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Six piano pieces op. 118 by Johannes Brahms: the analysis of the interpretations by Wilhelm Kempff and Radu Lupu

Thesis

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1. INTRODUCTION

The interpretation is, together with the development of technical abilities, one of the crucial topics among any music studies. The musical interpretation and performance practices have been fading away and being replaced throughout the history. However, interpretation as a historical phenomenon was very hard to be tracked or studied because of the lack of sources. Rare written testimonies and the invention of the recording devices contributed to the development of numerous theoretical approaches in the field of interpretation, which are from 19th century until nowadays still in the process of expanding. That is one of the reasons why is the interpretation, a widely discussed field of study among many theoreticians.

In his Theory of Interpretation, Herman Danuser is offering three modes of interpretation which are requiring wide and advanced knowledge about artistic music and its history, its performers and audience. His theory is based on three subgroups in terms of artistic music which were formed at the beginning of 20th century. Each group set its own mode of interpretation. My idea is to try to better understand and explain the results of my analysis with H. Danuser's Interpretational theory.¹

Together with theoretical approach to the interpretation, this thesis contains topics which belong to history of pianism, late works of Johannes Brahms, together with the pianistic approaches of two world famous pianists, Radu Lupu and Wilhelm Kempff. All this subjects should be for any piano student, not only interesting but in addition highly important, since they are indispensable part of any higher pianistic education.

The Six piano pieces op. 118 composed by Johannes Brahms were part of my final exam and hence an essential segment of my master studies. The performances of Radu Lupu and Wilhelm Kempff were the sources of great inspiration during the artistic work on the pieces. Turning to some basic information about the recordings and the knowledge about the biographical data of the two pianists and are the reasons that triggered me to choose their performances for my final thesis.

¹ Danuser, Hermann, „Interpretation“, in: *MGG online*, published by Laurenz Lütteken in Kassel, Stuttgart, New York. First released 1996, online released 2016. <https://www.mgg-online.com/mgg/stable/12834>. (Accessed on 02.08.2021).

1.1. The recordings

Wilhelm Kempff made the recording of the Six pieces op. 118 between 6th and 8th of December 1963 in Hannover Congress Centrum. The recording was released for Deutsche Gramophon as a LP in 1964. At the time he made a recording, Kempff was already more than 70 years old with a very long and fruitful career behind him.²

Radu Lupu's recording was created in July 1976 in Kingsway Hall in London and in 1978 it was published for the Decca label as a vinyl. At the time the recording was created, Lupu was 30 years old. Although he was already established as winner of several big piano competitions, he was still considered to be the rising star of the pianism.³

The age gap between the recordings is thirteen years, which could be significant from the perspective of the technological development. However, the both versions of Six pieces op.118 are stereo studio recordings, they are released as stereo LP vinyl and later digitalized. Therefore, the technological aspect should not significantly influence the procedure and results of the analysis.

1.2. Objectives and questions

Following the interpretational methods and modes of Hermann Danuser,⁴ I decided to approach this thesis partly from the hermeneutical side, mentioning the external influences and historical circumstances crucial for the interpretation of Brahms' pieces, as well as their theoretical structural analysis. The similar technique will be used for better understanding of the both pianists and their further classification.

With this thesis, I aim to:

- a) Measure certain aspects of interpretation in the recordings of both pianists, detecting the elements of correlation and disparity between performances and the scores.
- b) Display the findings in a systematic way in order to compare them
- c) Discuss the reasons behind the differences.

² *Deutsche Grammophon Galleria: Kempff-Brahms Fantasien op. 116, Intermezzi op. 117, Klavierstücke op. 118 und op. 119* (1992); stereo; 6–8. December, 1963 in Hannover Congress Centrum; © 1964 Polydor International GmbH, Hamburg; ©1992 Deutsche Gramophon GmbH Berlin; DG 437 249-2 GGA.

³ *Radu Lupu plays Brahms* (1987); full frequency stereophonic sound; July 1976 in Kingsway Hall, London; © 1978 The Decca Record Company Limited, London; ©1987 The Decca Record Company Ltd, London; DH 417 599-2.

⁴ Danuser, 2016, <https://www.mgg-online.com/mgg/stable/12834>.

d) Associate the performances with the interpretive approaches of H. Danuser

The intention is to have an overview of different ways of approaching the music scores in the case of Wilhelm Kempff and Radu Lupu, finding possible reasons behind the interpretative differences of the written text as well as reasons behind the different interpretations between these two pianists. However, the interpretational analysis, especially measuring and comparing different interpretations are facing a lot of different challenges, starting with the subjectivity of verbal interpretation of music. Moreover, without precise measurements, the interpretational analysis can easily be turned into impressions of someone's interpretation, and therefore prone to re-interpretation.

The results and graphics created for this thesis are a product of Sonic Visualizer computer program combined with the manual tapping technique, Microsoft Excel, manual counting and bare listening to the recordings with the help of Sony WHCH710NB earphones. Although my first impression of the Sonic Visualizer was very positive, during the working process it turned out that the technological level of existing plug-ins for automatic measurements of tempo, power slopes, bars and other existing parameters is often not high enough to cope with the complexity of the Brahms's pieces and their performances, which often resulted with the illogical findings. Therefore, bars and beats are manually added in the computer program. The received values are later imported into Microsoft Excel and graphically represented.

The second problem connected with the findings of Sonic Visualizer is the interpretation of the findings, since the usage of different parameters, can provide significantly different readings, which are later very difficult to recall or clearly represent. From that reason, in every piece I used the *time value layer* which is expressing the time distance interval until the next note (not the previous one) measured in bpm.

1.3. Methods

The most relevant methods for this topic are:

- a) Historical method, which is providing the background for the interpretation of the collected data

- b) Analytical method, which is partly oriented on the musical structure and the analysis of the music scores. The second part is focused on the measurement of the interpretations and their analysis.
- c) Analytic induction, which will compare the relationship between the music performance and aesthetic views of the performer based on the biographical data.

1.4. Structure

The thesis contains four chapters. The first one is the description of the thesis, its relevance, goals, methods and structure. Second chapter contains the information crucial for the hermeneutical approach of the recordings. Third chapter contains analytical and interpretational analysis of *Six piano pieces op. 118*. The last chapter represents the summary and conclusions.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter contains an overview of German and Russian pianistic schools since they are both necessary for the content of the thesis, while another special subchapter is dedicated for Heinrich Barth, a piano professor of Wilhelm Kempff and Heinrich Neuhaus whose connection with Radu Lupu will be explained as well. Furthermore, the historical background of the both pianists will be described. The special highlight will belong to the connection between Wilhelm Kempff and Radu Lupu, similarities in their biographical data as well as in their pianistic education

2.1 Pianistic schools and traditions

One of the biggest examples of traditional approach towards interpretational practices and its development are national schools in 19th century. In the quest for national identity, originality and possibly superiority in comparison with other nations, different composition techniques, interpretational practices, methods and schools were rising all over Europe.

2.1.1. German pianistic schools

The center of the pianism in German speaking countries was at first formed in Vienna, the city of Beethoven and Schubert. The interpretational approach in Vienna at the first third of 19th century was mostly based on the technique and tradition of classicism.⁵

Next bigger center was in settled in Leipzig, formed by musicians like Ignaz Moscheless and Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Friedrich Wieck, Clara and Robert Schumann. They were being marked as *conservatives* whose approach towards musical interpretation was mostly based on proper interpretation of Beethoven.⁶ The main characteristics of their pianism were focus on structure and objectivity, beauty and quality of tone, technique in the service of the music and its content.⁷

Parallel to them, Franz Liszt formed another center in Weimar, where he gathered the so called progressive musicians in their attempt to widen and develop the structure and expressiveness which were in this case, in the service of the program, or in other words, in the service of the content that was coming outside of music as an absolute. His pianistic technique was highly virtuous, brilliant, and visually attractive, based on many improvisational skills.⁸

Those two pianistic streams continued with their development throughout the 19th century and their outcomes were described as virtuosos and interprets according to Herman Danuser, who furthermore narrates the interprets in the second half of 19th century, as an answer and alternative to the Liszt's eccentric virtuoso approach that was for many years dominant.⁹ This group, who based their pianism to a huge extent on the works of Ludwig van Beethoven, led by Hans von Bülow, built a path to many great pianists and represents of the German tradition, including Wilhelm Kempff.¹⁰

In the second half of 19th century, the center of German (and world) pianism was settled in Berlin. Many significant pianists who developed their pianistic skills with both, Weimar and

⁵ Danuser, Herman: „Die Musik vom der Wiener klassik bis zur Gegenwart“ in: *Musikalische Interpretation*, (= Neues Handbuch der Musikwissenschaft), Laaber 1997, p. 394.

⁶ Großman, Linde: „Klavierspiels: III. Entwicklung des Pianofortespiels in 19. Jahrhundert“ in: *MGG Online*, ed. By Laurenz Lütken Kassel, Stuttgart, New York 2016 ff., first published 1995, online published 2021, <https://www.mgg-online.com/article?id=mgg15574&v=1.2&rs=mgg15574> (accessed on 08.09.2021).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Danuser, 1997, pp. 394-397.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 397.

Leipzig aesthetic approaches, and in some cases, combined with other European national schools, were working, or studying in *Berliner Hochschule für Musik*.¹¹

2.1.1.1. Heinrich Barth

Heinrich Barth was one of the most respected professors of this institution. He started to learn piano in Weimar and continued his studies with Hans von Bülow. However, he had a strong professional connection with Johannes Brahms, and Joseph Joachim,¹² who both were prone to absolute music. Although his pianistic career wasn't as successful as his career of the piano teacher, he was a respected pianist as well, who performed works of Johannes Brahms and other traditional German and Viennese composers.¹³

Eduard Hanslick, who was fond of the absolute music, described Barth and his performance of Beethoven's Piano concerto in G-major in a following way:

„Die echt germanische krafttrotzende Erscheinung dieses blondvollbärtigen Künstlers mochte in ängstlichen Gemüthern die Besorgnis erregen, er werde vielleicht das Klavier zusammenschlagen. Um so angenehmer war man überrascht, als Herr Barth ein überaus zartes, elegantes und geschmackvolles Spiel entfaltete, dass ohne weichlich zu werden, doch gerade durch seine Mäßigung und ruhige Unmuth gefiel.“¹⁴

This testimony is showing strong influence of the national aspect in the critic already in the first half of the opening sentence. However, his style of playing is described as elegant (probably without striking or aggressive gestures), while tasteful could be indicating a performance without too much emotional expressions and in alignment with musical structure. All those claims are analog to descriptions of German interpretational approach.

Many of his famous students were describing Barth as a very strict, hard-tempered, traditional and demanding professor, whose outbursts of rage were very frightening.¹⁵ His pedagogical approach obviously made the results, since he happened to be the professor of Arthur Rubinstein, Heinrich Neuhaus, Wilhelm Kempff.¹⁶

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Karadaschow, Viktor: „Barth, Karl Heinrich“, in: *MGG Online*, published by Laurenz Lütken, Kassel, Stuttgart, New York 2016 ff., first published 2008, online published 2016, <https://www.mgg-online.com/article?id=mgg16329&v=1.0&rs=mgg16329> (accessed on 04.08.2021).

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Hanslick, Eduard: *Konzerte, Komponisten und Virtuosen der letzten fünfzehn Jahre 1870-1885: Kritiken*, Allgemeine Verein für Deutsche Litteratur, Berlin 1886, p. 294.

¹⁵ Sachs, Harvey: „*Rubinstein: A Life*“ Grove press, New York 1995, p. 27.

¹⁶ Karadaschow, 2016.

2.1.2. Russian pianistic school

Russian pianistic school started with development in 1860s, with the forming of the first Russian music conservatoriums in St. Petersburg and Moscow by Nikolai and Anton Rubinstein. However, the first professors on the two Conservatoriums were coming from abroad, mostly from Germany, Czech and Italy, while the representatives of German tradition were especially appreciated.¹⁷ This tendency changed in the late 19th century, when the first generations of Russian musicians were formed on the Moscow and St. Petersburg's Conservatoriums. In that period Russian cultural politic stopped with following the German and western interpretational traditions. Instead, it started forming its own.¹⁸

The main characteristics of Russian traditional interpretational approach, according to the Russian musicologist are focus on high artistic values, spontaneous and emotional performances, vocal treatment of the phrases as well as the intonated leading of the melodic lines.¹⁹ All of the aspects are in fact, present in many other national schools, and therefore are as well in the alignment with the heritage of the 19th century's German pianistic school. However, they remained in the Russian tradition until the Soviet time.²⁰

One of the most significant Russian professors who came back to Russia after the 1st World War was Heinrich Neuhaus. Being a student of Heinrich Barth, he got himself introduced with the German interpretational traditions. One of the ideas behind his pedagogical approaches was that pianistic technique and artistic presentation of a musical piece are a synthesis.²¹ This approach has a lot in common with the German interpretational tradition. Together with many other pianists and piano pedagogues in Soviet Russia, who were following the demands of totalitarian regime, Neuhaus published several works, books and articles about Russian pianism and piano school. This (hyper) production of written material about Russian music tradition and music pedagogy created a strong conception about specific elements of Russian national pianistic school, although many of its aspects were originally or to a big extent connected with other national

¹⁷ Tchineaev, Vladimir: „Kontrapunktische Wirkungen – Traditionen der Russischen Schule heute“ in: *Russische Schule der musikalischen Interpretation*, ed. by Heinz von Loesch and Linde Großmann, Schott Musik GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz 2015, , (=Klang und Begriff Vol. 5), pp. 11-25.

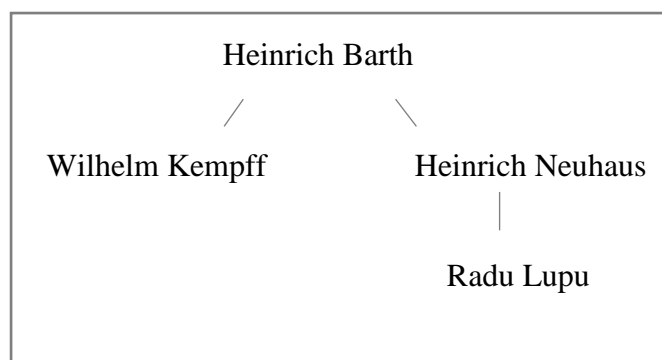
¹⁸ Ibid, pp. 13-15.

¹⁹ Großmann, 2021, <https://www.mgg-online.com/article?id=mgg15574&v=1.2&rs=mgg15574>.

²⁰ Tchineaev, 2015.

²¹ Neuhaus, Heinrich: *Kunst des Klavierspiels*, ed. Hans Gerig, Musikverlag Gerig 1967, p. 15.

schools and German tradition.²² Heinrich Neuhaus was a professor of many famous Russian pianists including Swjatoslaw Richter, Emil Gilels, and Radu Lupu as well.



Pianistic lineage of Wilhelm Kempff and Radu Lupu

2.2 Biographies of Wilhelm Kempff and Radu Lupu

2.2.1 Wilhelm Kempff

Wilhelm Kempff was a German pianist and a composer born in Jöteborg in 1854 in a family of musicians. His first musical steps were guided by his father who was a church cantor. Showing remarkable improvisational skills on organ at the age of nine, Kempff was recommended by Josef Joachim to Heinrich Barth and Robert Khan, who both were teaching at Berliner Hochschule für Musik. Because of his very young age, he couldn't be admitted to the Hochschule, so he was taking private lessons from those two professors. His music education was financially supported by a wealthy Jewish family.²³

The first piano recital Kempff had at the age of 11. After three years long brake he had with his piano teacher, Heinrich Barth, he continued studying with him at the age of 14 when he passed the entrance exam to Berliner Hochschule für Musik. It is belived that Kempff's knowledge about Beethoven came under the Barth's influence. His relations to music of Johann Sebastian Bach, Kempff formed with the help of his father who was an organ player, with the

²² Grokhotov, Sergej: „Sowjetische Pianistik: Zwischen Ideologie und Mythologie“ in: *Russische Schule der musikalischen Interpretation*, ed. by Heinz von Loesch and Linde Großmann, Schott Musik GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz 2015, (=Klang und Begriff vol. 5), pp. 57-70.

²³ Linsenmeyer, Klaus: *Wilhelm Kempff. Lebensskizzen eines großen Pianisten*, Noetzel-Verlag, Wilhelmshaven 2006, pp. 16-29.

music of Beethoven, Kempff got familiar with thanks to Heinrich Barth and the most about Brahms he learned thanks to Heinrich Barth as well as his composition professor Robert Khan because they both happened to be close friends of Johannes Brahms.²⁴ Works of Ludwig van Beethoven, Johann Sebastian Bach and Johannes Brahms together with pieces written by Robert Schumann and Joseph Haydn were unavoidable part of almost all of Kempff's piano recitals.

One of the reasons for his focus on German romantics was possibly lying in the political and social circumstances in Germany, especially during 1930s when Kempff's carrier of a conductor and a composer blossomed. Although he wasn't officially a member of the national-socialistic party, he was a member of two other institutions formed by Joseph Goebbels in Germany: *Reichmusikerschaft* and *Reichsmusikkammer*. Membership for Jewish musicians in those two organizations was strictly forbidden as well as playing or performing of any piece composed by people who were Jewish or who were somehow against the regime.²⁵

Kempff was gaining popularity not only because of his remarkable pianistic skills, but also as the promoter of the New German culture, culture that belonged to ideals of German Reich. Since 1933 when he got the working place in Berlin's *Hochschule für Musik*, his engagements as a conductor became more intensified, while his compositions were often being performed. Several tours around Europe, South America and Japan before the beginning of the WW2 were part of the *Propagandakonzerte*, a concept invented to spread the culture of German Reich to other countries and continents. During the WW2 he was performing in Poland, France (together with Alfred Cortot), Sweden, Italy, and Netherland as well as in Germany. This tendency lasted until the end of the 2nd world war. Miraculously, although he was a member of two organizations invented by Hitler's regime, he was released of all the accusation for collaboration with the Nazi's. After the war, he continued with the development of his international pianistic carrier and studio recordings.²⁶

„[Aufnahmen von Kempff] alle zeigen die eigentümliche und unverwechselbare Helligkeit, Rundung und Leuchtkraft seines Spiels, das präzise neoklassizistische Diktion mit Transparenz und der Fähigkeit verband, die innere Logik einer Komposition zu verdeutlichen. Obwohl ihm der große

²⁴ Ibid, p. 9.

²⁵ Reucher, Gabi: „Wie Beethoven für die Nazi Propaganda vereinnahmt wurde“ in: *Deutsche Welle* 04.05.2020. <https://www.dw.com/de/wie-beethoven-f%C3%BCr-die-nazi-propaganda-vereinnahmt-wurde/a-53210603>. (accessed on 07.08.2021).

