

Purposes and Necessity of Length in the First Movements of Franz Schubert's Last Three Piano Sonatas

The doctoral thesis in music performance I did at the Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin looks at the interpretation of the first movements of the last three piano sonatas of Ludwig van Beethoven and Franz Schubert. By highlighting particularities of composition found in the movements and explaining the impact these particularities have on the interpretation, the dissertation helps pianists to understand what they have to be aware of, what they could emphasise in their interpretation, and why they should emphasise it.

The evolution of classical music in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been profoundly influenced by Beethoven and his music. Schubert's contemporaneity to the German composer led unfortunately to an automatic comparison of his work with Beethoven's, and helped relegate his compositions too often to a kind of second place. Especially Schubert's treatment of sonata-form movements was abundantly criticised by the past for its length and lack of inner organisation. It is only recently that opinions on Schubert's qualities of composition, seen anteriorly as imperfection, have been challenged and started to change. The length in Schubert's pieces, for example, is now seen by scholars as a brilliant quality of his music.

Based on the research found in the doctoral dissertation this presentation focuses on the first movements of Schubert's piano sonatas D. 958, 959, and 960. It explains that purposes justify the presence of length. It shows the necessity of length in Schubert's music as well as its essential role in the development of the general discourse of the movements. In parallel, and helped by musical excerpts of the three first movements, this paper describes the positive impact length has on the interpretation and reveals the coherence it creates throughout the music. Supported by the recent but successful reassessment of scholars on Schubert's critics, the presentation helps performers to be aware of the reasons that are behind the lengths. Consequently it becomes easier to underline these reasons in the performance and therefore to make them understandable for the listener. Only then, does length get its full meaning and becomes a significant expressive feature of Schubert's music.



Marie-Charline Foccroulle
Royal Irish Academy of Music, Dublin, Ireland
foccroulle@hotmail.com

Biography (150 words): The Canadian/Belgian pianist Marie-Charline Foccroulle received her doctorate in Music Performance in 2017 from the Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin, Ireland. She previously graduated from the Cologne *Hochschule für Musik*, Germany, and from the *Conservatoire de musique et d'art dramatique* of Quebec, Canada.

Active pianist, she regularly performs in concerts as soloist but also as pianist of the chamber music group 'Ensemble Tria'. In 2013 she recorded the first movement of Beethoven's fifth piano concerto for the symphonic graphic novel 'Ludwig' by Christian Quesnel with Gatineau Symphony Orchestra. Dr

Focroulle is strongly concerned, in her professional life to reach a better conjugation between musicology, music pedagogy, and music performance. She has given guest lecture or lecture recital at the 15th Annual Conference of the Society for Musicology in Ireland, at the Koninklijk Conservatorium, in Brussels, Belgium, and at the Third Festival Conference of Music Performance and Artistic Research, in Vilnius, Lithuania.