Sign and Expression in Performing Stravinsky's Neoclassical Works

An article by Per Dahl

Introduction

During the inter-war period, some classical composers continued writing in an epigonal national Romantic style, especially in the peripheries of the leading European music capitals. The main aesthetic discussion, however, was polarised between expressionists and neoclassicists. Both trends maintained a link to the past but with very different aesthetics. This influenced performance practice, and Neoclassical works came to be seen as expressionless and objective in contrast to the intimate intensity of the expressionist camp who followed Schoenberg. Igor Stravinsky became the champion of the Neoclassicists, primarily through his statements and the change in the scope of his compositions during that period (smaller ensembles, heterogenic sound, historical non-Russian material). Stravinsky's affiliation with Neoclassicist ideology will be the working focus of this article.

Stravinsky's compositions are often divided into three styles/periods. The transition from his Russian to Neoclassical period unfolded over several years in the first decade of the interwar period, whereas the entrance of his Serial period came rather abruptly. [1] The main criteria for the subdivisions into these categories was his application of different composition techniques, most clearly in his adoption of the twelve-note system and Serial techniques. Pieter C. van den Toorn argues that Stravinsky's compositional technique remains the same throughout all his works (Van den Toorn & McGinness, 2012). I agree with van den Toorn in that Stravinsky's compositional craftsmanship seems to remain constant in all his compositions, which is why it is relatively easy to identify a composition made by Stravinsky. His very personal adoption of serial techniques is an excellent example of this steadiness. However, his compositions' musical and ideological sources suggest a three-part division of his works, with Neoclassical works infused into the grouping of Russian and Serial works. Stravinsky's books, interviews, and other utterances strongly align him with the Neoclassical aesthetic through his promotion of the ideals of absolute music. This position has resulted in many performers adopting an approach to Stravinsky's aesthetic that tends to avoid expressiveness in performances of his Neoclassical works.

Two major trends have arisen in scholars' analysis of Stravinsky's oeuvre in his final decades. The first involves rewriting Stravinsky's history and ideas from sources other than Robert Craft's material (Stravinsky & Craft, 1959, 1960, 1962, 1963, 1969, 1980). The main contributors in this field have been Richard Taruskin (Taruskin, 1996) and Stephen Walsh (Walsh, 1999, 2006). The second takes as a point of departure an overview of Stravinsky's gramophone recordings, comparing the performances and interpretations arising from his many recordings of his own works. As Nicholas Cook demonstrates in "Stravinsky Conducts Stravinsky" (Cook, 2003), the claim that his recordings express his intentions with an absolute exactitude invoked a thoroughly problematic concept, namely that of compositional intentionality. This concept, which Stravinsky links to his scores, falls to pieces as soon as there is any variance in the recording's expression. Many scholars have taken care to explore this opportunity. [2]

In this article, I take an alternate approach to analysing Stravinsky's works, focusing on the performer's position rather than examining the score's compositional (or biographical) traits, as is common in traditional analysis. I will look at three aspects of Stravinsky's communication to the performer: 1) his comments on performing and interpretation in his books, 2) his vocabulary of articulation and interpretative signs in his published scores, and 3) the performance of his music on records conducted by Stravinsky himself. In each of the three areas of communication, I will explore a few of the many discrepancies in his practice between utterances, notation, and performances. The focus will be on performative information rather than compositional technicalities. The underlying expectation is that a professional musician can perform the rhythms and pitches of the notated music with the articulations indicated. The challenge for the performer, however, is to determine and produce the appropriate type of musical expression. I see the notation on the score as the pivotal point of communication between the composer's idea of the musical work and the musician's

interpretation. Based on my study of Stravinsky's vocabulary of articulation in all his compositions, I hypothesise that in performing his Neoclassical works (usually defined as starting with the *Octet* (1923) and ending with *The Rake's Progress* (1951)), it is essential to read the actual notation in the scores without applying Stravinsky's most extreme ideas of interpretation and aesthetics.

Method

Performing classical music involves a combination of several categories of information/knowledge. Sorting out the relevance of different inputs and developing an interpretation is a process that often involves many intuitive elements. Performing Stravinsky's Neoclassical works is challenging because he provides relevant guidance through various media and on several intellectual levels through his books, scores, and recordings. I will use a multi-layered communication model to elucidate this context and provide some advice on developing performance. The model can be seen as an extension of the semiotic triangle presented by (Ogden, 1974/1923), reframed and adapted to a musical context. The model's fundamental element is the arbitrary connection between a sign and its expression. Three positions establish the semiotic triangle: person – action – product. In music, we can describe this as the composer/performer/listener's musical thought/reference – the notation (action) – the music (product). The limitations of notation are well-known to performers of Classical music, leaving considerable space for interpretive variance. The connection between notation and music can be seen as arbitrary, as it is not the music that dictates the notation but the composer's cultural competence that transforms the musical ideas into notation.

The three corners of the triangle are connected by the person's intention of action that produces a sign/symbol, the possible identification of the action as a product of expression, and the receiver's interpretation of the product. In these three terms of the communicative chain, the composer/performer's choice of sign/symbol can be reliable, as the sign/symbol is an object observable to anyone. The identification will, however, be independent of the sender's intentions. Therefore, a performance's validity will depend on the receiver's acceptance of the identified product as a form of musical expression.