²⁶ Linsenmeyer, 2006, pp. 56-75.

virtuose Zugriff durchaus zur Verfügung stand, behielt Kempffs Spiel immer ein Moment des Geistreich-Differenzierenden und vereinigt.“²⁷

In the history of pianism, he remained as one of the most respected performer of German romanticism. He is considered to be one of the last representatives of the Traditional German pianism „eine Tradition, die Klavierspiel nicht als sensationeles Virtuosenkunststück, sondern als geistiges Bekenntnis und als Botschaft begreift.“²⁸

2.2.2 Radu Lupu

One of the greatest pianists of our time, Radu Lupu, was born on 30th November 1945 in Galati, Romania. This country was from 1947-1958 one of those in which, according to the Paris Peace Treat, the Soviet military was legally present with more than 500000 soldiers on its territory. The Soviet military control certainly affected the life in Romania in its every aspect.²⁹ In this strong-established Soviet dictatorship had Radu Lupu his music education. His first piano teacher was Mia Busuioceanu, who guided him on his first piano recital that he held at the age of 12. Apparently, the pieces that he performed on his first recital were his own compositions. His piano studies on Conservatorium in Bucarest started when he was at the age of 14. His teacher at that time was Florica Musicescu, one of the greatest Romanian piano teachers, whose student was Dinu Lipati as well.³⁰

The influence of Soviet Russia specially affected Romanian culture and educational system. Accordingly, on 1961 Radu Lupu received the prestigious scholarship for studies at the Moscow conservatory in class of Heinrich Neuhaus, student of Heinrich Barth, and later his son, Stanislav Neuhaus. This collaboration, which lasted until 1969, brought him first awards on several crucial competitions worldwide like Van Cliburn in 1966, George Enescu in 1967 and Leeds Piano Competition on 1969.³¹

²⁷ Harden, Ingo: „Kempff, Wilhelm“ in: *MGG-Online*, published by Laurenz Lütteken in Kassel, Stuttgart, New York 2016 ff., First released 2003, online released 2016, <https://www.mgg-online.com/article?id=mgg07156&v=1.0&rs=mgg07156> (Accessed 05.08.2021).

²⁸ Linsenmeyer, 2006, p. 9.

²⁹ Bachman, Ronald: „Romania: A country Study“, in: *GPO for the Library of Congress*, Washington 1989, online at <http://countrystudies.us/romania/#:~:text=Washington%3A%20GPO%20for%20the%20Library%20of%20Congress%2C%201989>, (accessed on 30.08.2021).

³⁰ Otten, Jürgen: *Die großen Pianisten der Gegenwart*, Henschel Verlag, Berlin, Leipzig 2009, pp. 75-80.

³¹ Linsenmeyer, 2006, pp. 56-75.

Most of the opportunities for the concert activities that he received after the prize at Van Cliburn competition through USA and Europe, he turned down, because he wanted to go back to Moscow for the further studies.³²

His studies in Moscow among the biggest representatives of Russian pianistic school like Emil Gilels, Swjatoslaw Richter or Eliso Virsaladze (students of Heinrich Neuhaus as well), and Grigorij Sokolov are definitely qualifying him for a membership in this Russian pianistic surrounding.³³ However, his national background, as well as the fact that the biggest part of his career was build up outside of Sowiet Russia could be the reasons why is he rarely qualified as a representative of Russian school, although he had more than fruitful pianistic career.

His biggest projects with orchestra started to happen during 1970s when he performed with Cleveland Orchestra conducted by Daniel Barenboim, 1978 on Salzburger Festspiele with Berliner Philharmonics conducted by Herbert von Karajan. Other significant concerts he held in 1986 with Vienna Philharmonic conducted by Riccardo Muti.³⁴

Although he is not showing a lot of interests towards studio recordings,³⁵ what is caused by his fear of microphones,³⁶ he still managed to make more than 20 recordings for Decca Record label, with works of Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert and Brahms, which won several international prizes including two Grammy awards. He himself admitted that his repertoire is slightly conservative and his playing technique mostly suitable for the works of Brahms.³⁷

Many musicians and music critics were thinking of him as a poet on piano,³⁸ comparing him often with Brahms not just because of the program he prefers to play, but also because of his appearance.³⁹ The richness of his expression without the excess of stylistic idioms, together with the profound tone nuances he is able to produce during live performances are the qualities that fasci-

³² Scott, Duncan: „A cache of rare Gems“ in: *Chicago Tribune*, Chicago, 13.2.1994, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-1994-02-13-9402130040-story.html>. (accessed on 20.08.2021)

³³ Synofzik, Thomas: „Phrasierungskunst und Klangzauber – Schumann-Interpretationen russischer Pianisten“, in: *Russische Schule der musikalischen Interpretation*, ed. by Heinz von Loesch and Linde Großman, Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz 2015, (=Klang und Begriff vol. 5), pp. 233-252.

³⁴ Lupu, Radu: Biography, available at <https://www.deccaclassics.com/en/artists/radu-lupu/biography>, (accessed on 07.09.2021).

³⁵ Otten, 2009, p. 78.

³⁶ Scott, 1994.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Otten, Jürgen: „Die Komponisten müssen mich mögen Schuberts Schatten: Dem Pianisten Radu Lupu zum Sechzigsten“, in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 30.11.2005, <https://www.genios.de/presse-archiv/artikel/FAZ/20051130/die-komponisten-muessen-mich-moegen/FD120051130461757.html> (accessed on 28.08.2021).

³⁹ Stosiek, Tobias: „Der Leisemagier“, in: *BR Klassik*, 30.11.2020. <http://www.br-klassik.de/aktuell/news-kritik/radu-lupu-pianist-geburtstag-portraet-75-100.html> (accessed on 17. 08.2021).

nated USA's music critics.⁴⁰ His interpretational approach is by John Rockwell described as one of the rare that is bringing the justice to the music of the past.⁴¹

Since Radu Lupu kept a lot of details about himself and his work in private, it was almost impossible to find a detailed study about his interpretational approaches and pianistic skills. As he officially never had piano students, the only today known sources about his pianism are his recordings, some concert critics and a couple of interviews he gave several decades ago to the different newspapers and magazines. Therefore, the written sources I managed to find considering directly his pianistic skills are based on newspaper articles, which are in most cases not going very deep into the interpretational thematic.

Besides the tone qualities, a slightly more detailed analysis of his interpretational characteristics, including the treatment of the tempos and dynamics is provided by Hans von Lösch:

„Lupus Spiel ist durch einen höchst subtilen Einsatz der musikalischen Darstellungsmittel gekennzeichnet. Bevorzugt er im Bereich der Dynamik zwar auch extreme Gegensätze, so neigt er insgesamt doch zu gemessenen Tempi sowie einer weitgehenden rhythmisch-agogischen Strenge. Neben einer ausgewogenen, geradezu klassizistisch zu nennenden Formgestaltung liegen seine größten Qualitäten vor allem im Lyrischen und hier ganz besonders im Bereich der unteren dynamischen Regionen. Lupus Klangdifferenzierung im Klavier ist beispiellos.“⁴²

Radu Lupu stopped with his concert carrier at the 2019 due to the health problems. Currently is living with his second wife in Switzerland. During his carrier as well as in later years he was not willing to give interviews or expose himself in public, because of the fear he will be misinterpreted or misunderstood by media. A lot of details about his private life or his thoughts about music are still under the veil of mystery.

2.2.3. Conclusion

The similarities between the pianists despise the 50 years long gap between their birthdays are numerous. Their pianistic background is quite similar, and not just in the terms of program they both played. Although they have been studying in two different states, Heinrich Barth is the per-

⁴⁰ Carey, Leo: „Listening to Lupu“ in: *The New Yorker*, 24. 01. 2013.

⁴¹ Rockwell, John: „Who says modern pianists are unromantic?“, in: *The New York Times*, 03. 6. 1984.

⁴² Loesch, Heinz von: „Lupu, Radu“ in: *MGG Online*, published by Laurenz Lütteken in Kassel, Stuttgart, New York 2016 ff., First released 2003, online released 2016 <https://www.mgg-online.com/article?id=mgg08399&v=1.0&rs=mgg08399> (accessed on 02.09.2021).

son that connects them both, as he was not just the professor of Wilhelm Kempff, but also the professor of Heinrich Neuhaus who was teaching Radu Lupu at the Moscow Conservatory. Nevertheless, Heinrich Barth is also the person who is possibly connecting both of the pianists with the Johannes Brahms and his pianistic approach. Another thing that both pianists have in common is experience of life under the totalitarian regime.

Wilhelm Kempff survived the German Reich in which his performing and interpretational skills were used as a part of Third Reich Propaganda. Afterwards, he continued his pianistic and pedagogical carrier in Germany, where he died. Unlike Kempff, Radu Lupu finished his carrier in another state (Switzerland), where he is currently living.

The differences in their approaches and characters could be traced with the help of different written sources. While Kempff made more than 60 recordings of different pieces in his carrier, Lupu was never a big fan of studios and technology. Comparing all these data, the difference in their characters becomes obvious. Kempff wrote his autobiography, was giving a lot of interviews, he was active as a teacher, conductor and a composer. At the same time, Lupu was never exposing himself to the publicity; he has never held the master classes or lessons in an official institution. Lupu's introverted nature is apparently reflected on his pianism, which is proved by numerous concert critics.

2.3. Brahms' performance practice

What is known today about Brahms' pianism and performance practice is mostly based on letters, notes, critics and other documentations his friends, students and close colleagues left behind. However, there is one recording of a part of Hungarian Dance n. 1 left on the cylinder performed by Brahms himself. Since the recording is in a very bad quality, the reconstruction of it was necessary in order to have a proper insight of the performance. Several reconstructions have been made until now, with a very different result. From the last one, that took into consideration the typical performance practices of 19th c. as well as written documents about Brahms' performance practice.⁴³ That is one more proof of the significance of historical approach in analyzing and understanding different recordings and performance practices.

⁴³ Rosser, James: „Reconstructing a Performance by Johannes Brahms“, in: *OSF Preprints*, 7.11.2017, online at: <https://osf.io/xq835/>, as a video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XEDGPG8C5Y4> (accessed on 17.07.2021).

On the reconstruction of the mentioned recording, the usage of broken chords and sudden tempo changes are some of the features Brahms was obviously using, which are standing in alignment with the Funny Davies' written testimonies.

2.3.1 Dislocated chords in accompaniment

One of the most common issues from the epoch of romanticism, a pianist could be facing with is too big or conventionally unplayable chord range. In the 19th century, dislocated arpeggios were highly important in intensifying the expression and therefore in a common usage in performance practice. From that reason, composers normally didn't write the arpeggio markings in the scores. This enhancing of expression was possible by delaying the melodic notes, brilliance, softness, textual variety etc. Playing chords together instead of playing unwritten arpeggios was during 19th century considered to be a special effect.⁴⁴

Those arpeggios were a common thing among many Brahms' contemporaries like R. Schumann, C. Reinecke, T. Leschetizky. There are several sources that are giving clues about Brahms' habits in arpeggiation. According to Moritz Rosenthal, Brahms was making arpeggios on all chords. Furthermore, he insisted that in case of string instruments, chords with pizzicato markings should also be spread, although no clear marking was written. On the contrary, there are written reports of Florence May, an English pianist who claimed that Brahms was against the arpeggios she was performing. According to her claims, she was playing those arpeggios unconsciously. Thus it is possible that Brahms' reaction was in order to help her to approach the music with more awareness.⁴⁵

The usage of the arpeggios in Brahms' music is therefore sometimes obvious, when Brahms had written the markings, or when the chord range without arpeggio is impossible to perform. Otherwise, the broken chords could also be a tool for accomplishing extra expressiveness when used in addition to musical context.

⁴⁴ Da Costa, Neal Peres: „Performance Practice in Piano Playing“ in: *Performance Practice in Johannes Brahms' Chamber Music*, ed. by Clive Brown, Neal Peres Da Costa, Kate Bennett Wadsworth, Bärenreiter-Verlag, Kassel 2015, pp. 15-27.

⁴⁵ Ibid, pp. 17-22.

2.3.2 Tempo

In most of Brahms's music pieces and original handwritings, there are no signs of metronomic marks at all. Brahms was apparently highly unwilling to precise the tempo markings from Italian tempo terms.⁴⁶

„There remains for me only to emphasize perhaps the most important essential in starting to reproduce a work of Brahms – and that is the tempo. All Brahms passages (...) are string of gems and that tempo, which can best reveal this gems and help to characterize the detail at the same time as the outline of the great work should be considered to be the right tempo. There is no doubt that the same artist will take a different tempo in the different time of life. The balance of dignity with detail comes with experience, but in gaining one the artist must not lose the other. Therefore, one must not uphold one single and only way of the arriving of the great goal, the aim being surely to arrive at conveying the highest message in any great work.“⁴⁷

The quotation implies that the idea of possessing the absolute tempo in Brahms' compositions is not the best interpretational solution and that the choice of tempo depends on the intention and interpretational ideas of the performer and his technical abilities.

2.3.3. Articulation

The precision of those markings in writing as well as in their execution was an aspect on which Brahms insisted quite a lot. According to the letter correspondence Brahms had with Joseph Joachim it is clear with how much attention and concern was he dedicated to achieve as correct and precise articulation markings as possible.⁴⁸

One of the biggest hardships was the difference between *portato*, and *staccato* under one bow, or the difference between *legato* bowings in piano scores and in the string parts. Apparently, what a group of notes under one bow means for a pianist (*legato*), for a string player means something different. In this particular case, simple bow over group of notes in the string scores

⁴⁶ Brown, Clive: „General issues of performing practise“, in: Performance Practices in Johannes Brahms' Chamber Music, ed. by Clive Brown, Neal Peres Da Costa and Kate Bennett Wadsworth, Baerenreiter-Verlag, Kassel 2015, pp. 35-40.

⁴⁷ Bozarth, Georg: „Fanny Davies and the performance of Brahms' late chamber music“, in: *Performing Brahms: Primary evidence, evaluation and interpretation*. London: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 170-219.

⁴⁸ Brown, 2015.

indicates that the last note should be shorter so the gap between the groups is bigger, which indicates the rubato changes as well.⁴⁹

What Brahms wrote about *legato* is:

„Nebenbei noch meine ich, dass der Bogen über mehreren Noten keiner derselben etwas an Wert nimmt. Er bedeutet legato, und man zieht ihn nach Gruppe, Periode oder Laune. Nur über zwei Noten, nimmt er der letzten... Bei größeren Notengruppen...wäre das eine Freiheit und Feinheit im Vortrag, die allerdings meistens am Platz ist.“⁵⁰

In piano practice, *legato* should always be played as much as it is possible with finger pedal, even if the damper pedal is being used in the same time.⁵¹ A bow could be the mark for the length of phrase as well as for the articulation, which is one more reason for making detailed analysis of the piece. What should be taken in concern according to Fanny Davies is the way pianist starts and ends the phrase.⁵²

Staccato can be shorter or longer, or under pedal.⁵³ What will be exactly used depends on the music context and content. Brahms was usually writing articulation markings with a great precision. The same case was with the implementation of *portamento*.⁵⁴

2.3.4. Brahms' pianistic style

Fanny Davis, a famous British pianist and a student of Clara Schumann, was witnessing Brahms' unofficial performances on a small upright piano in Baden-Baden during 1878.⁵⁵ Although Brahms wasn't any more highly dedicated to pianistic virtuosity as a decade ago,⁵⁶ and despite the fact that Davies style of writing was highly romanticized, her notes are still the precious testimony about Brahms' pianistic skills. Accidentally (or not), in the first sentence of her notes she

⁴⁹ Reissenberger, Bernhard: *Kammermusikalische Klarinettenwerke von Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, Schumann und Brahms. Eine Studie zur historischen Aufführungspraxis*, Finkenkruger Musikverlag, Falkensee 2017, pp. 268-269.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Wolff, Konrad: *Interpretation auf dem Klavier: Was wir von Artur Schnabel lernen koennen*, ed. Alfred Brendel, on German Tamara Trykar-Lu, Piper, München 1979, p. 109.

⁵² Ibid, p. 111.

⁵³ Bozarth, 2003, p. 171.

⁵⁴ Wolff, 1979, p. 128.

⁵⁵ Reissenberger, 2017, p. 249.

⁵⁶ Bozarth, Georg, 2003, p. 171.

⁵⁷ Bonatta, 1998, p. 162.

was as well struggling with the descriptions and analysis of Brahms' performance, and it's verbal representation.

„To attempt to put on a paper this description is difficult. One is dealing with a towering creating genius recreating his own creation. Brahms' manner of interpretation was free, very elastic and expansive, but the balance was always there; one felt fundamental rhythms underlying the surface rhythm. His phrasing was notable in lyric passages. In this a strictly metronomic Brahms is as unthinkable as a fussy or hurried Brahms in passages which must be presented with adamant rhythmic rhythm.“⁵⁷

Accordingly, the pianistic style of Brahms is described as a free and possibly prone to improvisation, with stable fundamental rhythm but constantly present agogic, without going to some extremes in frames of virtuosity.

Her further testimonies are describing Brahms' tone in different dynamics, dynamical nuances, his phrasing and articulation. The deepness of his tone, as well as its constantly present warmth on all dynamical levels, as described by Davies, are probably the result of a constant usage of arm weight which is also a necessity for a proper legato and phrase shaping on every piano. Virtuosity and brilliance, although present, especially in fast passages, wasn't a priority in his performances. The way he was shaping the phrase and playing fast passages was highly rational, without rush, always led by inner harmonies. Moreover, according to description of his tone, gestures and playing habits, it could be concluded that Brahms didn't use striking gestures while playing, therefore he didn't treat piano in a percussive way.⁵⁸

3. Johannes Brahms: Six piano pieces op. 118

Piano pieces op. 118 are among the so called Character pieces, written in four books (op. 116, 117, 118, 119), which were composed in the period between 1890 and 1897 (his death). Therefore they are considered to be among his late works together with the pieces he wrote for clarinet (Clarinettrio op. 114, Klarinettenquintet op. 115 and 2 Sonatas op. 120). In addition, the composing style and performance practices he used in his late chamber music pieces could be

⁵⁷ Bozarth, 2003, p. 172.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

found in Six piano pieces op. 118 as well. Among those characteristics are common usage of hemiolas and metrical ambiguity, the lack of precise tempo values, polyphony.⁵⁹

These 6 pieces for piano are dedicated to Clara Schumann. Reading their correspondence, it was clear, that Brahms didn't compose the 6 pieces as a cyclic form, he rather chose their order after he composed the pieces.⁶⁰ However, the choice of tonalities and arrangement of tempos as well as some common characteristics of the pieces could have indicated the cyclic elements.

Intermezzo	A minor	<i>Allegro non assai, ma molto appassionato</i>
Intermezzo	A Major	<i>Andante Teneramente</i>
Ballade	G minor	<i>Allegro energico</i>
Intermezzo	F minor	<i>Allegretto un poco agitato</i>
Ballade	F Major	<i>Andante</i>
Intermezzo	E♭ minor	<i>Largo e maestoso</i>

Table 1: pieces, tonalities and tempo markings

The keys are moving gradually downwards between a minor and E ♭ minor. At the same time, tempos are remittently changing between allegro and *andante*, which is already the sign of significant connection between the pieces. Further common characteristics are ABA structure of every piece, beginning with an upbeat (with exception of the last piece), the overall presence of polyphony that reaches its culmination in the 4th Intermezzo.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Mauser, Siegfried: „Klavierstücke op. 118“, in: *Johannes Brahs: Interpretation seiner Werke*, ed. by Claus Bockmaier und Siegfried Mauser, Laaber-Verlag, Laaber 2013, pp. 865-870.

