Creative Concepts across Cultures: An Examination of Piano Sonata No. 2 by Valentin Silvestrov and Selected Piano Works by Toru Takemitsu

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Abstract/Description:
This treatise is based on two lecture-recitals that were given as part of the Doctor of Music degree requirements at Florida State University on November 17, 2016 and November 13, 2017. The first lecture recital focused on the Sonata Nr. 2 for piano of Valentin Silvestrov and the second explored selected piano works of Toru Takemitsu. Both lecture-recitals were intended as separate events, the content of which was not related to each other. During the process of preparation for these projects, which included study of the score, analysis of form, research of the supporting material, and preparation for the performance of the selected pieces, I have discovered certain musical and conceptual ideas that are shared by both composers. The goal of the present research has been to reveal the creative concepts and corresponding historic background of the chosen piano works of composers from two different cultures. Valentin Silvestrov is a prominent modern composer from Ukraine. His compositional output covers a wide range of classical genres, in which music for piano is particularly well-represented. Toru Takemitsu, on the other hand, was a Japanese composer who is known for his innovative use of electronic music and his unique approach to classical composition. The present study provides a detailed analysis of the creative concepts and the historical context of the works discussed, highlighting the similarities and differences between the two composers' approaches to music.
wide range of classical genres, in which music for piano is of great importance. The work chosen for this research is his Sonate No. 2, a transitional work in Silvestrov’s compositional style. The goal of this lecture was to explore the historical context in Silvestrov’s creative output that led to the creation of this large-scale work, the analysis of its form and content, and the attempt to understand the musical narrative of this piece. Toru Takemitsu was one of the leading 20th century Japanese composers. One of the highlights of his creative career was his ability to incorporate and connect philosophical and musical concepts of the traditional Japanese culture with the musical language of the Western contemporary movements. He was not only a prolific composer but also a writer who left valuable thoughts on various topics related to music. The goal of this lecture was to give an overview of the creative concepts of Takemitsu and illustrate his approach to music-making in his piano works. First two chosen pieces, Romance and Litany (in Memory of Michael Vyner), represent Takemitsu’s early compositions and both of his Rain Tree Sketches were selected to illustrate composer’s late style.