The Theory of Intonation: Boris Asafiev and the Russian Piano School Tradition

Polina Golubkova

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THE THEORY OF INTONATION: BORIS ASAFIEV AND THE RUSSIAN PIANO SCHOOL TRADITION

by

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DEDICATION

To my husband Lingxiao Guo, who has been supportive of me every step of the way.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank all those who have inspired and guided me throughout my academic and musical journey.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to Dr. Scott Price for his mentorship not only as my chair of the treatise committee but also during all the years at the University of South Carolina. Words cannot express my gratitude for his patience, expertise, and dedication to creating an environment for me to grow as both a musician and researcher. I am grateful to Dr. Omar Roy and Dr. Reginald Bain, members of my committee, for their support. I could not have undertaken this journey without Dr. Charles Fugo, my piano professor, who always believed in me and encouraged me to discover a deeper love for music.

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ABSTRACT

Boris Asafiev was one of the leading musicologists whose Theory of Intonation is a philosophical and aesthetic study that comprehensively explains the historical and theoretical aspects of musical art. The Theory of Intonation is the methodological basis for music disciplines in Russia, including piano pedagogy. The purpose of this study is to create a source that explains Asafiev’s philosophical and aesthetic vision of the concept of intonation and to show how it can be applied to piano pedagogy. This study is also intended to translate and codify the Theory of Intonation and to provide examples of its implementation in any piano teaching method or repertoire study.

Both volumes of Asafiev’s book *Musical Form as a Process*¹ (published in 1930 and 1947) are devoted to the Theory of Intonation. While the first book presents musical form in a broader social and historical perspective presenting it as a method of communication and organization of musical material that is socially recognized generation by generation, the second book, titled *Intonation*, discusses the specific aspects of musical language and semantics. Asafiev develops unique terminology to support his ideas and the Theory of Intonation. The concept of “intonation” in the Theory of Intonation has a more comprehensive meaning than the pitch accuracy of a musician or musical instrument. Intonation is “the organization of acoustical media, by

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¹ Boris Asafiev, Музыкальная форма как процесс. Книга 1 и 2 [Musical form as a process. Book 1 and 2], 2nd ed. (Leningrad: Музыка, 1971).
the human consciousness, into meaningfully expressive sound correlations.” The author of this study explains in depth the terminology of the Theory of Intonation.

Asafiev followed the ideas of Mikhail Glinka and The Mighty Five composers—Mily Balakirev, César Cui, Modest Mussorgsky, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, and Alexander Borodin—who emphasized the importance of the melodic nature of music. Implemented the concept of the *melos*, an ancient Greek term referring to the succession of musical tones constituting a melody, as one of the key elements of the Theory of Intonation. While any kind of human communication by means of sound involves intonation, intonation in music is distinguished by the use of intervals that form the melos and other elements of music. The author of this study presents the elements of the Theory of Intonation and shows how they co-exist holistically.

Finally, the author of this study provides musical examples and shows how the Theory of Intonation can be merged in piano performance and pedagogy based on her experience, as the process of implementing the Theory of Intonation is unique to each individual pianist.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Russian Piano School is well-known for producing generations of pianists and pedagogues who have gained fame throughout the music world. The Russian Piano School became a cultural phenomenon in the twentieth century due to the recognition and international concert careers of these pianists, the appearance of Russian pianists and their successes in international piano competitions, and the evolution of international cultures and globalization.

The national school of secular musical art in Russia developed in the last decades of the eighteenth century. It was facilitated by the cultural reforms of Tsar Peter I, known as Peter the Great (1672-1725), in the first half of the eighteenth century. The all-encompassing nature of the transformations of Peter I was such that even after a century and more, they had not become history but continued to be something real and vital that affected everyday life. The most important changes were related to the development of secular culture in Russia. Peter I contributed to developing secular

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3 Alexey Alexeev, История фортепианного искусства [The history of piano art], 2nd ed. (Moscow: Музыка, 1988), 273.
schools independent from the church. He created a welcoming environment for foreign educators and artists in Russia. Among invited specialists were mathematicians Nikolai Bernoulli and Daniil Bernoulli, astronomer and geographer Joseph-Nicolas Delisle, historian Gerhard Friedrich Miller, and architects Domenico Trezzini and Giacomo Quarenghi. Leonhard Euler, a Swiss multidisciplinary scholar whose fields of expertise included mathematics, mechanics, astronomy, geography, physics, and music, accepted an invitation to enter the service of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences. Euler’s musical-theoretical works were published in Russian, and though few, they were fundamental. Overall, Peter I succeeded in establishing the public forms of secular life, for which the nobility perceived music as one of its principal elements. St. Petersburg became firmly placed on the map of the European musical market.

The cultural revolution of Tsar Peter I played an important role in forming the Russian national school of piano pedagogy. Inspired by the welcoming environment for European artists and scientists, foreign pianists such as Franz Liszt, Clara and Robert Schumann, and Hans von Bülow traveled to perform recitals in Russia. European piano makers arrived and established shops in Russia in the middle of the eighteenth century. The Italian composer, performer, and entrepreneur Muzio Clementi, who traveled through Europe demonstrating his piano models, became one of their most effective

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5 Anisimov, 224.
6 Anisimov, 223.
8 Ritzarev, 37.
9 Alexeev, *История фортепианного искусства* [The history of piano art], 276.
marketers in St. Petersburg. He arrived with his student John Field in 1802 who remained in Russia for the majority of his life.\(^{10}\) Alexandr Nikolaev mentions that Field's teaching approach and musical values influenced generations of Russian pianists.\(^{11}\)

Field’s student Alexander Villoing created a method book titled *Piano Playing School*\(^ {12}\) and he was the teacher of Nikolai and Anton Rubinstein. Field’s students also included Mikhail Glinka, who is well-known as the founder of the Russian school of classical music.\(^ {13}\) Glinka combined traits of European music with the heritage of Russian folk music. Long and expressive folk song-inspired melodic lines and folk or historical librettos are key elements of his operas *A Life for the Tsar* (1836) and *Ruslan and Lyudmila* (1842).\(^ {14}\) Glinka’s *Capriccio on Russian Themes* for four hands combines variation form with elements of symphonic principles of music development and Russian folk music themes.\(^ {15}\) The idea of a vocal-inspired long melodic line had a strong influence on instrumental music and the Russian piano pedagogy traditions of phrasing, tone production, and interpretation.

While Western musical traditions and experience were recognized and respected in Russia, Mily Balakirev, César Cui, Modest Mussorgsky, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, and

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\(^{11}\) Alexandr Nikolaev, *Джон Фильд* [John Field] (Moscow: Музыка, 1979), 145.


\(^{13}\) Alexeev, *История фортепианного искусства* [The history of piano art], 276.

\(^{14}\) Evgenia Gordeeva, *Композиторы Могучей Кучки* [Composers of the Mighty Handful] (Moscow, Музыка, 1985), 49.

\(^{15}\) Alexeev, *История фортепианного искусства* [The history of piano art], 278.
Alexander Borodin formed The Mighty Five group in the 1850s and 1860s. These composers emphasized the Russian national path of art development based on traditions stemming from Glinka. The majority of compositions by Glinka and members of The Mighty Five were inspired by folk song motives, traditional folk fairy tales, Russian history, and literature. Among the Mighty Five’s most recognized compositions were the operas *The Snow Maiden* (1881) and *Sadko* (1898) by Rimsky-Korsakov, the operas *Boris Godunov* (1872) and *Khovanshchina* (1880) by Mussorgsky, the opera *Prince Igor* (1887) by Borodin, and the symphonic suite *Scheherazade* (1888) by Rimsky-Korsakov.

The Russian Piano School was first recognized in the Western world through the successful European performances of Anton Rubinstein and Nikolai Rubinstein in the 1930s. Although the Rubinstein brothers became accomplished performers, they dedicated their lives to establishing professional music education in Russia. The St. Petersburg Conservatory was opened by Anton Rubinstein in 1862 and inspired the opening of more conservatories in Russia, including founding the Moscow Conservatory by Nikolai Rubinstein in 1866. While Western European musical pedagogy of that time prioritized finger dexterity and technical development, among other musical considerations, the Rubinstein brothers emphasized a model of education that prepared

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17 Gordeeva, Композиторы Могучей Кучки [Composers of the Mighty Handful], 3.
18 Gordeeva, 4.
19 Alexeev, История фортепианного искусства [The history of piano art], 288.
not only high-level performers but musicians with developed spirituality and extensive knowledge about music and art.

Although both Rubinstein brothers shared the same core pedagogical values, they had different teaching methods that developed into two branches in Russian piano pedagogy. Anton Rubinstein led his students by cultivating an approach based on the feeling of emotions leading to full comprehension of music. He usually began work on a piece of music by discussing associations and figurative metaphors about the piece leading to the enrichment of a student’s imagination. In contrast, Nikolai Rubinstein’s pedagogical approach led students from analytical comprehension of the piece to the emotional experience in performance.