3.1. Intermezzo op. 118 nr. 1

3.1.1. Formal analysis

The piece is very short, with the tempo marking *Nicht schnell aber leidenschaftlich* which was later transcribed into Italian *Allegro non assai, ma molto appassionato*.⁶¹ Formally, it is divided on three sections with repetitions followed by coda.

A	B	A1	Coda
Bars 1-10 (10-20)	Bars 21-30 (41-50)	Bars 31-40 (51-60)	Bars 61-71

Table 2: The structure of the Intermezzo op. 118 nr. 1

This Intermezzo starts with an upbeat, and this will remain throughout the whole piece as a constant rhythmical pattern. The melody is written in the right hand, mostly in octaves in a downwards motion, while the left has eight-notes that are moving in an opposite direction. Although the whole piece is from the very beginning written in *alla breve*, the rows of eights in the left hand could be divided into three equal groups among the first two bars, which is a good example of Brahms metrical ambivalence.⁶²

The contrapuntal respond to a melody arrives in the bar nr. 5 and is present until the end of the A section. The melodic motive, which is in the range of a third (C-B \flat -A) is sequentially repeating in next two bars. The melody line is then gradually moving down until the end of the section. Bar 5 is the place after which the motives in both hands are starting to get shorter (the groups of eight-notes in the left hand are lasting only through one bar, proportionally with the motives in the melody which are also getting shorter). In the following bar, while the melody continues with the downwards motion, the bass line in the left hand goes in the opposite direction, chromatically upwards, until it reaches the G₂ and afterwards C₂ as a pedal note in bar nr. 8. The last two bar of the section are the augmentation of the bar nr. 8. The section is finished in C Major, with *diminuendo* and *ritardando* markings.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.



Example 1: Intermezzo op. 118 nr.1, A section, bars 1-10⁶³

In the section B, the same motivic material is present, but the motives are changing their direction. The melodic motion in the upper voice is moving upwards together with the eight-notes in the left hand, while the contrapuntal response in the middle voice has an opposite direction. The motives are having the range of quart (G-C in the right hand, or between E-A in the left hand), they are reaching their pick in bar nr. 12 while at the same time they are forming the dim7 chord. The eight-notes are taken over by the right hand in next two bars, going sequentially downwards through different dim7 broken chords, while the left hand still has the eight note figures on the E pedal tone. This phrase is sequentially repeated in bars 25 and 26 for a fifth lower. The interval of the fifth gave the impetus for another culmination. The broken seven chords are gradually going upwards although they are being broken from the upper note, while the left hand has chromatic movement upwards, forming alternately dominant and diminished seventh chords. In bar 28, the punctuated quarter is the preparation for the bar 30, where we have the same notes in the melody line as on the very beginning, which indicates the reprise. The motives continue further with their sequential motion until the bar nr. 32, when the culmination of the part is reached. The melodic line together with the eight notes in the left hand is gradually going down until the coda. In bars 39 and 40 the motives of the melodic line from bar 38 are augmented which creates a feeling of *ritardando*.

⁶³ Brahms, Johannes: Sechs Klavierstücke op. 118, ed. by Emil von Sauer, C. F. Peters, Leipzig, 1910. Available at https://s9.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/2/2f/IMSLP08450-Brahms_-_Op.118_-_Sauer.pdf (accessed on 28.3.2022), p. 2.



Example 2: The culmination of the B section, bars 29-32⁶⁴

In the repetition of the B section motives from the bar 58 are repeated without augmentation in the bars 59 and 60 before reaching the bass note E₂, later followed by D[#] dim7 chord played upwards. After reaching the peak of the passage, Brahms was again using sequential motion of different seventh chords until he was able to change the bass note four bars later, forming the subdominant D Major chord. Four bars before the end the augmented melodic motive shows up one more time, leading towards the final resolution into A Major chord.

The whole piece is made of bigger and smaller culminations and eruptions. In almost the whole piece there is no break of tension except at the endings of the sections (where dim. rit. is marked), or in coda when the subdominant chord appears, two bars long. During the whole piece, we have most of the time the dynamical range of *forte*, except in the last two bars in coda. However there are a lot of graphical markings for dynamic, which could also indicate the slight changes in tempo fluctuation as well.⁶⁵

3.1.2. Wilhelm Kempff's interpretation

The tempo values in his recording are moving around 90 bpm. The measured values are applied to the speed of semi notes. From the graphic already it is very clear that eight notes in the accompaniment are played very free, especially on places where they aren't covered with melody.

Upbeat notes at the beginning of every motive are in tempo, or sometimes slightly shorter in comparison to the length of bar to whom they belong (bar nr. 2 lasts 1,32s, the last quarter note is only 0,26 seconds long). The reason behind is the significance that eight-note pause at the end of two-bars motive has for Kempff. It is being used as a preparation of the following sequential repetition of the melodic motive.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 3.

⁶⁵ Bozarth, 2003, p. 174.

The bass line in the mentioned melodic motive is starting slightly earlier than the first beat in the melodic line in bar nr. 1. This way of playing is corresponding with the performance practice that was usual in the time of Brahms.⁶⁶ However, Kempff is not using this tool the whole time throughout the piece. Instead, it is noticeable mostly when the signs < > appear in the scores between two melodic notes, which is as well analog to the performance practices of Brahms' time, where the above mentioned graphic signs could also evoke a different agogic, arpeggiation or dislocation.⁶⁷

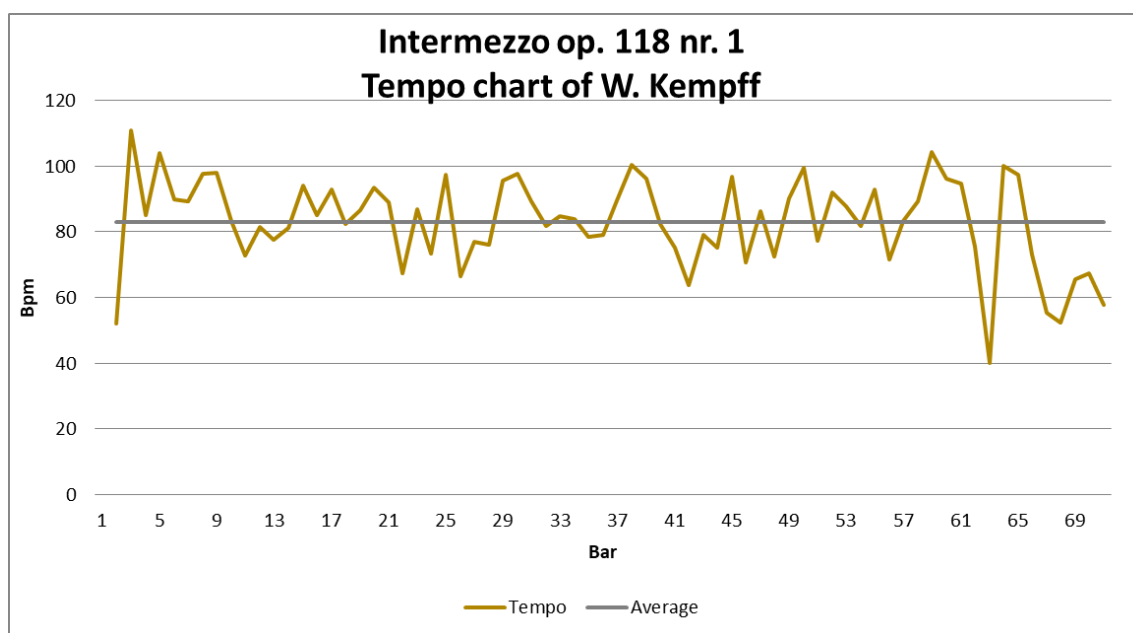


Chart 1: Wilhelm Kempff's interpretation of Intermezzo op. 118 nr. 1: Tempo

The repetition of the A section is quieter, rubato is achieved through the eight notes in second (or fourth bar). Eight notes are getting slower every time a half note is present in the melody line, however, they are faster when the melody stops (like in bar nr. 2, where the bar lasts 1,38s, and the first three beats with the eight notes are altogether 0,90s). In this case, the pause before the beginning of the melodic motive is even longer. *Ritardando* at the end of the section is very small, (bar lengths are moving from the 1,44s in bar nr. 16, until 1, 55 in bar nr. 19). The dynamical culmination of the section A is happening at the very beginning of the piece, when Wilhelm

⁶⁶ Da Costa, 2015, pp. 15-16.

⁶⁷ Brown, 2015, p. 6.

Kempff is playing with a lot of intensity and then gradually calming down. In the repetition, which is calmer and more silent at the beginning, the dynamical culmination is happening on the first chord of bar nr. 7.

B section starts with bigger tempo changes in the melodic line. Eight-notes are becoming more and more significant especially in their opposite motion in bar 21 and 22, when the tempo gets slowed down, so the bar length stretches on 1, 32s (bar 21), and afterwards 1, 52 s (bar 22). Sequential repetition (bars 25 and 26) begins quieter and slower (bars 25 lasts 1,53s, 26. and 1, 56s), after which the culmination starts to occur. The groups of eight notes are getting gradually faster, therefore is the length of the bars decreasing (bar 26 lasts 1,21s, bar 27 1,02s). In bar 28, where the melodic motive reappears, the tempo is gradually slowing down (bar lasts 1,47s). The eight notes are getting faster, while at the same time, every melodic motive is being prepared and played slightly stretched. Kempff is stretching and preparing every place marked with *sF*. This tendency continues until bar 33 when the melodic line slowly starts going towards the end of the phrase in a slight *ritardando*. In this culmination, Kempff is playing bass note in the same time with the melodic line until the bars 33 and 35 when he starts using dislocated bass again (as it is written). The culmination is occurring in the bar nr. 33.

Similar things are happening in the repetition, which is ending with the big *ritardando* until the E₂ note in the bass line. The length of the note is disproportional with the length of the other bars and tempo in general. It lasts 2, 5 s before the last eight-note appear in the similar tempo as the one from beginning. With this agogical accent on E₂, Kempff could have indicated in a manner of an organ player, the returning into A key. In the bar 63 a big *ritardando* is again occurring gradually, through the groups of eight notes. The tempo sinks towards 97 bpm and remains the same until the end.

3.1.3. Radu Lupu's interpretation

In the interpretation of Radu Lupu, the tempo is slightly faster, and it is in range between 103 at the beginning and 115 bpm. Opposite to Kempff, the distances between the bars are not really equal. Eight-notes are more stable in comparison with the Kempff's interpretation, while the length of the melody notes is more different. Lupu is creating the rubato in the melody line by taking time at the beginning of every motive. (The fourth beats in bars at the beginning are in his recording lasting circa 0,4s, while the bars are lasting 1,1s). The closing of each phrase is fol-

lowed with the *ritardando*. The second repetition is slightly faster, but at the same time is also more silent. Dynamical culmination is happening both times in section A in bar nr. 8. In the 1st and the 3rd bar, Lupu is playing the bass note slightly before the melodic octave in the right hand, creating a feeling of arpeggiated chord. In the repetition, this practice is not occurring, he plays everything at the same time. The chords at the beginning of the 2nd and 4th bar are rather arpeggiated at the beginning, as well as in the repetition.

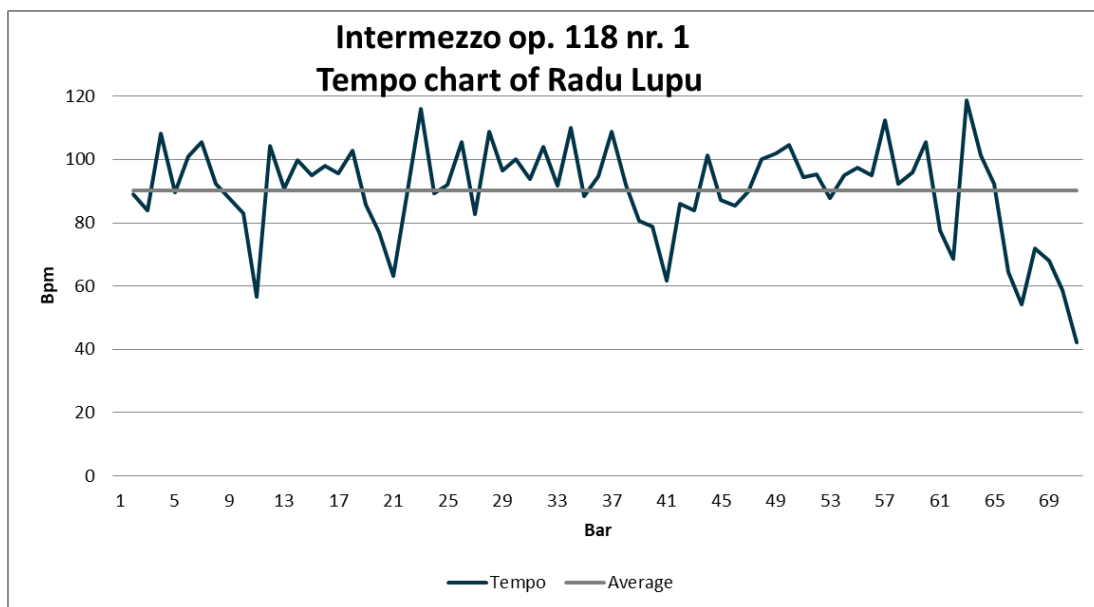


Chart 2: Radu Lupu's interpretation of Intermezzo nr. 1: Tempo

B section is in Lupu's version starting in *mP* dynamic on behalf of *Forte* that is written in the scores. Lupu's manner of playing the upbeats continues – the first bar in phrase, composed as an upbeat, is as well as in section A, longer than it is notated. The bar between A and B section is ending with a *ritardando* and therefore it is not suitable for measurement. From that reason the bar nr. 23 is used for a detailed analysis. This bar lasts 1, 18s, the last quarter note, with which the next phrase and the motive are beginning, lasts 0, 37s, which is almost one third of the bar length. The first motive is gradually speeding up, with the bar lengths 1, 42s, 1, 21 s, and 1, 04s. The following sequential repetition of the first motive is going even more into *decreasing* plus *ritardando* while the melody has its upright direction. From the bar nr. 26 onwards, the tempo is increasing, following the upwards motion of the melodic line. Two bars before the culmination, Lupu starts stretching the tempo.

The upbeat note (beginning of the motive) is all the time lasting longer than a quarter of the baRadu Lupu is taking time to prepare each motive and show its significance by making it a bit longer. This way of structuring is also causing the slight *ritardando* and widening effect that are preparing the culmination. At the same time, Lupu is treating eight notes in a similar way as the one Kempff used, by playing the eight notes in a slightly faster tempo where the melodic voice is not present. The culmination is over with gradual *ritardando*.

The repetition of the section is dynamically more silent while the tempo is more stable. The quarter notes (upbeats) are not significantly longer than it is written; therefore the repetition has more flow. The tension is created mostly with the fluctuation of the eight notes. In bar 54, the length of an upbeat is again increasing (bar lasts 1,51s, an upbeat lasts 0,52s). The general tempo is slightly decreasing in the same time still flowing until the long note E in the bass line. Unlike Kempff, Lupu remains in the tempo until, bar 66, where the D minor chord occurs. This chord is significantly slower than other eight notes. The upbeat note is again lasting one third of the bar announcing another tempo change according to the *ritardando* mark, which lasts until the end of the piece.

3.2. Intermezzo op. 118 nr. 2

3.2.1. Formal analysis

A	B	A1
1-50	50-83	83-123

Table 3: The structure of the Intermezzo op. 118 nr. 2

The second intermezzo has ABA form and starts with an upbeat, just like the previous piece. The Key of A Major corresponds with the last chord in Intermezzo n 1. The A section has a clear periodical structure. The melodic line is strictly distinguished from the accompaniment, whereas the accompaniment is divided to several lines. The eight notes motion is constantly present during the whole piece, almost without any interruption, and it is moving through all the voice lines.

In the first two periods, dynamical range goes between *p*, *pp* and *p dolce*. $\frac{3}{4}$ metric starting from the first upbeat continues until the bar nr. 16, when for Brahms' typical metrical ambivalence

starts to occur. Hemiolas in bars 18-20 and 23-25 are changing the established metrical pattern, so the upbeats are disappearing in bars 18 and 24. The change of metrical fluctuation is together with the melodic line in its chromatic motion contributing the culmination in bar 29, where the first *Forte* appears accompanied with the broken subdominant chord (D Major) followed by the melodic motive from the very beginning in the bass line. The melodic line, which appears after the D Major chord (bars 29-31) is basically the A Major scale in a downwards motion. In bars 31-33 the similar melodic motive reappears, this time as a minor scale which provides the feeling of the sudden calming down. The *dolce* section in bar 33 is returned in A Major, it has again the metrical structure starting with the upbeat contains several chords that physically cannot be played unbroken. The melodic line is the inverted motive from the beginning. The waltz-like part which is starting in bar 39 is now in A Major tonality in which the section is ending with the *rite-nuto* and *piu lento* marking.

The B section begins in F# minor, and it made of quite symmetrical periods. In the first 8 bars, the three different voice lines are present, the melody, accompaniment in triplets, as well as middle voice. Later on, the middle voice forms a canon imitation one beat later than the main (upper) melody, with some rhythmical variations and in the portato articulation. These eight bars are ending with a dominant seventh chord, which is a preparation for the mutation that appears after bar number 65, when the key is changing into the F# Major.



Example 3: Intermezzo op. 118 nr. 2, the beginning of the B section⁶⁸

A real canon between the upper voices is constantly formed until the bar 73. The choral-like chords are in *pianissimo* dynamic, marked with *una corda* pedal. Tempo is changed into *piu lento*, and one of the Brahms demands is strict legato of the chords, which is, from a pianist perspec-

⁶⁸ Brahms, 1910, p. 5.

tive, not really easy to accomplish. After fermata, the same motive is back into the F# minor (bar 74), similar to the section between bars 49-57. This time the upper and middle voices are switching the roles they previously established in the canon. The middle voice is now leading towards culmination where the voices are again switching their lines (bar 78), so the upper voice again owns the leading role in canon. The section is finished with four bars of broken F sharp minor, D major and A major chords as triplets, that end up forming very interesting dissonant: half dim7 chord on D# in the right hand, together with the E in bass, but marked with fermata and *dolce*.



Example 4: Intermezzo op. 118 nr. 2, bars 73-80⁶⁹

The reprise begins in the original tempo, while dynamic is *pp*. The variations in the melodic line are present in the reprise, which is one period shorter than the beginning. The last waltz-like section is ending with hemiola, after which the last two bars are in *piu lento* tempo, made of motives from the very beginning.