When Stravinsky talks about musical objects, he attempts to reduce the distance between notation (symbol) and music (referent), keeping it to a minimum. He is searching for a linear model where his notation is equivalent to his music. Chocked by the personal freedom taken by performers in Paris he joined the club of composers and intellectuals that promoted execution over interpretation.[3] In the Western Classical Music tradition, the concept of a musical work makes strong alliances between the music notation (the score) and the music (sounding

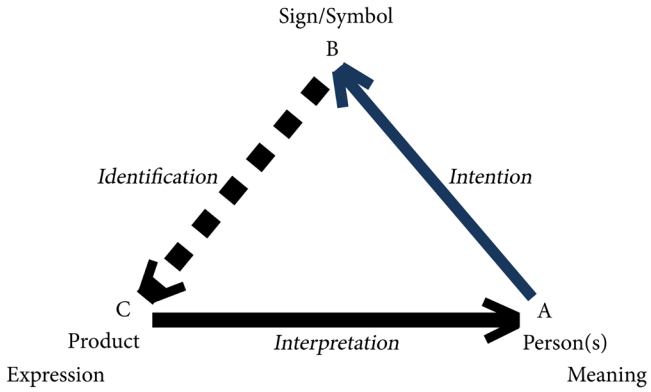


Figure 1: Basic elements of communication adapted from Ogden (1974/1923)

product); however, this concept of a "musical work" has its historical background in the development of bourgeois society in the late eighteenth century (Goehr, 2007)[4]. The random connection between the sign and its expression makes possible misunderstandings and misinterpretations of human acts crucial for developing language and music.
In contrast, Stravinsky wished to present the notation of a musical work as a self-contained entity, an *objet d'art*, and this idea became central to his promotion of Neoclassical music.[5]

More generally, the idea of notation as a representation of music is integrated into many aspects of *musicking* (Small, 1998) and our concept of music. Still, it blurs the difference between identification and interpretation. This difference is crucial to understanding the intersubjective dimension of communication because the identification is bound to the cultural context of the product, and the receiver's identification is independent of the composer/performer's intentions. The identification does not need to be linguistic; you can identify musical elements without naming them. Usually, communication theories focus on the sender and the design of the message to establish communication. However, a robust logical deduction from the reality of misunderstanding should make communication depend on the addressee (Luhmann, 1995). The sender intends to use a sign that identifies the expressive product. This identification is based on the sender's understanding of the relationship between the ideology inherent in the choice of sign and the context of the expression. However, the receiver's interpretation is an identification based on the receiver's understanding of the relationship between the sign and the expression, and this understanding is a logic or a way of thinking independent of the sender's logic. It is, therefore, partly wrong to attack the receiver's interpretation of the message. Misunderstandings evolve in the identification, where the relationship between the context and ideology is determined based on the receiver's impression of the sign and its expression. Therefore, the sender and the receiver are placed in the same position in this multi-layered model; they are the two human elements in the music communication chain that can create meaning and interpret musical performances.

The long-standing tradition of analysing classical music through studying the compositional elements in the score can unveil many characteristics in the syntac-

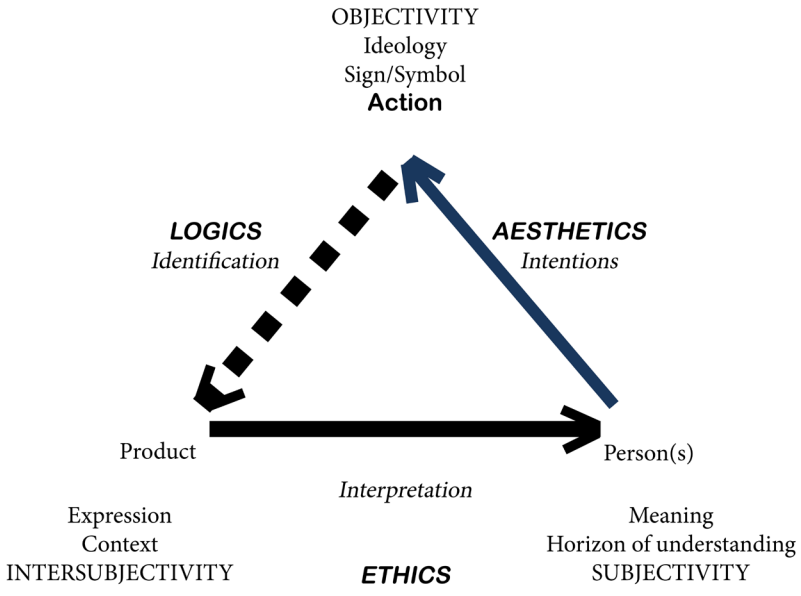


Figure 2: The multi-layered communication models.

tical structure of a composition. Nevertheless, I have methodological doubts about combining that kind of information with biographical information and cultural references to provide the analysis with a semantic flavour. There is no unified logic inherent in transforming notation into music, only arbitrariness. The result is that such an analysis tends to be authoritative (especially in textbooks) and sometimes becomes authoritarian (in master class seminars). (See figure 2)

Through its triangular structure, the model excludes the simple stimulus-response and communication models that conceive of language as a binary phenomenon. Saussure defined language as "a system of signs that express ideas" where the signifier (the sound object) is a set of speech sounds or marks on a page, and the signified (the concept) is the idea of the sign (Saussure et al., 1966). Stravinsky's longing to present a musical work as a self-explanatory entity can be seen as an example of Saussure's dichotomy.

Writings

Although Stravinsky used ghostwriters in *An Autobiography* (1936/1990) and the *Poetics of Music* (1942/1970), I see his utterances in those books as much more representative of his thinking about music than in many of the interviews he gave. Both books were published during his Neoclassical period and were products of the cultural context in which he found himself in Paris. French became the language of his official correspondence, and French expressions supplemented his notation practice from 1914.[6] The many books and conversations with Robert Craft came from 1959 (i.e., after his Neoclassical period). By that time, Stravinsky was already a celebrity, and he often answered questions in a way that enhanced his esteem as a leading music person, making statements that sometimes conflicted with earlier statements.

In his autobiography, Stravinsky (1936/1990, pp. 31 – 32) writes:

> Having finished this bizarre piece, I struggled for hours, while walking beside the Lake of Geneva, to find *a title which would express in a word the character of my music* and consequently, the personality of its creature (*Petrouchka*) (italics mine).