While Russian composers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century followed the path started by Glinka and The Mighty Five, the Russian Piano School followed the Rubinstein brothers’ principles of developing versatile pianists with a holistic musical vision based on an approach where matters of technique were not separated from the musical and artistic aspects of performance. The main goal of the Russian piano pedagogy tradition was to facilitate comprehension of the intellectual and emotional content of music. At the same time, technical training was a means of reaching this goal. Among the notable figures who influenced the development of the Russian Piano School of that period were Teodor Leschetizky and his student Anna

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20 Alexeev, 285.
21 Alexeev, 291.
22 Alexeev, 292.
Yesipova in St. Petersburg, as well as Nikolai Zverev, Sergei Taneyev, Vasily Safonov, and Alexander Siloti in Moscow.

The twentieth century was an eventful period for Russian piano pedagogy and musicology development. Boris Asafiev was one of the leading musicologists and experts of Russian music who shaped the philosophical and contextual understanding of musical art. He influenced the development and codification of musical terminology in Russia. While the Rubinstein brothers embraced holistic methods of piano pedagogy, Asafiev developed the Theory of Intonation as a holistic approach of comprehending musical art as an artistic form of thinking, a reflection of spiritual beliefs and values, a communication tool, and an essential phenomenon of life. He also followed Glinka’s and The Mighty Fives’ ideas about the importance of the melodic nature of music. Asafiev affirmed the importance of the melos as one of the most significant aspects for expressing the musical meaning and forming critical thinking in developing the concept of the Theory of Intonation.

Asafiev published numerous articles and treatises throughout his career, but *Musical Form as a Process* Book 1 and Book 2 (published in 1930 and 1947) summarizes his philosophical and aesthetic vision of the Theory of Intonation. He

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23 The Melos is the succession of musical tones constituting a melody. This ancient Greek term was used frequently by Asafiev. It will be explained more in depth in chapter three.


25 Asafiev, *Музыкальная форма* [Musical form].
developed unique terminology to support this concept. Intonation, Asafiev’s most significant term, is the relationship of music to the environment, or the way the nature of life is expressed in sound. While intonation is also a factor in speech, purely musical intonations are Asafiev’s specific concern.\textsuperscript{26} Musical intonations are particular to a given era and culture and include anything from the simplest musical materials to the largest complex forms.\textsuperscript{27} The Russian term “intonation” should not be confused with the English word “intonation,” which refers to the pitch accuracy of a musician or musical instrument. Asafiev’s meaning of the term “intonation” is broader than in the English definition of this word. Asafiev’s broader meaning of the term explains the history of musical evolution, can be applied in vocal or instrumental performance and pedagogy, and also facilitates the pedagogical goal of understanding the intellectual and emotional content of the music. Asafiev’s Theory of Intonation influenced the artistic values of generations of musicians in Russia, including most of representatives of the Russian Piano School tradition. This theory is one of the key elements for understanding tone production and phrasing for which Russian pianists are famous.

Moscow pianists Konstantin Igumnov, Alexandr Goldenweiser, Heinrich Neuhaus and Samuil Feinberg, and Leningrad pianist Leonid Nikolaev, were leading figures in the Russian Piano School from the 1930s to 1960s. They raised the next generation of Russian pianists, such as Lev Oborin, Yakov Flier, Yakov Milshtein, Grigory Ginzburg, Dmitry Kabalevsky, Dmitry Blagoi, Tatiana Nikolaeva, Alexandr Nikolaev, Dmitry

\textsuperscript{27} McQuere, 225.
Bashkirov, Sviatoslav Richter, Emil Gilels, Yakov Zak, Anatoly Vedernikov, Vladimir Krainev, Alexei Lyubimov, Lev Naumov, and others. These pianists left behind a wealth of resources about piano performance and teaching. The Theory of Intonation is the foundation for understanding and interpreting musical and pedagogical ideas in all of the written sources of these two generations of pianists and pedagogues. For example, Heinrich Neuhaus and Konstantin Igumnov reflect on the Theory of Intonation in their books.

Neuhaus mentions numerous ways to develop a student’s intonational way of thinking, such as developing his ear, giving him a broad knowledge of musical literature, making him live with one composer for a long time until he had thoroughly assimilated the composer and the style, making him memorize music by reading the score without touching the piano to develop his imagination and his ear, teaching him from childhood to distinguish the form, and the thematic material and the harmonic and polyphonic structure of the composition. Neuhaus also furthers the Rubinstein brothers' ideas about leading pianists not only as skillful performers but as intellectual and educated musicians. Igumnov considers intonation as the primary concern in studying a musical work, believing that the content of the performance largely depends on the ability to convey the intonational meaning of the work. Succeeding generations of pianists were inspired by the Theory of Intonation. Neuhaus’s students, such as Richter, Gilels, and

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29 Iakov Milshtein, Константин Николаевич Игумнов [Konstantin Nikolaevich Igumnov] (Moscow: Музыка, 1975), 56.
Asafiev’s Theory of Intonation is used as a methodological basis for studies in musicology, musical performance, and pedagogy in Russia. This theory influenced the way Russian musicians perform and teach. While some sources translate Asafiev’s writings into English, there are no English language sources that connect the Theory of Intonation and the Russian Piano School traditions.

The Russian Piano School masters, such as Samuil Feinberg, Alexander Goldenweiser, Konstantin Igumnov, Heinrich Neuhaus, Alexandr Nikolaev, and Nikolay Medtner and their students were all known as virtuoso performers and successful teachers who wrote numerous treatises about piano teaching. The Theory of Intonation aids in understanding and explaining the foremost trends in teaching methods of the Russian Piano School masters of the twentieth century.

The purpose of this study is to create a source that explains Asafiev’s philosophical and aesthetic vision of the concept of intonation and to show how it can be applied to piano pedagogy. The additional purpose of this study is to translate and codify the Theory of Intonation and to give examples of its implementation in any piano teaching method or repertoire study. This research will be significantly useful for future studies about Asafiev’s Theory of Intonation and the Russian music education system, including The Russian Piano School.
Need for the Study

Boris Asafiev’s Theory of Intonation shaped Russian musicians’ way of thinking and understanding of musical art for generations, including leading figures in the Russian Piano School. The Theory of Intonation is underrepresented in the Western world due to limited sources explaining Asafiev’s ideas and writings in English. An understanding of the Theory of Intonation can facilitate the comprehension of the teaching methods of the Russian Piano School. There is a need to define Asafiev’s term "intonation," explain the Theory of Intonation and show its application in piano pedagogy.

Limitations of the Study

Translating between Russian and English is a complex process due to certain grammatical differences and meanings of some words within the languages. The majority of the resources of the Russian Piano School are not translated into English, even though they contain valuable information for developing piano pedagogy worldwide. Moreover, Russian music terminology developed differently from Western standards.

The author of this study was born and raised in St. Petersburg and received her piano training as well as undergraduate and graduate level degrees in the system of music education influenced by the Theory of Intonation. While some aspects of the Theory of Intonation might remain unclear due to cultural and language differences, the author has attempted to represent the main ideas of Asafiev’s Theory of Intonation in an accessible manner.
Related Literature

Passing on musical traditions was important for Russian performers, educators, and musicologists. A large amount of literature exists about different aspects of piano performance and pedagogy by leading pianists and pedagogues from the Russian Piano School tradition.

Boris Asafiev wrote treatises about music and contributed to numerous areas of music theory and history. One of Asafiev's main areas of expertise was Russian music. He wrote books about the 19th and early 20th century Russian music and composers such as Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Scriabin. His books about Russian music of the 19th and early 20th century and Stravinsky are translated into English. Asafiev projected his unique holistic philosophical vision of musical phenomena and art within the context of social and cultural paradigms. In all his works, Asafiev attempted to explain the processes at work in music, from the nature of forms and their evolution to the nature of musical communication.³⁰

The appearance of Asafiev's book *Musical Form as a Process*³¹ was an event of tremendous importance in the development of all the areas of music studies in Russia. The first book was published in 1930. The concept of musical form is viewed from a broad social and historical perspective in the first book. Asafiev's vision is based on the idea that music is part of the social aspect of life, expressed in the form of music-making. Music form is not merely a constructive scheme. It is a form of communication

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³⁰ McQuere, *Russian Theoretical Thought in Music*, 218.
³¹ Asafiev, Музыкальная форма [Musical form].
and organization of musical material that has been socially acknowledged generation by generation. Music material is constantly developing and moving forward, so musical form organizes these constant developments and changes. The process of organization of sound combinations is based on socially proven principles. Twelve chapters of the first book are devoted to discussing all the aspects of principles of form organization, such as how musical form development happens, what stimuli and factors affect the musical formation and the principles of identity and contrast in established musical forms.