The second piece, probably the most famous one in the opus, has a quite opposite character in comparison with the previous Intermezzo. It is polyphonic and full of sophisticated contrapuntal treatments of the motives, used for building different sections and culminations. At the first sight uncomplicated harmonic solutions are trough the polyphonic structure occasionally forming some very interesting dissonant chords. However, most of these dissonances are marked with *p*, *pp* or *dolce*, corresponding with the general character of the piece.

3.2.2. Wilhelm Kempff's interpretation

Tempo of his interpretation is at the beginning 103 bpm. From the first sight, it is obvious that Wilhelm Kempff plays this piece with a lot of rubato movement, which is not always following the structure of the piece. First three bars have the same length, while in the end of the 4th,

⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 6.

Kempff makes small *ritardando*. However, periodical structure in Kempff's performance still maintains its shape in the ears of the listeners thanks to the dynamical and agogical differences of the similar or same motives.

The first jump of a seventh in a melody line (between bars 1 and 2) is performed in tempo, without any preparation, and in comparison to the motive at the beginning, it is representing a sudden change, almost the strike, after which the dynamic gets more silent in addition to the closure of the phrase. However, the dotted rhythmical figures are pushing the tempo forward. This faster performance of the dotted notes will remain constantly repentant throughout the piece. The following seventh jumps will in the rest of the piece be performed in most of the cases much softer and more silent than the similar place between bars 1 and 2.

Bar nr. 8 starts with real *pianissimo*, while the following punctuated note form a contrast in character as well as in the dynamic, thanks to the short and sharp sixteenth note in a dotted figure which is at the same time making the crescendo, and leading towards the next dotted figure. Section between bars 13 and 16 is the dynamical culmination of the two periods.

The last quarter note in bar 16 is the beginning of new section, which is walzer-like, where Kempff is accentuating the first note of the motive (last beat in the bar). The tempo from the beginning is used. As the culmination approaches, in bars 21 and 22, Kempff is playing slightly faster, preparing the sixth interval jump in the melodic line in bar 23. The tempo taken between notes A and F# remains during the bars 23 and 24. The stretching is noticeable in the length of the bars, that last now 2,02 s (bar 23) and 2,52s (bar 24). The culmination of the section A is in Kempff's interpretation prepared with slight tempo stretching, which he is using to highlight the melodic motives of the right hand.

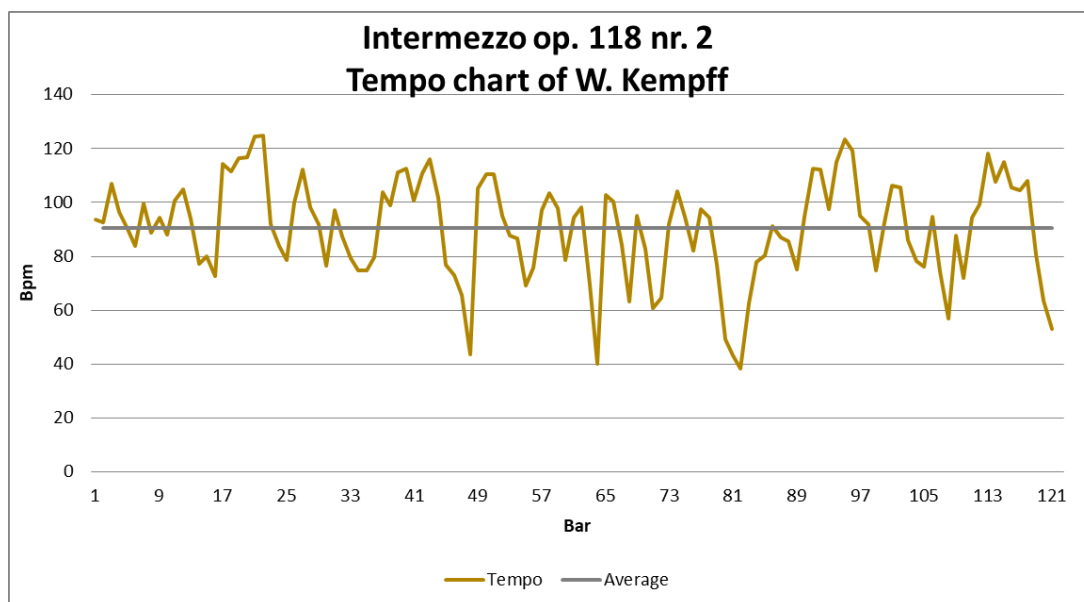


Chart 3: Intermezzo nr. 2 op. 118, Kempff's performance: tempo

The slow tempo in bars 35 and 36 is matched with the speed of the broken chords of phrase marked with *dolce*, who are 0,5 and 0,7s long. In following bars, tempo is rising, although Kempff is marking the hemiola by playing it slightly slower, in bar 41. Afterwards, the speed is growing until the bar 44, when the culmination followed by *ritardando* again occurs, and when another big hemiola is underlined by *ritardando*. The section A is being closed with a big *ritardando*, where general tempo sinks under 100 bpm.

Section B starts in a slightly faster tempo (109 bpm) which is constant until the bar 52, where the jump in the melodic line is carefully prepared. The *ritardando* continues until the bar 56, when the repetition happens. Repetition starts more silent but the development of the phrase (bars 62-63) are much louder than by the first time. The reason behind is the significance that the middle voice receives in the mentioned bars. Tempo is calmer, without many changes, except at the bar that is closing the section, when Kempff once again makes *ritardando*, so the bar lasts more than 4s, in comparison with the previous bar 63 which lasts 2,4s.

The *piu lento* part in Wilhelm Kempff's interpretation is definitely not slower than the previous phrase, on the contrary, the section is very fluent since the tempo from the very beginning is applied. The first chord in bar 65 is broken and connected with the F# note in the melodic line. Kempff is marking the eight notes in the middle voice in bar 68 by stretching them. The second change of tempo is happening in the bar 72, where Kempff slows down in addition to the end of

the phrase. The original tempo continues towards the last choral. The tempo is stable and the middle voice has a more significant role, since it is contributing to the culmination the same way the melodic line does. The tempo is stretching in bars 79 and 80, where, again Kempff slows down leading to the end of the phrase. The slower tempo continues in the following bars which are made only of the broken chords. Kempff approaches them freely, by playing them in different speeds, with different rubato methods. Bars 83 and 84 are therefore very long (lasting 3,8 and 4,3 s).

Reprise is having the tempo from the beginning. The dynamical peak in the first period is happening in the bar 87. The second phrase is softer and more silent with exception of the bar 89, where the octave jump in the melodic line is underlined. The further development is happening in a same way as in the part A of the piece.

3.2.3. Radu Lupu's interpretation

Tempo of A part: going between 60 and 106 bpm. The periodical structure of the piece is analog to Lupu's phrasing. Lupu is forming the periods with dynamics followed by rubato, so each crescendo is followed by *accelerando*, while decrescendos are at the same time closing the phrases with decreasing in tempo.

The performance starts in tempo of circa 60 bpm for a quarter note. At the end of first period a small *ritardando* occurs. A tendency towards preparation of the D₅ (first beat in bar) is visible, since the second note in the right hand lasts longer than the first one (0,50s vs. 0,54s). In the second repetition of the same motive (bar nr. 1), the second eighth note in melody is getting shorter, but the distance between F₄ in alt and A₅ in melody is bigger (F₄ starts 0,22s before the melody note). Bar nr. 4 is slightly faster than the bar nr. 3. Reason behind are eighth notes in the bass line, which are already on the last beat of 3rd bar starting with acceleration. The first beat in 4th bar lasts 1,01s, while the second one is already 0,8 s. Lupu was using the movement of the eighth-notes in the left hand (E-F₄-G) to return to the tempo of the beginning.

The second phrase of the first period is very similar. Between bars 5 and 6, where the culmination of the first period is happening, the last eighth note in bar is again longer (C₄ lasts 0,46s; H lasts 0,54s), however, the chord is played without breakage so all notes are coming together in the same time. The second phrase is slightly faster than the first one since bars last a bit shorter

(first four bars 2, 81 s in average, bars 5-7 are 2, 64 s long in average), but in the last bar of the period a small *ritardando* is present, so the 9th bar lasts in total 3, 05 s.

The similar tendency is present in the second period as the bar 15 is even more exaggerated (the first beat in the bar, the above-mentioned dotted motive lasts 0, 9s). However, the whole bar 15 lasts altogether 2, 6 s, which indicates the small *accelerando* during the following two beats, until the beginning of the next bar, where another *ritardando* occurs due to the ending of the phrase. The bar nr. 16 lasts 3,3 s.

From the upbeat of the 17th bar on, an *accelerando* is present. Lupu is building the culmination gradually by increasing the tempo between the motives E-F#-E, which are occurring in the melody line. The *accelerando* is happening at the same place where Brahms is starting his metrical game. With the appearance of hemiola, in Lupu's performance, the tempo starts to decline (bars 19-21). The first motive lasts 2, 43s, second one (bars 18 and 19), is 2, 22 s and the third group (hemiola) is altogether lasting 3, 6 s. Measured per bars, it is: bar nr. 17: 2, 25 s, bar nr. 18: 2,19 s, bar nr. 19: 1,99 s, bar nr. 20: 2, 09s.

In the following section, all the way up to the culmination in the bar 30, Lupu is gradually bringing the tempo of the beginning. However, the biggest change in tempo fluctuation is noticeable in bar 27.

Bar 27 is an exception because of several reasons: it is sequenced repetition of the previous two bars, the motion is upwards. In the previous two bars, chromatic change was happening at the beginning of the second bar (bar nr. 26). In bar 27 the chromatic change is happening already on the third beat, leading the melody chromatically upwards towards bar 28, which is in this case harmonic resolution of the chromatic alteration. Lupu is gradually playing the eight notes in the left hand louder, pointing out the chromatic alteration and its resolution.

Bar nr. 29 is analog to the metrical change Brahms wrote, (melody is dividing the bar on two equal parts, so the $\frac{3}{4}$ feeling with an upbeat is lost). Accordingly, the bass notes in the same bar are in Lupu's recording louder. Bar nr. 30 is performed with small broken intervals in the both hands. However, the alt is again starting the chord, with F# note in Lupu's case. The distance between F# and melodic A₅ lasts 0,43 s. The bass note is played between F# and melody note, very close to the melody note is very short, around 0, 12 s. After the culmination, in bar 31, Lupu is taking faster tempo, after which another *ritardando* occurs until the end of the phrase in the 34th bar.

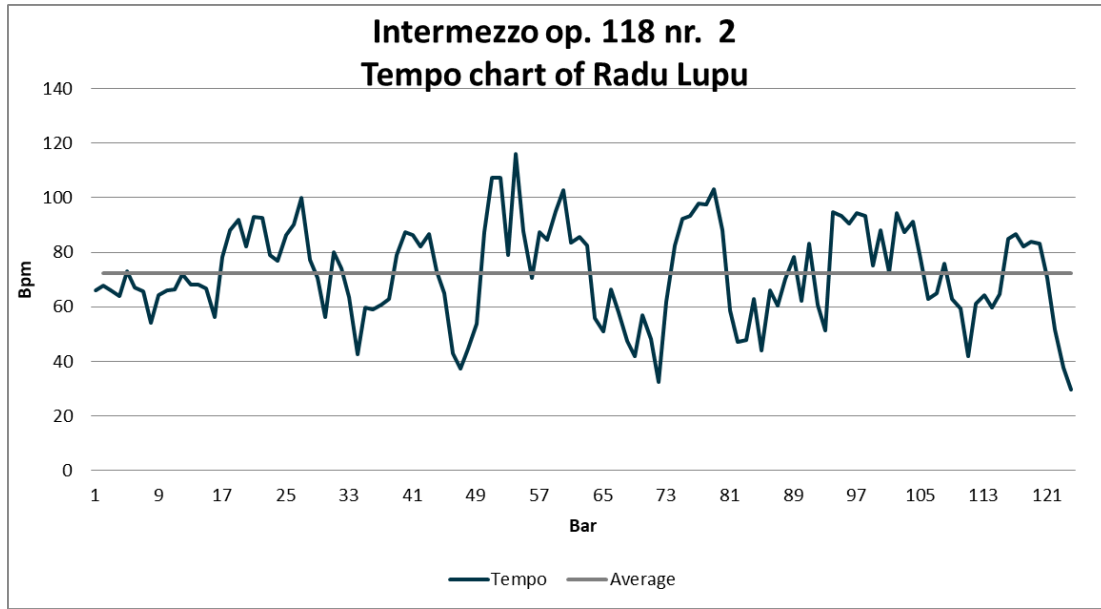


Chart 4: Intermezzo op. 118 nr. 2, Radu Lupu's performance: tempo

Following phrases until the end of section A are performed in a similar way as the first 30th bar of Intermezzo. The acceleration is occurring until the bar 44, where the appearance of the hemiola together with the *ritenuto* marking in the scores are causing Lupu's drastic change of tempo, so he is finishing the section A in tempo of circa 44 bpm.

B section is played in tempo of circa 105 bpm. The periodical structure of the Lupu's phrasing followed by dynamical-agogical features is here as well as at the beginning of the piece. Bars 51-58 are starting louder, with the tendency towards *diminuendo*. The similar thing is happening in their repetition, however, in the repetition Lupu is playing the middle voice slightly louder than in the first appearance of the new theme. The second repetition is finished with a big *ritenuto*, leading towards tempo *lento*, which is in Lupu's performance moving between 52 and 55 bpm. Bar 74, where the *lento* part ends, lasts in total 6,06 s, which suggests the tempo of 32 bpm for a quarter note.

The reappearance of the canon is again in faster tempo that's starting with deceleration where the middle and upper voices are changing their roles, which is at the same time representing the culmination of the section (bar 79). In this phrase, Lupu is playing equally loud both upper and middle voice, leading them to culmination in bar 79.

Between bars 82 and 86, Lupu is again following the general motion of the melodic line with the agogic and dynamic, going into decrescendo and ritardando until the end of bar 86 where the reprise appears.

The reprise of the A section is not played in a much different manner, with the exception of the last two bars where Lupu is making a bigger *ritardando*, in addition to the ending of the piece.

3.3. Ballade op. 118 nr. 3

3.3.1. Formal analysis

A	B	A1	Coda
1-40	41-75	76-108	108-117

Table 4: The structure of the Ballade op. 118 nr. 3

This piece was at first named Rhapsody, but before the publishing, Brahms changed it into Ballade.⁷⁰ As the previous two Intermezzos, it is also starting with an upbeat. The first eight bars have periodical structure. Like in the previous pieces, there are three different voices present: melodic line, bass line, and the middle voice with eighth notes. In this alla breve piece, the accents are clearly written on every first and third quarter note in the bar, only during the first period. Melodic line is going downwards, similar to the first piece, in this case from G₅ until G₄ during one phrase. In first eight bars, the articulation is mostly staccato.

After the bar nr. 10, the tonality changing into E \flat Major, the melodic motives are fragmented and not as rich as the melodic line on the beginning. In the bar nr. 17 the melodic line is slightly starting to change, in correspondence with the changes in harmonic structure, which provokes the culmination leading towards G minor key and the reprise of the first phrase in the bar nr. 23. The syncopated rhythm in bar 21 is additionally contributing to the culmination. The articulation is legato and portato, dynamic mostly *piano* until the reprise in bar 23.

Bar number 27 brings the change in the melodic line, so the highest note in the last phrase of the section A is not G₅, but B \flat ₅. The melody is then from downwards from B \flat ₅ until G₄ reaching the

⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 868.

bottom in bar 31. Last nine bars are the bridge for the section B, ending up on repeated G7 chord (as in bar 10).

The key of the B section is showing the signs of ambiguity. Although the left hand is in distant B Major, the figures in the right hand are indicating the tendency towards relative G# minor.⁷¹ The whole section is full of plagal harmonies. Unlike the previous part, the beginning is legato, the dynamic *p*. The melodic line and the first phrase are very long, the highest note is F#₅.



Example 5: Ballade op. 118 nr. 3; beginning of the section B, bars 41-50⁷²

The following phrase, starting from the bar 49 is fragmented. Its first part is made of the material introduced in the first phrase of the B section until the bar 51, where the modulation happens after the melody is reaching F#₅. The modulation is followed by reminiscence of the A part, but this time in D# minor key and in legato articulation.

Bars 56-64 are the reprise of the first B section phrase. In bar 67 a three voice polyphonic structure leads to an interesting chord in the bar 71: F#7 chord is lying on the B₃ note in the bass line, underlined with fermata, and like in the Intermezzo nr. 2, marked with *dolce* and *piano*. This chord is followed by the G Major chord in first inversion, reached through the bass line. The following four bars are transition towards the reprise, where the motives from the beginning (this time in G Major key and legato) are sequentially repeated upwards, until the G₅ in the G minor key is reached in bar nr. 76.

⁷¹ Charles, Rosen, „Brahms the Subversive“, in: *Brahms Studies*, ed. G.S. Bozarth, Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 110.

⁷² Brahms, Johannes, 1910, p. 6.

The bars 76-108 are the repeated section from the beginning. The bar 108 is in G minor key, unlike the corresponding bar 32 which is in the G Major tonality. The mutation is provoking the coda whose first five bars have lying pedal note in the upper voice on G₄ as well rhythmical ostinato pedal in the bass. After the tonal ambiguity happening between G minor and E^b Major, the motive from the B section is appearing as reminiscence, but this time in G minor key. The last two bars contain the eight-notes in the left hand. At first, they are moving upwards covering the range of two octaves. In the very last bar, the eight-note motive has an opposite motion, which ends with the eighth note G₁, followed by the eighth-note long pause under fermata. The short G₁ as well as the pause in bass which comes afterwards are probably the reason why the last two bars should be played without additional pedal.

The third piece is very rhythmical, with a lot of metrical accent given, which could be an additional contribution to the character of the piece (*Allegro energico*). The foot pedal markings doesn't exist whenever the chords should be played staccato, except in bars 32-40, where the foot pedal underlays the significance of ostinato pedal. The mostly dominant chords and accents that occur in the first part are standing in the contrast with the plagal harmonies and legato phrases of the middle sections.

3.1.1. Wilhelm Kempff's interpretation

The piece is being performed in the very stable rhythm, of around 136 bpm per quarter note. Already in the first part it is clear that the methods for forming the periodical structure are not containing a lot of rubato. Instead, Kempff's performance is mostly based on different articulation, which is bringing the freshness to the piece and a lot of repeated periods. In most of the cases, the accentuated chords in the middle voice are played staccato. In the first period, Kempff is using very small amount of sustained pedal. The pedal is easily noticeable first in bar nr. 5 and on the first beats of bars nr. 5 and 8. *Ritenuito* written in the scores in bar 10, Kempff is moving to the third beat in bar, by stretching the eight notes at the beginning of the following phrase. The *piano* part in bar nr 11 starts very silently and with lot of sustained pedal on the upbeat. Although the upbeat is stretched, the following bar is played again in original tempo. The sequential repetition is one level louder. Tempo and dynamic remain the same until the bar 18 (although it is the ending of the phrase), leading all the way towards culmination and the repetition of the motive

from beginning. From the bar 18 onwards, all the way until the culmination, Kempff stays in the same tempo, while he is gradually changing the dynamic.