I have used italics where Stravinsky indicates an exciting link between music and language, a kind of parallel expressivity between word and music that later he would so often deny existed in his music.[7] Despite his denial, many works have solid connections between the words' meaning and his musical expressions. As early as *Poetics of Music* (1942/1970), he indicates another understanding of the link between music and language:

> But no matter how scrupulously a piece of music may be notated, no matter how carefully it may be insured against every possible ambiguity through the indications of tempo, shading, phrasing, accentuation, and so on, it always contains hidden elements that defy definition, *because verbal dialectic is powerless to define musical dialectic in its totality.* The realization of these elements is thus a matter of experience and intuition, in a word, of the talent of the person who is called upon to present the music. (Stravinsky 1942/1970, p. 123)

Here, Stravinsky sees music and language as incongruent communication systems.[8] However, when he recorded the repertoire for two pianos with his son Soulima, Stravinsky admitted that his pronouncements were not to be taken as unbending as he professed (Joseph, 2001). Nevertheless, in Stravinsky's writings and interviews, many examples indicate an unstable understanding of the connection between language and music and between notation and music. Placing these discrepancies on different sides of the semiotic triangle can provide a better understanding of Stravinsky's thinking. **When talking to Soulima, Stravinsky explains the logic (the hierarchical understanding) a musician needs to have to identify the connection between a sign and its expression. When discussing the reliability of notation, his concern is the aesthetics that the composer needs to focus on realising his intentions. When he accuses performers of taking too much liberty in their deviations from (interpretations of) the score, he addresses the ethics of the musicians mediating the music for the listeners.**

An essential constituent in Stravinsky's life and one that had consequences for his attitude towards language and music performance was his religious conviction. In adulthood, after gaining admittance to the circle of Diaghilev, Stravinsky formally left the church in 1910. During the 1920s, however, he became increasingly concerned about questions of religion and faith. In 1926, Stravinsky re-joined the Russian Orthodox Church; an immediate consequence was Stravinsky's composition of *Otče naš (Pater Noster).* The text was Slavonic, the language in which Stravinsky prayed. There is a strong connection between the words' meaning and the melodic line (in line with the doctrine of affects) (Dahl, 2015). It was his first work that did not involve instruments, and the score has no articulation, tempo, or dynamic signs, very starkly making a performance dependent on the talent (horizon of understanding the text) of the person called upon to present the music.

Stravinsky's development from his Russian period towards Neoclassicism took several years. Depending on which criteria are used to define the two stylistic outcomes, there is a mix of elements that belong to each or both in several of Stravinsky's works in the period after *The Rite* and up to the *Octet*. As early as the *Three Pieces for String Quartet* (1914), Swiss conductor Ernest Ansermet (1883–1969) commented, "this music is absolute music in a true sense of the word … music innocent of any and all suspicion of a literary or philosophic program" (Ansermet, 1915). However, the second movement, later orchestrated as Eccentric, was inspired by the movements of the clown Little Tich, whom Stravinsky saw in London in 1914 (Stravinsky & Craft, 1960). Maureen A. Carr (2014) argues in her book *After the Rite* that he composed the *Jeu du rossignol mécanique* on August 1, 1913, which could be taken as his first step on his path to Neoclassicism. She also underlines that the emergence of Neoclassicism is closely tied to the changing aesthetics of the time.

Stravinsky was not the only intellectual living in Paris who spent their early years in St. Petersburg. Several members of the artistic group *Mir iskusstva* had moved to Paris, and their magazine was form 1898 edited by Alexandre Benois, Léon Bakst and Sergei Diaghilev (chief editor). In 1910, Nicholas Roerich became the new chairman and continued to promote artistic individualism and other principles of *Art Noveau*. Their experiments in literature, art, music, and dance led to intense discussions in Paris, not least from the French intellectuals, Catholics or not. Moreover, for Stravinsky, his acquaintance with Jacques Maritain's article "Art et scolastique" from 1920 (Maritain, 1971) would underpin an Aristotelian-Thomist understanding of reality that provided him with a broad basis for the humanist practice of art and religion. Maritain, who was associated with the *renouveau Catholique* movement, argued that the lack of clarity in the Catholic church and late Romantic thought shared common causes and a common remedy: to depersonalise expression and return to medieval ideals of humility and anonymity wherein acceptance of a divine sense of order was implicit. This idea was not only against Romanticism but for a music performer; it represented a complete break with the concept of (traditional) musicianship. On the other hand, if art is not about emoting (a Romantic trait) but about intellectualising (as promoted in Neoclassicism), aesthetic theory could function as an arbiter of taste regarding spiritual values. But what then about musicianship, embodied knowledge, and traditional expressivity?

These concepts were essential to Stravinsky as he developed his understanding of text-music relationships, especially concerning religious texts. For Stravinsky, these discussions extended his fundamental belief that music has its own ordered nature and must avoid any extra-musical literary representation of its text's content. However, Stravinsky's assumption (and that of the co-constructors of his aesthetic theory in *Poetics of Music*) that it is possible to separate a word's linguistic meaning from its sound structure could be clearer. He bases his theory of language on the text's written meaning (and the complex meaning it represents). However, he does not account for the dimensions and qualities that spoken language contributes to constructing meaning, which is a cultural and intersubjective contribution. When the composer Stravinsky is fascinated by words and syllables (as in Oedipus Rex), the sound of language captures his interest; when he rejects language as an untoward influence upon his way of

composing, it is the content of language to which he refers. A performer should, therefore, not use the literary meaning of the words as a guide for expressions in the music but rather seek the expressive potential in the pronunciation of the text.

In the cultural debate after World War I, Stravinsky's statement, "My Octuor is a musical object" (Stravinsky, 1924, cited in White, 1979, pp. 574–577) had an immense impact, making possible a new understanding of Stravinsky's music.[10] The core of Stravinsky's ideas about Neoclassicism is sometimes reduced to the slogan: "Music is, by its very nature, essentially powerless to express anything at all."[11] He presents this idea in his autobiography (Stravinsky, 1936/1990, p. 53), and he repeats some of it as a question in the *Poetics of Music:* "Do we not, in truth, ask the impossible of music when we expect it to express feelings, to translate dramatic situations, even to imitate nature?" (Stravinsky, 1942/1970, p. 177). Adding "in truth" to the statement makes it sound more scientific, underlining Stravinsky's search for objectivity as the ideological ground of Neoclassical absolute music. Stravinsky's list of expected expressions combines ontological (objective) elements, such as dramatic situations and nature, and epistemological elements, such as (subjective) feelings. Nevertheless, as further documented in this article, he uses a vocabulary that includes objective signs of articulation and emotive literary elements that refer to feelings in his notation practice.

