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Jazz Interpretations of Classical Musical Works

Caz Yorumunda Klasik Müzik

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to elucidate the interpretation of jazz music within the classical music domain through specific works, examining the improvisations and arrangements of jazz music on compositions from various periods of classical music. It assesses themes of improvisation in both classical and jazz music, as well as the interpretations of jazz music within a classical context. The selected musical material provides an opportunity for analytical examination of various forms of classical music representation in piano jazz and identifying the mechanisms of 'translating' academic compositions into the language of jazz art. The research demonstrates that the transformation of classical sources occurs at intonational, harmonic-modal, metrorhythmic, and structural levels. By characterising piano jazz and tracing its multifaceted history, the author highlights the main directions characteristic of performance on this instrument.

Keywords: Classical music, improvisational art, interpretation, Pyotr Tchaikovsky, 'jazzing the classics', jazz arrangements

ÖZ

Bu çalışma, klasik müziğin çeşitli dönemlerine ait besteler üzerinde caz müziğinin doğaçlama ve düzenlemelerini inceleyerek, klasik müzik alanında caz müziğinin yorumlanmasını belirli eserler üzerinden aydınlatmayı amaçlamaktadır. Hem klasik hem de caz müziğindeki doğaçlama temalarının yanı sıra caz müziğinin klasik bağlamdaki yorumları da değerlendiriliyor. Seçilen müzikal materyal, piyano cazında klasik müzik temsilinin çeşitli biçimlerinin analitik olarak incelenmesi ve akademik bestelerin caz sanatının diline 'tercüme' mekanizmalarının belirlenmesi için bir fırsat sunuyor. Araştırma, klasik kaynakların dönüşümünün entonasyonel, armonik-modal, metroritmik ve yapısal seviyelerde gerçekleştiğini göstermektedir. Yazar, piyano cazını karakterize ederek ve çok yönlü tarihinin izini sürerek, bu enstrümandaki performansın karakteristik ana yönlerini vurgulamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Klasik müzik, doğaçlama sanatı, yorumlama, Pyotr Tchaikovsky, 'klasikleri cazlaştırmak', caz düzenlemeleri

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INTRODUCTION

Contemporary piano jazz constitutes a significant facet of jazz history. This form of musical performance is multifaceted and represented by musicians worldwide. Pianists, choosing the piano as their instrument, have inherited rich traditions that they either evolve or enhance with innovations. Modern pianists employ all techniques and styles, blending academic and jazz traditions. The piano repertoire is vast, encompassing both jazz classics and contemporary compositions. Many pianists interpret classical pieces, reimagining the jazz legacy by infusing them with a 'contemporary' perspective. The diversity of styles, directions, methods, and forms in piano jazz necessitates a deeper understanding of this phenomenon.

Clearly, musical instruments have acquired a new resonance in jazz, unveiling hidden potentials. Piano jazz is no exception: it represents one of the vibrant chapters in jazz performance. Throughout the historical development of jazzing the classics, pianists have either leveraged the characteristics of their instrument or attempted to transcend them. These experiments have given birth to an original piano jazz style of interpreting classical music compositions.

Investigating the specificity and nature of jazz improvisation requires defining the concepts of 'musical improvisation' and 'jazz improvisation' themselves. The problem of definition lies in the fact that traditional categories of European music are not applicable to improvisation, which is indivisible into composition and performance, noted music is given priority (Dyson, 2007, p. 127). Therefore, the common definition like in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* of improvisation as 'to create and perform (music etc.) spontaneously or without preparation' is not accurate.

Investigating the specifics and nature of jazz improvisation requires defining the very concepts of 'musical improvisation' and 'jazz improvisation'. The challenge in defining these terms lies in the inapplicability of traditional European music categories to improvisation, which cannot be divided into composition and performance, with a priority given to the music itself (Dyson, 2007, p. 127). Therefore, the widely accepted definition of improvisation in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* as 'the creation and performance (of music, etc.) spontaneously or without preparation' is not entirely accurate.

For a long period, academic performance was dominated by a 'scripted' concept—reliance on a written source, namely the musical score of a composition, which was to be reproduced accurately. In the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the term 'interpretation' derived from the Latin interpretātiōn-em (to interpret), has been used since the mid-19th century, alongside the category 'performance' which denotes the same phenomenon—the process of auditory reproduction of a composer's musical work. The understanding of improvisation is linked to the etymology of the term itself: the Latin improvisus means 'unforeseen', 'unexpected', 'without warning'. Subsequently, while maintaining a connection to the phenomenon of sound reproduction, a differentiation in the understanding of these concepts occurred, assigning performance to a mechanical function and interpretation to a creative one.

The question of improvisation in jazz was raised in 1956 by the French musicologist André Hodeir, who understood improvisation as the rhythmic, harmonic, and timbral modification of a melodic phrase (Hodeir, 2006, p. 86). The context of the issue expanded in 1968 when German scholar Joachim-Ernst Berendt identified similarities between jazz and ancient Greek theater in terms of improvisational aspects and addressed the issue of the boundless spontaneity of jazz improvisation (Berendt, 2009, p. 180).

Interpretation is neither a 'mechanical reproduction', as proponents of the aesthetics of imperfection might argue, nor is it a restoration, such as the restoration of paintings. Naturally, there are various approaches—similar to those used in painting restoration—but there is no original authentic performance. The art of performance implies inexhaustible possibilities for interpretation (Hamilton, 1990, p. 339).

Improvisation is not only a way of organising music but also a factor in the artistic identification of entire musical traditions, including jazz, where it serves as the primary carrier of semantics and syntax encompassing all sonic parameters, and its stylistic significance remains throughout jazz history. "The difference is, as far as I am concerned, that one [improvisation] is unknown poetry in which I can progress. I am just learning to do better what I already do", notes avant-garde guitarist Derek Bailey (1992, p. 69).

Therefore, the term 'interpretation' should be considered not only as the performer's interpretation of the composer's notation, but also as the improviser's interpretation of their own creative ideas, primarily based on the original musical material that serves as the starting point for the unfolding improvisational process. By eliminating a certain degree of control from the composer, the performer can further develop skills in interpretation and improvisation (O'Connor, 2017).

Since alongside spontaneity it involves canonicity and planning. Based on the thesis of the meaningfulness of the process improvisation is understood as creating music in the process of playing it or 'real-time composing' (Kernfeld, 1988, p. 555).

Thus, jazz improvisation art is not directly spontaneous, as it is often unjustifiably characterised. This form of artistic activity, characterised by elements of spontaneity and impulsiveness is necessarily determined by permanent preliminary preparation of textural and intonational potential required for realising improvisational ideas, as well as by pre-established norms embedded in the musical material of the theme, which serves as the 'starting point' for the music-making process. Most scholars in improvisation, including Philip Alperson (1998; 2010), Michael Bitz (1998), Barry Kernfeld (1997), David Sterritt (2000), and Nicolas Zaunbrecher (2011) and others agree that improvisation encompasses elements such as skill, training, planning, constraints, and foresight.

This article aims to complement a series of contemporary studies by exploring the development of piano jazz in the 20th century, a period during which all styles, techniques, and approaches to the interaction between piano jazz and other musical traditions were formed. The study sets out the following objectives: firstly, to trace the history of piano jazz in the 20th century and investigate the issue of piano improvisations in classical music; secondly, to identify and classify the styles, creative approaches, and developmental trends of piano jazz through the jazz interpretations of works by Pyotr Tchaikovsky.

A relatively independent section of this study addresses the 'jazzing' of classics requiring more intensive analysis and interpretation. This issue remains open as jazz categories themselves are not yet clearly defined. The concept of 'jazzing the classics' (Wriggle, 2012) compasses both arrangements in jazz interpretations of individual themes or entire compositions by academic composers, and the incorporation of elements of classical style into jazz compositions and improvisations. The goal of the article is to analyse the various forms of transformation of musical 'classics' into 19th-century piano jazz and to identify the mechanisms of 'translating' academic compositions into the language of jazz art.

Main styles and trends of piano jazz development in the twentieth century

Ragtime is considered the starting point for piano jazz (Collier, 1978, p. 43). Pieces in this style are not very similar to jazz: they do not swing, lack improvisational solos, yet they featured syncopation which was adopted by early jazz bands. Ragtimes, widely popular in the USA and Europe in the early twentieth century, formed the basis for the 'Harlem stride piano' style (Harlem in the 1920s was a centre of piano jazz). The basis of ragtime is the stride technique—characterised by a clear left-hand ground beat foundation while the right-hand featured virtuosity and complexity, including melodic lines, rapid passages, and embellishments.

Earlier in New Orleans, instrumental blues, including piano blues, emerged (Gioia, 2017, p. 6). It was these early pianists, playing in the evenings at drinking establishments, who learned to achieve the effect of blue notes. This refers to the III, V, and VII scale degrees which are usually marked as flattened in sheet music but are played as microtones, something in between, for example, a natural and a flattened third. This microtone was freely achieved by vocalists, wind players, and guitarists. However, Black pianists adapted to playing blue notes by quickly sliding from the black keys to the white keys.

The history of jazz musicians interpreting academic music is associated with the turn of the 19th to the 20th century. Military brass bands formed from musicians of African descent, New Orleans 'marching bands' and orchestras of Black Creoles all performed popular marches (Collier, 1978, p. 51). Also, dances, and classical arias from their repertoire were performed, incorporating unique rhythms and blue tones characteristic of African American folklore. The early stages of 'jazzing the classics' should also include the parodying of European opera music featured in minstrel shows and intensive syncopation typical for ragtimers' interpretations of classical composers' piano compositions. After the 1920s, the importance of solo episodes—improvised choruses—increased in jazz pieces, and a new type of jazz improvisation developed—improvisation over a harmonic sequence (Collier, 1978, p. 291).

In contrast to collective improvisation, harmonic structure becomes more complex and, consequently, the melody is transformed. During this time, swing emerged as a distinct genre associated with small combo bands and big bands, where the interplay between saxophones and brass instruments, later established as a principal technique thanks to Fletcher Henderson and Don Redman, supported the soloist with riffs, i.e., short melodic-rhythmic figures (see more in Ted Gioia's Chapter 'The Swing Era' in The History of Jazz).

In jazz, improvisational activity is defined by the expressive qualities of the musician, the exploration of timbre in consideration of jazz swing, and the specific parameters of the original material, which serve as a necessary condition for intonational development and overall form creation (Dyson, 2007, p. 214). Even if during a performance the improviser radically changes the initially chosen concept, they merely choose one path over another, without losing connection with the overall array of potential solutions. The primary goal in interpretation is not to disrupt the aesthetic integrity of the piece as an artistic phenomenon.

A notable milestone in the history of jazz interpretation of classical music was the 1937 swing adaptation of J.S. Bach's *Concerto in D minor* for Two Violins and Orchestra, performed by a jazz trio consisting of Eddie South, Stephane Grappelli (1st and 2nd violins), and Django Reinhardt (guitar).

In the latter half of the 1920s, working with Louis Armstrong, Earl Hines managed to fundamentally change the approach to piano playing by using his right hand to play melodic lines in the style of Armstrong. This was the first instance in jazz history when a pianist took as a model not another pianist, but a wind musician. This method explains the nuances and phrasing in Hines' play, and subsequently in all jazz pianists. Thus, Hines had a profound influence on the further development of piano jazz (Collier, 1978, p. 93).

Duke Ellington (1899-1974) entered jazz history as the first significant jazz composer of the swing era. His deeper thematic content (the history of African Americans, questions of spirituality), use of new forms (suites, rhapsodies, concerts), departure from the three-minute recording standard, and new coloristic techniques in arrangement, including the introduction of the baritone saxophone to the big band, were innovations Ellington found intuitively as an autodidact. The maestro drew his ideas from the rich and original world of African American folklore. Ellington's piano style was equally original. It was as if he applied broad strokes to the canvas (in fact, researchers of Ellington's work draw such a parallel, since the musician was passionate about painting and created artwork). His piano playing could be Harlem stride in all its 'primitive' energy flowing descending passages across the keyboard, or striking chords.