In the following section, the chords in the middle voice are not played staccato anymore, Kempff uses a lot more sustained pedal. In bar 25, the bass line played in staccato is particularly significant. The culmination of the whole section A is happening between the bars 27-29. As the of the end of the section A approaches, the dynamic is gradually fading, while the tempo in bars 36 and 37 is getting slightly slower. This is happening because of the motive which is repeating several times, until the bar nr. 40.

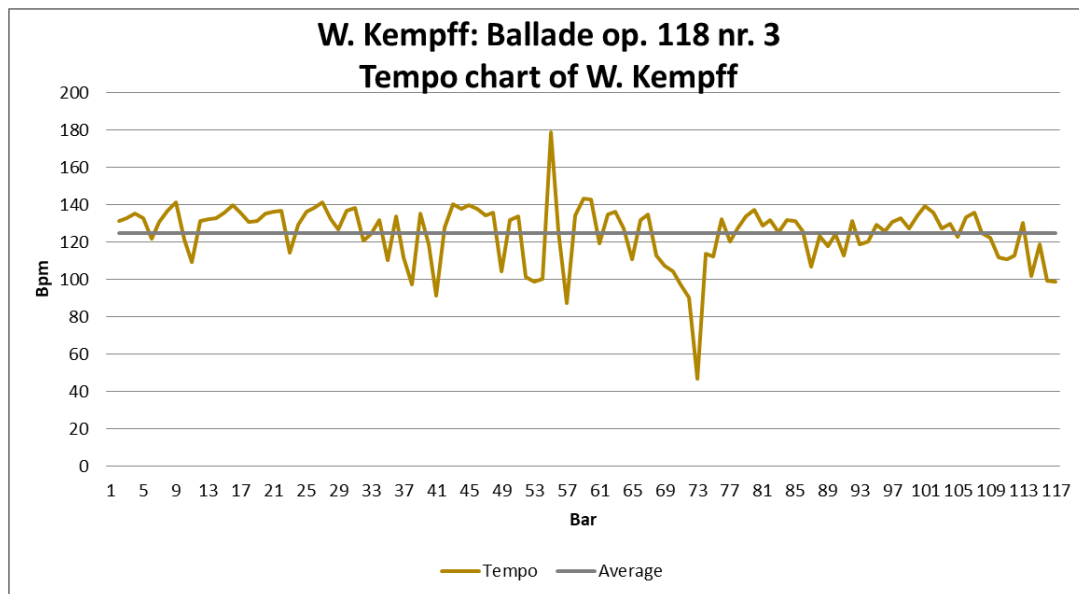


Chart 5: Ballade op. 118, Kempff's interpretation: Tempo

B section is as well played in the similar tempo as the one at the very beginning (now 139bpm per quarter note). Tempo is stable until the bar 48 where Kempff takes more time for the eight-notes movements in middle and later in upper voice. The eight notes are louder than the rest of the section. Following phrase is played in the same tempo at the beginning, but already in bars 51 and 52 the tempo is slowed down in addition to the tonality and the material change. In bar 57, Kempff retakes the tempo from the beginning. Bars 60-64 are again stretched and are slightly louder than rest of the phrase due to eight-notes-motion in the melodic line. Kempff is closing the phrase with a big *ritardando*. Next phrase is again played in the tempo of the beginning. Here, he pays special attention to the eight notes in bars 65 and 66, by stretching them. In bars 67 and 68

he is paying additional attention to melodic jumps of the sixths which together with gradual slowing of the eight notes contributes to *ritardando*, which is tendency that lasts until bar nr.72.

Between bars 73 and 76, the faster tempo is occurring although not yet the tempo from the beginning. Kempff is gradually bringing the listeners back to the reprise of the section A with a slight *accelerando*, so the bar lengths are now 2, 159s (bar 73), 2,12s (bar 74), 1,84s (bar 75). Bar 76 is slightly stretched. Here, Kempff is pointing out the chromatic movement in the melodic line (E♭E), while at the same time underlying the upbeat of the reprise.

In the reprise, the tempo stays stable until the end. The only bigger difference occurs in the usage of sustained pedal, which is in the reprise of the section A happening for a longer time and more often than at the beginning, which is providing richer sound. Therefore, the accentuated chords are not as short as they were at the beginning of the piece.

At the very end, Kempff stays in a very stable tempo, all the way to the bar 112, when he gradually starts slowing down using the eight-note motion.

3.1.2. Radu Lupu's interpretation

Lupu's performance of this piece is in tempo 180 bpm per quarter note at the beginning and remains stable until the end of the first period when a slight *ritardando* in bars 8 and 9 occurs (bar nr.8 lasts 1,3s, bar nr. 9 1,5 s). In Lupu's performance of the first period the accentuated notes are not particularly highlighted, on the contrary, Lupu is more focused on the melody of upper voice. Therefore, the main accent (or strike) is performed on the first note in the bar, while the previous eight notes on the upbeat are going into crescendo, leading to the strike. From the bar 8 a slight change of sound is noticeable in this performance, as the second part of the phrase is suddenly played softer, which corresponds with the appearance of the *ritardando* and the end of the period. Tempo remains stable and is followed with the softer sound color in the next section.

The change of dynamic could easily be noticed just by looking at the sonic visualizer chart. Between bars 10 and 12, a small crescendo is gradually happening between the bars, which is analogue to the upwards motion of the melodic line, and in addition a slight decrescendo until bar number 17. Lupu is following the dynamical changes with the rubato.

In the following section between bars 17 and 22, tempo is gradually speeding up from 172 bpm until the 183 bpm (tempo from the beginning) followed with crescendo. The next phrase (bars 23-27) is played very intensively, fast and loud, with small agogic adjustments which are

following the movement of the melodic line, or in other words, the tempo is decelerating with the ending of the phrase. Following four bars are played with acceleration high intensity until the bar 32, which corresponds with the changes of the melodic line.

An interesting correspondence between bars 32 and 33 as well 34 and 35 is occurring. From this point on, Lupu is building decrescendo by treating the bars sequentially in blocks of two, where bars 32 and 34 are the louder one, while 33 and 35 are more silent. The tempo remains slower (circa 160 bpm for a quarter note) until the middle section in bar 41.

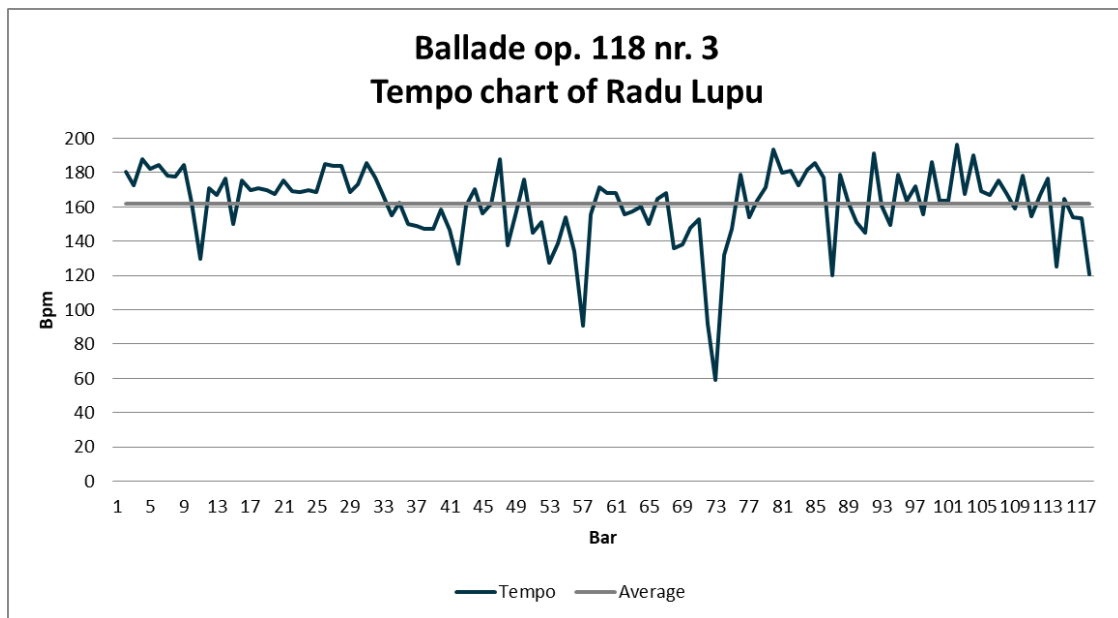


Chart 6: Ballade op. 118; Lupu's tempo

The middle section is showing clearly the way Lupu is structuring the phrases. The tempo is more or less constant until the modulation or end of section, which is in Lupu's interpretation followed by a slight *ritardando*. Lupu is mostly following the melodic line of upper voice, where the eighth-notes are played slightly accentuated, leading towards the following punctuated quarter note which is performed slightly softer.

The modulation into G# minor is happening in bar 52 and the new tonality lasts until the bar 56, where Lupu starts the section in H major in a fluent tempo, decelerating to the tempo of 166 bpm which he used at the beginning of the B section. The motive from the section A in 52nd and 53rd bar is starting slightly louder, while the rest of material until the bar 56 is played very softly with a lot of sustained pedal.

Another rubato change is happening between bars 65 and 67, where Lupu is pointing out the slight change in the melodic line. Bars 70 and 71 are very stretched, with the bar 71 lasting almost 4s thanks to the fermata. The returning to reprise is happening gradually, with *accelerando* and crescendo until the *forte* dynamic and the tempo from the beginning are being reached with the first beat of the bar 77.

The reprise starts with the approximate tempo of the beginning, with the decelerating tendency towards the end. Bars 86-92 are played calmly both in sense of dynamics and tempo. Section between 92 and 98 is built with crescendo and acceleration until the 95th bar, where Lupu starts stretching the tempo as a preparation for the reappearance of the first motive in bars 98/99. The culmination of the piece is happening between bars 103 and 108 where Lupu plays each chord of the last motive with extra wait, taking extra time to prepare them, especially highlighting and stretching the four eighth notes forming an E \flat chord in the bar 108. Additional eighth-notes are used for returning into the tempo, which continues with gradual sinking until the end.

3.4. Intermezzo op. 118 nr. 4

3.4.1. Formal analysis

A	B	A1
1-51	51-99	100-133

Table 4: Structure of the Intermezzo op. 118 nr. 4

The fourth piece, just like the all previous ones, starts with an upbeat and is structured as ABA form. However, unlike the previous pieces, this Intermezzo doesn't start with rich melodic line. Instead it is fulfilled with very simple motives that are contrapuntally developing the structure of the piece.

At the beginning, the four voices are easily distinguished. The first part contains a canon between the leading first voice and the third voice. Canon starts with the one quarter delay, and in first six bars only the dotted quarter-notes are building it. Second voice and the bass line are made of triplets that are defining the harmonic structure. The first four bars are shaped into a small phrase which ends up on the C Major chord. The next two bars (5 and 6) have the same melody in canon, but a slightly different harmonic background in triplets. The jump between C5

and G₅ in the upper voice (bar nr. 6) is provoking the change in the fluctuation of the phrase. As a consequence, the phrase becomes longer, the melody in canon voices becomes richer, and an interesting cross-rhythmical combination between triplets and eight notes is occurring as a consequence canonic imitation. The first six bars are in *forte* dynamic, and the first culmination, prepared with the crescendo starting from the melodic change in bar nr. 6, occurs in the bar nr. 9, where the cross-rhythm begins. Following four bars are the same as on the very beginning (bars 12-16). In bar nr 17, the small intervals in triplets are turning into broken octaves, under *piu piano e delicamente*. The canon is shaped now only between two existing voices, in inversion.

Additionally, the metrical structure is leaving the space for another example of metrical ambiguity typical for Brahms' late works. As the piece is composed in 2/4 bar, the existence of six equals notes in the bar is leaving space for different metrical organization, with three groups of two notes, or two groups of three. Those bars are 18-19, 22-23, and 26-27. The section that starts together with *dolce* (bar 28) is also leaving the space for the rhythmical ambiguity. The triplets are here connected with the first triplet in the next group through a legato bows forming groups of 4 five or six equal notes. From the bar 32, only three triplets are connected with the bow, but each bow starts with the last triplet in the previous group. In this whole part (bars 28-35), the triplets are having opposite melodic motion, although both lines are moving downwards, until the bar 35, when the sequential moves are transforming to D \flat 7 chord. One more repetition of the first them is closing the section A.

In the section B, the canon continues, where the voices made of chords and not triplets are copying each other exactly one octave lower, with one quarter-note distance. First section is happening between bars 51 and 59 in A \flat Major key. From that point on, the melodic motions in upper voices (sopran and tenor) are present, in bars 59-63 upwards, and until bar 67 when they are moving downwards. Bar 68 is the place where enharmonic modulation is happening. A flat Major is changing into G \sharp Major Chord, and the main tonality is going towards E Major. From that point on, the lower voices (alt and bass) are starting to have their motion as well. The bar 76 is an interesting place, where instead of expected E Major key, through the bass tone E₂, Brahms is chromatically modulating into C Major key. This change of harmony is followed by the *pianissimo* dynamical marking. C Major is permanent key until the bar number 92. The dim7 chords are closing the section moving in a downwards motion, which ends up with C₁ tone. The atmosphere of calando and *pianissimo* dynamic are interrupted with C Major chord in the right hand, which

prolongs the canon between soprano and tenor, exacerbated with cross-rhythmic. The canon suddenly stops in bar 97 on the G7 chord. The chord is repeating an octave lower, followed by passage in the left hand going upwards. Next chord is F minor sixth chord, sequentially repeated, leading towards the reprise in bar 100.

Reprise of the section A begins in *forte* dynamic with additional mark *piu agitato*. It is more compressed than the first A section, since it is 20 bars shorter. Most of the section is marked with *Forte* with the exception of the last four bars. The last culmination is happening in the bar nr. 126. The tension before the bar 126 is built throughout the entire reprise, in regards to repetitive texture and canon in combination with the cross-rhythm. In the bar 176 and 177, Brahms resolved the culmination with complicated polyphonic structure made of canonic imitation, Stretto technique and inversion, which finally ends on F Major Chord.



Example 6: Intermezzo op. 118 nr. 4, last culmination; bars 167-183⁷³

This piece, in terms of the contrapuntal practice, shows some similarities with the Intermezzo nr. 2. The whole piece is based on the canon technique, metrical ambiguity and cross rhythm that are altogether giving the feeling of *agitato*. The composing techniques Brahms used in this piece brought the structure of the musical sentence to the edges of the at that time present style. The similar tendencies in contrapuntal actions will later be seen only in works of Anton Webern.⁷⁴

⁷³ Ibid, p. 14.

⁷⁴ Mauser, 2013, p. 868.

3.4.2. Wilhelm Kempff's interpretation

The starting tempo is 117 bpm for a quarter note. Kempff is structuring the phrase periodically. In addition, tempo is slowing down in bar nr. 8 when the eight notes appear for the first time leading towards the end of the period in the 13th bar, so the end of the phrase is played with a slight *ritardando* (bar nr. 11 is 1,14 s long, bar nr. 12 1,42 s).

In dynamical sense, the culmination in the Section A is happening in the bar 17, analogue to the scores. The dynamical culmination is built through the imitation of the upper voice, which is gradually becoming louder and leading towards *Forte*. Kempff has an interesting way of articulation. The legato slurs which are connecting triplets with the following eight-notes are often broken in his performance, leaving the last eight-note slightly separated.

In the following section Kempff is showing the tendency towards highlighting the triplets, especially the ones starting in higher register, like in bars 16/17, 20/21, 24/25. In the same time, he is compressing the bars 18/19; 22/23; 26/27. In other words, he is playing slightly faster all the places that could be metrically ambiguous. This forward motion in tempo is followed by crescendo, so the bars 18/19; 22/23; 26/27 almost sound like stomachs (Bauch on German) in comparison to the bars with triplets in octaves which are stretched and much more silently performed. It is interesting to mention that Kempff in bar 29 plays different notes versus to what has been written in the scores (instead of F# as the last note in the right hand in that bar, he plays a third E-G). In bars 31 and 32, Kempff is stretching the melodic line, agogically making a difference between the same melodic motives that are repeating in several bars. In 33rd bar he is already back in tempo, after which he immediately begins with deceleration followed by decrescendo in bars 36, 37 and 38. The reappearance of the first theme is happening in the tempo similar to the one from the beginning. The phrase ends in decrescendo and with a very small *ritardando* happening between bars 45 and 47.

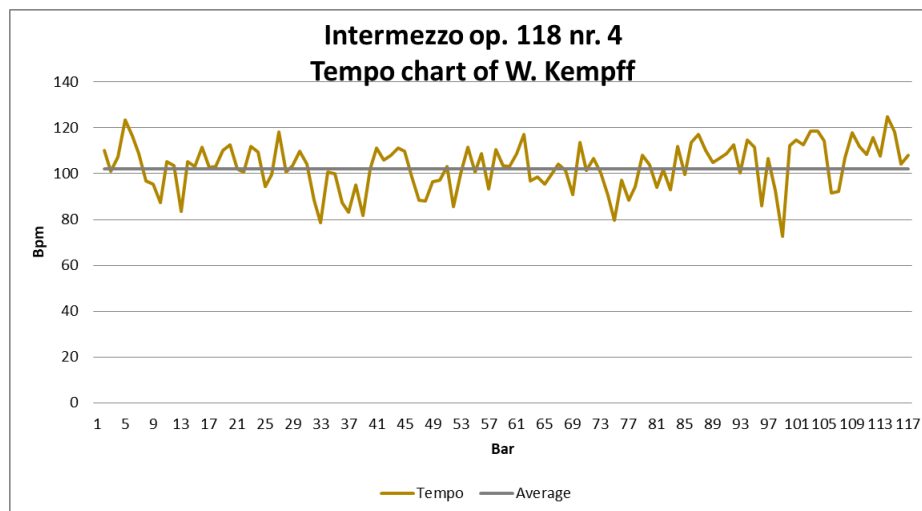


Chart 7: Intermezzo op. 118 nr. 4; Wilhelm Kempff's tempo

Section B is starting in a tempo similar to the one from the beginning of the piece, with the tendency towards acceleration all the way until the appearance of the E Major Key and *diminuendo* sign in bar 66. From that point on, Kempff is reducing the tempo all the way until the bar 80. One of the main characteristics of Kempff's performance of the B section is the appearance of broken chords that he is using especially in the left hand, in almost every second bar starting with the bar nr. 58, which is potentially influencing the tempo reduction. Dynamically, he wasn't really following the markings given by Brahms. *Diminuendo* in bar 67 is starting with an accent, after which all the following notes are significantly softened, or in other words, he makes sudden dynamical change instead of gradually lowering the loudness.

The major differences in dynamic or in any other expressive way is as well not present when the *pp* appears in the bar 75. Another example is noticeable in the bars 85-90. In the version of Brahms, *Forte* in bar 90 has more of a surprise role. However, Kempff is ignoring *calando* and *diminuendo* in bars 87-90, and by playing completely the opposite, going into crescendo that leads to *forte*, he creates the tension and one longer, unbroken structure that will last until the end of the piece. The feeling of tension and connection is also contributed by the sustained pedal, which he reduces in the bar nr 100. The reappearance of the motives from the beginning in *forte* dynamic is followed by the same characteristic articulation Kempff was using at the beginning of the piece by separating the eight-note from the triplets.

