles and pursuing different sound effects, contributing to a diversification of subject matter, genre, sound and creative techniques.

In terms of diversity of genre, accordion music has evolved from its subordinate position as the accompaniment alone to a musical form with its own independent artistic character.

Experiments with different genres have produced concertos ("Great Wall Love" by Lin Hua, for example), a suite (such as "Huishan Clay Figurines Suite" by Li Yuqiu or "Children's Suite" by Wang Shusheng), sonata ("Long March" by Li Yuqiu), ensans (like "Jiangnan Good" by Huang Li Fan), fantasies (such as "Nuoenjiya Fantasia" by Wang Shusheng) and collaborations with bands (like "Yinshan Rock Painting Impression: Hunting" by Zhang Xinhua and Wang Ruilin)- the list is already long and getting longer.

The new creative approaches can be roughly divided into three categories:

- Continuation and development of pre-1980s practice: use of instrumental music, vocal melody adapted from accordion music, the pursuit of aesthetic popularisation and the music language of nationalism. Included in this category could be, "Sunshine in the Tashkur Stem" (Cao Zhiping), "Tibetan String Drance" (Ren Shirong), "Play My Favourite Pipa" (Guo Weixiang) and so on.
- Use of folk music as a source, using the accordion to interpret the rich tradition of Chinese music and pursuing a national innovative sound outside of the constrictions of "nationalist" music. Representative of this style are the "Yunnan Folk Song Series" (Yang Tiegang), "Chinese-Style 15 Pieces" (Li Jianlin), "Fishing Song" (A Tu. Li Weiming), "Spring to Liangshan" (Wang Yuping), "Tajik Dance" (Zhang Zimin), etc.
- Learning from and drawing inspiration from modern Western composition techniques to interpret Chinese pieces, maintaining their national characteristics and charm while presenting them in new and innovative styles. Such works include "Huishan Clay Figurines Suite" (Li Yuqiu), "Children's Suit" (Wang Shusheng), "Gui" (Li Weiming).

Since the 1980s, the Chinese accordion has, in both form and its artistic pursuits, entered a larva-state, slowly transforming from a traditional template to utilising a more modern spirit. Insofar as skills are concerned, it has inherited traditional techniques to apply to new technology with which to explore new possibilities. In terms of philosophical outlook, the outlook is no longer as utilitarian as it was: works are more able to lead their audience or listeners on emotional journeys, to elicit even spiritual or philosophical consideration, than their more functional forebears, truly expanding the creative mental real estate occupied by the accordion and music for it. Pieces that operate in this way, according to Li Yifei, "absorb the foreign, the classical, everything, all in order to create Chinese characteristics, a new Chinese people's music", and are precisely the marks a maturing musical culture develops.

With the increasing popularity of the accordion came competitions, both domestic and international. Going abroad saw Chinese accordionists travel to the likes of the Klingenthal Accordion Competition in Germany, the Castelfidardo Accordion Festival in Italy, the competition for the Confederation Internationales des Accordéonistes' Coupe Mondiale prize (C.I.A., held in a different country every year), the Northern Cup Accordion Competition held every five years in Russia and the Lithuanian Vilnius Accordion Competition (every two years). China, meanwhile, hosts four of its own international competitions: the Tianjin International Accordion Festival (that takes place every four years), the Harbin International Accordion Art Week (every two years), the Shanghai Spring International Accordion Festival (again, every two years) and the Shenzhen International Accordion Festival (also every two years). There are also purely national-level competitions and tournaments, such as the Parrot Cup and the Baidi Cup. Each one of these competitions attracts many excellent musicians to participate, which in turn furthers the popularity and development of the accordion.

During this period, Chinese accordion music has progressed to its current ability to sublimate both quality and quantity, though it must be noted that the works and authors acknowledged in this text demonstrate that most works remain created or adapted by a relatively small number of accordion teachers or performers and, hence, subject to the biases of a comparatively limited group. A prime example of this continues to be the extremely low number of works created for the free-bass accordion, and dealing with it, alongside the ever-present aspect of instrument development, will be the key to the evolution of Chinese accordion music in the 21st century.