The second book of *Musical Form as a Process*, titled *Intonation*, focuses more on specific aspects of musical language and semantics. This book was published seventeen years after the first book in 1947. Asafiev worked on the second book during the Leningrad Siege, one of the longest (September 8, 1941–January 27, 1944) and most destructive sieges in human history. Constant hunger, cold, and bombing affected how the second book was written. While the first book is structured and written in the academic tradition, the second book is written freely and less academically. Intonation is not just the pitch accuracy of a musician or musical instrument in Asafiev’s vision. Intonation also involves the musical meaning and interpretation of each sound in the context of a certain period, style, genre, perception, etc. Therefore, the Theory of Intonation is most clearly understood when applied to the relation of sounds. The second book of *Musical Form as Process* discusses intonations in music history, from Gregorian chant to all the innovative styles of the early twentieth century. Moreover,

32 Asafiev, 22.
Asafiev examines various musical styles from the earliest to the most recent. He shows how intonation acquires a stylistic dimension and how a style acquires an intonational expression.

Although Asafiev’s *Musical Form as Process* has never been published in English, James Robert Tull translated both books from Russian to English as his research for his Ph.D. dissertation in 1977.33 Also, Gordon D. McQuere gives a brief overview of both of Asafiev’s books and summarizes each chapter in his book *Russian Theoretical Thought in Music*.34

Russian musicologist Vyacheslav Medushevsky connects the Theory of Intonation with the psychology of perception and neuropsychology in his treatise *The Intonational form of music*.35 Another Russian musicologist, Irina Orlova, traces some historical prerequisites for the intonational understanding of music and explains Asafiev’s vision as a creator of the Theory of Intonation in her book *Asafiev’s intonation theory as a study on specifics of musical thought. History. Development. Essence*.36

The second half of the twentieth century was important for Russian piano pedagogy in that numerous treatises and method books were published by leading pedagogues and pianists. The majority of these were influenced by Asafiev’s analytical and philosophical ideas and the Theory of Intonation. The author of the current study examines treatises by Samuil Feinberg, Alexander Goldenweiser, Konstantin Igumnov,

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33 Tull, “Asaf’ev’s Musical Form.”
34 McQuere, *Russian Theoretical Thought in Music.*
35 Vyacheslav Medushevsky, Интонационная форма музыки [Intonational form of music] (Moscow, Композитор, 1993).
36 Orlova, Интонационная теория Асафьева [Asafiev’s intonation theory].
Heinrich Neuhaus, Alexandr Nikolaev, Nikolay Medtner, and introduces ideas about the application of Asafiev’s Theory of Intonation to piano performance and pedagogy.

Alexandr Nikolaev is a Russian pianist, pedagogue, and musicologist. He graduated from Moscow State Conservatory as a student of Grigory Ginzburg in 1931 and completed postgraduate studies with Grigory Kogan in the history and theory of pianism. Nikolaev began teaching at Moscow State Conservatory in 1937 and served as professor, the head of the Department of History and Theory of Pianism, Dean of Piano Department, and the Chief of Academic Affairs until his death. This pianist and educator is well-known for his method *The Russian School of Piano Playing*, published in 1951. It is generally considered to be one of the most systematic and successful piano methods produced. Tone production and phrasing of melodic lines are the primary components in playing the piano according to this method. The way tone production is taught in the Russian Piano School tradition is based on the Theory of Intonation in many ways. Each sound is considered in a musical and meaningful relationship with another sound.


practical pieces of advice and suggestions on how to study repertoire, furnished with musical examples.

_The Art of Piano Playing_ by Heinrich Neuhaus,\(^{39}\) published in 1959, is the only recognized and translated treatise in English from that period of the Russian Piano School.

According to Neuhaus, music is a phenomenon of sound, and the most important task, the primary duty of any performer, is to work on tone. The master has a chapter titled “On tone,” where he gives practical suggestions on how to work on tone production for long and smooth melodic lines as required by the Theory of Intonation.

Iakov Milshtein, Dmiri Blagoi, and Samuil Feinberg published treatises about piano playing in the 1970s. The book _Konstantin Igumnov_ by Iakov Milshtein\(^{40}\) is about the life and pedagogical values of Konstantin Igumnov, who was a professor at Moscow Conservatory. While the first part of the book is about Igumnov’s life and career path, the second part discusses his teaching ideas.

The book _Goldenveizer A.B. About Musical Art_, compiled by musicologist and pianist Dmitri Blagoi\(^{41}\) and published in 1975, is dedicated to the life and work of the outstanding musician Alexander Goldenweiser. Blagoi used transcripts of Goldenweiser’s lectures and his own notes, which he made while attending lessons with

\(^{39}\) Neuhaus, _The Art of Piano Playing_.

\(^{40}\) Milshtein, Константин Николаевич Игумнов [Konstantin Nikolaevich Igumnov].

the master. *Everyday Work of a Pianist and Composer* by Nikolai Medtner\(^{42}\) is a diary where the composer documents his thoughts about piano playing and composition. Editors combine Medtner’s notes in chapters about different piano playing problems and concerns. Unknown to English-speaking audiences is the treatise *Art of Being a Pianist* by Samuil Feinberg.\(^{43}\) It consists of chapters about the interpretation of Bach’s works, Beethoven’s piano style, and ideas about piano teaching. Among sources that were published in the 1980s can be found the book *Grigory Ginzburg*, compiled by Maksim Yakovlev.\(^{44}\) The book provides a perspective on Grigory Ginzburg’s teaching approach. The essay about Grigory Ginzburg as teacher by Galustyan is an especially significant source about the master’s changing teaching philosophy throughout his life. Ginsburg, as the assistant of Alexander Goldenweiser, followed Goldenweiser’s teaching approaches at the beginning of his teaching career. Later Ginzburg developed his teaching approach inspired by ideas involving orchestral sound.

This study is also supported by the book *The Russian Piano School: Russian Pianists & Moscow Conservatoire Professors on the Art of the Piano*, translated and edited by Christopher Barnes.\(^{45}\) It is one of the most prominent sources in English besides *The Art of Piano Playing* by Heinrich Neuhaus and was published in 2008. Barnes`s book addresses several technical and interpretative problems of pianism

\(^{42}\) Nikolai Medtner, Повседневная работа пианиста и композитора [Everyday work of a pianist and composer] (Moscow: Музыка, 1979).

\(^{43}\) Samuil Feinberg, Мастерство Пианиста [The art of being a pianist] (Moscow: Музыка, 1978).


Additionally, this study is supported by recent dissertations. Maria Razumovskaya’s dissertation titled Heinrich Neuhaus: Aesthetics and Philosophy of an Interpretation\textsuperscript{46} contains the application of some aspects of the Theory of Intonation in Heinrich Neuhaus’s aesthetics of interpretation. Konstantin Lapshin’s research titled Expressive Inflection: Applying the Principles of Sergey Rachmaninoff’s Performance in My Own Practice\textsuperscript{47} has a chapter that explains the difference between the Russian musical meanings and English musical meaning of the word “intonation.” Irena Kofman’s study The History of the Russian Piano School: Individuals and Traditions\textsuperscript{48} highlights the main figures and historical development of The Russian Piano School.

Design and Procedures

This study comprises four chapters and appendices. Chapter one consists of an introduction that gives an overview of four main periods of The Russian Piano School development and Boris Asafiev’s role as a musicologist in this process, purpose of the study, need for the study, limitations of the study, the related literature review, and

design and procedures of the study. Chapter two provides biographical information about Asafiev. Chapter three discusses Asafiev’s definition of intonation and the Theory of Intonation. Chapter four provides a practical application of Asafiev’s Theory of Intonation with musical examples from standard pedagogical piano literature. The final chapter consists of a summary and conclusions.
CHAPTER 2

BIOGRAPHY OF BORIS ASAIEV

Introduction

Boris Asafiev made numerous contributions to the fields of music history and theory, music education, and music pedagogy in Russia and the Soviet Union. Chapter two will be devoted to the biography of the musicologist and composer. Primary sources consulted for this chapter include the book Academician Boris Vladimirovich Asafiev by Elena Orlova and Andrey Kryukov⁴⁹ and the article Boris Asafiev – Igor Glebov by Dmitry Kabalevsky.⁵⁰ The biographical facts about Asafiev will be presented in chronological order.⁵¹

Boris Asafiev was one of the leading musicologists in the twentieth century in Russia and the Soviet Union. Asafiev's ideas are the foundation of modern Russian musical aesthetics and musicology, but they are not well-known outside of the country. Additionally, Asafiev's legacy as a composer is very large: 28 ballets, 11 operas, 4 symphonies, romances, chamber instrumental works, and music for theatre

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⁵¹ Translated by the author of this study.
productions. The majority of his operas and ballets were written on librettos inspired by Russian classical literature. The ballet *Flames of Paris* is considered one of his most famous works because it was the first ideological ballet in which revolutionaries were the main characters.