In stark contrast to Duke Ellington's rich and complex pianistic style is the style of Count Basie (1904-1984) who apparently was the first exponent of the so-called minimalist style. Basie played very sparingly and economically. His piano part was a contrasting counterpoint to the big band's lush and dense tutti. In response to the driving riffs and energetic swing of the orchestra, Basie would play a few notes, sometimes an interval or chord, or a short phrase. The maestro always encouraged his colleagues to listen not to the notes, but to the pauses, and to use musical space economically.

Recall the Benny Goodman Orchestra (functioning from 1936 to the mid-1940s), known for its fragmented performance style, where the musical phrase typically starts on the third beat of the bar. In the process, characteristic features of jazz rhythmics were established, becoming one of the main distinguishing features of individual performance style—deliberately emphasised weak beats of Jay McShann's big band, even accentuation by Count Basie, the symphonic jazz of Stan Kenton and Woody Herman, which concluded the era by the mid-1940s.

It is evident that spontaneity plays a significant role in jazz improvisation, marked by unrestrained playfulness and freedom of musical expression. Improvisation and processuality, as inherent properties of jazz, become integral parts of an 'open' form of work, thereby any classical piece viewed through the prism of jazz idioms appears in a different light.

In jazz styles and directions that consistently evolved from the early 1940s of the last century, such as bebop, hard bop, modal jazz, and post-bop, the melodic material of the original theme often served merely as a pretext for improvisation. In such cases, only the logic of harmonic development and the architectural structure of the theme remained mandatory and unchanging. The rhythmic and intonational features of the melody of the theme were rarely used as material for improvisational variation. To this day, deliberate motivic development of the melodic potential of the original text remains the prerogative of only a few jazz musicians. Moreover, in performances oriented towards free jazz trends, the presence of an original thematic material may not be implied at all, and its possible existence does not exert any real influence on the development of the improvisational act, except for the sporadic observance of certain textural settings, the parameters of which may be embedded in the theme.

Piano jazz prior to the bebop era (1940s) exhibited a homophonic-harmonic texture, characterised by a predominant melody with accompaniment in a secondary role, serving merely to support the melody. Bebop redefined the role of the bass drum as a timpani-like instrument and the double bass with a continuous cymbal sound, providing a fundamental rhythmic base that anchored the orchestra's play, creating a 'heavier' sound effect.

The subsequent evolution of jazz rhythmics was marked by the emergence of rhythm and blues at the turn of the 1930s to 1940s, which absorbed the stylistic richness of classic pre-war blues and transformed it into a distinctive urban modification. During this period, Francis Belleu invented a drumming technique featuring a reverse drum beat—a sharp accentuation on the weaker beats and a deep hit on the stronger and relatively strong beats. Combined with a clear 12-bar (occasionally 8-bar) structure, this laid the rhythmic foundation for a call-and-response interaction between the soloist's riffs and the orchestra, characterised by the distinctive sound of the performer against a pausing band after briefly hitting the first note of the bar. A notable feature of jazz rhythmics later became the use of a simple ostinato melody in rhythmic variations.

In the 1950s, new trends emerged in piano jazz, associated with *cool jazz*. This style merged the best of swing and bebop and utilised academic music lexicon (Gioia, 2017, p. 209). Jazz performances began incorporating previously

unused musical instruments such as the flute, oboe, English horn, French horn, tuba, and mellophone. Musicians studied scores by Stravinsky, Ravel, Bartók, Hindemith, and Honegger; as a result of engaging with contemporary academic music, the melodic and harmonic language of jazz, as well as its arrangements, became more complex. The sound, dominated by brass winds, acquired a cooler tone (hence the term 'cool jazz').

Under this new aesthetic, pianists emerged with different approaches to sound. Notably, Bill Evans (1929-1980), referred to by critics as the 'Chopin of jazz piano' exemplified contemplative play. His lines were unhurried and soft, lyrical, and calm. His style was marked by an abundance of chordal texture, subtle and intricate harmonization, multiple undertones, elements of polyphony, melodies that flowed from the right hand to the left, and cross-rhythms—all contributing to his distinct and recognisable style. Evans revolutionised the piano trio by asserting the equality of instruments, transforming the bassist and drummer into independent, improvising participants in the creative process, unlike earlier configurations where the pianist, such as Nat King Cole, Oscar Peterson, or Erroll Garner, played a central role with the bassist and drummer as accompanying members.

Despite the common perception that musicians possess absolute freedom in their creative self-expression, each musician not only retains a conditional 'self' or a social schema for future improvisation but also possesses a rich arsenal of formative textural and intonational techniques necessary for constructing their musical statements. Berliner delves deeply into the complex interplay between musicians' self-schemas, the music they perform, and the aspirations they associate with the musical context (Berliner, 1994, p. 12).

Thus, 'classical' jazz improvisation is a free artistic interpretation of the original theme, correlated with the interpretation of personal musical ideas (preconceived and spontaneous). This understanding of improvisational functionality applies both to the 'spontaneous' development of original (authored) thematic material, personally pre-composed, and to a more free, although schematically prepared, exposition of a jazz standard theme followed by inventive realization of its tonal-harmonic potential. The jazz interpretation of themes, taken as a basis for improvisation from the academic repertoire ('jazzing the classics' - a term by Winthrop Sargent), is by nature pre-adjusted (Sargent, 1946, p. 27).

Another equally important and interesting 'line' of development in 1950s piano jazz was baroque jazz. This term is used when pianists combine two traditions—jazz and classical. Baroque jazz, representing the practice of interpreting or jazzing music from the Baroque period, is associated with the work of ensembles such as the *Modern Jazz Quartet* (USA) and the *Play Bach Trio* (France), which included original quotations, used imitative polyphony, and melismatics within a jazz structure. The experiment initiated by the young pianist Jacques Loussier—performing the music of the great J.S. Bach in swing with jazz variations—was seen as a revolutionary step forward.

The types of jazz improvisation discussed relate to a type of constrained improvisation, as they are constructed according to specific rules. In the 1960s, a style of contemporary jazz music, *free jazz* emerged characterised by a departure from the principles of tonal organisation of musical material, traditional swing rhythmics, and blues chord sequences, based on the principle of total improvisation (Gioia, 2017, p. 402). Furthermore, free jazz is characterised by the absence of harmonic connection in the melody, heterogeneous rhythmic structure, and unpredictability in the development of the melodic line.

Clearly, piano jazz in the 1960s underwent radical changes compared to the 1950s. Intellectual and delicate performance based on European thought was replaced by fierce, expressive play, built firstly on the material of bebop and African American folklore; secondly, on the modal principle of improvisation; and thirdly, on the overthrow of established musical systems.

Jazz has followed a dynamic and eventful developmental path, giving rise to a new style each decade. The 1970s saw jazz evolve primarily under the influence of rock music (Gioia, 2017, p. 423). James Collier in his work *The Making of Jazz* noted that piano performance in jazz tended to gravitate towards European forms of music-making (1978, p. 4). This inclination likely stemmed from the serious traditions of the piano school established on the European continent, as well as from the homophonic-harmonic texture that allows for simultaneous playing of melody and accompaniment (Collier, 1978, p. 4-5).

However, the most striking event on the jazz scene of the 1970s was the emergence of 'jazz-rock' and '*fusion*' styles. Jazz-rock appeared in the late 1960s as a result of the massive and impressive expansion of British rock onto the global stage, which inspired jazz musicians to begin experiments combining jazz and rock. Early pioneers included Miles Davis, Herbie Hancock, John McLaughlin, Billie Cobham, the Brecker Brothers, and Joe Zawinul. During this period, the first three legendary jazz-rock groups emerged—*Blood, Sweat & Tears* (1968), *Chicago* (1968), and *Earth Wind & Fire* (1969). Fusion (from the English word for amalgamation) crystallized from jazz-rock slightly later, in the early 70s. If jazz-rock is a blend of rock's hard rhythmic pulsation with improvisation and a powerful brass section, fusion represented a mixture in varying proportions of jazz, rock, ethnic, and academic music. Groups such as *Mahavishnu Orchestra, Weather Report*, and *Return to Forever* undoubtedly epitomise fusion.

Certainly, there have always been pianists who managed to create an individual style of play: these performers, using many of the performance methods mentioned above, added unique, characteristic features: occasional absence of accompaniment (Earl Hines), transition of the melodic line from the right hand to the left and vice versa (E. Hines, A. Tatum, B. Evans), detailed harmonization at fast tempos (Art Tatum), metrorhythmic conflict between the right and left hands (Erroll Garner), and the transfer of keyboard techniques to piano technique (Chick Corea). In addition, many pianists (Oscar Peterson, Dave Brubeck, Ahmad Jamal, Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock, Keith Jarrett) aimed for versatility, using the entire arsenal of techniques, methods, and approaches, hence their style can be called combined. As a result of differing approaches, thinking, temperament, and artistic objectives, jazz pianists have developed numerous lines of evolution in this art form.

Thus, the main path of jazz development in the last third of the 20th century lay through intercultural interaction, the most significant results of which are achieved when in contact with cultures that have similar performance principles, one of which is the improvisational construction of musical material.

Jazz interpretation in the context of an 'open' composition

The understanding of text, as presented in the works of Umberto Eco is rooted in structuralist theory, although it differs from strict structuralism itself. It emphasises the importance of the playful element within the structure of a work and the value of the fundamental incompleteness of artistic form. Eco introduces the term 'open work' to denote the new qualities of a text. In his analysis of James Joyce's novel *Ulysses* Eco provides a detailed characterisation of this new type of text that exhibits properties of an 'open' artistic form:

Here everything moves in a primordial and disordered flow; everything is its own opposite; everything can collegate itself to all the others. No event is new for something similar has already happened; a *ricorso*, a connection, is always possible. If history is a continuous cycle of alternations and recurrences, then it does not have the characteristic of irreversibility that we are accustomed to confer upon it today. Rather, each event is simultaneous; past, present, and future coincide. But since each thing exists to the extent that it is named, this whole movement, this game of continuous metamorphoses can only happen in words, and the pun, the calembour, is the mainspring of this process (Eco, 1982, p. 64).

The Italian philosopher's observations dedicated to describing impressions of composition and dramaturgy in the novel reveal a tendency to establish the idea of a work as a flow. Indeed, for this work by Joyce numerous deviations from syntactic norms, unfinished sentences, various textual ruptures, and divisions are characteristic. Yet, at the same time there is a distinct musicality and internal expression conveying, according to the author himself, internal passions, impulses, motivations, and instincts inherently human. These characteristics are typical of the 'genotext' as understood by Julia Kristeva.[1]

This notion aligns with the broader explorations of the 1970s-1990s aimed at exhausting the traditional 'author-work' schema and transforming the fixed text into a text-process, meaning a creative event. Jacques Derrida's theory designates such a method as 'deconstruction' where the work is interpreted not as the author's original creation but as a kind of 'construction' of original elements from which an infinite number of readings of one text are recreated.[2] According to the French philosopher the meaning of the text is unique with each encounter just as each deconstruction is unique every time. One of the characteristic features of deconstruction is distrust of the traditional version, which at first glance seems so natural. A new text is written as if on the margins of the old one, or the old one is inserted into its own textual fabric. This leads to situations of textual 'grafts', 'scions' where ultimately there is an infinite return to an even more primary, original text.

According to Derrida, it is always easy to find the first text – the classical text where the idea of presence predominates unreservedly. This first text according to the philosopher simultaneously contains traces of another text, different yet the same. However, Derrida notes it is impossible to reconcile these two texts in any way: their synthesis would only be achievable as a result of 'overcoming' their 'differences' (1978, p. 164). The second text in Derrida's view is merely a 'displaced resemblance' of the first (1978, p. 180). This 'displaced resemblance' is more akin according to the scholar's thought to a 'barely perceptible veil' (1978, p. 260). The gentle swaying of which through linguistic play in reading

[1] The terms 'genotext' and 'phenotext' were introduced by Julia Kristeva in her work *Semiotics* (1969) and later elaborated more thoroughly in her doctoral dissertation "Revolution in Poetic Language" (1974). Kristeva's attempt to look 'beyond language' to identify the 'pre-verbal' level of the subject's existence where the unconscious reigns supreme, on one hand, aligns with the general post-structuralist orientation towards dismantling monolithic sign systems, transitioning from the study of the structural level of language to pre- and extra-structural levels from meaning to the process of signification. On the other hand, it reflects a shift in her own interests from structuralist semiotics and linguistics towards psychoanalysis within the framework of what is known as 'semanalysis'.