In the reprise, the main role has the melodic line of the soprano, which is played very legato and distinctively louder than the rest of the voices. The canon starting in bar 106 is the place

where Kempff starts with lowering the tempo and from bar 107 he continues with the usage of the sustained pedal. The second reappearance of the canon is together with triplets pushing tempo forward. The same thing is happening between bars 116-118. Kempff is using triplets to for acceleration, while the melody in eight-notes is lowering the tempo. The same is happening in bars 119-123, where triplets sound very quiet and blurred unlike the eight notes, which are appearing in bar 123. The eight-notes are significantly louder than the other voices, and through them, by stretching the tempo Kempff is making the culmination. The whole structure is collapsing in bar 128 together with the tempo, after which, the piece is closing in F-Major tonality.

3.4.3. Radu Lupu's interpretation

In this interpretation, the structure of the A section is visible from the first sight. First sixteen bars are making one form, than the following section until the bar 35 has a different more straightforward shape which is ending with a big deceleration. The last part is analog to the reappearance of the main motive and it is again performed with a bit more agogical changes.

The starting tempo is 126 bpm with a tendency towards acceleration. Just like in case of Wilhelm Kempff, Lupu is periodically organizing the phrasing at the beginning of this piece, with tempo that is sinking with the appearance of the eight notes in the melodic line in the bar nr. 8. The next significant change in tempo happens between bars 17 and 19 with the broken octaves in the melody-line, which are providing the possibility for a metrical ambiguity. In Lupu's performance, those broken octaves, marked as *Piano e delicamente* are played in tempo of circa 143 bpm, in a very light way, articulated as a non-legato. Lupu is accenting the second beat (G₄ note in the right hand) of the bar 18, as well as the first note in the bar 19, before he starts with the acceleration. When the similar place appears (bars 22-23), the accent is now at the beginning of the phrase, on the G_{b5} note, the last note of the first triplet in bar 22. The last group 26-27 is not as quickly performed as the two previous ones. The broken octaves in those bars are played in a slightly slower tempo (first three notes in the phrase A₅-G_{#5}). *Dolce* part (bar 28) starts also slightly stretched but from the following bar, the tempo is again around 136 bpm and it is staying stable until the bar nr. 35 where the *pp* dynamics and upwards motion of the triplets are occurring, causing the big change in the tempo fluctuation. Lupu is taking a bit of time to prepare the *pp* and the change in motion in bar 35. Therefore, this bar is 0,3s longer than the bars 34 or 36.

The reappearance of the main motive in bar 39 starts in tempo of the beginning, with some agogical changes, with overall tendency for slowing down as the ending of the section A is approaching. In addition, the average tempo sinks all the way to 104 bpm for a quarter note until the bar 51.

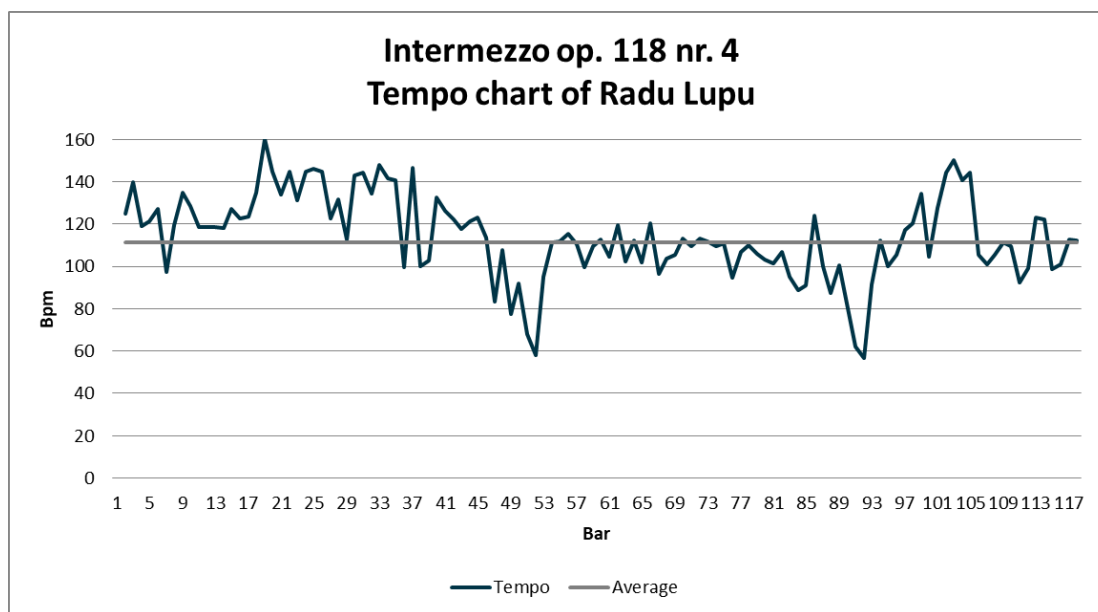


Chart 8: Intermezzo op. 118 nr. 4, Radu Lupu's tempo

The section B is played in a stable tempo (circa 112 bpm), with very small agogical changes. Starting from bar 60, Lupu is playing the intervals in the left hand which are accentuated a bit earlier than the right hand. The intervals are played always together, so the chords are not fully arpeggiated. Since the time difference between the hands is very small (0,062s) and remains constant, this action could be the product of Lupu's intention to show the significance of the left hand and to additionally highlight the canon.

Lupu is gradually slowing down after bar 67, where the ending of the phrase occurs. Deceleration continues all the way until the bar 84, where the ending of the following period in C major appears. Dynamical and character markings given by Brahms are in Lupu's performance strictly followed. Accordingly, the graphical marking for crescendo (bar 84), is causing the increased tempo fluctuation. At the same time, the *calando* marking is followed with the slowing down in tempo between bars 89 and 90, so the bars are lasting 1,67s (bar 89) until 1,92s (bar 91). Big accent in the last beat of bar 91 is provoking a sudden and significant change in character, as

well as in the tempo. The acceleration is exponentially growing until the tempo 139 until the reprise. Lupu is making this *accelerando* throughout the sixteen-notes in the left hand (bars 96-99).

In bar 105 is Lupu taking a bit of breath, by preparing the *sfz* and the following melodic motive. The similar praxis is repeated every time before the beginning of the melodic motive. He is introducing it by taking a bit more of time before he starts playing the eight notes in melody. The triplets, which are leading towards the melody, are in that case being played in a more agitato way, with the tendency towards deceleration, with especially stretched triplet before the beginning of the melodic line and canon (bars 105, 113, 122). Each beginning of the canon is starting with the eight-notes, which are in Lupu's interpretation played slower, while the rest of the canon is used for speeding up and obtaining the original tempo. This organization of rubato diametrically differs from the Kempff's actions at the same place.

The last culmination is made through the eight notes who are going gradually into crescendo as well as *accelerando* and then *ritenuto* until the bar 126. The same agogical treatment he is giving when the melodic line starts going into the opposite direction. In this case, *ritenuto* remains until the very end, followed by a big decrescendo.

3.5. Romanze op. 118 nr. 5

3.5.1. Formal analysis

A	B	A1
1-16	16-47	48-57

Table 5: Example 20: Structure of the Romanze op. 118 nr. 5

The title itself is already suggesting the character of the piece. Additional dynamic or character markings, except of *espressivo* at the very beginning, don't exist before the 9th bar. Like the previous pieces, it starts with an upbeat, has polyphonic structure, but unlike the 4th Intermezzo, the melodic line is traditional: rich, long and vocal. The 6/4 bar, beginning with an upbeat is leaving a lot of possibilities for hemiolas, syncopes and additional metrical ambiguities.

The structure of the A section is periodical, with the melodic line made of descending octave throughout the first two bars. This melodic line will have its periodical repetitions with the brake

of two bars throughout the whole section A. Accordingly, every fourth bar in this section begins with a hemiola.

The beginning of every phrase is followed with different contrapuntal voices, which are becoming more and more complex, as the ending of the piece is approaching. Harmonic base remains the same throughout the whole section, floating between the keys of F Major and D minor. An unusual cadence is happening in bar nr. 8, which is closing in a minor. In this case, the previous A Major chord is the end of the cadence, as a dominant of D minor. However, Brahms avoided D minor key by suddenly mutating into a minor chord, which is becoming the part of chromatic transition back to F Major Key.

The B section is marked as *Allegretto grazioso*. The 6/4 metric from the beginning is turning into an alla breve bar and the whole section is now in D Major Key, periodically structured as 4 + 4 bars, with following variations in the similar four-bars form. The harmonic basis of the variations is staying the same unlike the rhythm and metrics of their melody. The beginning of the each different period is clearly marked with a C#-D seventh interval in the left hand. The right hand has two separate voices that are in alternating sequence corresponding with each other. While the section starts with eight notes in the first upper line, the second voice has a dotted rhythm, analog to the one in the left hand.

In the first variation, during the first four bars the right hand has triplets instead of eight-notes, left hand continues with the same dotted rhythm as before, and the remained line is still punctuated but in accordance to the triplets. Triplets are connected with legato bows in the groups of six. Following four bars (29-33) have a slightly different organization in terms of articulation and metric. The triplets are now clearly divided into the groups of three. Every first note in the group is the quarter-note as well, creating the third voice, while the other two triplets are staccato. Melodically, the motives are having the opposite direction in comparison with the previous variation.

Next variation contains sixteen-notes in combination with dotted quarter-notes in the right hand. This metrical acceleration happening throughout the whole B section is suddenly interrupted with the broken chords in the next variation (bar 37), which are ending with the sixteen-notes passages and thrillers, slowly transitioning back to the 6/4 metric and the reprise.



Example 7: Romanze op. 118, beginning of the section B⁷⁵

The reprise is shorter than the first part since it is made of only one period. The second phrase has a rich contrapuntal line in octaves, additionally marked with *piu espressivo*. This is the place of culmination, where the contrapuntal line is crossing the lines of melody. Like in the fourth Intermezzo, the passionate outbursts or tension and intensity almost don't exist, until the last section, after which the whole piece end up with fade away effect.

3.5.2. Wilhelm Kempff's interpretation

Average tempo of this interpretation is 88 bpm. The whole section A is played with a lot of sustained pedal, very legato. The greatest importance has the melody in the upper voice. Although the first chord is composed with an unavoidable range of tenth in the left hand, Kempff is not playing this chord arpeggiated or broken.

At the beginning, Kempff is dividing the structure dynamically into two-bar complexes, which are always shaped with different effects. The first two bars are going into decrescendo. In bar number two, the second half of bar is slightly stretched, as the end of the slur approaches. The 3rd and the 4th bar are connected with crescendo and decrescendo, followed with the *ritenuto* at the end of the 4th bar. Between bars 3 and 4, Kempff is following the dynamical markings by playing crescendo followed with broken chords on the last beat in bar 4. Although this chord doesn't have to be arpeggiated since it is easily playable, with this performance practice, Kempff is providing more swing and fluctuation to the whole phrase.

⁷⁵ Brahms, 1910, p. 16.

Between bars 5 and 6 Kempff is creating crescendo and decrescendo by using the eighth-notes in alt and tenor in addition to the dynamical markings in the scores. Bar nr. 6 starts with a slightly broken chord. The reason behind is possibly the fluctuation of the phrase, since he is stretching the tempo at the end of the bar, when the piece is modulating into D minor. The next deceleration is happening in the bar nr. 8, where Kempff is highlighting the interesting chord sequence.

From bar nr. 9 onwards, the dynamic is becoming slightly louder since melody line is higher for a third, and *piu espressivo* is written in the scores. The first chord in bar nr. 9 is slightly arpeggiated, as well as the first chord in bar nr. 10. Kempff is leading the melodic line between bars 9-13 with the help of the middle voice. The important role of the middle line is particularly obvious between bars 10 and 11. Bar 11 starts with the slight accent formed on a dissonance A-G in the first chord, which is later resolving into the F (the line of the middle voice). This melodic line is going into crescendo at the end of the bar nr 10, preparing the ongoing accent. The second half of bar 11, when the melody-line in the middle voice repeats (G-F), is played very softly. Afterwards, Kempff is following the dynamical markings and the following bars are played with a crescendo and decrescendo (bars 11 and 12).

From the bar nr. 13 the overall tempo is sinking. In addition, the bar nr. 14 is also starting with a small arpeggio. The leading voice is again the soprano, and the last two bars are closing the section with the gradually played intensive *ritenuto*. Accordingly, the last A major chord with the fermata is lasting 2, 6 s although it has the length of an eight-note.

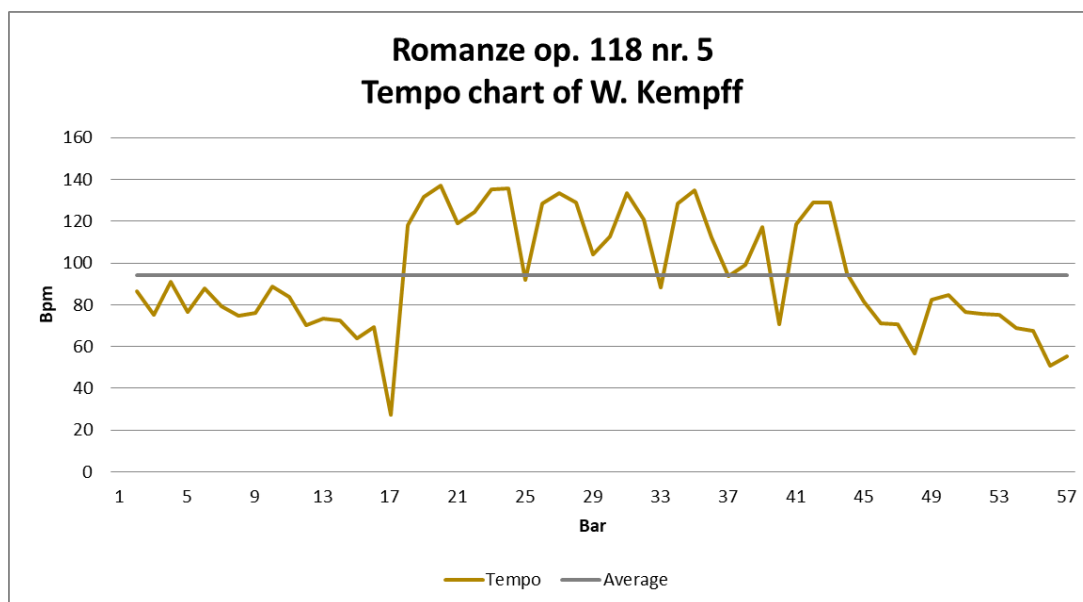


Chart 9: Romanze op. 118 nr. 5; interpretation of Wilhelm Kempff: tempo

The section B isn't written in a particularly expressive way, the dynamical range is moving between *piano* and *pianissimo* and Kempff is respecting that by playing it with a very soft and delicate tone. He is starting in tempo of 126 bpm, with the tendency towards acceleration. Since in the whole B section Brahms didn't leave a lot of space for rubato exhibitions, as in the whole section an ostinato rhythm dominates the left hand, the main expressive tools are the articulation and the usage of sustained pedal.

The first three bars are played in the stabile tempo. The upper voice has a leading role. There are no particularly expressive places, the general dynamic is *piano*, and Kempff is using a lot of sustained pedal. In the bar 21, Kempff is stretching the tempo by highlighting the upwards melodic jump between A₄ and F₅, after which he uses sixteenth notes to return into original tempo. The similar action is happening in bar nr. 27.

Bar nr. 25 starts very silently, but in the matter of one quarter note Kempff is deciding for a bigger presence of the melodic voice. In this part, the sustained pedal is not as present as it was in the first phrase of the section B, on the contrary, bar 27 and 28 sound very dry. From that reason, the bar 27 and sixteenth notes in bar 28 are played *leggiero* and *non legato*. Kempff is using the articulation written in scores in bars 29-32. In bars 33-36, the sustained pedal is not used when the sixteenth notes are in the middle voice. On all the other places, sustained pedal is present as well as the legato treatment of the sixteenth notes.

Bar nr. 34 is the place where Kempff starts using sixteen notes for the tempo reduction, preparing the section with arpeggiated chords where he is not clearly distinguishing the written dynamical markings (*piano* and *pianissimo*). In bars 41-43 Kempff is not using sustained pedal on the thrillers at all. He is ignoring the written *diminuendo* in the bar 41, instead, he is going into crescendo until the bar 43, after which the *diminuendo* occurs followed with the *ritardando*, starting from bar 45, until the reprise. With this dynamical organization, he is forming larger line although it might not be in alignment with the idea of Brahms.

The first phrase in the reprise is treated as the one bigger four bars long complex. Kempff is changing the color in the second half of bar nr. 50, when the A-D motive in middle voice occurs for the second time in bar. Following eight-notes are then immediately back to the brighter atmosphere, and the suddenness of the change is softened with the slightly arpeggiated chord on the last beat in the bar nr. 50. Bar 51 starts with a small decrescendo. Last two beats are however leading towards the last phrase, in crescendo. Bar nr. 52 is played *forte*, with the four last octaves having acceleration. In bar 53, the octaves are slowing down before the fourth beat in bar, after which Kempff is suddenly changing the color and starts playing softly, gradually going into decrescendo and *ritardando* as the end of the piece approaches. Bar 56 is starting slightly faster than expected, but from the third beat on, the gradual *ritenuto* is again continuing together with *diminuendo*.

3.5.3. Radu Lupu's interpretation

Lupu plays Romanze in tempo of circa 80 bpm for a quarter, but with a lot of small agogical schanges which are following the melodic motion. He is structuring the piece as four bars complexes, with the dynamical peaks in every third bar. The dynamical changes are followed by agogical actions, so crescendos leading towards dynamical peaks are accompanied with small accelerations. Since every phrase is ending with decrescendos, Lupu is accompanying them with small *ritardandos* which are lasting until the fifth quarter note in bar, since the sixth is beginning of the next phrase. From that reason the bar nr. 4 lasts slightly longer than the others (bars 2 and 3 4,89 s, bar four 5,34 s). At the end of first period, Lupu is making a bigger *ritardando*, which starts already in bar 7. Therefore, the length of the bars is following: bar nr. 6: 4, 78s, bar nr. 7: 5, 62s, bar nr. 8: 6, 37s.

The beginning of the second period starts a bit louder, in addition to the melody line which is for a third higher than in the previous bars, as well as in addition to *piu espressivo*. Lupu is maintaining the 4 bar complexes, so after the bar nr. 11, the a big decrescendo followed by *ritardando* is occurring. Therefore is bar 12 (5,32s) again a bit longer than the bar nr. 11 (4,86 s).

The last four bars of the section A are played very softly and slightly slower than the rest of the section (starts with tempo of 65 bpm), with the big *ritardando* starting already from the bar nr 14 onwards. As a consequence, the bar 16 lasts more than 10, 71 s.