### Exception

Even as a relatively young instrument, born as it was in 1829, the accordion nevertheless has 170 years of development under its belt, though that must be considered as being even shorter in the narrower confines of Chinese history. Introduced only in the early 20th century, it took three or four decades for the accordion to work its way into Chinese musical life, and it was not until the 1950s, with the creation of professional accordion educational institutions, that it really began to flourish.

During this half-century of development, the accordion was fortunate enough to be able to seize a position as a "popular" instrument, aided no doubt by its survival during the Cultural Revolution. Today, Chinese accordion manufacturers produce more than 60,000 accordions every year. Accounting for those exported, domestic sales still amount to approximately 50,000 or a little higher. In spite of the instrument's inauspicious beginnings, it is clear that China has become an accordion-loving country, with the highest number of accordion players anywhere in the world.

Throughout its history, the accordion has continued to find a place in Chinese musical culture, no matter how small. From its initial entry onto the stage, it has been used as part of art troupes, seen as a foreign curiosity, provided accompaniment and taken part in propaganda, leaving behind it a group of musicians and teaching professionals supported by a large base of mass support from the public. However, the very trends that have helped to innovate and update accordion culture in the last thirty to forty years also threaten it. By the mid-1990s, with living standards improving thanks to the open and liberalised economy, cultural tastes inevitably also began to change, with the accordion gradually taking less of a role on the musical stage in favour of newer, more modern instruments and styles. There is a sense among some that the accordion has somehow fulfilled its "historical mission", whatever such a nebulous term implies, and is destined to step away from the limelight, though to what degree is this actually the case?

Indeed, the position of their own particular niche's art and craft within society as a whole is a concern that seems to have niggled musicians and artists for longer than the accordion has existed, and

accordionists are no different: Chinese accordion art's status and its future paths have always been a focus. Since the 1990s, much ink has been spent on such concerns, the most prominent articles on the issue being:

- Wang Yuping: Retrospect and Prospect of the Turn of the Century - Some Problems, Gap and Hope of the Development and Construction of Chinese Accordion
- Chen Yiming: An Analysis and Prospect of Accordion in China
- Li Yuqiu: The Calling of History - On the Conception of Chinese Accordion School of thought
- Ren Shirong: Strengthen the nationalization of China, and strive for the establishment of the Chinese accordion school of thought

In these articles, there is a general consensus on the state of Chinese accordion art and how it ought to be developed in the future against a bigger picture of world accordion art, the international accordion community and the exchanges that go on within it. Two main challenges are identified: one regarding instruments, the other music. Firstly, localised accordion manufacture still has structural deficiencies which directly restrict performance, variety and effects through lower-quality construction. Secondly, as noted above, owing to the relatively limited pool of creators or adapters of new music, much of Chinese accordion music, whilst lending itself to a superior stage performance, suffers from being overly similar in terms of technical level and structure.

The development of a musical instrument always utilises the same three factors- physical developments in the instrument itself, teaching and performance- which complement each other and result in a cycle that, with any one part removed or deficient in some way, hinders the evolution and development of said instrument. With some luck, by drawing on the experience of the former Soviet Union and Europe in the development of the accordion, the Chinese accordion can chart a new path, making use of the following three aspects.

i) The instrument: the development of the instrument itself determines its status. The Chinese accordion community has been using the keyboard-style standard bass system accordion for decades, and its traditional structure has helped play an important role in the accordion's popularity through Chinese history. However, the traditional bass system's range, and the limitations to chord type this imposes, have been gradually exposed. This renders it difficult to produce polyphonic music and modern harmonies, ensuring the accordion has had little to no part in jazz, tango or other popular modern music styles, and even restricting it in terms of baroque and classical music. Prof. Wang Yuping, speaking to the shortcomings of the existing bass system, has spoken of said limitations ensuring the accordion still feels "nervous" in the context of a professional music institution environment.