[2] Jean Jacques Derrida uses the term 'deconstruction' in all three of his books: *Writing and Difference, Speech and Phenomenon, and Of Grammatology.*

can transform the 'wisdom' of the first text into the 'comedy' of the second. The existence of two texts within a single text provokes and conditions the transgression of the first (open) text into the hidden text.

Contending that any text is fundamentally unfinished and incomplete the French philosopher operates with the concept of 'supplement' indicating the foreignness of any addition to completeness (for instance, of one text to another) and simultaneously the necessity of this addition to achieve perfect fullness, and so on to infinity (Derrida, 1973, p. 88). The text ceases to possess substantial constancy; it becomes a constant reference to another, more original (possibly non-existent) text. In his own interpretation of Hegel's dialectics, the French thinker argues that contradictions are fundamentally irreconcilable and, moreover, they are necessary conditions for any development (Derrida, 1978, p. 18).

Derrida notes that texts are open to much more radical multiplicity and differentiation of meanings. He starts from the premise that before any meaning or understanding interpretation always influences the functioning of writing (Derrida, 1978, p. 200).

In accordance with this understanding of language, interpretation for Derrida signifies a kind of criticism that he calls deconstruction. Following specific key concepts and words, it deconstructs centres and hierarchies present in text, demonstrating how they contingently organise the production of meanings. Deconstructive criticism is not only constructive but also simultaneously constructs something new, builds and reconstructs. However, it does not leave any previous subjects or meanings unchanged in its wake.

If we consider interpretation broadly as a variational epistemological strategy for working with a text, then deconstruction is one of them and can be called an interpretive strategy. However, in the case where we understand interpretation as a specific method of interpretation, deconstruction cannot be reduced to it; rather, it overcomes that method.

Therefore, deconstruction is a unique interpretation strategy. It is easy to notice that the postmodernist characterisation of the text aligns with the characteristics of jazz improvisation where the role of spontaneity, the element of unrestrained playfulness, and the freedom of musical expression are so significant. Improvisation and processualism as essential properties of jazz become inherent to the 'open' form of work in the postmodern era. Through the lens of jazz idioms any classical work will appear differently.

The phenomenon of piano improvisations in classical music

'Jazzing the classic' encompasses jazz interpretations of individual musical themes or entire compositions belonging to classical composers, as well as the tradition of incorporating elements of classical stylistics into jazz compositions (Sargent, 1946, p. 27). 'The relationship between jazz and classical music has often been close—at times surprisingly so but is ultimately equivocal', notes Terry Teachout (Teachout, 2000, p. 343). The engagement of jazz musicians with classical heritage as a source for reinterpretation and for creative transposition is a vividly expressed trend noted from the 1960s to the present day.

The first jazz adaptations of classical themes appeared in piano pieces by Jelly Roll Morton, who incorporated fragments of 'Miserere' from Act IV of Giuseppe Verdi's opera Il Trovatore. The John Kirby ensemble uniquely interpreted Frederic Chopin's Etude in C minor, Op. 10, No. 12, while Nat King Cole uniquely performed Sergei Rachmaninoff's *Prelude in C-sharp Minor*. The further development of jazz art proceeded along the lines of jazz improvisations on themes from classical music, as well as arrangements (adaptations) of works by composers of the academic tradition for jazz ensembles and soloists.

This blending of genres highlighted the versatility of jazz musicians and their ability to reinterpret and transform classical compositions into the jazz idiom, enriching both genres and broadening the appeal and understanding of each.

The piano traditionally holds a prominent position in jazz. However, during the evolution of jazz music the roles performed by pianists underwent significant changes, piano playing techniques were modified, and the musical language was refined and transformed. (Taylor, p. 1975, p. 35). The role of the piano in jazz has undergone various metamorphoses, from solo performances aimed at entertaining the audience to participation in different group compositions on large concert stages.

The actual process of improvisation is based on performance activities which despite various semantic tasks have the same nature in all situations connected with the recreation of musical discourse through instrumental (or vocal) capabilities, that is with performance itself. When an artist interprets other artistic ideas encoded in musical notation showing their attitude towards them and thus revealing both the composer's intentions and their own creative individuality the performer interprets themselves directly. It is important not to cross the line where rejection becomes possible, as listeners are inclined to compare jazz interpretations with the classical original in one way or another. As Frank Barrett notes: "Jazz players find themselves [. . .] creating interpretations out of potentially incoherent materials,

piecing together other musicians" patterns, their own memories of musical patterns, interweaving general concepts with the particulars of the current situation, creating coherent composite stories" (Barrett, 1998, p. 616).

The concept of a 'pattern' is widely used in musical and literary practices to denote genre and stylistic models that artists operate with in their works as quoted material. Listeners perceive sounds as music by selecting patterns to which they give consistent attention generating expectations about the music's development (Lora, 1979, p. 176). These models are perceived as integral units of artistic experience fixed by previous generations. It is precisely these patterns that constitute the 'metatext' of culture and the author's references to them determine the overall direction and content of an individual artist's work (Lora, 1979, p. 167). At the same time, the pattern serves as the formative framework of the flow of text, as it allows the author to build their own work based on already established models.

Umberto Eco writes about this when describing the nature of the creative process (cognitive situation):

As human beings we can sense only those 'togethernesses' that have significance to us as human beings. There are infinities of other togethernesses that we can know nothing about. It will be generally agreed that it is impossible for us to experience all possible elements in any situation, let alone all the possible interrelationships of all the elements. This is why, time after time, we end up relying on our experience as the formative agent of perception [. . .] In other words, what we see is apparently a function of some sort of weighted average of our past experiences. It seems that we relate to a stimulus pattern a complex, probability-like integration of our past experience with such patterns (Eco, 1989, p. 72).

The concept of pattern is closely related to jazz musicians and is productively used when it comes to updating the jazz language by incorporating new and diverse genre and stylistic models. Improvisation using patterns from professional (baroque, classical, romantic) music retains value as a means of significantly enriching and expanding the artistic possibilities of jazz. The improviser encounters patterns and motifs that eventually integrate into a shared pool of vocabulary elements and stylistic norms. Over time, these elements are absorbed and replicated as part of the improviser's style (Foreman, 2005, p. 83). 'The performance tradition comprises an everchanging kaleidoscope of patterns in which no two musical expressions are the same', also notes Laudan Nooshin (1998, p. 110-111). In this regard, each of the patterns used maintains its independence from others serving as a complete episode within the holistic improvisation. However, in postmodernist experimentation a different role is assigned to the pattern: it becomes a formative framework that allows for maintaining improvisational freedom within the intended 'hidden structure'.

Initially in jazz, the primary form of improvisation was collective improvisation that appeared in the 1950s particularly in free jazz experiments. It involves a group of improvisers who do not know each other and do not use common referent working together to create music (Canonne, 2013, p. 40-41). Improvisers make music together in a 'pure' improvisation setting where musicians have never played together before (Canonne, 2013, p. 41). The first type was prevalent in the early development of jazz specifically in the 19th century referred to as ornamental variation. The second type flourished in the second half of the 20th century. Furthermore, collective improvisation can be simultaneous or sequential meaning improvisation is 'passed on' from one musician to another.

The essence of jazz rhythm originated in African-American communities is defined by its many features. Samuel A. Floyd Jr. states:

calls, cries, and hollers; call-and-response devices; additive rhythms and polyrhythms; heterophony, pendular thirds, blue notes, bent notes, and elisions; hums, moans, grunts, vocables, and other rhythmic-oral declamations, interjections, and punctuations; off-beat melodic phrasings and parallel intervals and chords; constant repetition of rhythmic and melodic figures and phrases (from which riffs and vamps would be derived); timbral distortions of various kinds; musical individuality within collectivity; game rivalry; hand clapping, foot patting, and approximations thereof; apart-playing; and the metronomic pulse that underlies all African-American music (Floyd, 1995, p. 6).

Many jazz musicians combine the fundamental openness of form with the idea of a pattern. A notable example is the work of Brad Mehldau, a pianist who aims to create a 'jazz text'. In his blog sharing his thoughts on the composed trio *House on Hill* the musician notes:

The very condition that allows for expressivity implies its own limitation. The successful integration of composed and improvised music material has always been a challenge for me. It warrants a discussion of form, or more specifically, the dialectic between the fixed form of the composed music and the (ideally) unfixed content of the improvised music (Mehldau, 2006).

First improvisers in classical music

Music in its infancy was characterised by imitative and improvisational tendencies. Robin Dale Moore states that '. . . performers of European art music in previous centuries exhibited considerable interest in improvisation and

continued to consider it an important musical skill until at least 1840' (Moore, 1992, p. 61). A quintessential example of the highest artistic and technological level of such musical improvisation is the creative work of Johann Sebastian Bach. According to eyewitness accounts Bach could tirelessly and inventively develop his musical ideas contrapuntally for several hours guided by strict rules governing polyphonic composition (Vigran 2020, p. 13).

Bach astonished his contemporaries with his imaginative use of texture and mastery of form 'improvising' his chorale variations. Improvisation took two main forms during this period: accompaniment for choral singing and solo organ pieces performed during services. Chorale accompaniment required proficiency in harmony, counterpoint, and knowledge of chorale themes. It could range from simple harmonisation of the theme where each note is harmonised differently to complex contrapuntal compositions, exemplified by Bach's chorale treatments.

Performances by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Ludwig van Beethoven were characterised by logical organisation and creative justification, as they improvised within the framework of classical norms for organising musical discourse. They created highly developed musical structures that required compositional order such as the sonata form and rondo.

Mozart, in his innovative approach to cadenzas, marked a departure from traditional use of repetitive passages and motifs, opting instead for the introduction of novel themes and interpolations characterised by distinct individuality, vibrant tonalities, and structured forms. The evolution of Mozart's cadenzas is evident, for example, in the transition from the concise, five-bar cadenzas found in the first movement of the *Eighth Piano* Concerto in C Major, K. 246 (1776), to the more developed cadenzas in his later piano concertos. These latter cadenzas evolved into expansive, inserted sections laden with virtuosic runs, strategically placed typically at the commencement or conclusion of movements. Moreover, they incorporated new thematic transformations and motifs that existed autonomously, enhancing both the structural complexity and the expressive capacity of the concerto form. This progressive transformation underscored Mozart's creative prowess and offered performers a vehicle to exhibit their interpretative acumen and technical proficiency.

Throughout history, evaluating creative potential—the ability to create music—has been widespread. Beethoven captivated audiences not only with his virtuosic piano skills but also with his compositions for which he transformed the instrument's sound and playing techniques.

Prior to Beethoven, cadenzas did not possess the dramatic content and thematic unity that would encapsulate the entirety of a work. Beethoven's approach to the cadenza in the first movement of the Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 61, as arranged for piano (Op. 61a), appears revolutionary. This particular cadenza spans 125 bars against the 535 bars of the entire first movement and includes a part for timpani. This cadenza alone transforms the piano version of the Violin Concerto into something far beyond a mere mechanical transcription of the original. This innovative treatment not only enhances the structural and expressive dimensions of the concerto but also emphasizes the cadenza as a pivotal element in the thematic and dramatic development of the piece.

In various eras of European public performance audience priorities in evaluating artists changed: admiration for virtuosic instrument mastery, skill in spontaneous fantasy (improvising musical compositions), and expressive interpretations of masterpieces.