Stravinsky sees only one creator in the communicative music chain: the composer. This corresponds to the traditional way of thinking about musical communication, which involves three (human) figures arranged in a sequence from the composer via the performer to the listener. This model has been paradigmatic to nearly all discourses in music history and music theory, often without the benefit of any distinction among the ideas of music that might accompany or even characterise these three humans. The concept of communication as an exchange of ideas has dominated the discourse about the musical experience. Still, music's double ontological status demands that we include the most essential non-human elements (or objects) in musical life. In classical music, these would be the notation, the sound of a performance, and the discourse about the music. In performing Stravinsky's Neoclassical works, it is necessary to consider these non-human elements, developing an interpretation and not letting Stravinsky's writings and aesthetics overrule the actual score.

The communicative chain, then, will look like this:

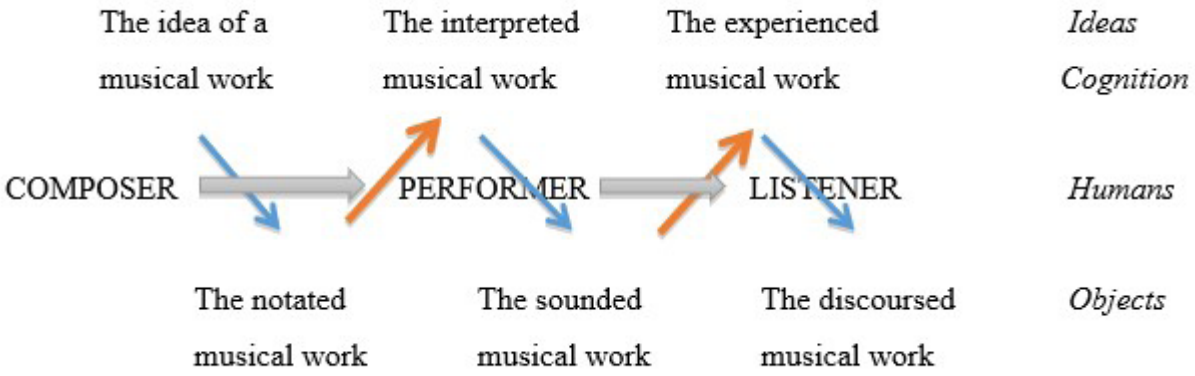


Figure 3: The communicative chain (Dahl, 2019).

This model illustrates that transforming an idea towards an object involves reducing the information from a thick entity to a thin entity (to use Stephen Davies' (2001) terms). The composer's idea of the musical work is developed during its composition, and the actual notation practice limits and dictates what ends up in the work's score. The notated musical work is the thin element that needs to be interpreted—that is, given (musical) meaning through the addition of properties that consequently open new space for meanings other than those intended by the composer. The performer's reading of the notation generates an interpretation based on the performer's horizon of knowledge (which is not restricted to music/sound/notation) and their performance skills. The performance as a sounding musical work is thinner (has fewer properties) than the performer's concept of the interpreted musical work. The listener will then interpret the performance through their own expectations and horizon of knowledge, which is not restricted to music at all.[12] The utterances in a discourse of music are thinner than the musical experience that prompted them. It is impossible to trace this model backwards because of the lack of consistent linearity in the communicative process. It involves three different people, each with unique ways of structuring musical knowledge. In addition, essential information is lost when comparing objects and ideas at each stage (a big challenge for the music critic!)

Stravinsky's demands of the interpreter are typically twofold: a perfect translation of the score into sound and a literate approach that provides loving care towards the composer's intentions and which follows the style and conventions associated with the composer (Stravinsky, 1942/1970, pp. 123–124). The balance between interpretation and execution greatly occupied Stravinsky in the 1920s. He was one of many composers who became frustrated about performers deviating from the score.[13] In *Poetics*, he became rather demagogic in his analysis of the dilemma: "It is the conflict of these two principles – execution and interpretation – that is at the root of all errors, all sins, all the misunderstandings that interpose themselves between the musical work and the listener and prevent a faithful transmission of its message."(Stravinsky, 1942/1970, p. 122). Here, there is a mix of objective entities (errors), ethical choices (sins), and a lack of communication that might have a thousand reasons other than simply the balance between interpretation and execution. Stravinsky's way out of this mess is, as always: "It is the need for order without which nothing can be achieved, and upon the disappearance of which everything disintegrates."(Stravinsky, 1926/1990, pp. 131–132). This order could be linked to the multi-layered model (Fig. 2) as a hierarchical understanding of the logic that connects the sign to its expression. However, the main problem inherent in Stravinsky's many utterances is his understanding of musical notation as a representational visualisation of music. His premise is: "The idea that execution implies the strict putting into effect of an explicit will that contains nothing beyond what it specifically commands." (Stravinsky, 1942/1970, p. 122). It presupposes that musical notation can give specific commands to the performer in an explicit way, thus resulting in an effective (objective) realisation of the musical work commanded by the composer.

Notation

Notation is a graphical logic-mathematical sign system that must be interpreted to be transformed into a musical perfor-

mance. Notation is visual, not sounding, and it is restricted to a logic-mathematical timeline that lies far from the realm of human expression. As Brian Ferneyhough comments, "A strange ontological position: a sign constellation referring directly to a further such constellation of a completely different perceptual order." (Ferneyhough, 1998). Stravinsky used the traditional vocabulary of signs in music notation to communicate his musical ideas to the musician. However, he often talks about music notation as an ahistorical tool. Such a discourse stands outside the cultural process in which the notation is seen as an object of social and creative interaction.[14] Transforming notation into music requires an understanding that includes more than just identifying the signs/symbols that direct which pitch and tone length are to be produced. In one way, notation is a representation, but simultaneously, it puts the imagination into action.[15] *Music notation is a system of ontological entities with the potential for meaning construction in a cultural context* (Dahl, 2023). Stravinsky's writings about notation and performance lack this understanding. Nadia Boulanger seems to have shared a similar opinion that the music itself controlled a work's signification when she linked notions of emotions, expressions, and inspiration not to subjectivity but to form/objectivity.[16] Nevertheless, Stravinsky uses specific commands in producing the sound from the instrument that are supplemented by verbal expressions to activate the performer's imagination.