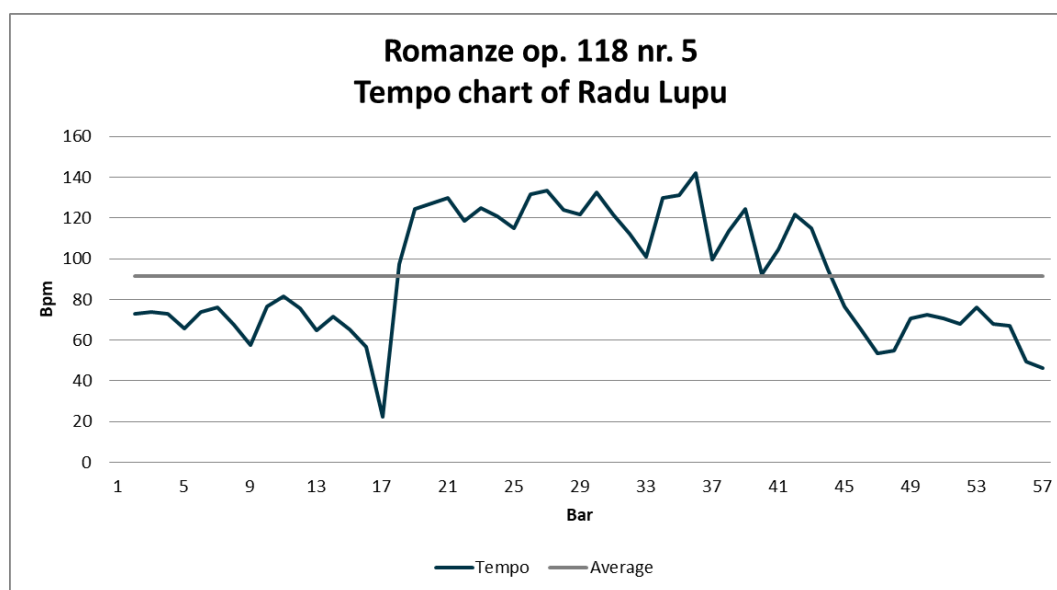


Chart 10: Romanze op. 118 nr. 5, Lupu's tempo

The B Section is played in average tempo of 120 bpm. However, Lupu is playing the first group of eight notes slowly, finding the tempo step-by-step and establishing it in bar 18. The whole section is played very silently and delicately. Lupu is following the clear 4-bars structure again by making the dynamical peaks in every third bar (bars nr. 18, 22, and between 25th and 26th) and going to decrescendo afterwards. In the following four bars (29-32), Lupu is following the articulation given by Brahms, but in the same time, his major melodic line is the one formed between quarter and semi notes in the right hand.

The following variation is played without sustained pedal during the sixteenth notes, very light. Lupu is holding the thirds at the beginning of the bars 33 and 34 (the B2 lasts 0,12s, in comparison to the sixteenth notes, which are lasting 0, 06s). The dynamical peak of this variation is happening in the last bar, on the thriller written on the highest note of the variation. Sustained

pedal is contributing to the voluminous dynamical peak, which is quickly retrieving to the *pianissimo* dynamic at the beginning of the following variation. Bars 37-39 are starting in *pp*. They are played in tempo, with a lot of sustained pedal. Lupu is pointing out the chords starting with the A in the middle octave (last beat of bar 37, third and fourth beat of bar 38 and third beat of bar 39). Section between bars 40 and 45 has its highest peak in the bar 43 after the thriller, after which the *diminuendo* is finally occurring together with the *ritardando* all the way to the bar 47. Therefore are the bars gradually getting longer (bar 43: 2, 56 s, bar 44: 3, 04 s, bar 45: 5, 6 s, bar 46: 6, 74 s, also bar 47: 6, 74 s.).

Reprise is played in the same tempo as at the beginning. The difference lies in the dynamics – reprise is played louder, and the dynamical peak of the whole piece is happening between bars 52 and 53. The culmination is prepared with a big crescendo happening during bars 50 and 52. First four bars of the reprise are played in a stable tempo, while the octaves in bar 52 are performed with agogical motion that Lupu used in order to shape the octaves in addition to the legato bows written in the scores, as well as to contribute the culmination and leads the melody towards fourth beat of the bar 53.

From the bar 54 onwards, the tempo is slowing down again. One of the reasons for the slower tempo is the appearance of eight-notes in the middle voice that Lupu is playing heavily. By stretching them, he is creating the *ritardando* written in the scores.

3.6. Intermezzo op. 118 nr. 6

3.6.1. Formal analysis

A	B	A1	Coda
1-40	41-62	63-84	85-86

Table 6: Structure of the Intermezzo op. 118 nr. 6

For the first time in op. 118, the piece is not starting with an upbeat. The melodic line is circling around $G\flat_5$ tone, as a *Dies irae* motive which is repeating several times in the same key of $E\flat$ minor. The accompaniment is beginning in the 3rd bar, as a broken *dim7* chord, arpeggiating throughout two octaves, organized like thirty-two notes in sextuplets as well as group of four, on

the second beat of the bar nr. 4. The differences in the note values between the melody and the accompaniment are hiding the metric of the 3/8 bar.⁷⁶



Example 8: Intermezzo op. 118 nr. 6, *Dies irae* motive⁷⁷

In bar number 9, groups of sixth are switched with groups of four thirty-two notes. In the same time, the melody line is moving for a quint higher which is causing the slight changes in the already established *Dies irae* motive. Further imitation of the motive, that are interrupting the ending of the previous motive are getting more and more compressed, moving upwards, leading to the first short culmination (bars 14-16), after which the phrase and the main motive of the piece end up in the Bb minor key. In the bar nr. 19, by adding the Ab₃ tone on the already existing Bb-F fifth, Brahms is modulating back into Eb minor key.

Using the similar approach, Brahms repeated the previous melodic material, with variations in the accompaniment. The repeated closure of the section in the Bb minor key in the bar 40 changed the key into Gb Major chord at the beginning of the section B.

Although the B section doesn't contain any marking of character change, the atmosphere in the piece is certainly different than at the beginning. Massive chords and octaves are appearing in the right hand, in staccato articulation, followed by staccato accompaniment in the left hand, in upward motion. The tonality is floating between Gb Major and Bb minor, intensifying the epic atmosphere. The opposite motions of the motives in both hands are leading towards the first culmination in bars 53-54, where the *Dies irae* motive again in Eb minor key is appearing in the upper voice. The theme is interrupted with the fragments from the bars 55-57, moving upwards until the D₄ note, after which, in octave passages, the melodic line suddenly goes downwards, until the C₅ and later the *Fortissimo* repetition of *Dies irae* in bars 59-61 with the chord accompaniment in downwards motion.

⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 869.

⁷⁷ Brahms, 1910, p. 18.

Bar 63 is the beginning of the reprise. The *Dies irae* theme, which remains in the E♭ minor key is accompanied with uncompleted sextuplets. The theme is doubled with an interval of sixth in the bar 66 which is again provoking a slight variations of the main motive. The melody is going gradually downwards until the bar 71. After it reaches the E♭ minor chord, the melodic line is changing the direction, leading towards another small culmination in bars 73 and 74 and going back to *pianissimo*, with the downwards motion, until the main *Dies irae* theme reappears in bars 77-80, doubled with octaves in the bass line.

The last repetition of the theme is appearing in following four bars, two octaves higher than the previous appearance, leading towards very intensive last culmination happening in bar 83. The third bar of the theme for the first time harmonized with the B♭7 chord and is marked with *sFF*. The significance of this chord is reflected not just in the harmonic sense, but in several other aspects as well: this type of marking (*sFF*) is rarely to be seen in Brahms' works.

At the same time, it has to be reached throughout only two bars, starting with *pianissimo* dynamic. Crescendo is marked with both graphic and verbal markings, while following decrescendo is marked with only the graphical sign, followed by Coda in *lento*. This place can as well indicate the common interpretational practice of Brahms' time, when graphic signs for crescendo and decrescendo could have also indicated the agogical changes.⁷⁸ The dominant is resolving into E flat minor chord, repeated twice in the position of the fourth chord, with the left hand moving one octave lower, towards the E♭ minor bass in bar 85. The piece ends up with the broken E♭ minor chord in *lento* tempo and *piano* dynamic.

3.6.2. Wilhelm Kempff's interpretation

After listening to the recording, my first impression was that Kempff use a lot of rubato from the very beginning, treating the main motive in a very free manner, which is partly true, considering the fact that sonic visualizer also showed unequal beat gaps and different bar lengths. However, the length of the bars 1-4 altogether (the first appearance of the main motive), and the following four bars (the repetition) is almost the same (Bars 1-5:14,039s, bars 5-10: 14,024 s), which is showing Kempff's precise rhythmical structuration in this piece as well.

⁷⁸ Clive, 2015, p. 6.

Dynamically, from the 4th bar on Kempff is playing slightly louder, which is understandable, considering the fact that the left hand is joining the theme from that bar. First eight bars are played very legato, with a lot of sustained pedal and the dominant right hand.

The next section (bars 9-14) is having the dynamical peak in bars 10 and 11. Kempff is starting as it is written, in *piano* dynamic, and goes into crescendo followed with small acceleration until the end of bar 10 (F₅-D₅ in the upper voice together with G₄ which starts the main motive). The next chord is a bit more silent, but the reappearance of the main motive in the middle voice in bar 11 is prevailing until the beginning of bar nr. 12, when a decrescendo is happening.

Following section is again shaped as a four bars complex with dynamical peak in bars 15 and 16. Bars 17-20 are much softer and Kempff is using them to accelerate the tempo, so the following section will start in circa 60 bpm. The reappearance of the main motive is therefore played faster but more precise than at the very beginning of the piece. The slight *ritardando* happens in the bar 24, after which Kempff plays the repetition of the theme in the bar 25 in tempo 58 bpm. The *ritardando* is happening again in bars 27 and 28, when Kempff is showing the significance of the bass line, while in the same time going into decrescendo. Calming down is interrupted with the last beat of the bar 28, which is played significantly louder than the rest of the bar.

Kempff is continuing with shaping the 4-bar complexes the same as he did it in the whole piece, making dynamical peaks followed with rubato movements. The dynamical peak of the whole A section is happening in bar 30. The rest of the section is in a dynamical way more calmed than the first 20 bars.

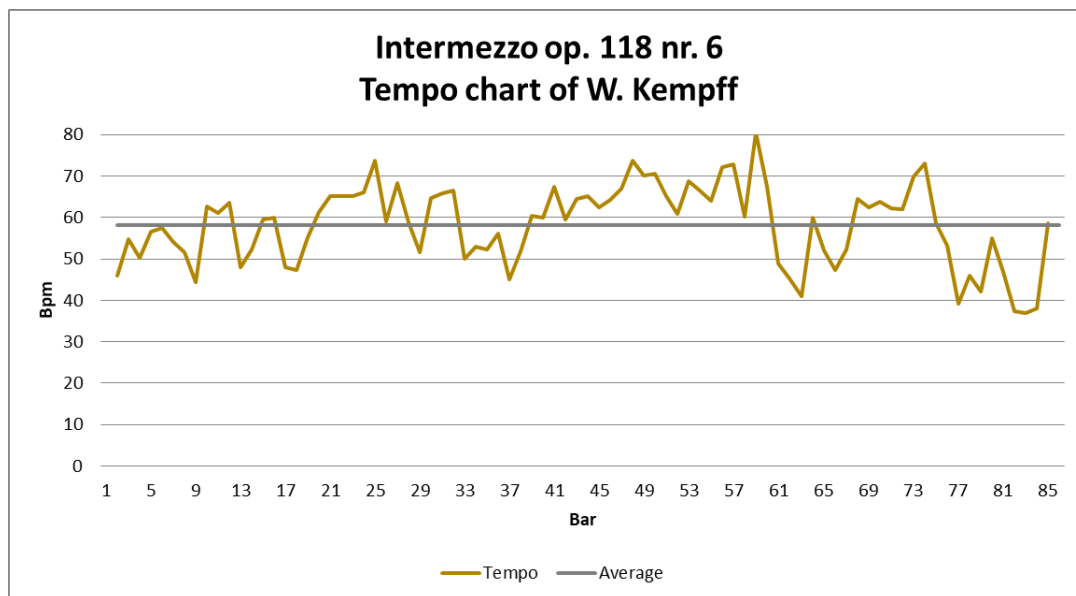


Chart 11: Intermezzo op. 118 nr. 6, Kempff's tempo

B section is representing a real contrast. Dynamically is significantly louder, it is played with more sustained pedal as well, and contains more agogical motions. Wilhelm Kempff's tempo at the beginning of the section is 65 bpm, with the tendency towards acceleration. The whole section is in Kempff's performance organized according to the structure of the piece, in four-bar complexes, which are dynamically shaped with the usage of crescendo and decrescendo and exponentially getting louder as the culmination of the section approaches. After the bar nr. 46, where Kempff takes time to distinguish the change between $G\flat$ Major and $E\flat$ minor chords, he continues with acceleration all the way until the bar 50.

In this bar, Kempff doesn't play the arpeggiated chord in the left hand, but in following bar, he is stretching the sixteen notes in the left hand on the first beat of the bar. In bar 52, the stretched sixteenths are finally combined with the arpeggio, while the same time, the tempo is reaching its slowest point. With this rubato, Wilhelm Kempff is building up the feeling of the tension, since dynamically he doesn't really have a space for maneuver.

Tempo is going slightly forward together with octave-passages and reaches the reappearance of the main theme in bar 54 in tempo of 63 bpm. The beginning of bar 56 brings a short-term relief in dynamical sense. In bars 56 and 57, Kempff creates the crescendo and a feeling of gradation by following the melody line of the right hand. This time he is stretching the dotted figures in the right hand, especially the one in the bar 57. Bar 58 has a small break between the

bass chord on the second beat and the beginning of the octave passages which lasts 0,4s and is contributing to deceleration of the tempo. The octave passages are played fluently, and in the bar nr. 59 Kempff is making again a big *ritardando* as an introduction to the reappearance of the main motive. The main motive lasts this time a bit longer than on the beginning of the piece 14, 74s in total, (bars 59-62). The dynamical peak is happening in the bar 61 on the first beat, in addition to *sff* written in the scores. Kempff is stretching the main motive as the bar 61 approaches, which creates a tension, as well as a slight tempo deceleration.

The reprise starts with the main motive played in *piano* dynamic. Average tempo is around 52 bpm. However, Kempff is still playing freely the main motive. Dynamical peak is happening in bar 64, after which a *diminuendo* is occurring. At the same time, Kempff is pushing the tempo forward with the help of the figures in the left hand in the bars 65 and 66. The following bars (67 and 68), are played with more fluctuation. A small *ritenuto* is happening in the second half of the bar 68, as an introduction for *dolce* in 69 *dolce*, which is in Kempff's performance played slower and softer. Kempff is stretching the tempo in bar 70. The following culmination (bars 71-77), is followed by crescendo and deceleration until the bar 74, after which the calming down is again happening. The above mentioned culmination is the loudest place in the reprise.

The following reappearance of the theme in bars 77-81 is played very softly. The bars are lasting 15, 32 s, in comparison to the last appearance of the main motive in bars 81-85, which is in total 17, 53 s long. Kempff is stretching the last motive as the culmination with big crescendo approaches in the bar 83. The slower tempo is going forward towards last two *lento* bars which are closing the piece very softly. Kempff is playing first group of triplets in bar 85 a bit more fluently, after which he makes *ritardando* until the end.

3.6.3. Radu Lupu's interpretation

Lupu starts the piece in tempo 54 for an eight note. Just like Kempff, he is playing the theme quite freely. The group of four notes in the accompaniment in the bar 4 Lupu is highlighting by making a short stop on the C₃, so the value of that note lasts as one triplet.

The tempo is rising until the bar 10 where the first part reaches its dynamical peak. In bars 10-13 a slight *ritenuto* is occurring together with the big decrescendo.

Dolce section (bars 13-16) is in Lupu's version delicately layered. He is using a lot of sustained pedal and slight accents at the beginning of every stretto motive, played very legato. The

dynamical actions are following the movement of the melodic line, so the upwards motion provokes crescendo and vice versa. However, the peak of crescendo it is not being more intensive than the first culmination in the bar 10. Bars 17-20 are bringing the calming down and a big decrescendo.

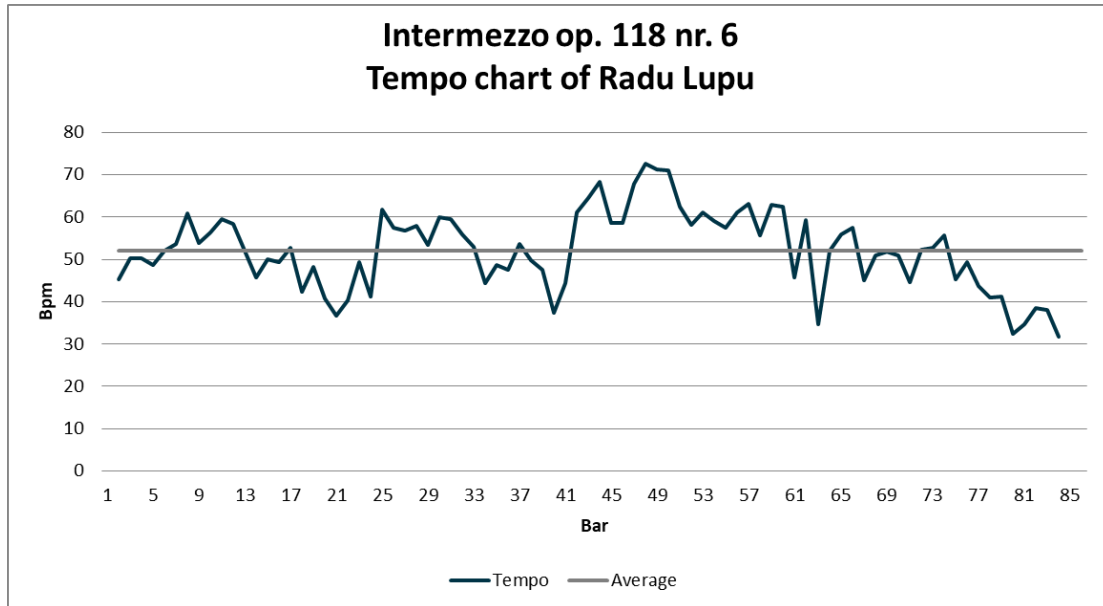


Chart 12: Intermezzo op. 118 nr. 6, Lupu's tempo

The reappearance of the first motive in bar nr. 21 is played very distinguished and clear, while the accompaniment is entering very softly, barely hearable, without any disturbance of the lying F5 tone in the right hand. Bar nr. 25 begins with the slightly arpeggiated first chord played in *pianissimo*. In this section, Lupu is purposely hiding the theme, by playing it as silent as its accompaniment in the left hand. Reason for that could be the change of register in the accompaniment line, which is at the time higher than the main theme (bars 25-28). The following delayed stretto imitations Lupu is more distinguishing from the accompaniment, while maintaining very delicate *piano* atmosphere. The long notes at the end of the section are, like in Kempff's case, being used to provide the tempo fluctuation and therefore are played a bit shorter.