Jazz borrowed improvisation principles from ancient music. The experience of great improvisers like Georg Friedrich Handel, an unparalleled organist-improviser whose musical divertissements gained great fame during theatrical intermissions influenced jazz improvisation (Fisher, 2009). Romain Rolland writes in his monograph:

He [Handel] wrote straight off as he improvised, and in truth he seems to have been the greatest improviser that ever was. Whether extemporising on the organ at the midday services in St. Paul's Cathedral or playing the capriccios during the entr'actes of his oratorios at the Covent Garden-or improvising on the clavier in the orchestra at the opera, at Hamburg or in London [. . .] he astounded the connoisseurs of his time (Rolland, 1916, p. 116).

Musical improvisation in church services is essential due to the nature of the action, the dramaturgy of which is subservient to musical accompaniment. The improviser chooses what suits their skill and the situation.

The evidence of improvisations in London's Covent Garden theatre appears to be more intriguing where during intermissions of his operas and oratorios Handel made a habit of improvising on the organ which met with tremendous success (Rolland, 1916, p. 150). Presumably, these improvisations intrigued the audience to a much greater extent than the performances themselves. It is precisely the interaction with the audience that externally distinguishes improvisation from 'playing with the score'.

When we witness a musical performance, we are unaware of which moments are surprises for the performer and which ones are prepared. The musician could have memorised the music being performed and played it pretending to be an improviser. However, it is precisely the interaction with the audience that presents the composition in a vital manner and creates that feeling of 'creating on the spot'. Vocal embellishments contrary to common belief were rarely genuine improvisations but were notated by Handel in the scores and were constantly refined and elaborated upon following the principle of 'accumulating baggage'. These fantasies subsequently served as a source for his organ concertos. In organ

concerts, improvisational elements include solo organ fragments, cadenzas, and, most importantly, the control of the orchestra by the soloist-organist.

A similar phenomenon can be observed when listening to the concerts of jazz trumpeter Miles Davis's quintet in Europe. Throughout an extensive tour numerous recordings were made and released as a series of albums. Most of them feature almost the same program. By listening to the recordings in chronological order one can easily notice how successful phrases and ensemble combinations are utilised in subsequent performances.

Handel's propensity for borrowing stemmed from a distinctively cultivated and meticulously honed method of composition which frequently cantered on and flourished through transformative imitation. Given Handel's adeptness at elevating this approach to an art form he inevitably engaged in borrowing and reshaping musical material whether his own or others', more extensively than arguably any other composer in history (Murray, 2009, p. 1). Despite the fact that musical borrowing was a widely implemented practice, and notwithstanding Handel's adept utilisation of it, he stood alone as 'the only great composer to be open to English charges of plagiarism' (Buelow, 1990, p. 127).

Similarly, jazz performers gladly quote themes from their contemporaries and predecessors in their improvisations which is not considered plagiarism but rather carries the meaning of homage. For example, the jazz audiences between the 1930s and 1950s considered these songs 'part of the family' and when musicians quoted them the audience recognised them instantly forging a connection between the performers and the listeners (Smith, 2008).

Musicians of the 19th century masterfully utilised complex techniques of polyphonic organization of musical texture improvising in genres such as ricercare and fugue. Frederic Chopin and Franz Liszt created romantic improvisational fantasies at the highest level of artistic-structural perfection and emotional-imagistic realisation of creative intent. When performing on stage they astonished audiences with their technique, innovations, and creative ingenuity. Meticulously crafted, recorded, and published masterpieces of the Romantic era coexisted with improvisational compositions: variations, transcriptions, paraphrases. By the beginning of the 20th century only the concept of 'cadence' remained which is a prepared and pre-learned solo by the performer. This phenomenon attests to colossal rehearsal preparation based on creative understanding of intonational-textural settings that organise the process of musical-linguistic expression.

Moreover, it is necessary to note that many renowned composers of past epochs preceded the actual compositional process with improvisational music-making finding in it not only intonational 'sketches' for the future sonic embodiment of their dramatic plans but also the logic of textural design of certain musical intentions. And this seems logical since in the improvisational-performative 'sensation' of texture endowed with various functions (spatial-coordinating and form-generating) all constructive means and methods of organising musical texture acquire a special artistic meaning. Texture in jazz piano is not only the most important means of shaping the sonic texture of improvisation but also one of the key conduits and catalysts of the interpretational principle.

Therefore, professional jazz piano improvisation represents a unique form of performer-composer artistic activity. The impetus for this activity lies in a core of simultaneous meaning, synthesising the improviser's original authorial ideas with the objective musical-linguistic conditions of the thematic material, facilitated by the effectiveness of pre-established textural settings.

The parameters of these preliminary textural settings, along with specific artistic-technical conditions of the thematic material and the improviser's personal (both preconceived and spontaneous) musical concepts form a complex musical-semantic complex embodying a multi-dimensional 'primary object'. The material-sonic and figurative content of this object serves as the basis for artistic interpretation in the improvisational process. The texture of the improvisation itself, as a system of organising the corresponding expression of musical discourse resulting from intra-musical composition realised through a complex psycho-physical mechanism of tactile-kinetic connection with the instrument becomes an important means of artistic interpretation.

The cult of the performer-interpreter is a relatively recent historical phenomenon. In the second half of the 19th century performer and composer were inseparable, and composers impressed listeners with the authorship of their works performing as their interpreters. No matter how great the abilities of the performer are, how diverse the individual emotions of the artist-interpreter, or how widely differing are the various styles of playing and interpretation of the composer's ideas; any valuable and artistically justified concert performance requires from the artist the most careful and deep penetration of the composer's ideas and emotional intentions (Feinberg). The interpreter must present the composition to the listener as an undistorted whole, and he should see this as his first and foremost artistic goal (Feinberg).

A similar phenomenon exists among jazz musicians. They gather during their leisure time and engage in musical activities for their enjoyment. Such gatherings are known as 'jam sessions'. These sessions provided a place for musicians to experiment artistically as during collective improvisation the most interesting ideas are born including vocal-poetic improvisations (Williams, 2015, p. 112). Improvisation began to be valued in jazz when this music found

itself outside the realm of entertainment genres and commercialisation. The uniqueness of the unfolding event 'depends on the individual qualities of each musician'. This refers not only to the ability to improvise but also to timbre, phrasing, musical inventiveness, and a predilection expressing the individuality and identity of the improviser. Thus, a specific improvisation (even if later recorded or captured by other means) is inseparable from the specific performer who created it (Dyson, 2007, p. 156).

Masterpieces of music classics in jazz interpretation

Until recently, classical musicians' involvement in jazz remained minimal and lacked a complete fusion of jazz and classical music. However, evidence of such fusion emerged in works like Aaron Copland's *Clarinet Concerto,* Igor Stravinsky's *Ebony Concerto*, Claude Debussy's 'Golliwog's Cakewalk' from *Children's Corner* and Eric Satie's ballet Parade. Nevertheless, one of the primary trends in contemporary jazz piano is the integration of elements from both jazz and classical music traditions.

In classical jazz, improvisation involves transforming a standard theme before the audience. It is believed that true jazz always entails catharsis characterised by complete dedication during performance. Both musicians and listeners experience a state that closely resembles a religious encounter during such musical moments. The foundation of any composition lies in rhythm, serving as a backbone to other elements of performance. Rhythm typically involves shifting strong beats and accents making it crucial for musicians to constantly feel these rhythmic elements during performance. Solos are also improvisational.

Prepared improvisation is structured around a given theme fitting into a 12- or 16-bar framework. The original theme undergoes melodic transformation while harmonically remaining intact. Such a theme in jazz is referred to as a standard. Melodic alterations of the theme are achieved using harmonic techniques such as altering notes, reinterpreting chord functions, and chord suspensions.

In seeking answers regarding the concept of a 'fixed form' Brad Mehldau delves into the study of various musical traditions, particularly the works of classical composers whose compositions, in his opinion, possess a dual nature displaying emotional spontaneity within a clearly defined structure. For instance, Mehldau examines the music of late Romantics, notably Johannes Brahms. He acknowledges the evident freedom of expression within a rigid framework in their works:

One reason that Brahms is such a model for me is the way he straddles two epochs. He was a master of counterpoint, with its strict rules, yet his music expresses ardent, immediate emotion that we associate with the free flights of romanticism. The Sturm und Drang in his music is tempered by the rigor of its structure. He is fully a child of his time yet reached back to an earlier epoch for inspiration. Bach's music was the apotheosis of that epoch.

The musician emphasises that the contrapuntal texture of Brahms's music may offer a solution to the issue of 'fixed form' in jazz. However, it does not address the problems of 'unfixed' content. The method chosen by Mehldau is evidently conceptually akin to postmodernist notions of the pattern as a 'theme with variations'. In situations of collective improvisation requiring a rigid structure, Mehldau 'coordinates; the actions of all participants through a hidden structure, where polyphonically unified diverse metrorhythmic pulsations serve as the underlying framework. This phenomenon referred to as polymeter forms the foundation for the construction of collective improvisations by individual soloists.

The jazz harmony is 'diluted' to ensure that accents signalling a new chord within the theme's meter, contrast sharply (syncopate) with the accents of the basic metric framework. Thus, both the soloist and the accompanists always have a choice between two metric spaces, that is, the opportunity to utilise the 'gifts' of hidden polyphony provided that at least one member of the trio marks the beats of the 'basic' meter. In accordance with jazz tradition the role of the soloist periodically transitions from one to the other.

The rigid polymetric structure serves as a distinct pattern within which each participant in the improvisation has the opportunity for free expression. Examples of such compositions include Mehldau's *Countdown, 50 Ways to Leave Your Lover,* and *Black Hole Sun*. The author's variable composition directs the improvisation of performers and organizes the sound, but it is scarcely reflected in the text. Unlike traditional compositions, this composition does not have a single defined connection between elements but rather a multitude of possible connections.

In the piano arrangement of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's Flight of the Bumblebee by the Polish jazz composer and pianist Konstantin Vilensky I will attempt to identify the changes that have occurred in the piece's intonational, tonal-harmonic, metric-rhythmic, textural, and structural organisation. For a more precise analytical observation I will choose not the orchestral score of *The Tale of Tsar Saltan* as a reference point, but the concert arrangement of *Flight of the Bumblebee* for piano by pianist Lev Oborin.

It is commonly accepted that the uniqueness of jazz music is conditioned by its metric-rhythmic, tonal-harmonic and other features. One might assume that the jazz character applied to Rimsky-Korsakov's music would primarily bring about fundamental shifts in its metric-rhythmic organisation, however, this did not occur. The explanation lies in the programmatic content of the classical piece and the specific thematic material derived from it. The absolute uniformity of the sixteenth notes intended to convey the monotonous buzzing of the flying insect cannot be disrupted without compromising the recognisability of the source material. Only in the accompanying layer of the musical fabric can occasional traces of jazz be found: the shifting of the metric accent to the weak beat shown in Figure 1, a characteristic rhythmic figure with variations in the intra-motivic accentuation (bar 50) in Figure 2. However, the main 'jazzifying' factor in the metric-rhythmic organization of Rimsky-Korsakov's piece lies in the replacement of duple meter with a quadruple meter foundation—a substitution that once marked the emergence of jazz.