*Asafiev's Childhood and Early Years*

Boris Asafiev was born on the 17th of July in 1884 in a poor working-class family in St. Petersburg. Asafiev's family wanted him to pursue a career as a government official, but Asafiev exhibited his musical talent at an early age. He played the piano by improvising and imitating marches for an army of toy soldiers at the age of five or six. He mentioned in his article *My Path* that he developed such abilities as absolute pitch, musical memory, and the skills to improvise at a very early age, but he had no systematic training. He received his first knowledge of music in an autodidactic way.

After Asafiev's parents noticed the musical interests of their son, they hired a piano teacher, and he started to learn music reading.

Asafiev entered the preparatory class of the Sixth St. Petersburg Gymnasium in 1894 and completed his first class a school year later in 1896. After that his parents could not afford the tuition and they had to find a gymnasium with an opening sponsored by the government. He continued his education at the Kronstadt Gymnasium.

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52 Orlova and Kryukov, *Академик Борис Владимирович Асафьев* [Academician Boris Vladimirovich Asafiev], 20.
53 Boris Asafiev, “Мой путь” [My path], *Советская музыка* 14, no. 8 (1934), 47.
54 The gymnasium is a term for an educational institution that prepares academically minded students for higher education at the college level. It can be comparable to the US term "preparatory high school."
where he also was provided meals and lodging. He studied music as well as other
general school subjects and graduated in 1903 with excellent grades in humanities and
sciences.

University Education Period

Asafiev was accepted and began his university education in the history and
philology department at St. Petersburg State University in 1903. That year Asafiev met
Vladimir Stasov, a well-known Russian music and art critic, and the composer Nikolai
Rimsky-Korsakov. Stasov recognized the great musical talent and potential of Asafiev
and appreciated his extraordinary mind. Kabalevsky mentions Stasov’s supporting role
in Asafiev’s life in his article Boris Asafiev – Igor Glebov (Igor Glebov is Asafiev’s nom de
plume):

Stasov taught Asafiev how to understand and love Glinka, which defined the
focus of Asafiev’s entire research career in the future. Stasov provided him the
opportunity to become acquainted with Mussorgsky’s manuscripts (Asafiev
rewrote the opera The Marriage at Stasov’s request), marking the beginning of
Asafiev’s study of Mussorgsky’s music, which similar to the study of Glinka’s
music went through Asafiev-Glebov’s entire professional life. Moreover, Asafiev
learned from Stasov about the world of Russian painting and Russian literature
and discovered the significance of the literary-critical work of Belinsky, Herzen,
and Chernyshevsky.55

Rimsky-Korsakov played an important role in Asafiev’s path as a composer by
serving as a teacher, mentor, and role model. Asafiev showed to Rimsky-Korsakov his
first compositions, and Rimsky-Korsakov suggested to Asafiev that he study with Vasily

Kalafati, a composer and a student of Rimsky-Korsakov at the St. Petersburg Conservatory who could assist in the preparation for entering that institution.  

Asafiev passed the entrance examinations and started taking classes at the St. Petersburg Conservatory in 1904. It was challenging to study in two higher education institutions at the same time, but hard-working Asafiev managed to do so.  

When Asafiev started his education at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, he wanted to learn the art of writing operas and enrolled in the composition class of Rimsky-Korsakov, the leading opera composer of Russia. According to the program of study of that time, the first years of study would be dedicated to theoretical and historical subjects, and composition classes were not recommended. Asafiev had an opportunity to study only instrumentation with Rimsky-Korsakov while he was overwhelmed and busy managing his studies at two higher education institutions at the same time. When he completed his education at St. Petersburg State University with honors in 1908, he had hoped to start his studies in composition in the class of Rimsky-Korsakov, but the latter’s death interfered with his plans. Asafiev had to continue his studies with Anatoly Lyadov. Although his music studies did not go as he planned and and

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56 As the city of St. Petersburg was named after the apostle Saint Peter in 1793, then renamed Petrograd in 1914, later again renamed Leningrad in 1924, and named back to St. Petersburg in 1991, the conservatory had to change names accordingly with the name of the city.

57 The St. Petersburg State University and the St. Petersburg Conservatory are two different higher education institutions. The St. Petersburg State University is a public university with twenty-four specialized departments, while the St. Petersburg Conservatory is specialized music higher educational institution.

58 Orlova and Kryukov, Академик Борис Владимирович Асафьев [Academician Boris Vladimirovich Asafiev], 56.
expected, Asafiev excelled in his studies in music at the conservatory and met many inspiring young composers. Kabalevsky mentions Asafiev’s important friendships at the Leningrad Conservatory in his article Boris Asafiev - Igor Glebov:

Asafiev’s friendship with young composers Sergey Prokofiev and Nikolai Myaskovsky started during his student years at the conservatory. Myaskovsky played an important role in Asafiev’s musical development. Asafiev mentioned that many evenings were spent together playing the piano with Myaskovsky, a very erudite musician and a distinguished connoisseur of musical literature, who significantly expanded his musical horizons. Later, Myaskovsky, who had already tested himself in the musical-critical field, persuaded Asafiev to start a career as a music critic and journalist.

Early Professional Achievements

Asafiev completed his course of study at the Leningrad Conservatory in 1910. He immediately began employment as a ballet accompanist in the Mariinsky Theatre. Although this was a highly demanding position, Asafiev had an opportunity to view all rehearsals and performances in one of the best theatres in Russia. Kabalevsky writes about Asafiev’s work in the theatre in his article Boris Asafiev - Igor Glebov:

Here Asafiev deeply delved into the art of ballet not only as an audience member but as a member of a team who created a performance. There is no doubt that the years of work in the Mariinsky Theatre played a decisive role in the development of Asafiev as a ballet composer by helping him to understand all of the specifics of musical and choreographic art.

Asafiev began his career as a music critic in 1914 under the pseudonym Igor Glebov. He was published in the magazine Music and was an employee of the magazines

59 Orlova and Kryukov, 56.
61 Asafiev did not officially graduate from the St. Petersburg Conservatory.
Musical Contemporary and The Melos. Although the range of topics in Asafiev’s early articles was broad, he maintained a primary focus on Russian music. Many of Asafiev’s articles at that time were about the music of Tchaikovsky, Taneev, Rachmaninov, and Prokofiev. Orlova and Kryukov write about the importance of Asafiev’s work as critic in their book Academician Boris Vladimirovich Asafiev:

Asafiev is well-known as the creator of the Theory of Intonation and as the author of the research about intonational characteristics of musical art. We will talk about them later, but the first ideas of the Theory of Intonation were in the articles of The Melos. Asafiev began to discover the ideas about melodic lines, problems of symphonism, and musical form as a process widely known and discovered in Asafiev's later works. 63

While Asafiev was establishing himself as a musicologist and critic, he also developed as a composer. Asafiev believed that he could make discoveries as a musicologist only by viewing music through a composer’s perspective. 64 Asafiev explains this point of view in his second book of Musical Form as a Process:

The musicologist must hear like a composer while he is analyzing the score and sorting through the manuscript. If he interprets the performance, he is obliged to hear as a performer and understand what a performer’s plan and intention are. Imposing your plan and your intentions on a composer or performer without considering their aspirations and the direction of their thoughts is like standing in front of a painting and assuring a blind man that the artist has painted something completely wrong. 65

Asafiev’s experience as a composer shaped him as a musicologist. Opera and ballets were his preferred genres. 66 His first opera for children, Cinderella, was

63 Orlova and Kryukov, Academician Boris Vladimirovich Asafiev [Academician Boris Vladimirovich Asafiev], 86.
65 Asafiev, Музыкальная форма [Musical form], 221.
composed when Asafiev was twenty-two years old. Asafiev’s first ballets were The Fairy’s Gift, Cunning Florentine, and White Lily.

**Professional Achievements after the October Revolution**

After the October Revolution in 1917, Asafiev was one of the first Soviet composers and musicologists who sought to respond to the needs of a new mass audience. He wrote numerous program note booklets for the first folk and public concerts, popularizing works of Russian classical composers in 1918-1919. Later, Asafiev compiled *Concert guide (Dictionary of necessary terms and concepts)* for music lovers and visitors to concerts, opera, and ballet performances.