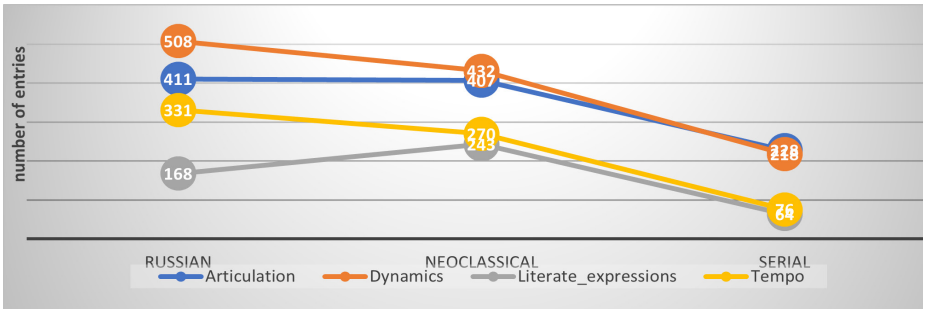


Figure 4: Sum of vocabulary groups in the three periods

In my book *Modes of Communication in Stravinsky's Works* (Dahl, 2022), I divided the vocabulary in Stravinsky's published scores into four categories: Articulation, Dynamics, Tempo, and Literary expressions, all containing subgroups,[17] organising a total vocabulary of 232 entries. The total number of registrations was 5,486 from 155 works.[18] I also divided his compositions into nine work categories. A grouping of signs for shortening and lengthening the tone produced empirical results that underline the notion of Stravinsky focusing on the attack of the tone.[19] The typification of the vocabulary in adjustment and nuances was necessary, as adjustments can be interpreted within the information already presented in the score. In contrast, nuances refer to a human experience that exists independently of the score. Consequently, in the performance assessment, the reliability of performing adjustments in the score can be identified. The nuances will lack an unambiguous basis for objective criteria, so only their validity is assessable for the listener.

"Music notation is a system of ontological entities with the potential for meaning construction in a cultural context"

The empirical study I undertook indicates the potential for a new understanding of Stravinsky and his development as a composer. In exploring his search for objectivity, we could expect that his notation in his Neoclassical period became more focused on standard signs and their adjustments. An overview of his vocabulary in the three periods, Russian, Neoclassical, and Serial, indicates minor differences between Russian and Neoclassical, but a dramatic reduction of vocabulary in the Serial period. See figure 4.

(N=155. Number of entries distributed on vocabulary units: Russian 189, Neoclassical 194, and Serial 95. The correlation coefficient between the vocabulary in Russian and Neoclassical works is r= 0.834.)

Breaking down the data on vocabulary subgroups unveils a surprising development in Stravinsky's notation practice. Based on his critique of the performing practices he found in Paris, an increased use of universal articulation signs (including the 11 character indications in French used in 1914–1930) could be expected. However, there is an enhanced use of literary expressions and nuances of character in his Neoclassical works, which is unexpected.

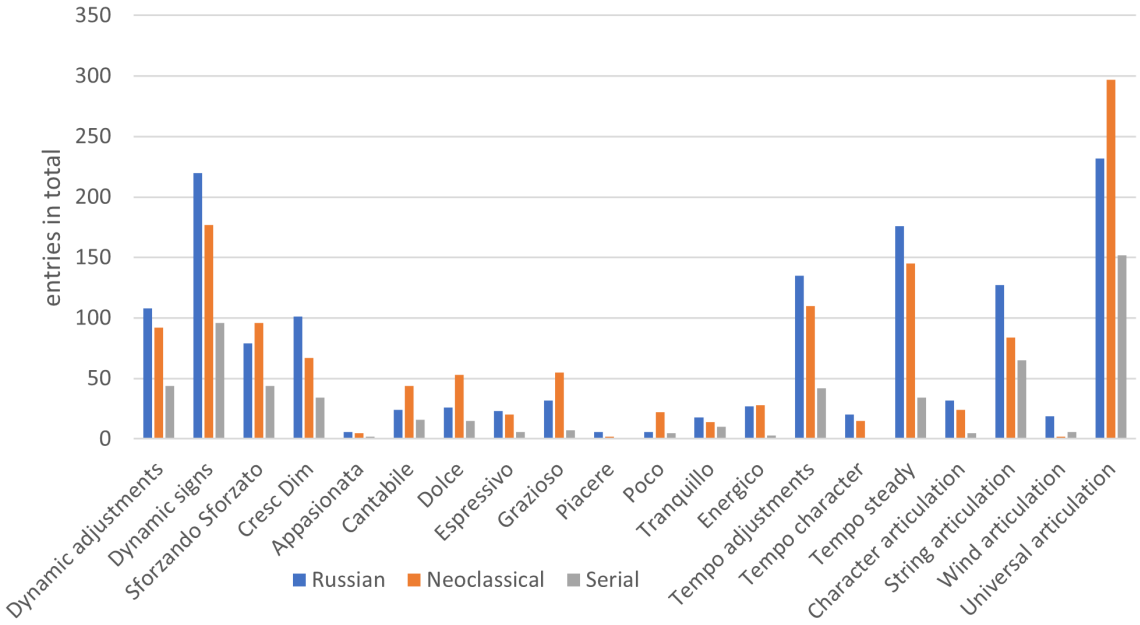
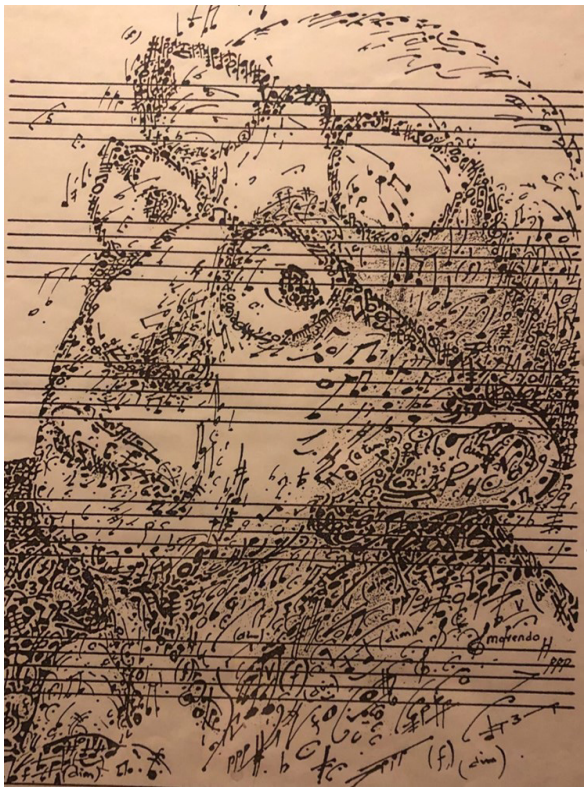