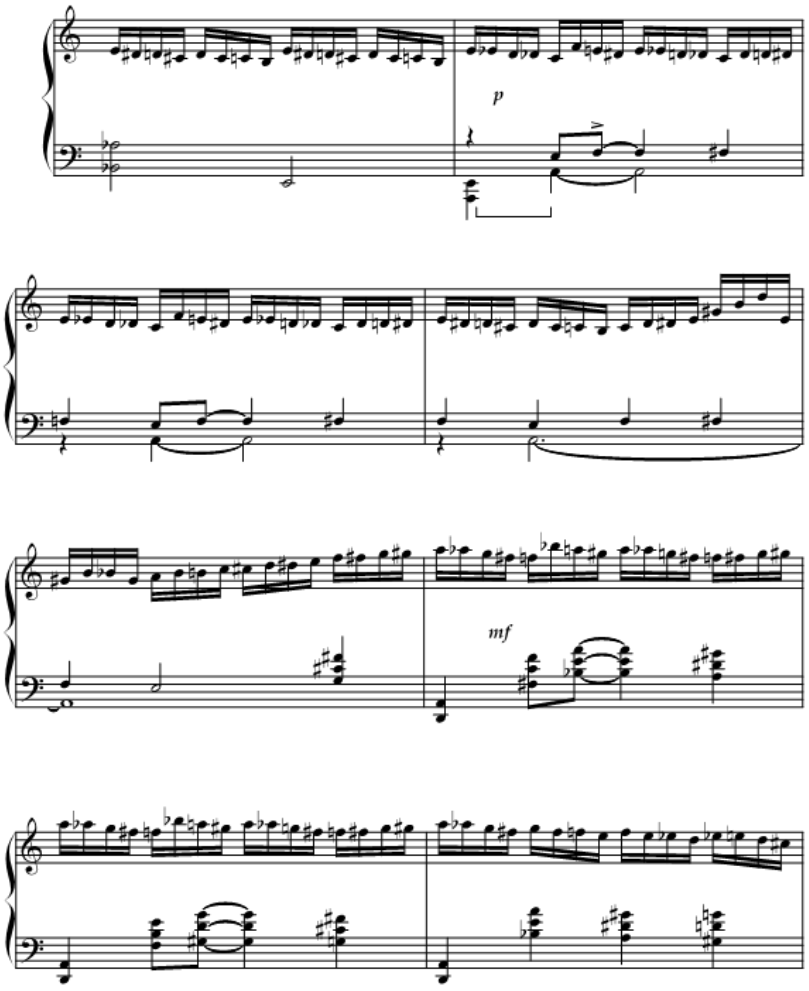

Figure 1. Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Flight of the Bumblebee (piano arrangement by Konstantin Vilensky), bars 3-10.

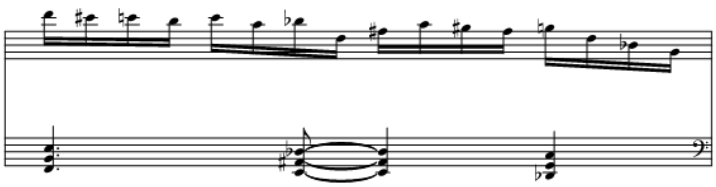

Figure 1. (a): Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, *Flight of the Bumblebee* (piano arrangement by Konstantin Vilensky), bar 22.

In the intonational realm of the piece *Flight of the Bumblebee* minimal changes are observed. It is possible to note a slight 'adjustment' in the pitch contour in the exposition and developmental sections of the form and a more noticeable alteration of the melodic pattern in the recapitulation. In bars 51-57 shown in Figure 3 Vilensky boldly departs from the intonational 'framework' of the theme approaching free improvisation 'on the occasion'.

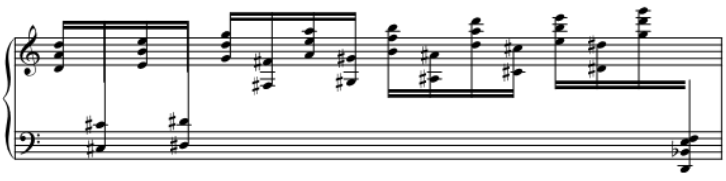

Figure 1. (b): Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, *Flight of the Bumblebee* (piano arrangement by Konstantin Vilensky), bar 35.

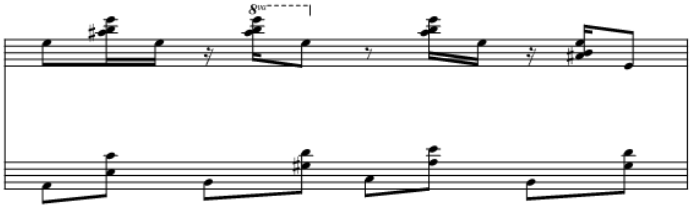

Figure 2. Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, *Flight of the Bumblebee* (piano arrangement by Konstantin Vilensky), bar 50.

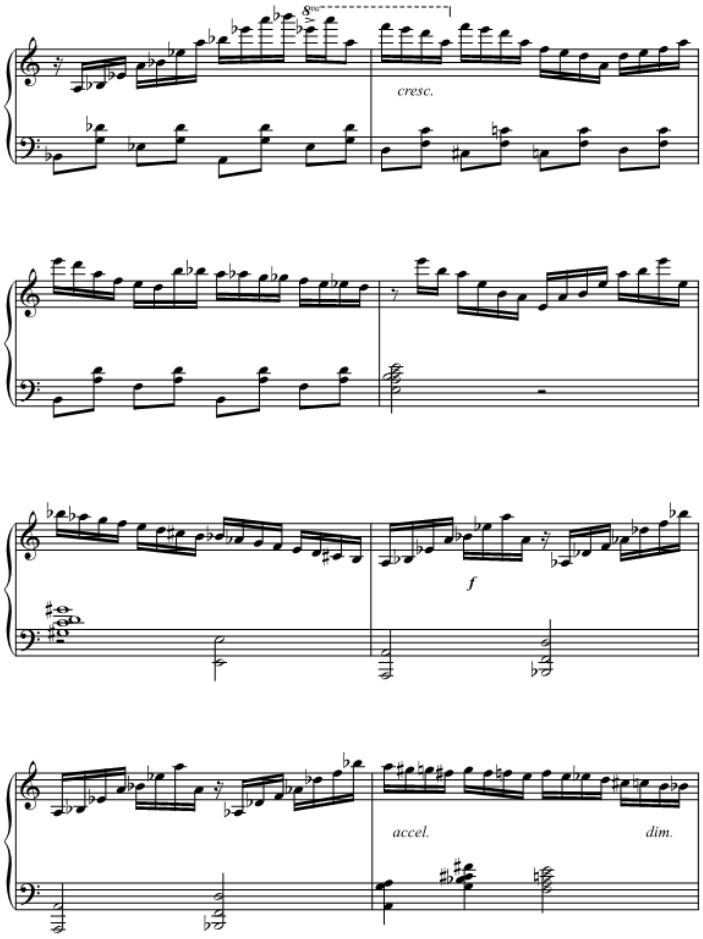

Figure 3. Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Flight of the Bumblebee (piano arrangement by Konstantin Vilensky), bars 50-58.

More significant changes are evident in the harmonic structure of Rimsky-Korsakov's piece. The place of dominant triads and their inversions in the source material is occupied by consonances consisting of fourths and tritones (polychords). At the same time, Vilensky does not 'overload' the harmonic fabric preferring triadic or quadradic chords. The technique of chord progression often appeals to purely jazz traditions. Examples include the resolution of more dissonant chords into less dissonant ones (bars 58-59) or the 'chromatic glide' of identical in structural terms consonances, reminiscent of the notorious 'barbershop harmony'[3] (bars 10-11) shown in Figure 4.

[3] Technique of harmonic accompaniment of the melody, based on parallel chromatic motion of voices when connecting chords (primarily seventh chords).

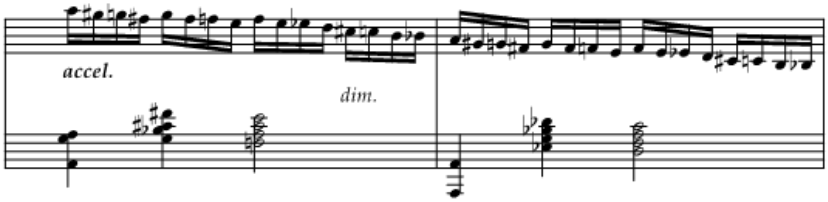

Figure 4. Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, *Flight of the Bumblebee* (piano arrangement by Konstantin Vilensky), bars 58-59.

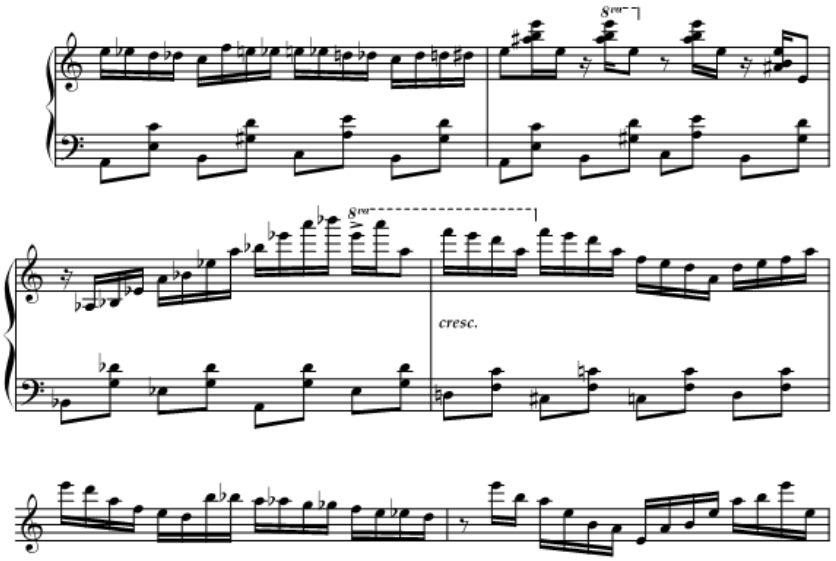

Figure 4. (a): Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, *Flight of the Bumblebee* (piano arrangement by Konstantin Vilensky), bars 9-14.

Harmonic 'signs' of jazz also include simultaneous (or sequential, but over a narrow time span) sounding of low and high degrees, reminiscent of the 'stride style' developed by jazz pianists to reproduce characteristic 'blue tones' on the piano (bars 55-56).

Noticeable deviations from the original also occur at the textural level. This includes changes in the register of the theme doubling the melodic line in the fifth or octave and introducing additional voices that densify the musical texture. Particularly noteworthy is the use of textural patterns typical of the stride piano style in the recapitulation.

It should be noted that the piano texture of the jazz arrangement appears more saturated, virtuosic, and rhythmically diverse compared to the classical version. The range coverage widens—both in vertical and horizontal dimensions. Spatial boundaries, delineated by extreme voices, sometimes span up to five octaves. Thematic and figuration material is occasionally distributed between the left and right hands (bars 12, 32-37) in Figure 5. Leaps to wide intervals, diverse figurations and passages, chordal arpeggios, intricate finger technique, rapid tempo progressing even faster toward the concluding point with Piu mosso—all these correspond to the competitive spirit inherent in jazz, which closely aligns jazz with the categories of circus, acrobatics, equilibrium, and sports.

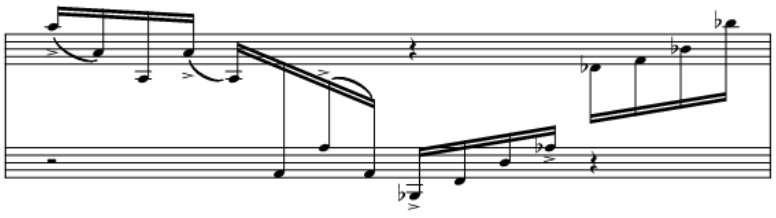

Figure 5. Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, *Flight of the Bumblebee* (piano arrangement by Konstantin Vilensky), bar 12.