The free-bass system has fixed these limitations, and its existence offers a way out for the development of the accordion, widening its repertoire and creativity options. The button-type dual system free-bass accordion has become the main instrument used by international professional accordionists, though whether it will meet mass appeal in China remains to be seen: China's accordion manufacturing industry has certainly matured in terms of the production of keyboard-type traditional bass accordions given its half-century of experience, but still lags behind the older experts like Germany, Italy and others when it comes to solutions to basic problems. The button-style free-bass accordion's development in China remains in its infancy, ensuring that importation remains the best way to acquire one, the expense of which most assuredly has a smothering effect on uptake.

In the less controlled, more market-led economy today, instrument structure and quality control must rely on the mutual assistance and joint efforts of producers and consumers to solve related problems. Two accordion factories in China are capable of producing free-bass accordions (known as the "Parrot" and the "Golden Cup"), and their expertise in the matter can only improve but needs more time to mature, regardless. Meanwhile, the question of whether the free-bass accordion can only prosper at the expense of the more traditional standard bass model remains a current one. There are numerous advantages to the "upgrade", such as the free-bass system's greater options with which to compose, but more choice also means more complexity, and, given the continuing vitality of amateur teaching in the realm of promoting change within the accordion community, it will require acceptance and improvement within this circle for the free-bass system to truly take off.

ii) Creation: As a young profession, in spite of its turbulent life thus far, accordion music continues to lack many unique characteristics of its own. Though it has made great progress, the accordion music industry has done so thanks to a relatively small number of professional composers, who have created a large number of works that subsequently show only small amounts of difference and variation in composition techniques. Meanwhile, given the age of the accordion in China, the lack of long-term expertise has resulted in very little difference between professional and amateur teaching tracks, being limited as they are to the accordion grading test materials.

To solve this problem, professional accordion workers should carry out various promotional activities related to the accordion and take the initiative to contact composers to understand performance characteristics, structures and performance techniques of the dual system free-bass accordion. In the former Soviet Union, Germany, Denmark and other European countries, composers and performers enjoy a close relationship that has resulted in excellent work on the part of both. In the final analysis, to create outstanding performances, improvements must be made to compositions to create fresh and original work. National music can be more fully tapped for innovative resources. The Russian composer Sofia Gubaidulina, for example, has delved into Russia's Orthodox Christian background to create strongly religious-flavoured pieces such as, "Et Experto", "Profundis" and "Seven Words". The Finnish composer E.Jokinen, meanwhile, is among a number of artists experimenting with "no-tone" works, such as his piece, "Alone". Much can be learned about newer and exciting ways to compose and create from such international figures.

The image displays a musical score for the piece 'Alone' by Erkki Jokinen. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system includes a grand staff with three staves: the top two are labeled 'M.D.' (Middle and Deep) and the bottom one is 'M.S.' (Middle and Soft). Above the first system, the tempo is marked '(ad lib ♩ = 60)'. The notation includes various notes, rests, and dynamic markings such as 'stacc.' and 'mp'. The second system begins with an octave sign '8va' and continues with similar notation. The score is written in a style typical of modern experimental music, with a focus on texture and dynamics.

Figure 2. Example 'Alone' by Erkki Jokinen.