Asafiev began as an educator at the Russian Institute of Art History in 1919, where he became the head of the music history division in 1920. Asafiev began this stage of his career as a professor of Russian folk music. He actively wrote about Russian music during this period. The series of articles *Letters About Russian Opera*, published in 1922, concerns the ballets of such composers as Glinka, Tchaikovsky, Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakov, Glazunov, and Dargomyzhsky. These articles employed accessible language so that persons of any level of knowledge had an opportunity to learn about these composers and their works. At the same time, Asafiev worked on the book *Symphonic Etudes*, which is described in Kabalevsky’s article Boris Asafiev - Igor Glebov:

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67 Kabalevsky, 9.
68 Boris Asafiev, *Путеводитель по концертам* (Словарь необходимых терминов и понятий) [Concert guide (Dictionary of necessary terms and concepts)], 2nd ed. (Moscow: Советский композитор, 1978).
In this book, Asafiev summed up many years of observations and reflections on the work of Russian classical composers. Asafiev developed a well-founded concept of the originality and universal value of Russian classical music. His perspective was in opposition to the view of Russian music as a kind of “Russian variant” of Western European musical romanticism.\(^7\)

In addition to *Letters on Russian Opera and Ballet* and *Symphonic Etudes*, Asafiev wrote several other works about Russian music in the 1920s, including the books *Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky: His life and Work,\(^7\)* short monographs about Rimsky-Korsakov and Mussorgsky and numerous articles about the music of Glinka, Dargomyzhsky, Mussorgsky, Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakov, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov, and Scriabin.\(^7\)

Although Asafiev dedicated his life to Russian classical music, he never underestimated Western classical music as indicated in Kabalevsky’s article *Boris Asafiev – Igor Glebov:*

Asafiev did not limit himself by researching and promoting Russian classical music. Among his many articles of those years, we also find articles on Western music about Bach, Lully, Mozart, Bizet, Verdi, Grieg, Chopin, Liszt, Schumann, Wagner, and Mahler, we also find a serious work *Dante and Music* that Asafiev highly valued.\(^7\)

Asafiev was invited to teach at the Leningrad Conservatory in 1925. This invitation was important and meaningful for him. Although Asafiev did not graduate from the Leningrad Conservatory, this institution considered him as a specialist worthy of becoming a colleague of many outstanding musicians, including the rector of the

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\(^7\) Kabalevsky, “Boris Asafiev – Igor Glebov,” 12.

\(^7\) Kabalevsky, 12.
conservatory, Alexander Glazunov.\textsuperscript{75} While Asafiev created and led the department that focused on research about music, he also was an active lecturer in multiple courses.

Asafiev’s most outstanding achievement as a researcher in the 1920s was the book \textit{Musical Form as a Process}.\textsuperscript{76} This book was begun in 1925, completed in 1929, and published in 1930. This book became the pillar of Russian musicology and was recognized as profoundly innovative research.\textsuperscript{77} Asafiev thought deeply about the Theory of Intonation and the essence of understanding intonation.\textsuperscript{78} Orolva and Kryukov acknowledge in their book \textit{Academician Boris Vladimirovich Asafiev} the importance of the treatise \textit{Musical Form as Process} in Russian musicology:

The book \textit{Musical Form as a Process} concentrated on the main achievements of Asafiev’s theoretical and aesthetic vision and was the result of all the previous research of Boris Vladimirovich. The concept of this book was gradually created, starting from early articles in the collections of articles \textit{The Melos}.\textsuperscript{79}

Asafiev understands the musical form primarily as an intonational phenomenon created in the music-making process in the book \textit{Musical Form as a Process}. It is well-known that music-making happens at a certain moment, and the music works are perceived during that time. However, in musicology, this way of thinking about music was not given enough attention for a long time. Much more attention was paid to the result and the outcome of the music-making process.\textsuperscript{80}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{75} Orolva and Kryukov, \textit{Академик Борис Владимирович Асафьев} [Academician Boris Vladimirovich Asafiev], 129.
\textsuperscript{76} Asafiev, \textit{Музыкальная форма} [Musical form].
\textsuperscript{77} Orolva and Kryukov, \textit{Академик Борис Владимирович Асафьев} [Academician Boris Vladimirovich Asafiev], 190.
\textsuperscript{78} Orolva and Kryukov, 124.
\textsuperscript{79} Orolva and Kryukov, 165.
\textsuperscript{80} Orolva and Kryukov, 166.
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Another important work published in 1930 was Asafiev’s book *Russian Music from the Beginning of the XIX century*, which served as a reference for further research about Russian music by Soviet and Russian musicologists. Kabalevsky acclaims the importance of this work in Russian musicology as well:

Some of the most important contributions of this book are accurate characteristics of Russian classical music composers and some of their works, the research of the period before Glinka in Russian music, and the highlighting of two main trends in the development of Russian classical symphonic music such as – “objective genre” and “subjective-emotional” symphonic development, etc. Many ideas from this book became important in the process of Soviet musicology development.

Asafiev prioritized composition and abandoned his activities as a musical critic and researcher during the first half of the 1930s. During these years, Asafiev created many new compositions, including the ballets *The Flames of Paris, The Fountain of Bakhchisarai, and The Prisoner of the Caucasus*. These ballets are highlights of Soviet realistic musical and choreographic art. Among other works of that period are the ballets *Lost Illusions, Partisans, The Night Before Christmas, Ashik Kerib* and operas *The Treasurer, Minin and Pozharsky, and Thunderstorm*.

*The Period of the Siege of Leningrad and the Second World War*

Asafiev was at the height of his productivity when the Second World War (22 June 1941–9 May 1945) interrupted life in the Soviet Union. He remained in Leningrad during the Siege of Leningrad (8 September 1941–27 January 1944), overcoming difficult

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81 Boris Asafiev, *Русская музыка от начала XIX столетия* [Russian music of the beginning of the 19th century] (Moscow and Leningrad: Академия, 1930).
83 Kabalevsky, 21.
living conditions, the tremendous cold, and illness. Asafiev published the article *My Creative Work in Leningrad in the Early Years of the Great Patriotic War*, in which he candidly describes his thoughts about this difficult period of his life:

> None of the Soviet Union people’s thoughts should be unexpressed or silent under any adversity that has befallen the motherland, and no matter how modest the level of my work on the vast scale of Soviet national and cultural construction is, it does not dare to stop.\(^8^4\)

During the siege of Leningrad, Asafiev had much more free time than before due to the evacuation of members of the large musical organizations. There was no need to constantly write reviews or have meetings, auditions, and discussions. Asafiev concentrated on creative work, even though conditions were not conducive. He was inspired by a great feeling of Soviet patriotism and composed a large number of musical works in the most diverse genres, from operas and ballets to popular songs. He also published many articles and critical works. According to Asafiev, he wrote approximately 130 pages of musicological articles during that period.\(^8^5\)

Among works written by Asafiev during this period was the set of articles titled *Through the Past to the Future*. Kabalevsky describes this work:

> The subject of history has never existed for Asafiev for the sake of just the subject of history as well as the subject of theory has never existed for the sake of just the subject of theory. The music of the past interested and captivated him not as a part of the history from centuries ago but as a living and undying art that exists today and has not lost all its freshness and significant artistic influence.

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\(^8^4\) Boris Asafiev, “Моя творческая работа в Ленинграде в первые годы Великой Отечественной войны” [My creative work in Leningrad during the first years of the Great Patriotic War], *Советская музыка* 10, no. 103 (1946): 89–96.

\(^8^5\) Kabalevsky, “Boris Asafiev – Igor Glebov,” 27.
The thematic range of articles included in the set *Through the Past to the Future* is very wide: Russian classical music, Western classical music, folk song, folklore, pedagogy, performance, Soviet musical creativity, and the musical life of the Soviet people. The best pages of this set of articles are devoted to Russian musical classics and folk songwriting.\(^{86}\)

Asafiev moved to Moscow during the winter of 1943, where he continued the works he had begun in Leningrad. One of the books he finished in Moscow was *Musical Form as a Process. Book Two (Intonation)*.\(^{87}\) Asafiev’s focus was devoted to substantiating the intonational characteristics of music as an art. In the second book of *Musical Form as Process*, Asafiev explores further the problems about musical form that he discusses in the first book. Elena Orlova and Andrey Kryukov write about the importance of the second book of *Musical Form as Process*:

> The second book highlights a very wide range of problems - theoretical, historical, and aesthetic. Asafiev’s intonational terminology was also defined in this book.\(^{88}\)

Asafiev’s Theory of Intonation embraces all musical art. The melody is not only an intonational aspect of music but also harmony, rhythm, and timbre. Moreover, sometimes Asafiev uses the term “intonation” to designate certain semantic turns of musical phrases (“musical sayings,” as he called them).\(^{89}\)

Besides the second book of *Musical Form as a Process*, Asafiev created several monographic works devoted mainly to Russian classical music. Among them is the book about Glinka,\(^{90}\) which summarizes Asafiev’s years of research about the life and music of