Figure 5: Subgroups of vocabulary in RNS



Illustrasjon: Richard Butterworth

Cantabile, dolce, grazioso, and poco are used much more in Stravinsky's Neoclassical works than in his Russian repertoire. From the perspective of Stravinsky's writings, this could be seen as a way of making what he calls *specific commands*. However, when performing literary expressions and character nuances, musicians must make decisions based on their horizon of understanding the expression and what it could mean in generating musical sounds. As such, his enhanced use of literary expressions advocates a more personal interpretation from the musician, in contrast to what Stravinsky, the writer, preaches.

Recordings

In his autobiography, Stravinsky (1936/1990, p. 101) writes: "In order to prevent the distortion of my compositions by future interpreters, I had always been anxious to find a means of imposing some restrictions on the notorious liberty, especially widespread today, which prevents the public from obtaining a correct idea of the author's intentions." The gramophone record became his preferred physical documentation of his musical works and performance aesthetics.[20] The recorded history of Stravinsky conducting and playing his music started with acoustic recordings on 78s in 1923 and ended with stereo LPs in 1967 (Stuart, 1991). It covers nearly all his compositions and is a unique legacy created under the spell of Neoclassicism (Dahl, 2020). The technical development from acoustic to electric recordings (1925), the introduction of the tape recorder in 1945 (which made editing possible), and the change from shellac to vinyl (1948) did not have any impact on Stravinsky's recording practice. As with most classical music recordings, the aesthetics focused on documenting a concert performance and reducing any interference from new technology assets.[21] Nevertheless, editing possibilities resulted in a sharper distinction between recording and performance. In 1951, CBS launched the slogan "Stravinsky Conducts Stravinsky", and in a conversation with Robert Craft in 1959, Stravinsky said: "I regard my recordings as indispensable supplements to the printed music." (Stravinsky & Craft, 1980, p. 119). However, an overview of Stravinsky's gramophone and concert recordings makes possible a comparison between different performances of the same work. Then, the concept of unique compositional intentionality ("musical work") falls to pieces when there is any variance in the recording's expression, as Nicholas Cook and many others have shown. (Cook, 2003).

"The soundscape created by the producer in the studio can have a significant impact on the musical experience of listening to the record"

In the *Symphony of Psalms* (1930), Stravinsky originally called the second movement "Double Fugue". It is impossible to compose a double fugue, of course, unless you invest wholeheartedly in the structure and content restrictions of the form. It is, therefore, tempting to read Stravinsky's choice of this form for the work's text (Psalm 39, verses 2, 3, and 4) as an act of advocacy for a logic of something bigger (God) than his own compositional aesthetics. The movement is not only a double fugue but also a prayer. His religious beliefs are also evident in the work's other movements via several of his musical-rhetorical figures. However, he remarked that he "even chose Psalm 150 in part for its popularity, though another and compelling reason was my eagerness to counter the many composers who have abused these magisterial verses as pegs for their own lyrico-sentimental 'feelings'" (Stravinsky & Craft, 1963, p. 7). This comment reveals a desire to realise performances that depersonalise expression, which is in line with Maritain and the renouveau Catholique movement, which sought a return to the medieval ideals of humility and anonymity alongside an implicit acceptance of a divine sense of order. The choirs used in Stravinsky's three published recordings of *Symphony of Psalms* do not realise this intention because the orchestra and choir use too much vibrato and lyrico-sentimental feelings.[22]

The soundscape created by the producer in the studio can have a significant impact on the musical experience of listening to the record. Stravinsky recorded the *Concerto in D for String Orchestra* (1946 "Basel") for the first time on April 1, 1950,[23] and the soundscape has a dry and nearly aggressive character. The string sound is far from the Romantic string sound that dominated classical records. As such, it is an example of Stravinsky's ideology overruling the soundscape, making the recording an extension of this new score. However, the soundscape was totally different when he re-recorded the piece in Rome on Oc-

Illustrasjon: *Stravinsky rehersing the Rite of Spring*, Jean Cocteau

tober 23, 1957.[24] In this recording, there are slow tempi and rhythmic disorders in the parts (possibly due to a lack of rehearsal time enabling the musicians to adjust to Stravinsky's conducting style?), so this recording is not to be seen as "how my music is to be performed".[25] The third recording, made for CBS in 1963,[26] is more in line with Stravinsky's first recording. The soundscape is closer to a typical concert hall acoustics but is still rather aggressive, especially in the first movement, and dry, even in the Arioso (marked *dolce espressivo* in VnI and Vc), where the accompaniment in Violin II and Viole is marked *staccato*.

In *Themes and Conclusions* (Stravinsky, 1972), Stravinsky comments on his recording of *The Rite* with the Columbia Symphony from 1960 (reissued in 1970)[27] and compares it with Boulez/Cleveland Orchestra [28] and Metha/Los Angeles Philharmonic[29] made in June 1969. For all three recordings, he continuously comments on tempo, dynamics, and articulation, all with reference to the score. Evaluating his own recording as the best, his final argument includes a typical Stravinsky utterance: "Because the tempos are better on the whole and because there is more strength behind it." (Stravinsky, 1972). I would say that the tempi are indicated in the score by a diversity of standardised musical signs. Still, the strength behind it seems to result from the interpreter's imaginary decisions that were mediated to the musicians. Stravinsky's discrepancy in trying to write conductor-proof music, reducing interpretation to execution, and his need for musical dimensions that are still not part of notation practice illustrate the diversity between Stravinsky, the champion of scholarly objectivity (Neoclassicism), and Stravinsky, the creative musician.