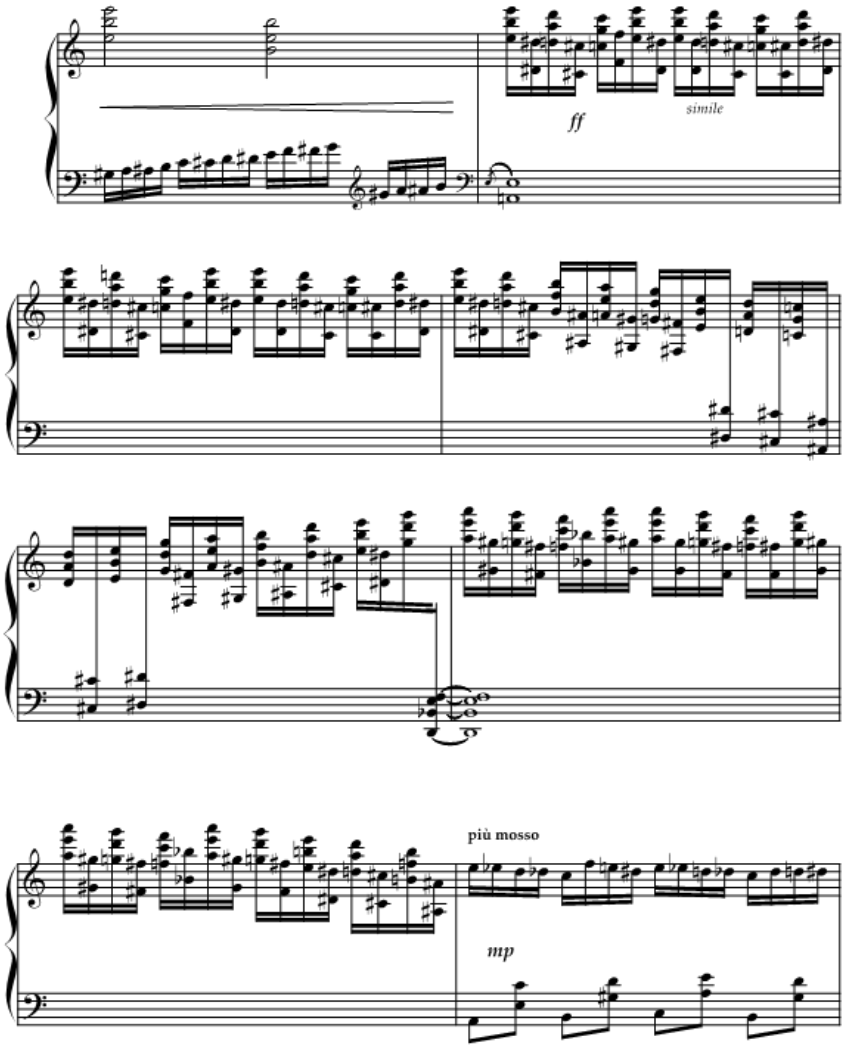

Figure 5. (a): Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, *Flight of the Bumblebee* (piano arrangement by Konstantin Vilensky), bar 31-38.

The changes observed at the structural level of the analysed composition indicate a deliberate tendency towards dynamizing the form. For instance, the total bar number in Lev Oborin's arrangement is 170 in a 2/4 meter, while Vilensky's transcription consists of 65 bars in a 4/4 meter resulting in a temporal ratio of 4:3. Reductions are made in the exposition and developmental sections: 144 bars in the classical version and 62 (in 4/4) in the jazz rendition. Conversely, the recapitulation section is expanded (56 and 68 bars, respectively).

However, the main focus lies not merely in a simple arithmetic calculation of bars. The compression of the form is achieved through several factors: the exclusion of certain themes and sections, the deliberate tonal motion, and the tempo acceleration in the recapitulation which in combination with dynamic intensification 'models' a special quality inherent in hot jazz commonly referred to as 'drive'. In Oborin's concert arrangement musical material from both scenes of Act 3 of Rimsky-Korsakov's opera *The Tale of Tsar Saltan* is utilised.

Thus, the comparison of the piano arrangements of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Flight of the Bumblebee* by Oborin and Vilensky allows for the conclusion that the 'translation' from the academic 'language' to jazz is achieved through significant 'shifts' at all levels of the musical whole. However, the degree of transformation varies. In this case, the clearly jazz interpretation of harmony and texture is offset by the preservation of classical norms at the intonational and metrorhythmic levels. As for the form, while retaining the typical rondo structure the customary proportions of sections for academic music are disrupted, and the characteristic rhythmic-dynamic profile equilibrium of the rondo composition is overcome.

Let's delve into another instance of 'jazzing up classical music': Antonin Dvorak's Humoresque (op. 101, no. 7) in Art Tatum's transcription. The popular piece by the Czech composer becomes the raw material for the pianist serving as an impetus for inspired jazz improvisation. If in Vilensky's arrangement of the Flight of the Bumblebee there were

more or less significant deviations from Rimsky-Korsakov's original, while Tatum's Humoresque should be regarded as a transformation of the classical source into a specific jazz composition.

The attention is drawn to the acceleration of the tempo: Dvorak's *Poco lento e grazioso* becomes *Allegro vivace* in Tatum's rendition with frequent rubato (stretches or compressions of durations used to present the theme). In the fanciful melodic movement, the contours of the borrowed theme are sometimes distinctly heard, while other times they are only vaguely discerned amidst various textural lines. Tatum layers Dvorak's thematic material with common motion patterns typical of piano jazz adorning it with trills, mordents, scale-like and arpeggiated figurations, and punctuating individual phrases with passage inserts. A new appearance is given to classical themes by the phrasing, which differs from the original.

Another 'jazzifying' factor in Dvorak's piece is its specific metrorhythmic structure. The entire second half of Tatum's improvisation is steeped in a swing manner, completely transforming the classical music material in its genesis. The harmonic solution of the jazz arrangement is characterised by a significant complexity of chord voicings (multi-voiced soft dissonant complexes) while preserving the functional backbone of the themes.

The 'decorative-processing approach' to the original musical material entails a textural transformation of Dvorak's sonically exquisite *Humoresque*. Clearly delineated monophonic lines occasionally supported by third-sixth doublings are replaced by chordal layers, to which additional textural voices are added. Virtuosic passages filling the gaps between phrases expand the range of sound from deep basses to high ringing registers. The wide application of complex piano performance techniques lends concert brilliance and stage effectiveness to jazz improvisation. The form of the classical source material has also undergone changes. In Dvorak's composition, it follows a complex three-part structure with a shortened recapitulation:

A C A
a b a c c a b

Tatum adds three additional sections – A C A - to the existing ones, thereby bringing the structure closer to a rondo:

A B A C A B (+) A C A

However, starting from the third presentation of the main theme (A) the change in metrorhythmic (the emergence of swing) and textural (stride piano) characteristics delineates a clear boundary, dividing the entire composition into two stanza-variations. The 'watershed' between them is highlighted by extended improvisation on passage-figurative material. Another zone of free improvisation precedes the final presentation of the main theme, enhancing its concluding function. As a result, a coherent composition is achieved 'adjusting' some asymmetry in the structure characteristic of Dvorak's piece:

Introduction A B A C [Interlude] A B A C [Interlude] A

Overall, Tatum's rendition of Dvorak's *Humoresque* demonstrates a radical 'reharmonisation' of the classical source material. Changes have occurred at all levels of the organisation of the whole which has resulted in a different status for the analysed version. It is not so much a jazz arrangement of a classical piece as it is a jazz musician's improvisation on material borrowed from the realm of academic art.

Art Tatum (1909-1956) is best known for fast blues shouted over a string rhythmic accompaniment- a boogie piano or a riffing band (Collier 1978, p. 120). He can be regarded as a successor to the traditions established by Earl Hines. Elements of blues and stride piano, along with rapid, fluid transfers between hands, are reminiscent of Hines. However, Tatum also possessed distinct individual characteristics. As an exceptional harmonizer, he managed to make chord substitutions nearly on every beat at considerable tempos without losing the swing, thereby enriching the harmonic texture of his performances. Tatum's style was so self-sufficient that it did not require a rhythm section; the maestro himself replicated all necessary musical functions: bass line, accompaniment, and various fills.

One widely known example of stylising Johann Sebastian Bach's music in jazz piano is George Shearing's composition *Get off my Bach*. The title itself indicates a special attitude of the jazz pianist towards the German composer and his desire to assert the right to his own interpretation (and perception) of Bach's music. Shearing's composition does not contain direct quotations from Bach's works; it is a kind of 'work in the style of', akin to the well-known technique of neoclassical composers. In this case, the 'model' is Bach's two-voice inventions. Almost throughout there is a graphically clear interaction of melodic lines.

Only in the middle section does the transparent two-voice texture give way to purely jazz block chords. However, the quality composition of these chords (minor seventh, diminished seventh chords and their inversions) does not contradict

the harmonic norms of Bach's era. The melodic and rhythmic levels of organisation in Shearing's piece (harmonic or textural) are within the 'sphere of influence' of Baroque music.

Alongside such stylistically neutral elements as even movement in eighth and quarter notes or scalar melodic lines, there are also at the core of the stylistic system of Bach's music complementary rhythms, diatonic and chromatic sequences, melodic progressions associated with the interval of the diminished seventh. One cannot fail to mention Bach's specific final cadence – the conclusion of the minor piece with a major third in one of the inner voices. In the musical notation only syncopations on strong beats are reminiscent of the 'jazz style'. However, the author's note emphasises that the performance must convey a sense of metric pulsation – an imaginary 'support' from the rhythm section. The composition of the piece is as follows:

Introduction (8 b.) + A (8 b.) A (8 b.) B (8 b.) A (8 b.) + Interlude (12 b.) + A (8 b.) + Coda (9 b.)

The structural core of the composition comprises a typical jazz song form with a bridge (AABA) to which a 12-bar section in the spirit of free improvisation is added followed by another reprisal of the main theme. The entire form is framed by identical material in the introduction and coda. However, Shearing's composition can also be interpreted from the perspective of academic musical forms: the fourfold presentation of the main theme alternating with new musical material indicates signs of rondo structure.

George Shearing (1919-2011), the composer of the enduring jazz standard Lullaby of Birdland introduced to pianists the technique of 'locked hands' which involves playing block chords. As a skilled improviser, Shearing easily adapted to any performance style. Interestingly, he incorporated guitar and vibraphone into his ensemble, featuring notable musicians such as Toots Thielemans on guitar, and Cal Tjader and Gary Burton on vibraphone at different times. This incorporation of guitar and vibraphone enriched the textural and harmonic diversity of his group, showcasing Shearing's innovative approach to jazz ensemble configuration.

Thus, jazz imitation of classical stylistics, as well as jazz treatment of genuine classical works, involves the interaction of elements from both jazz and classical music on various levels of organisation. Identifying individual linguistic elements (jazz or classical), assessing their quantitative relationship, identifying levels and forms of interaction, and analysing the qualitative results of synthesis are the main stages in the study of examples of 'jazzed-up classics'.

Pyotr Tchaikovsky's works in jazz arrangements

What are the methods of 'jazzifying' classical music? How is the 'translation' of classical stylistics into jazz achieved? Let us examine how the most renowned works of Tchaikovsky have been further developed by representatives of the jazz establishment. Despite the disparity of eras, his music continues to thrive, receiving ever-new interpretative readings within the multifaceted culture of global jazz.

Among the swing era pianists (Mel Powell, Daniel Sullivan, Teddy Wilson, Stacy Dillard, Marvin Ash), Duke Ellington stands out as the first significant jazz composer. Ellington intuitively embraced innovations such as a deeper thematic content (African American history, spiritual issues), the use of new forms (suites, rhapsodies, concertos), departure from the three-minute standard of sound recording, new coloristic arranging techniques, and the introduction of the baritone saxophone into the big band ensemble. Ellington's music captured the essence of life in the black community reflecting the spirit humour and struggles of African Americans during a time when black artists faced challenges in the industry (Current, 1974, p. 171).

Equally original was Ellington's piano style. He seemed to apply broad strokes to the canvas (Ellington scholars draw such parallels because the musician was interested in painting and created artworks). His piano could be Harlem stride in all its 'primitive' energy flowing descending passages across the keyboard or bold chords. Throughout his career Duke Ellington's piano performances were a significant part of his orchestras where he led many famous sidemen who contributed to the unique sound of his music (Current, 1974, p. 171).

In 1960 Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn turned to Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite.* Lacking the childhood reverence for the great classic they approached Tchaikovsky's music primarily as a source of familiar melodiousness for mass audience appeal which they arranged in a vibrant swing style relying on the talent and recognisable individual tone colour of the jazz big band soloists. Overall, reviewers have struggled to grasp the motivation behind Ellington and Strayhorn's decision to reinterpret music from the classical repertoire (Calenza, 2011, p. 2). This trend of negative evaluations regarding the Ellington and Strayhorn adaptations persists in jazz scholarship. For instance, Max Harrison characterised Ellington's treatment of Tchaikovsky as 'contemptible manipulations' describing them as 'grotesque assaults on major and minor European masters' (Harrison, 1993, p. 393). Walter van de Leur also offered a critical assessment of the *Nutcracker Suite* despite acknowledging that Strayhorn dealt mostly with his adaptations of Tchaikovsky (Leur, 2002, p. 139).