\(^{86}\) Kabalevsky, 27.
\(^{87}\) Asafiev, Музыкальная форма [Musical form].
\(^{88}\) Orlova and Kryukov, Академик Борис Владимирович Асафьев [Academician Boris Vladimirovich Asafiev], 224.
\(^{89}\) Orlova and Kryukov, 225.
\(^{90}\) Boris Asafiev, Глинка [Glinka] (Leningrad: Госполитиздат, 1942).
this composer. Asafiev researched Glinka for his entire life, and there are no studies by Asafiev where he did not refer to Glinka and his influence on the development of Russian music.\textsuperscript{91} In addition to the book about Glinka, Asafiev created monographic works about Rimsky-Korsakov, Tchaikovsky, Grieg and published articles about Borodin, Balakirev, and Anton and Nikolai Rubinstein. Among these works, the book \textit{Eugene Onegin. The Experience of Intonational Analysis of Style and Musical Drama}\textsuperscript{92} is a vivid example of Asafiev's holistic method of organically merging historical research with deep theoretical analysis and the Theory of Intonation.\textsuperscript{93}

Shortly after relocating from Leningrad to Moscow during the winter of 1943, Asafiev took an active role as the head of the Research Cabinet at the Moscow Conservatory. Asafiev invited leading Moscow musicologists to work with him. Six departments were created under Asafiev's supervision: Glinka and his contemporaries (supervised by Asafiev himself), Musical Moscow (supervised by Konstantin Kuznetsov), Soviet musical culture (supervised by Roman Gruber), Folk Musical Terminology (supervised by Evgeny Gippius), Musical-Theoretical Committee (supervised by Victor Belyaev), and Committee for Source Studies and Textual Studies (supervised by Vasily Yakovlev).\textsuperscript{94} Additionally, Asafiev was an active participant in the Moscow Conservatory life as a professor and member of the Artistic Council. As Elena Orlova and Andrey

\textsuperscript{91} Kabalevsky, “Boris Asafiev – Igor Glebov,” 29.
\textsuperscript{93} Kabalevsky, “Boris Asafiev – Igor Glebov,” 30.
\textsuperscript{94} Orlova and Kryukov, \textit{Академик Борис Владимирович Асафьев} [Academician Boris Vladimirovich Asafiev], 241.
Kryukov mention in their book *Academician Boris Vladimirovich Asafiev*, Asafiev actively supervised and conducted research in the section devoted to Glinka and his contemporaries:

As a leader, Boris Vladimirovich had extensive plans for future research. The starting point was to research the life and work of the founder of Russian classical music. Reflecting on future research questions, Asafiev prepared a document entitled *The Fundamental Issues of Soviet Musicology in the Field of Glinkiana*, which is clear evidence of his broad way of thinking and understanding of the importance of the variety of research tasks ahead for comprehending the Glinka phenomenon. This document refers to the need to prepare an academic edition of Glinka’s works, the creation of a museum in Novospas, Glinka’s family estate, the urgent re-edition of the scores of his operas, and studying the archives of Glinka’s relatives.

*Career and Research Achievements after the Second World War*

Asafiev organized the Department of Music History at the Institute of Art History of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in 1945, which he led until the end of his life. Asafiev’s department became one of the leading musicology research centers in Russia.

Asafiev was also active as an independent researcher. He often lectured and presented reports at the Museum of Musical Culture, the All-Russian Theater Society, and the Union of Composers. He concentrated his attention on researching the Russian Classical Music of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and on Soviet musical culture during the post-war period. Elena Orlova and Andrey Kryukov mention that Asafiev focused on the research of music of such composers as Glinka, Mussorgsky,

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95 The word “Glinkiana” means everything related to Glinka. The title is translated from the Russian language without paraphrasing.
96 Orlova and Kryukov, *Академик Борис Владимирович Асафьев* [Academician Boris Vladimirovich Asafiev], 242.
97 Orlova and Kryukov, 243.
Rimsky-Korsakov, and Tchaikovsky: “Asafiev enriched and deepened his previous research about these composers and revised his assessments of their work.”

Asafiev focused on researching music of Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov in the early 1940s. Asafiev devoted numerous articles and books to Tchaikovsky in 1943 in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of Tchaikovsky’s death. The most well-known among these works are the articles *The Enchantress. Opera by P. I. Tchaikovsky* and *On the Direction of Form in Tchaikovsky*. Elena Orlova and Andrey Kryukov mention in their book about Asafiev’s monograph devoted to Rimsky-Korsakov that Asafiev prepared in 1944, the centenary of that composer: “This is an original and deep work in terms of the perception of the musical phenomenon and the method of analysis. The author sees in Rimsky-Korsakov a realist artist, purposefully pursuing his aesthetic and ethical principles in his work, a man of great will who had discipline in every aspect of his life.”

Until the last days of his life, Asafiev remained involved in the most important events related to the musical culture of the Soviet Union and had many ideas for future research and publications. Asafiev was elected chairman of the Union of Composers of the USSR during The First Soviet Union Congress of Soviet Composers in 1948. Asafiev died on January 27, 1949, at the age of 65. The Soviet Union government, who highly appreciated Asafiev's contributions to the development of musicology, awarded him the honorary title Honored Artist of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic in 1933.

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98 Orlova and Kryukov, 245.
99 Orlova and Kryukov, 244.
100 Orlova and Kryukov, 247.
and the title People’s Artist of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic in 1938. In the same year of 1938, Asafiev was awarded the Order of the Red Banner of Labor. He was awarded the academic title of Doctor in 1941. Asafiev was elected a full member of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in 1943 and awarded the Stalin Prize of the second degree for his many years of work in the field of musicology. In the same year, Asafiev received the medal “For the Defense of Leningrad.” He was twice awarded the Order of Lenin in 1944 and 1945. In 1947, Asafiev was awarded the Stalin first-class prize for his book about Glinka.

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101 The Russian system of education has two levels of doctoral degrees. The first level is called Candidate of Sciences. It is formally classified as “doctoral or equivalent” by the International Standard Classification of Education. The Candidate of Sciences degree requires a minimum of three years of full-time study during which the student must conduct and publish advanced original research. The second more advanced level is Doctor of Sciences, which can be earned after obtaining The Candidate of Science Degree. The Doctor of Sciences has no academic equivalent in North America. Doctor of Science is a highly prestigious degree that can be conferred only for a significant contribution to science and/or technology based on a public defense of a thesis, monograph, or a set of outstanding publications in peer-reviewed journals in rare cases. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000129839
CHAPTER 3

BORIS ASAFIEV’S DEFINITION OF INTONATION AND THE THEORY OF INTONATION

Introduction

Chapter three will briefly discuss salient concepts of the Theory of Intonation from Asafiev’s second book of *Musical Form as Process*, titled *Intonation*. While Asafiev’s Theory of Intonation may be used for the interpretation and understanding of any vocal or instrumental piece by any composer, this chapter will focus on the ideas and concepts of the Theory of Intonation and how they may be applied to piano performance and pedagogy.

Asafiev considered the art of music as a holistic discipline. In all of his written works in musicology, music history, music theory, composition, performance practice, and pedagogy, he considered these subjects as not separate but parts of one united process of music-making that reflects centuries of humankind’s thoughts and manifestations. Although Asafiev did not leave any written works devoted to piano pedagogy, his holistic vision of the music-making process inspired the teaching approaches of pianists of the Russian Piano School. Both books of *Musical Form as a Process* cover various performance problems, from aesthetics and interpretation to revealing the essence of expressiveness and the subtleties of performance mastery. The study of performance practice is conditioned by the provisions of the Theory of Intonation:
Performance is a consistent, purposeful, and inevitable consequence of the intonational nature of the musical art, there is no music in social and cultural interchange without public intoning (“telling” of music aloud before listeners). A composition that is not intoned (vocally or instrumentally) exists only in the composer's consciousness, not in the public consciousness.102

Asafiev expresses his vision of performance as a product of the process of intoning in the above-mentioned quote. If a performer did not intone a musical composition and did not communicate the meaning of its various elements, a listener would not receive the idea that a composer expressed in the piece. There would not be a cultural interchange between the composer, the performer, and the listener. A performance would be meaningless without intoning.

Asafiev’s writings have been continually examined and investigated by Russian scholars, and several important works have appeared in English translation.103 One of the major sources concerning the Theory of Intonation in the Russian language is the book Asafiev’s Intonation Theory as a Study on Specifics of Musical Thought. History. Development. Essence104 by musicologist Elena Orlova, whose research interests focused on Russian music and Boris Asafiev’s works. While Orlova traces some historical background of the Theory of Intonation in the first part of her book, the second part of the book focuses on defining and categorizing theoretical concepts of the Theory of Intonation. This chapter will use some of Orlova’s categorizations and definitions that can be applied to piano pedagogy and performance.