Conclusion

Analysing Stravinsky's works in a multi-layered communication model makes it possible to shed some light on some important interpretive problems. Taking the performer's perspective, thereby making the score the pivotal point of communication between the composer and the performer, has demonstrated a new approach to Stravinsky's music.[30] In this way, the analysis has offered more information about how the music is (to be performed) than how it was composed.[31] This method has the potential for developing new perspectives and further research on all compositions that have a comparable use of the notation system's signs and symbols. It will also make the analysis more attractive for the performers and will contribute to the practical turn in musicology.

Stravinsky's professed preference for execution over interpretation indicates a lack of understanding of the relationships between the outer circles in the model (Fig. 2): The sign/symbol's dependence on Ideology and Objectivity, Expressions on the Context of their appearances and the affiliation to Intersubjectivity, and the Person's Meaning on their Horizon of understanding and Subjectivity. Music notation is an objective collection of signs and symbols. Still, its realisation as a form of musical expression depends on the performer's logic as it is bound to the actual context (including the performer's artistic level) and ideology. This logic is independent of the composer's aesthetics in the choice of notation. In the slogan "music is powerless to express anything at all", Stravinsky fails to understand the dimension of intersubjectivity in our musical experiences, making objectivity the only platform for musical experiences. As demonstrated through my analysis of his vocabulary of articulation signs, Stravinsky, in his Neoclassical works, uses adjustments and nuances that can only be realised through the performer's interpretation. The discrepancies between his preference for execution over interpretation are most notable in his Neoclassical period but are based on an overly simple understanding of the communicative element in music.

As a conductor, Stravinsky let musical expression overrule notation, meaning that his recorded interpretations became dependent on the context of the sounding recording. A performer who avoids expression in performing Stravinsky's Neoclassical works might end up playing "stupid notes", as Boulez called it, referring to performing single notes without an understanding of the context of the composition. Therefore, I conclude that when Stravinsky's Neoclassical works are to be performed, the performer should not emphasise Stravinsky's flashy utterances and writings about striving for an objective performance practice, but instead stick to realising the possibilities of subjective expression in the score. Remember, in the seminal article about the Octuor, Stravinsky concluded: "I must say that I follow in my art an instinctive logic and that I do not formulate its theory in any other way than ex post facto." (White, 1979, p. 577). As such, Stravinsky was an absolute musician.

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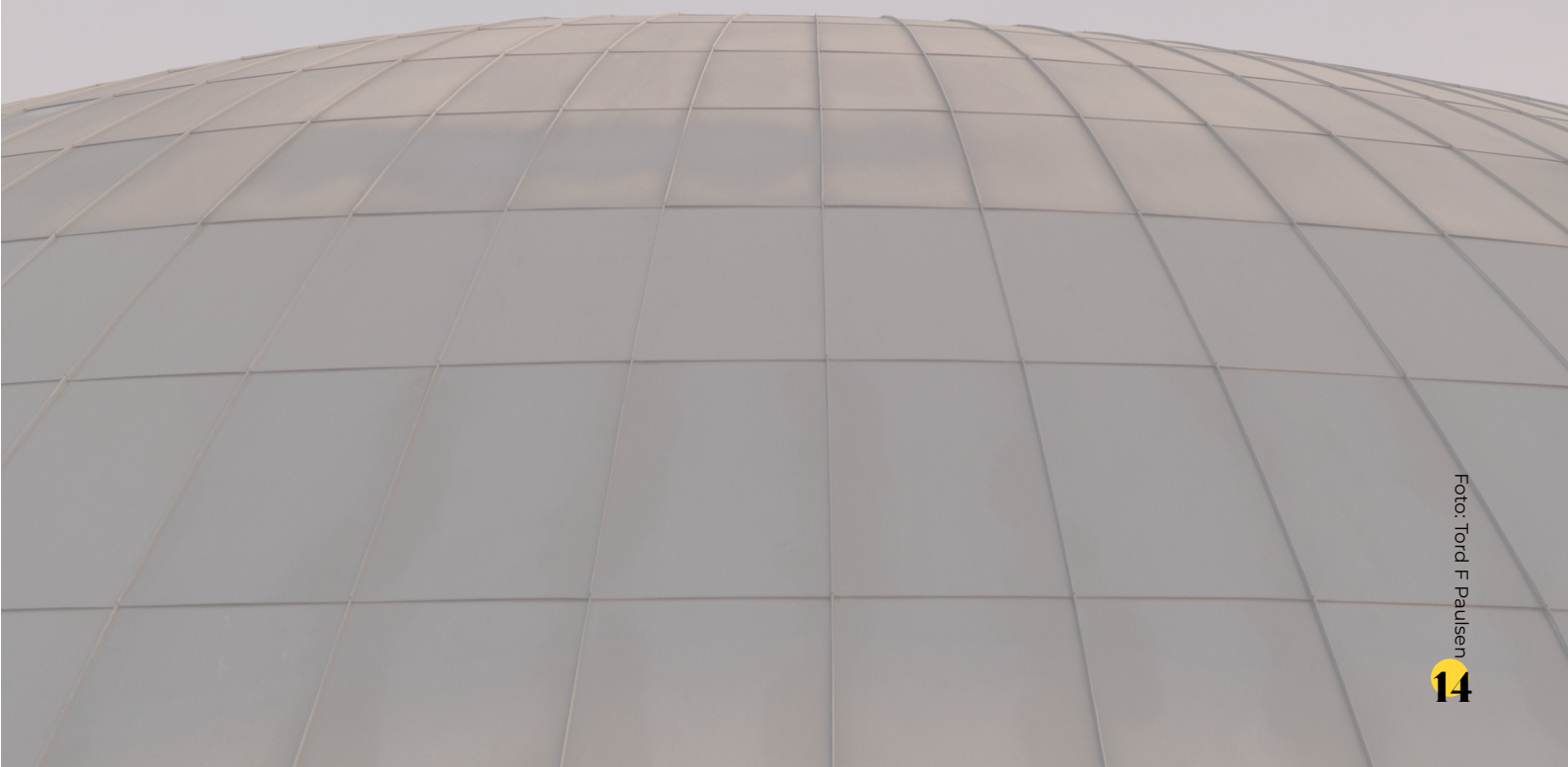

Foto: Tord F Paulsen

NOTES

[1] Nevertheless, in addition to the twenty serial compositions listed in Straus (2001), Stravinsky also composed 9 works using non-serial composition techniques.