Amidst my analysis, it becomes a task to discern the discrepancies between the jazz rendition and its classical

antecedent. Notably, we can observe a departure from the sequence of movements, a departure compounded by the composer's own non-conforming arrangement in relation to their original placement within the eponymous ballet. Therefore, this difference is purely external and does not affect the overall dramaturgy when applying the well-known principle of musical material contrast.

Tchaikovsky's 'Waltz of the Flowers' is a classic example of theatrical waltzes. The composer employs standard musical language features of this genre: a three-part structure, triple meter rhythm, emphasis on the accompaniment with a strong beat, introduction containing the main motifs of the main theme, and coda. The main key of the movement is written in the key of D major.

The 'Waltz of the Flowers' comprises a total of four themes (two in each part). The first theme unfolds with a horn passage over the tones of the tonic triad.

The form of the Waltz, or as it was renamed to the 'Dance of the Floreadores' in the arrangement by Ellington and Strayhorn[4] is somewhat simplified, although the rondo structure is easily discernible. The arrangers intentionally omitted the C-minor episode which is full of expression and poignant personal beginnings - it seems that it did not fit into the overall 'playful' concept of the suite.

The vibrant introduction performed by the big band is strikingly different from the original - the waltz meter is changed to a four-beat one, and of course, swing is vividly expressed. The score of the introduction includes hi-hats, bass, exchanges between soloing instruments and sections, trombone with a mute, clarinet, trombone, baritone saxophone, the performance of the main thematic element by the entire orchestra (big band) with bright rhythmic accents.

The first theme of the waltz is entrusted to the solo tenor saxophone, engaging in a dialogue with the trombone improvising on the pauses with a mute, clarinet (in the second sentence), and the replies of groups of instruments. The second theme, however, is performed by the violin section. It consists of exchanges of descending motifs in the middle register with triplet passages in the upper register.

The American musicians present the material of the second waltz theme not by soloists, but by a group of saxophones and clarinet. In the cadenza attention is drawn to the vivid exchange between the brass and the saxophone group.

Tchaikovsky's *third theme* is performed by flutes and oboes with the melody's foundation being an ascending, gradual motion with a weak beat ending in a descending, leaping resolution.

In the jazz interpretation by the Americans the development of the third waltz theme is handled by a solo trumpet without polyphonic responses from other participants in the 'game' against the backdrop of harmonic pedals from the saxophone group. In the second phrase, the big band joins followed by solo saxophone phrases, glissando trombone introducing a playful effect and jovial communication. The main theme returns this time with trombone leading the solo improvisation echoing with short tenor saxophone phrases later engaging in dialogue with the improvising clarinet against the backdrop of percussion and bass. Once again, the second waltz theme is heard with trombone and clarinet continuing their 'conversation' intermittently interrupted by orchestral 'packs'. Next comes the introduction material: the main thematic element of the waltz is played alternately by the muted trombone, clarinet, trombone, and baritone. And a brief coda performed by the big band.

Tchaikovsky's *fourth theme* serves as the lyrical centre with the melody written in a romance style, sounding in the violas and cellos.

One of the most popular jazz arrangements of the 'Waltz of the Flowers' is performed by Yuri Markin. In this version the original key is changed to E-flat major, the meter becomes duple (4/4 time signature), and only the first theme of the original composition is retained in the extreme non-improvisational sections.

In addition to the meter change, the rhythmic presentation of the theme is altered. In the arrangement the main melody is syncopated due to the introduction on the weak beat and the use of the rhythmic figure quarter note followed by eighth note. Thus, the piece loses the metrorhythmic characteristics of a waltz. Furthermore, the structure of the theme is shortened: four-bar phrases are compressed to two bars shown in Figure 6.

The harmony of Markin's jazz version of the 'Waltz of the Flowers' is based on standard jazz progressions. For example, the presentation of the main theme (section 2) begins with an embellished turn-around: I-VI-II-V7-I (Eb-Cm-Fm-Bb7-Eb). This is followed by an extended turn-around utilising the backdoor progression of the tonic: VI7-VIIb9-V7-I-IV-III-VI (Cm7-Db9-Bb7-Eb-Ab7-Gm7-C7). The third section is represented by turnarounds IV-v in two variations: II-VII-III7-VI7 and II-V.

[4] Ellington and Strayhorn employed predominantly satirical titles for their *Nutcracker Suite*, such as 'Toot Toot Tootie Toot', 'Peanut Brittle Brigade', 'Sugar Rum Cherry', 'Volga Vouty', 'Arabesque Cookie' etc.

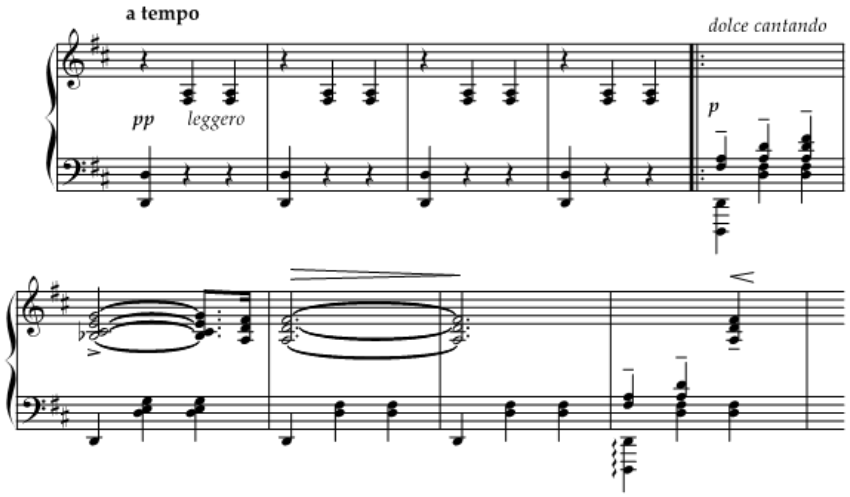

Figure 6. Pyotr Tchaikovsky, *The Nutcracker Suite* (piano arrangement, original), bar 34-42.

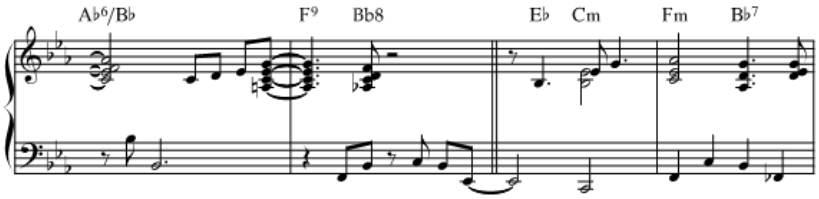

Figure 7. (a): Pyotr Tchaikovsky, *The Nutcracker Suite* (piano arrangement by Yuri Markin), bars 8-11.

The following two sections of the piece (sections four and five) are based almost entirely on the same harmonic progressions as sections two and three, except for the transposition of section five up a tone from its initial presentation in section three.

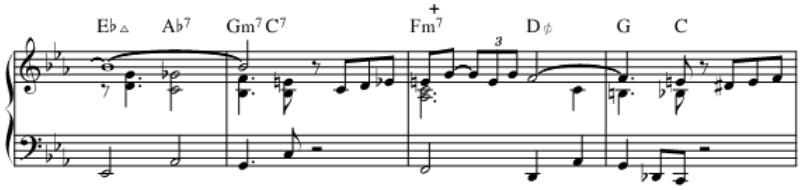

Figure 7. (b): Pyotr Tchaikovsky, *The Nutcracker Suite* (piano arrangement by Yuri Markin), section 3.

It should be noted that the main harmonic framework of Markin's adaptation remains consistent with Tchaikovsky's original 'Waltz of the Flowers' replicating the foundational harmonic progressions of each section of the presented theme.

Sergei Zhilin, on the other hand, draws inspiration from Markin's interpretation in his jazz arrangement. The main theme in Zhilin's composition is assigned to the piano. A notable feature of his arrangement structure is the inclusion of a second improvisational section.

One difference between Zhilin's arrangement and Markin's version is the utilisation of not only the first theme from the original work. The second and fourth themes appear in the first improvisational section of Zhilin's arrangement. They undergo the same alterations in the key signature and meter as the first theme.

The third theme is applied by the arranger in the second improvisational section. It is worth noting that this arrangement approach closely aligns with the original wherein Tchaikovsky provides an elaborate coda after the main sections.

Another technique that is absent in Markin's adaptation but employed by Zhilin is the presence of an extended introduction and conclusion echoing Tchaikovsky's original version with some exceptions, such as key changes.

Drawing on Markin's adaptation, another jazz musician Alexei Kruglov forms the basis of his arrangement. Kruglov's arrangement is written for a quartet comprising saxophone, electric guitar, bass, and percussion. The saxophone carries

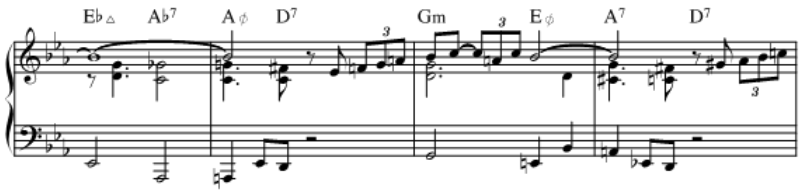

Figure 7. (c): Pyotr Tchaikovsky, The Nutcracker Suite (piano arrangement by Yuri Markin), section 1.

the main melodic line. The arranger retains the tonality, harmonic framework, metrical organisation, and structure of Markin's version. However, there are significant differences.

Firstly, Kruglov incorporates not only the first but also the second and third themes from the original syncopating their rhythms and changing the meter to duple meter. Additionally, the arranger preserves Tchaikovsky's concept and uses saxophone-guitar interplay during the development of the second theme. The improvisational section is more expanded incorporating both the first and second themes of the Waltz. A distinctive feature of this arrangement is the percussion solo at the conclusion of the piece.

Another jazz rendition of the 'Waltz of the Flowers' is the arrangement and adaptation by Alexander Maslov which remains closely aligned with Tchaikovsky's original composition. The musician preserves all four themes of the 'Waltz of the Flowers' from the original version maintaining the original key D minor and the meter and rhythm of the piece: 3/4 time signature, steady rhythm with emphasis on the strong beat. The improvisational section of his jazz arrangement is constructed around motifs from the second theme of the Waltz.

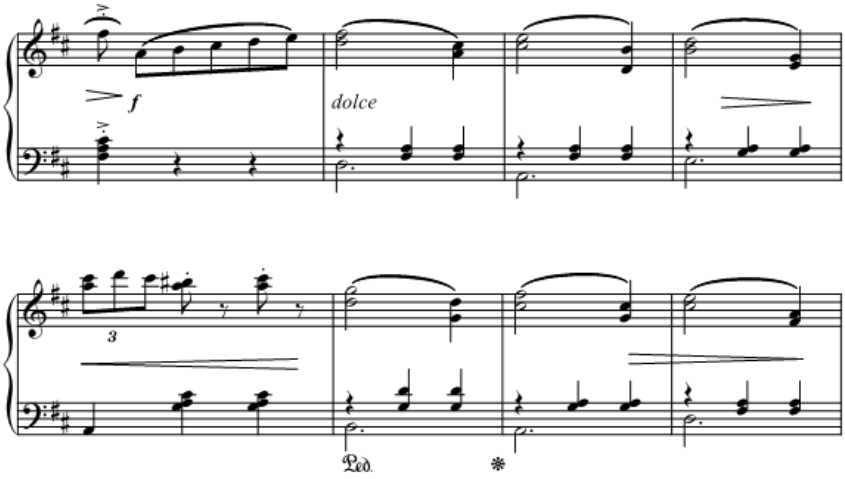

Figure 8. Pyotr Tchaikovsky, *The Nutcracker Suite* (piano arrangement, original), section 2.

The arranger primarily focuses on harmonic alterations modifying the original harmonic progressions by incorporating jazz chords, such as harmonies with sixths, added tones, tritone substitution substituting the tonic with VI and III and incorporating improvisational passages using jazz modes into the thematic material. The piano plays a key role in the arrangement.