102 Asafiev, Музыкальная форма [Musical form], 295.
103 McQuere, Russian Theoretical Thought in Music, 217.
104 Orlova, Интонационная теория Асафьева [Asafiev's intonation theory].
Although both books of *Musical Form as a Process* have never been published in English, James Robert Tull translated *Musical Form as a Process* book one and two in English in his doctoral dissertation *B. V. Asafev’s Musical Form as a Process: Translation and Commentary*. Additionally, Gordon McQuere summarizes the primary ideas of both books of *Musical Form as a Process* in his book *Russian Theoretical Thought in Music*. The translation of Asafiev’s works is challenging due to Asafiev’s unique terminology and philosophical way of understanding musical art. McQuere mentions these challenges in the translation process of Asafiev's works to English in *Russian Theoretical Thought in Music*:

The challenge is that of drawing this diverse, sometimes contradictory but always stimulating, body of material into focus, of finding the essence of Asafiev’s thought. His opaque, complex style and his penchant for undefined neologisms exacerbate the problem. The rewards of such an effort lie, however, in the opportunity to follow in the path of a vast intellect that unfailingly precipitates a revaluation of the commonplace and to observe as he helps to found Soviet musicology.\(^{105}\)

Although this chapter will use some translations of Tull and McQuere, the author of this study will provide her translations when she believes that they could better express the meaning of the original text in the Russian language more comprehensively and accessibly to readers.

It is essential to establish the meaning of the term “intonation” in order to understand Asafiev’s ideas and the Theory of Intonation. It is important to note that Asafiev’s concept of the term “intonation” has little to do with traditional Western European interpretation of that term:

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\(^{105}\) Orlova, 217.
Musical intonation is the organization of acoustical media, by the human consciousness, into meaningfully expressive sound correlations.\textsuperscript{106}

Music is wholly an intonational art and is neither a mechanical transference of acoustical phenomena into the area of artistic imagination, nor the naturalistic exposure of the sensual sphere. Like any activity of man, which apprehends and recognizes reality, music is directed by the consciousness and represents rational activity. The sensual (i.e., the emotional) tonus, inevitably characteristic of music, is not its cause, for music is an art of intoned meaning. This art is conditioned by nature and by the process of human intoning; man, in this process, does not consider himself apart from his relation to reality, and neither verbal nor musical intonation is exposed by means of mechanical articulation, removed from the quality of the voice.\textsuperscript{107}

On the macro level, the term “intonation” significantly evolved throughout both books 1 and 2 of \textit{Musical Form as a Process}. Asafiev found intonation as an expressive and semantic element that connects music with humankind’s existence and history through a series of associations in a complex indirect way. Gordon McQuere explains Asafiev’s broad perspective of the term “intonation” in English in his book \textit{Russian Theoretical Thought in Music}:

\textit{intonation [intonatsiia], Asafiev’s most important term, is the relationship of music to the environment, the way the nature of life is expressed in sound. While intonation is also a factor in speech, purely musical intonations are his specific concern.}\textsuperscript{108}

Broadly, any kind of human communication by means of sound [sic]. Intonation in music is distinguished from intonation in the speech by the use of intervals. Rhythmic intonation [ritmo-intonatsiia], as in chant, closely allies pitches and words. True musical intonation, potentially or actually independent of words, is the communicative essence of some musical structure, linking composer and listener through the medium of performance.\textsuperscript{109}

\textsuperscript{106} Tull, “Asaf’ev’s Musical Form,” 153.
\textsuperscript{107} Tull, 904.
\textsuperscript{108} McQuere, \textit{Russian Theoretical Thought in Music}, 224.
\textsuperscript{109} McQuere, 382.
Meanwhile, on the micro level, Asafiev approaches the term “intonation” from narrower angles. Intonation is involved in all aspects of musical sound, so the term “intonation” serves to designate individual figurative and semantic phenomena of musical art as musical speech. While the melody is the main carrier of the content of music, harmony, timbre, and rhythm are unthinkable without intonation as well:  

In a narrow sense it (intonation) may be an identifiable fragment that coincides with a motive, but it is not a structural unit. It may also be an entire section of a work. An intonation reflects the environment and era that created it and may also have some value as an image.  

Asafiev uses in his works the verb “to intone,” derived from the term intonation. He writes about the definition of this verb in his book *A Book about Stravinsky*:

I often use the term “intonation,” and I, therefore, state that I mean thereby the totality of sounds from whatever source, not only the audible music but the whole phenomena of sound, actually or potentially audible as music. To intone means to define a system of sound relationships.  

Another important concept is “intonational vocabulary” and “intonational analysis.” Tull translates and explains these terms in his dissertation *B. V. Asafev’s Musical Form as a Process: Translation and Commentary*:

The intonational vocabulary is conceived as an accumulation of musical ideas, often no more than fragments, which is crystallized in the collective consciousness of people within a given epoch and environment, and which represents the totality of all previous musical experiences of that epoch.  

The intonational analysis is clearly to be viewed as indicating an analysis of the communicative and expressive properties of the composition under study. As such - and this is repeatedly emphasized by Asaf’ev - it must proceed from what is heard; in other words, it must be analyzed first of all as a process occurring in

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110 Asafiev, *Музыкальная форма* [Musical form], 13.
113 Tull, “Asaf’ev’s Musical Form,” 159.
time. At the same time, it must be perceived as an immediate manifestation of a larger category which represents the product of generations of previous experience and social selection.\textsuperscript{114}

The first and the second books of \textit{Musical Form as a Process} were created in different periods of Asafiev's life. The first book was written primarily in 1925, prepared for publication in 1929, and published in 1930. The second book was primarily written during the Siege of Leningrad and published in 1947, just two years before Asafiev's death.\textsuperscript{115} Asafiev also had an idea for a third book that would focus on questions of form and style as phenomena of intonation, but his death did not allow him to implement this idea.

The title \textit{Musical Form as Process} reflects Asafiev's philosophical vision of the musical forms not only as constructive schemes but the organization of musical motion of musical material by purposeful and regulated distribution over a certain time period (musical material, by its nature, must always move and cannot be static) that is socially revealed and recognized by generations of human beings. McQuere states in his book \textit{Russian Theoretical Thought in Music}, "Its title, \textit{Musical Form as a Process}, indicates that it is anything but a conventional survey of traditional forms. In fact, it is an attempt to express his unique, personal concept of the origins and operations of music, coming closer to music philosophy than to a survey of forms."\textsuperscript{116} Asafiev summarizes the purpose of his first book \textit{Musical Form as a Process} in the final paragraph of his book:

\begin{quote}
I repeat, my main aspiration was to formulate in the most general terms the premises of the dialectic of musical formation, as they follow from the dynamic
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{114} Tull, 163.
\textsuperscript{115} Tull, 3.
\textsuperscript{116} McQuere, \textit{Russian Theoretical Thought in Music}, 218.
doctrine of musical form, a doctrine that denies the self-sufficient evolution of “silent” form-schemes and considers musical form as an intonational process of shaping, and therefore as a type of social discovery of music.\textsuperscript{117}

One of the fundamental ideas of Asafiev’s perspective and vision of musical form is that there can be no analysis of musical phenomena outside of the auditory perception: In music, nothing exists outside of the auditory experience. Therefore, not a single definition can arise from “silent” and abstract premises lying outside the material of music. It should arise only from a concrete understanding of what sounds are occurring.\textsuperscript{118}

The first book of \textit{Musical Form as a Process} consists of three parts that are framed by an introduction where the main question and problems of the book are introduced and two appendices. The first part, \textit{How Musical Formation Occurs}, describes the principles of a musical structure, such as resemblance and recurrence (recognition of similarity). The second part, \textit{Stimuli and Factors of Musical Formation}, focuses on specific techniques that are involved in initiating, continuing, and concluding musical motion. Asafiev derives from a formula consisting of impetus, motion, and conclusion, which can be applied to the musical structure as a whole and to each of its parts.\textsuperscript{119} The third part, \textit{Principles of Identity and Contrast: Their Exposure in Crystallized Forms},\textsuperscript{120} categorizes forms in terms of the organizational factors derived from either

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\textsuperscript{117} Asafiev, \textit{Музыкальная форма} [Musical form], 179.
\textsuperscript{118} Asafiev, 198.
\textsuperscript{119} Tull, “Asa'ev’s Musical Form,” 148.
\textsuperscript{120} Asafiev called recognized and established musical forms (for example, fugue or sonata allegro forms) that formed during experiments and adaptations of musical formation as crystallized forms.
\end{flushright}
resemblance or contrast. The classification of musical forms according to the principle of their development and not according to the final constructions is a unique trait of Asafiev’s vision of musical forms. Resemblance and contrast are the main musical factors facilitating musical development, but contrast can only be felt in the presence of identical elements.\textsuperscript{121} While the forms obtained from the principle of resemblance include variation forms, canon, fugues, rondo, etc., the most recognized form of the principle of contrast is the sonata-allegro form.\textsuperscript{122}