When it comes to musical instruments, there is no need to restrict ourselves to focusing on solo works. The accordion has great artistic potential in different combinations such as the ensemble, chamber music, accordion band, etc. The accordion can be played with violin, piano, percussion, electronic music, vocals, folk instruments, and so on. These things have been used together in, again, the former Soviet Union and Europe with increasing frequency, while combinations of new colour effects and modern composition techniques have become marks of new composition attempts in the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries. China shows encouraging signs: many excellent new works have been thrown up as the form has been diversified. Accordion competitions, held in order to encourage young composers to try their hand at new creations, have led to the discovery of such solo pieces as "Zui Jingfeng" by Dai Bo; chamber music like "A Song With Wind" by Tan Jialiang; and more varied works like "Feng Shiwu" and "Fade Away" by the same. While taking inspiration from foreign and modern sources, these pieces remain uniquely Chinese thanks to their blending with traditional styles, creating something new and diverse that does wonders for promoting the cause of the accordion.



Figure 10. Zui Jingfeng by Dai Bo.

iii) Teaching and Performance: with regard to free-bass accordion teaching, the training of teachers, both professional and amateur, should be strengthened and improved. With advanced skills and awareness, and a strong sense of responsibility, teachers will be able to not only cultivate promising students but also improve the overall level of Chinese accordion performance. They should pay close attention to developments in accordion culture and technique both at home and abroad, so as to possess a comprehensive "database" encompassing all aspects of accordion practise and theory. Without this, teaching techniques have a tendency to take detours and shortcuts, compromising the development of students. A lack of high quality materials (teaching aids and guides, audio material, accordion theory) will ensure that teachers do not fully understand the instrument they teach; they must, then, be provided with such.

The long-term problem of the lack of skills required to support a high-quality national accordion-building craft continues to ensure that the localisation of the Chinese accordion manufacturing industry is problematic, though it can be dealt with. Chinese learning from its Western counterparts in the realms of the piano, the violin and other primarily-European instruments has demonstrated that real progress and achievements can be made, with Chinese piano virtuosos among top international ranks, for instance. In order to make real development and take a prominent place in the international cultural exchanges that have gone on for thousands of years, from the Silke Road down to today's global trade, Chinese accordion art must not hesitate to draw on the lessons that its international cousins have learned in the areas of teaching and composition. The free-bass system must be promoted at the same time as continuing to support the more traditional bass accordion. Education continues to require improvement and standardisation, as it ever has throughout Chinese accordion history. With stimulation of its composers to pioneer and innovate, with the ultimate aim of promoting a new modern, professional and uniquely Chinese accordion music, Chinese accordion art can enter a new golden age in the 21st century.



**Wei Bijun**, Master of Arts. Wei began to play the accordion at the age of 6, she achieved excellent results in various competitions in the province and city since she learned music. In 2005, She studied with the famous international accordion educator Prof. Wang Shusheng and Prof. Luo Han. In 2008, Wei was admitted to the Accordion Keyboard Department of Tianjin Conservatory of Music with excellent results. She studied with the famous international accordion player Prof. Luo Han. In 2012, she graduated from the Tianjin Conservatory of Music with the first place. In January 2013, Wei went to France to continue her master study in France with the famous French accordion player, Philippe Bourlois in Lyon. In the same year, she went to Paris to study with the most famous accordion player and educator Max Bonnay. During her studies in France, she was repeatedly invited by the French municipal government to perform for city and national leaders. In October 2014, Wei came to Austria to continue her master study, and she was educated by world-renowned accordionist and Alfred Melichar at Anton Bruckner University. During the period of studying abroad,

she participated in international master classes many times, played

concerts in different counties, and her artistic performance ability continued to improve. She awarded in several international competitions. In 2015, she won the first place in Chamber Music Group in the International Accordion competition which held in Australia, and she also got the second place in the artist group. She participated in Harbin Summer International Accordion Art Week that organized by the Chinese Ministry of Culture, and won awards such as Outstanding Instructor Awards and Advanced individual. As a teacher, her students won the competitions at home and abroad for many times. And she got many times the title of outstanding teachers, such like Parrot cup national accordion competition, Harbin international accordion art week and so on. In 2017, She finished her Master study at Anton Bruckner University with excellent results. After her study, she back to China working in music schools, organising concerts and big festivals as well as playing concerts everywhere.