The beginning of the section B is starting in *piano* dynamics, in tempo 68. As the melodic voice moves upwards, Lupu is building up the tension with the crescendo and a small *accelerando* until the bar 46, where the tempo reaches 72 bpm. The articulation is staccato, with the sustained pedal being used only during the movement in the left hand and the bars 47 and 48 are being stretched agogically in order to build up the tension for the bar 49.

From the bar 49, Lupu is using more sustained pedal, covering the right hand with it as well. The octave passages are played rubato, again with the stretching before the culmination and reappearance of the first theme in bar 53. This theme is played very loudly, with the particularly highlighted syncopated chords in the Lupu's version. In the bar 55, tempo is again rising before Lupu prepares the last reappearance of the theme, which at the same time represents the culmination of the piece. The loudest place is again the syncopated chord, appearing on the second sixteenth note of the bar 60. In the following two bars, Lupu makes a big decrescendo, preparing the atmosphere for the reprise in the bar 63.

Lupu is creating the delicate atmosphere by playing the main motive in C \flat Major in the similar tempo but with the lot rubato. The big culmination is happening in bars 72-75, like it is written in the scores, where the key returns to original tonality. Lupu is additionally stretching the bars 78-80 as a preparation for the effect of the last culmination. Last culmination is played in tempo 48, freely, with additional rubato and a slight *ritenuto* before the bar 83. The *ritenuto* continues progressively and in bar 85 *lento* Lupu is playing each note in triplets in a tempo of approximate 50 bpm.

4. Comparison and conclusion

Name of the piece	Wilhelm Kempff	Radu Lupu
Intermezzo nr. 1, <i>Allegro non assai, ma molto appassionato</i>	104 bpm	116 bpm
Intermezzo nr. 2, <i>Andante teneramente</i>	102 bpm	70 bpm
Ballade nr. 3, <i>Allegro energico</i>	136 bpm	180 bpm
Intermezzo nr. 4, <i>Allegretto un poco agitato</i>	114 bpm	126 bpm
Romanze nr. 5, <i>Andante</i>	88 bpm	80 bpm
Intermezzo nr. 6, <i>Largo e maestro</i>	48 bpm	54 bpm

Table 7: Comparison of tempos

Comparing the tempos of the both pianists, it is immediately noticeable that Lupu interprets hastily pieces (1st, 3rd and 4th) faster than Wilhelm Kempff, while *Andantes* and *Largo* are significant-

ly slower in comparison to Kempff's tempos in average. At the same time, I am incapable of claiming that Lupu is going into any extremes, simply because his choices of tempo and character are matching the Brahms' markings (or at least, my way of understanding of Brahms' markings). That is not always the case with Wilhelm Kempff, whose interpretation of Intermezzo nr. 2 sounds a bit too hasty for my understanding of *Andante teneramente*. His way of portraying the second piece is tender in a dynamical way, but very fluent, while the treatment of the melody has more of a narrative than a vocal character. Either way, since Brahms himself never wrote exact tempos, it cannot be claimed with certainty that Kempff is not following the tempo markings of the pieces.

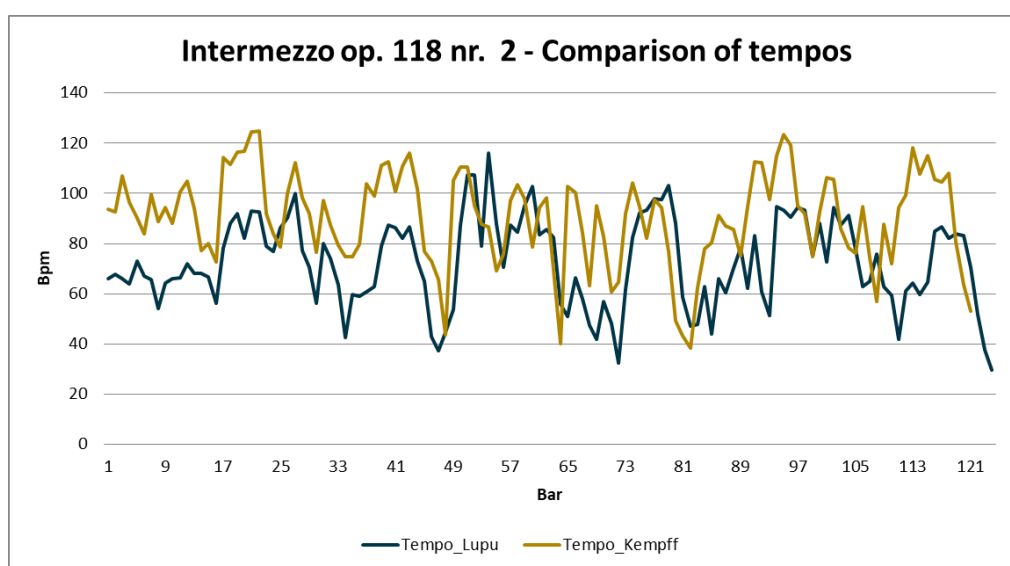


Chart 13: Intermezzo op. 118 nr.2 comparison of tempos

It seems that the choice of tempo is directly influencing the diversity of articulation used in pieces. Kempff's tempos in hasty pieces are slower than Lupu's, which is quite understandable if we take their age gap in concern. However, Kempff is very successfully compensating his slower meter with the variety of articulation and pedaling tricks, all of it is mostly noticeable in the Ballade nr. 3. Lupu has a similar approach to this piece in terms of articulation and pedaling, but to the less extreme, due to the significantly faster tempo.

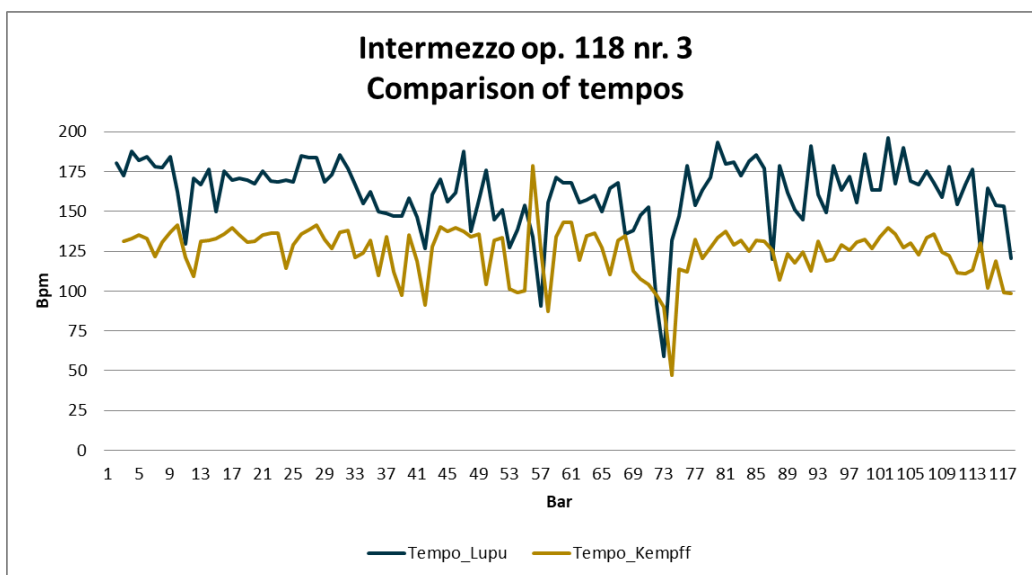


Chart 14: Intermezzo op. 118 nr. 3, Comparison of tempos

The both pianists are following the similar conventions in shaping bigger sections reflected in usage of drastic *ritardandos* at the ends of the sections. In some cases, Kempff's agogic is either a result or a tool for creating longer lines and structures, larger than what composer had marked like in Intermezzo nr. 4. Another way of Kempff's rubato usage is reflected in agogical combination of the smaller complexes. He is doing this in different ways, not always following the formal structure of the composition, neither the articulation markings nor character changes written in the scores.

Lupu's melodic rubato, reflected in preparation of the jumps in the melodic line, reveals his tendency towards vocal treatment of the melody. The small rubato changes are often conditioned by intonating the intervals in the melody, which is an approach close to the Russian pianistic school. Despite his freedom on a smaller plan, Lupu uses rubato as well in order to create the structure and expressiveness of the phrases.

Although in both interpretations of the six *piano* pieces we could see all sorts of rubato changes, it appears that rubato which follows melodic line as often the phrasing as well prevails in Lupu's performance, while agogical accents and fragmentation are more common in Kempff's performance practice. The rhythmical ambiguity of Brahms' works is in neither case especially highlighted. The metrical accentuation is in most of the places remaining unchanged. On the other hand, the both pianists are using particular rhythmically ambivalent places for tempo changes, or in other words, for acceleration.

The both performances contain the dislocated and arpeggiated chords in accompaniment on similar places. They are contributing to the tempo changes or used to highlight important melodic spots. However, neither one of the pianists is using the dislocated chords as much as Brahms did at least according to his saved recording.

Dynamical changes and culminations are in both performances mostly happening according to the scores. The both pianists are almost all the time combining the crescendo and decrescendo with bigger or smaller adjustments in tempo. In a similar way, both of them are agogically preparing sections marked with *dolce* or *sF*. At the same time, in the repetitions (like in the first intermezzo), both pianists are sometimes ignoring the written dynamical markings.

Special characteristic of Radu Lupu's performance is delicate treatment of the tone. Comparing any recording of Radu Lupu and Wilhelm Kempff, the difference in volume of the sound and amplitude sizes becomes obvious. Although I can't answer with certainty if this characteristic is a product of the technological imbalance between the two recordings, one thing is sure – the reduced volume in Lupu's recording gave me the impression of intimacy and definitely forced me to focus more onto the subtle tone nuances and sound effects he is using to distinguish the different polyphonic layers or register changes. Precise voice distinguishing and clarity are on the other hand, characteristics of Kempff's recordings.

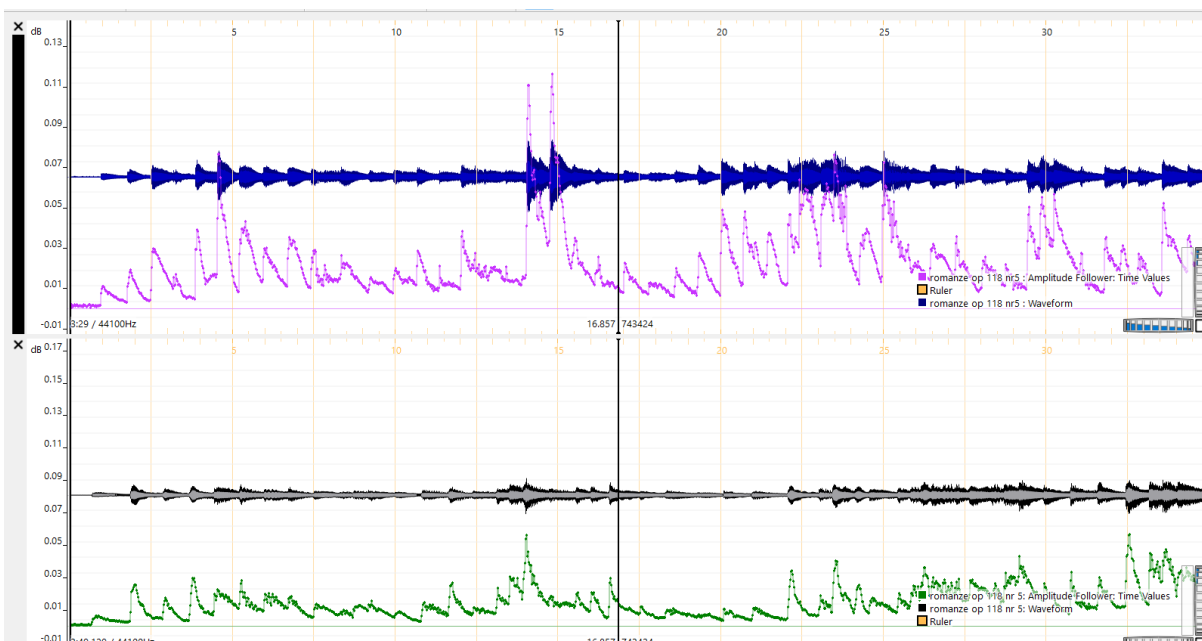


Chart 15: Romanze op. 118 nr. 5: comparative amplitude charts in dB; upper Wilhelm Kempff, lower Radu Lupu

After the comparison of the two performances, several facts are standing out. In every aspect of Wilhelm Kempff's performance there is almost equal number of exceptions as the elements who could be classified in one particular way. In addition, his treatment of tempo is very free and a tendency towards fluctuation is generally noticeable in almost every piece, often without reason grounded in the Brahms' handwriting. His way of organizing and portraying the musical structure is in many cases very clear, although it is not necessarily following Brahms' instructions. His interpretation of character markings and tempos is again, not strictly following everything that Brahms has written. The way he is implementing agogic is in many cases, but again not always, in the service of the music structure. Kempff's treatment of the melody often has no vocal character, although he is sometimes taking time before melodic jumps (like in the middle section of the Ballade), instead contains elements of neoclassical approach, reflected in structured phrases, diverse articulation, (like in Ballade op.118), clarity of polyphonic treatment, or clearly distinguished lines and the tone nuancing with a careful amounts of pedal (like at the A part of the Intermezzo nr. 6).

As a musician who happened to live in a historical crossroad, between several different regimes and therefore different esthetical and cultural demands, in different circumstances, in different roles as a musician, while experiencing technological breakout and its influence on the world of music, Wilhelm Kempff was integrating an amazing amount of different layers in his interpretations. I would dare to write that it is even possible to the certain extent to follow the development of the history of musical interpretation just by listening to Wilhelm Kempff's recordings made in different stages of his life. Therefore, interpretational analysis of his recordings is never a simple task, especially of those recordings made in later years of his career.

Taking into consideration all of the above mentioned facts, it was equally complicated to classify Wilhelm Kempff into one of the three interpretational modes according to H. Danuser. Although many times it occurred to me that Wilhelm Kempff has to be seen as exceptional phenomenon in history of pianism and interpretation, a couple of facts emerged, that helped me to fit him into the standards Mr. Danuser has offered. His educational background together with the concert program based on works of mostly German composers of classicism and romanticism could easily be identified as a part of Danuser's traditional mode. Furthermore, the presence of neoclassical elements in his pianistic approach could be treated as traces of tradition originally developed from the Leipzig pianistic school of the 19th century. Since the theory of H. Danuser

is dividing the history of interpretation into the periods, Wilhelm Kempff could be without any doubts settled into Danuser second mode or traditional mode of interpretation. The exceptions he is making in the treatment of the music scores are as well analog to the second interpretational mode of H. Danuser in terms of freedom and subjectivity, which are as well heritage of the German romanticism.

In Lupu's interpretation, the correlation with the music scores is significantly higher, in comparison to Kempff's performance. Looking towards Lupu's situation at the time of the recording, it is clear that he was a representative of a younger generation of the pianists coming from the Eastern bloc, building up his career in the western world. Detachment from the influence of the new tendencies in Germany and in western Europe due to political and life circumstances and at the same time attachment almost directly to Brahms and his pianism due to his university teachers, are placing Lupu in a very special position. Although his access towards interpretation is originally arising from the romanticism, it is, at least according to my findings, very much attached to the demands of the music text. Additional differences in comparison to performance of Wilhelm Kempff are the quality of tone and the respect towards small structure of the pieces and vocal treatment of the melodic lines.

The pedagogical connections he has with the German romanticism and his concert program are implicating direct relation with the traditional mode of Herman Danuser. The results of the analysis made me believe that Radu Lupu plays these pieces simply as they are, detached from all the extravagant procedures and actions, and still maintaining high level of emotionality and expressiveness. Although his repertoire is mostly based on the works of romanticism, he still belongs to the new generation of pianists who built up their careers on the competitions worldwide, which could be the reason for his respect towards the demands of the text. His subjectivity, expressiveness and emotionality, which are characteristics of the romanticism and therefore traditional mode of interpretation, are still present in his performances in terms of profound sound quality, tone nuances, not always transparent polyphonic layers and vocal treatment of the melody. Many of the performance practices of Brahms' time Lupu is using in his performance, just like Kempff, since they are as well part of the same tradition. However, Lupu's outside personal and artistic public image is showing the slight tendencies towards historicism in his interpretation. The vocal treatment of the phrase, which is considered to be one of the main aspects of the Russian schools even nowadays, is a dominant aspect in the performance of Radu Lupu. Howev-

er, we cannot trace it back with certainty to the performance practices of Brahms, although it could be traced until the German performance practices in general in 19th century.

The elements of the German 19th century pianistic tradition could be found in both performances, as well as some historical performance practices of the Brahms' time. The subjectivism and virtuosic eccentricity is in a much bigger extend present in the performance of Wilhelm Kempff, while Radu Lupu has the more simple but poetic approach caused partly by respecting the small structure of the piece, partly by the vocal treatment of the melodic line. All those features are in alignment with the major characteristics of what is considered to be Russian pianistic tradition. Although the mentioned aspects probably have the same origins arising from the German 19th century approaches, this more lyrical one certainly found the fertile ground and a good reception in Russian academies, and was kept there, what can clearly be seen on the example of Radu Lupu.

One more interesting reflection imposed itself during the process of writing this thesis. The strong cultural connections Russia and Germany had in 19th century, although interrupted for many decades, still managed to bring to the world one of the greatest interpreters of Brahms' piano music in modern history, who happened to study in Russia. Surprisingly huge amount of German performance practices and pianistic traditions of the 19th century is incorporated in the Russian academic system, and to such a big extent, that after the WW2, the traditions kept in Russia remained almost closer to their original source (looking at the Radu Lupu's performances), than the remained pianistic approaches in Germany. This proves as well, that the cultural exchanges at any time could be bringing amazing results for decades after the end of the collaboration and therefore, for artists, as well as for the future of artistic music, the necessity and a demand.

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Radu Lupu plays Brahms (1987); full frequency stereophonic sound; July 1976 in Kingsway Hall, London; © 1978 The Decca Record Company Limited, London; ©1987 The Decca Record Company Limited, London; DH 417 599-2.

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List of illustrations:

Music scores and examples

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Abstract

Wilhelm Kempff and Radu Lupu, both known as famous performers of Brahms' music, share the same pianistic origin incarnated in prof. Heinrich Barth. The period of 13 years between their recordings as well as possible influence of Russian or German teaching approaches are aspects that are hermeneutically interesting for the analysis of their performances with the help of Hermans Danuser's Theory of interpretation. The goal was better and deeper understanding of their pianistic approaches.

The analysis is made with the assistance of Sonic Visualizer computer program in measurements of tempo values and agogical changes, which are represented with the graphs. Dynamics, articulation, polyphony and pedaling were analyzed just by pure listening to the music. The findings are compared and explained with the content of the music text, proven biographical data, known elements of Brahms' performance practice and interpretational modes of Herman Danuser.

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