Based on the above it can be concluded that the main changes in all the examined arrangements occur in the harmony of the original. Typical jazz music progressions and structures are incorporated. Additionally, all arrangements shorten the form (reducing the length of the introduction and coda, compressing sections of the original composition). However, Sergei Zhilin and Alexander Maslov maintain introductions and codas close to the original which is not present in Alexei Kruglov's arrangement and Yuri Markin's version.

All performers include three or four themes from the original but do so in different ways. Maslov and Kruglov incorporate Tchaikovsky's main themes into non-improvisational sections (Maslov uses all four original themes, while Kruglov omits the fourth). In contrast, Zhilin only uses the first theme in these sections, incorporating the remaining three into the improvisation (only the first theme is used in the main sections by Markin).

The meter changes in two arrangements based on Markin's jazz version. Here, the time signature changes from 3/4 to 4/4, and the theme becomes syncopated deviating from the smoothness of the original waltz genre. Nevertheless, the melodic line of the original is preserved in all examined versions.

The Ellington and Strayhorn version is markedly distinguished by its musical language and orchestration. All

components of the jazz idiom can be observed in the sound of this composition: the significant role of the rhythm section, swing feel, the specificity of the sound of certain instruments and the entire orchestra (big band), distinctive phrasing, and characteristic performance nuances. It is important to note the polyphonic texture, the interplay between solos and tutti passages, and the characteristic big band ensemble playing.

It is noteworthy that in Kruglov's arrangement there are improvisational sections for most ensemble members, including the percussion, and there are interplay passages between instruments which brings Kruglov's version closer to Tchaikovsky's orchestral version. In the other arrangements only one instrument of the ensemble (the piano) stands out prominently while the others serve as accompaniment. Thus, these versions are more akin to piano arrangements of 'The Flower Waltz' rather than its original orchestral version. Improvisers create their own new vocabulary when a new system of thought arises. Mastering this language enables one to express their own thoughts effectively.

Sergei Zhilin arranged *The Seasons* for a trio ensemble consisting of piano, double bass (or bass guitar), and drums. In 'April. Snowdrop' the arranger draws upon Yuri Markin's arrangement which preserves the original key B flat major and melody of Tchaikovsky's April theme. Among the alterations it is notable to mention the change in the register of the main theme in the second phrase of the first section, as well as the substitution of certain notes with enharmonically equivalent ones presumably done to align with the harmonic and modal framework of the jazz arrangement.

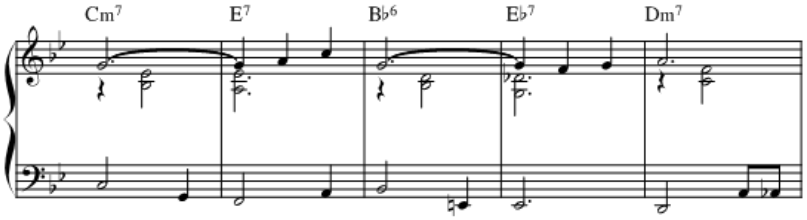

Figure 9. Pyotr Tchaikovsky, *The Seasons*, 'April. Snowdrops' (piano arrangement by Yuri Markin), bars 17-21.

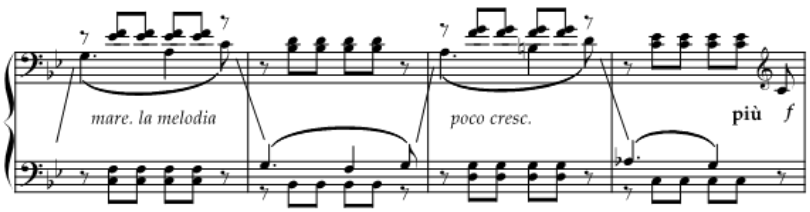

Figure 9. (a): Pyotr Tchaikovsky, *The Seasons*, 'April. Snowdrops' (original), bars 9-12.

The resemblance to the original is also evident in the arrangement's form maintaining a three-part structure with an improvisational section in the middle. Zhilin, however, initiates the piece with an improvisational introduction absent in both Tchaikovsky's and Markin's renditions. In this section of the arrangement the arranger hints at thematic motifs related to the main theme highlighting thematic anchors. The material is condensed due to the absence of theme restatement in the second phrase.

Unlike Markin's arrangement the third part in Zhilin's composition is not an exact repetition of the initial section. Zhilin utilises bars 5-16, 19-20 and 23-28 of Tchaikovsky's 'April' avoiding direct repetition of the original motifs.

A significant deviation between the jazz version of 'April. Snowdrop' and the original lies in the meter change. Tchaikovsky employs a duple meter in 6/8 time signature with shorter note durations. Markin alters the meter to triple meter (3/4 time signature) lengthening note durations. Despite the meter and rhythm alignment with the original there is an increase in the number of bars and consequently, the duration of the theme which does not affect its lyrical lightness due to the lively tempo and utilisation of waltz genre characteristics.

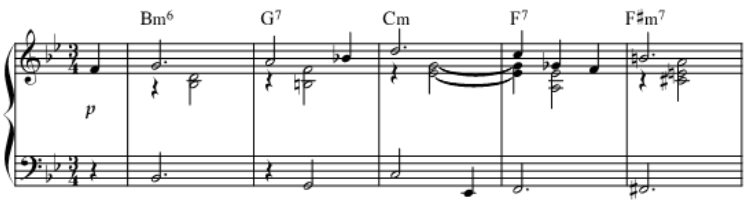

Figure 9. (b): Pyotr Tchaikovsky, *The Seasons,* 'April. Snowdrops' (piano arrangement by Yuri Markin), bars 1-5.

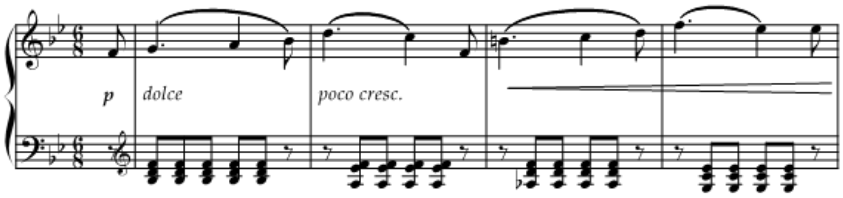

Figure 9. (c):Pyotr Tchaikovsky, *The Seasons,* 'April. Snowdrops' (original), bars 1-4.

Deviation from the original meter and rhythm can be observed in the use of syncopated rhythms and periodic displacement of accentuated beats in the arrangement. This allows the arranger to handle thematic material more freely incorporating elements of swing into the performance.

The most significant changes occur in the harmony of the piece. In the jazz arrangement nearly every harmony from the original is presented with its expansion employing standard jazz progressions. For instance, the progression of sixteen tritones III-VI-II#-V#-II-V-VII-III in bars 19-25 of the arrangement.

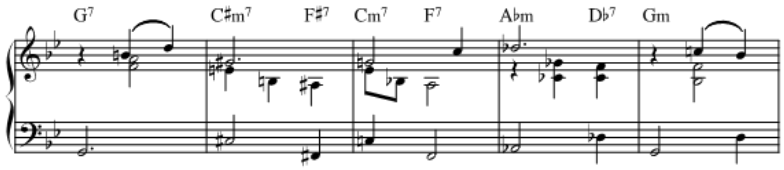

Figure 9. (d): Pyotr Tchaikovsky, *The Seasons*, 'April. Snowdrops' (piano arrangement by Yuri Markin), bars 17-26.

Table 1. I am using the first section of the form as an example (see music Example above).

original	I		V		D		II	
	Bb		F7		B dim7		Cm	
arrangement	Bb	G7	Cm	F7	F#m7	Fm7–E7	Eb	Ab9
	I	VI	IIm	V	D	D-IV	IVb	VIIb

From the indicated harmonic scheme it can be observed that each harmony is extended with its counterpart: the tonic is followed by the VI harmony, the II is used before V and in the last bar the 'backdoor' harmony (VIIb7) is applied. Thus, the composers of the jazz version combine Tchaikovsky's original harmonic structure with jazz music techniques. In the improvisational part of the piece the movement V-I is mainly used in the manner of a descending fourth-fifth sequence (confirmation sequence) which is also characteristic of jazz compositions.

Correlating the aforementioned analysis of musical compositions with the identified specifics of interpretation in jazz, it can be stated that the texture in piano jazz is not only a crucial method for structuring the sonic fabric of improvisation but also serves as one of the key conduits and catalysts for interpretative initiation. The parameters of preliminary textural settings, coupled with the defined artistic-technical conditions of the original thematic material and the improviser's personal musical concepts (both pre-set and spontaneous), form a complex musical-semiotic complex. This complex represents a multi-layered 'primary object' whose materially-sonorous and imagistic content provides the foundation for artistic interpretation in the improvisational process. The texture of the improvisation itself (as a system for organizing the corresponding musical discourse), being a result of intra-aural composing achieved through a complex psychophysical mechanism of tactile-kinetic connection with the instrument, becomes an important means of artistic interpretation.

Thus, considering jazz art as one of the most vivid and distinctive cultural phenomena of the 20th century, it should be noted that it is characterised by a vast stylistic and genre diversity. Here, characteristic rhythmics, along with improvisation in the form of melodic variation or full-fledged vocal or instrumental solos, stand out as primary features.

CONCLUSION

Originally in jazz, the primary form of improvisation was collective improvisation, which involved either a variation on a melody or improvisation based on a harmonic or modal framework common to all ensemble performers. The first type, prevalent in the early development of jazz in the early 20th century, was known as ornamental variation. The second type flourished in the latter half of the 20th century. Moreover, collective improvisation can be simultaneous or sequential, meaning that the improvisation is passed from one musician to another.

Having considered various examples of the jazzification of classical works, the question arises: is there a classification of different types of improvisation in classical compositions? After all, improvisation can be a pre-composed piece or an unprepared, spontaneous performance, executed by an ensemble or a soloist, and can be either constrained or free. The motto of jazz interpretation has always been 'development'. Modern jazz compositions, thanks to the improvisational component, combine folk traditions, musical classics, the jazz heritage of predecessors, and the fervent desire of contemporary musicians and composers to be unique and at the same time heard and understood.

The jazz arrangement of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Flight of the Bumblebee* by Oborin and Vilensky can be termed a jazz reading of a classical work. Art Tatum's transcriptional version of Dvořák's *Humoresque* can be considered a radical reworking of a classical jazz piece, more precisely a jazz improvisation on material borrowed from classical music. George Shearing's work *Hands Off My Bach* based on Bach's two-part inventions, can be regarded as a 'model work'.

Having analysed the development of piano jazz throughout the 20th century, we conclude that, balancing between the nature of the piano, the rich European traditions of piano schooling, and a more 'refined' jazz sound, piano jazz has established itself as a vibrant and self-sufficient performance tradition. Improvisational creativity seamlessly integrates into the modern artistic landscape, embodying the uniqueness of the creative act and the inherent intent for communication both internally—among performers—and externally—between the performer and the audience. Improvisation reflects the principle of creative freedom that underlies contemporary artistic aesthetics.

Thus, the jazz imitation of classical stylings, as well as the jazz adaptation of authentic classical works, entails the interaction of jazz and classical music elements at various levels of organization. Identifying individual language elements (whether jazz or classical), assessing their proportional relationship, discerning the levels and forms of interaction, and analysing the qualitative outcomes of this synthesis are the primary stages of studying instances of 'jazzified' classics.

In summary, jazz, having evolved into a distinct and multifaceted art form, has become a unique phenomenon in global musical culture. Synthesising the fundamental traits of classical music, national folklore, and European harmony, jazz artistry has flourished for over a century and exerts a profound influence on contemporary music. The improvisational foundation and characteristic rhythm are not merely its main components; they are the foundation, the basis without which the existence of this phenomenon would be impossible.

Clearly, the ability to infuse music with new techniques and deeper content and meaning, while simultaneously 'standing on the shoulders' of giants of jazz piano, defines the art known as 'piano jazz'.

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