[2] Here to mention just a few: Fink (1999), Hill (2000), Cook (2003), Philip (2004), Taruskin (1996), Day (2000), Cross (1998) and Stravinsky!

[3] His fascination for pianola is one consequence of this idea. See McFarland (2011).

[4] While Stephen Davies finds that "the work concept as a recent invention does not provide the most plausible narrative for music's history. My emphasis on the thinness or thickness of pieces better captures the differences between musical periods and styles while respecting the continuities that unify them." (Davies, 2001).

[5] His understanding of notation as a tool for expressing musical facts in an unambiguous way could be seen as a premature version of the philosophical movement of logical positivism that developed from the mid-1920s. It posited an understanding of language as a tool for expressing logical and scientific facts in an unambiguous way. (Wittgenstein & Russell. 1971).

[6] In his published scores from Three Pieces for String Quartet (1914) to the Symphony of Psalms (1930).

[7] When Stravinsky talks about Abraham and Isaac, he says: I do not wish the listener any luck in discovering musical descriptions or illustrations: to my knowledge none was composed, and as I see it, the notes themselves are the end of the road (Newman, Craft, Stravinsky, 1967, reproduced on the record cover of The New Stravinsky MS 7386).

[8] Music and language as incongruent communication systems is one of the three categories in Agawu's list of music/language propositions. I group Agawu's ten (eleven) propositions into three categories: Similarities, a difference of degree, and disparity/incongruence. Agawu (1999, pp.141¬–146) and Agawu (2009).

[9] Stravinsky and Maritain met for the first time in 1926. They became close acquaintances in 1929, two years after the second edition of Maritain's "Art et scolastique", in which Maritain apologises for associating Stravinsky with Wagner in terms of music "that dulled and 'debauched' the eye, ear or spirit" in the first edition. In Stravinsky and Craft (1962), Stravinsky dismisses any influence of Maritain upon this conversion. Walsh (2006, p. 170) notes that starting in the 1920s, Igor and Katya were reading Maritain and Aquinas (especially his Summa Theologica) and other central works of the Catholic church's theological literature.

[10] Copland, present at the premiere October 18, 1923, wrote:" Everyone asked why Stravinsky should have exchanged his Russian heritage for what looked very much like a mess of eighteenth-century mannerism." (Copland, 1941, p. 101).

[11] There are several forerunners to such a statement: Most prominent is likely Hanslick in 1856 (Hanslick, 1986) but also Nietzsche, who twists the question to whether feelings can generate music. (cited in Carr, 2014). Nietzsche's text "On Music and Words" is also available in Dahlhaus et al., 2020).

[12] Listening to a performance by your hero makes everything in the performance valid!

[13] Ravel: "I do not ask for my music to be interpreted, but only it to be played." (Long, 1973, p. 16).

[14] A syncopation can look the same in music by Scott Joplin and W. A. Mozart, but needs to be identified according to a different logic.

[15] Boulez calls it "To realise an invention" (Boulez et al. 2005, p. 558).

[16] Rephrasing Francis (2015).

[17] Subgroups of Articulation: universal, string, wind articulation, and character articulation. Dynamics: dynamic signs, Cresc./Dim., Sforzando/sforzato, dynamic adjustments. Tempo: tempo steady, tempo adjustments, tempo character. Literary expressions were divided into 9 subgroups.

[18] It included some revisions of the 105 original compositions. He kept his vocabulary the same in the revised versions independent of style at composing the work and at the time of revision.

[19] By shortening the tone, there will be less time for expressivity! There are 14 different signs in the subgroup Sforzando/sforzato... The ratio Staccato/Legato was 1.49 in the Russian and 1.87 in the Neoclassical period.
The characteristic focus on the attack of the tone is also commented on in Van den Toorn & McGinness (2012, p. 259): "In matters of articulation, a crisp, clean, secco approach was essential if the bite of invention was to be given its due."

[20] Stravinsky about gramophone recordings: "This work greatly interested me, for here, far better than with the piano-rolls, I was able to express all my intentions with real exactitude." (Stravinsky, 1936/1990, p.150).

[21] Trying to "create an ambience equivalent to the best seat in the concert hall" (Walter Legge's mantra in Symes (2004, p. 73).

[22] A good example is the first movement's choir part in Fig. 5. After singing "Hear my prayer, O Lord" in piano in Fig. 4, the choir is instructed to sing in a simple forte "and my supplication". Many choirs go overboard here, expressing too many feelings (among the worst is the Choir der Deutsche Oper in Karajan/DG 1975 – in addition, after the fortissimo at 12, the male choir is out of tune).

[23] R.C.A. Victor Electrical twelve inch 78: 12-1327-29, LP issue LM 1096. Recorded 1 Apr 1950.

[24] Fonit-Cetra (2LPs) LAR 25 (Rome Symphony Orchestra) 23 Oct 1957

[25] Seattle Post-Intelligencer 5 March 1954. See also Cook (2003, p. 179).)

[26] Producer: John McClure CBS LP: USA M 30516, Europe 72976. (in 1982 in 2Recorded Legacy")

[27] C.B.S. DL5503/DS 6183 (set D3L300/D3S614) recorded 5 -6 Jan 1960

[28] C.B.S. 72 807 (1969)

[29] Decca 7.075B (SXL6444) (1969)

[30] Different from what was presented in Lang's (1963) seminal book.

[31] Schoenberg, in a letter to Rudolf Koelisch on 27 July 1932, who had presented his analysis of the row in Schoenberg's 3rd String Quartet: "I can't utter too many warnings against overrating these analyses, since after all, they only lead to what I have always been dead against: seeing how it is done; whereas I have always helped people to see: what it is!" (Schoenberg, 1964).