The second book of \textit{Musical Form as a Process}, titled \textit{Intonation}, has an introduction, twelve chapters, a conclusion, and an afterword. The afterword of the book \textit{Intonation} summarizes some ideas about modes, the expressive quality of intervals, the intonational essence of musical forms and their elements (cadences, periods), the intonational nature of musical instruments, and the interaction of style and form. This book is closely connected with many other works by Asafiev that preceded or were created around the same time such as, for example, two of his studies of the early 1940s: an intonational analysis of Tchaikovsky’s opera \textit{Eugene Onegin: The Experience of Intonational Analysis of Style and Musical Drama},\textsuperscript{123} and the monograph \textit{Glinka}.\textsuperscript{124}

Asafiev considered his second book \textit{Intonation} not only a continuation but a further development of his first book. In the introduction, he mentions that one of the

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\textsuperscript{121} Asafiev, \textit{Музыкальная форма} [Musical form], 127.
\textsuperscript{122} Asafiev, 118.
\textsuperscript{123} Asafiev, \textit{Евгений Онегин} [Eugene Onegin].
\textsuperscript{124} Asafiev, \textit{Глинка} [Glinka].
\end{flushright}
main goals of the second book is to research how sound is organized, what are the principles of intoning and how they express a certain meaning:125

Thought, intonation, and the forms of music - all exist in continuous connection: in order for all of them to be expressed by the sound, it becomes an intonation and then can be intoned. The process of intoning, in order to become not speech, but music, either merge with speech intonation and is transformed into a unity of rhythmic intonation of word and tone, into a new quality, rich with expressive possibilities, which is defined for a long time in the recognized forms and varied practices for centuries. Also, it can escape the words (in instrumental music), but it will experience the influence of the “speechless intonation” of rhythmic movement and the movements of humans (including the gesture language of the hand), the process of intoning becomes “musical speech,” “musical intonation.” 126

Asafiev acknowledges that it was a challenging process to express all of his ideas about the Theory of Intonation clearly: “I very much suffer from the inability to present this book in a literarily blameless manner, and I acknowledge the viscidity of its language.”127

The idea is that the process of intoning as a manifestation of thought determines the essence of the aesthetic orientation of Asafiev’s Theory of Intonation.128 The process of intoning is the process of perception of human consciousness in specific forms of musical art.129 Orlova mentions in the preface of the edition combining both books 1 and 2 of Musical Form as a Process that Asafiev persistently emphasized the idea of music as one of the forms of “figurative-cognitive activity of consciousness” as a “figurative-sound display reflection of reality”:

125 Asafiev, Музыкальная форма [Musical form], 211.
126 Asafiev, 211.
127 Asafiev, 214.
128 Asafiev, 211.
129 Asafiev, 11.
Intonation, according to Asafiev, connects everything that happens in music: creativity, performance, and listening. It also connects music with both the verbal speech of a person and the verbal arts (poetry, literature, theater), often clarifying, commenting, revealing the true meaning inherent in the words.\footnote{Asafiev, 11.}

\textit{The Intonation of Speech and the Intonation of Music}

Asafiev acknowledges the correlation between speech and musical intonation in his work \textit{Speech Intonation}, published in 1925, where he writes that speech and purely musical intonation are branches of one sound stream.\footnote{Orlova, \textit{Интонационная теория Асафьева} [Asafiev’s intonation theory], 173.} Asafiev analyzes both the intonation of speech and music and defines commonalities and differences between these two types of intonations. Although serving as a communication tool is the psychological function of both speech and musical intonation, Asafiev did not consider music as a derivative of verbal speech. Asafiev’s definitions of speech intonation and musical intonation are:

The intonation of speech is the interpretation of sounds not musically fixed, not stabilized in musical spaces, nor in the invariable relations of sounds that have become tones. Musical intonation is the interpretation of sounds already placed in a system of sound relations precisely fixed by the memory: a system of tones and tonalities.\footnote{Tull, “Asaf’ev’s Musical Form,” 543.}

The intonation of speech is a system or means for organizing coherent-sounding speech that includes the melodic lines of the speech (movement of the pitch, voice quality, and tone of the voice), stresses in the words and sentences, speed of speech, and pauses. The elements of intonation really exist only in unity when a person communicates using verbal speech. Every human being develops the ability of auditory
analysis of speech from the moment of birth, which becomes unconscious competence.\textsuperscript{133}

Common qualities of verbal speech intonation and musical intonation facilitate the process of intoning a melodic phrase. The ability to listen and analyze the structure of verbal speech and identify structural similarities in certain musical material aids the process of intoning and interpreting the musical phrase in numerous ways, such as finding climaxes, feeling the internal unity of individual shorter phrases among larger musical constructions, identifying the beginning and end of phrases or motives, etc.

One of the major differences between speech intonation and musical intonation is that musical intonation depends on the concept of fixed intervals. Composers of different periods preferred certain intervals. For example, the sixth is a characteristic interval of the romantic era.\textsuperscript{134}

In the Theory of Intonation, musical intonation is a type of figurative-musical speech during which, just as in the process of verbal speech, contact is created as well as the communication of ideas. Communication is established between a composer, a performer, and a listener during the music-making process. Asafiev compares a successful performance with a passionate speech.\textsuperscript{135} Moreover, Asafiev believed that the process of humanization of instrumental music derived from the human voice: “The process of the humanization of instrumentalism must not be understood as a crude

\textsuperscript{133} Unconscious competence is when the individual has enough experience with the skill that he or she can perform it so easily they do it unconsciously.
\textsuperscript{134} McQuere, \textit{Russian Theoretical Thought in Music}, 245.
\textsuperscript{135} Asafiev, \textit{Музыкальная форма} [Musical form], 298.
imitation of the human voice. It is not imitation but the search in instruments for the expressiveness and emotional warmth peculiar to the human voice; that is the essence of the process.”

The Melos as the Initial Expressive Tool in the Theory of Intonation

The term “melos” originated in ancient Greece, where this word denoted a tune, a melody, and sometimes just a lyrical poem intended for singing. While the ancient Greek theory of music associated this term with the melodic nature of musical art, the term “melos” began to be encountered more often in Western musicology in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Russian musicians had used the term “melos” before Asafiev. For example, Rimsky-Korsakov uses it in his article about his opera The Snow Maiden. Asafiev shares his thoughts about the term “melos” in his first book of Musical form as a Process:

I would recall that it rose in my consciousness in 1917, when I considered how to define that quality of music or musical formation in the occurrence of which the interchange of pitches, not as separate “points,” but in their interconditionality and their interconnection through “breathing,” appears as the chief operating force. The familiar concept, melody, has long been associated with limited forms of the occurrence of music, and has not served to unify all the properties and possibilities of melodic formation. After a while the concept “melos” flared up in Germany and has now become widely disseminated. This concept embodies the quality and functions of melodic formation; it is the catchword of music which is vital, real, emotionally responsive, in contrast to currents of effeminate estheticism or conservative philistinism and academicism.

It is important to note that Asafiev’s understanding of the term “melos” gradually evolved. Orlova compares the definition of this term in the early and later

137 Orlova, Интонационная теория Асафьева [Asafiev’s intonation theory], 162.
editions of his glossary of terms: “The melos is a melody, a song” in 1919, and “The melos (Greek – melody, song) – this concept combines all forms of melody and the properties of melody (or rather, melody) – the qualitative, expressive side of all types of sound relations as sequences in time” in the 1940s.139

Gordon McQuere summarizes Asafiev’s definitions of the term “melos” as: “The linear aspect of music. Melody is an instance of the melos, which includes "the quality and function of melodic formation.”140

Asafiev repeatedly mentions the importance of the melos as the leading element among other elements and methods of expression in music, as well as the major source for understanding and interpreting musical meaning throughout all of the years of development of the Theory of Intonation. Asafiev persistently emphasizes the melodic principle as a key element in the Theory of Intonation since he acknowledged the connection of the melos and speech as sound expressions of the human mind. A melodic line determines the direction and character of a certain musical segment:

The concept of horizontal as a melodic formation led to the insertion of new terms: line, design, linear, focal point, mode, melodic fabric, etc. The concepts of line and design suggest a feeling of plasticity in melodic motion and its direction; they impart a nuance of independence to the motion of the voice and, very importantly, stimulate dynamic perception of the musical horizontal as incessantly changeable - now thickening, now thinning, now full, now spare, now like a muscle, expanding and contracting, now a single-line unison, now giving off a sprout of a "supporting voice," now serene, now tortuous. Each melodic line is conditioned by breathing (of the human voice or an instrument), i.e., by a certain coefficient indicating the maximum durations and extents of intonations in relation to a given reserve of breath, a given length of the bow, the smooth motion of the hand, etc.141

139 Orlova, Интонационная теория Асафьева [Asafiev’s intonation theory], 173.
140 McQuere, Russian Theoretical Thought in Music, 382.
Asafiev believed that the melos was the “soul of music” because it was a reflection of the main qualities of human “vocal speech,” such as pronunciation in tone and voice continuity.\textsuperscript{142} Asafiev always tried to connect instrumental playing with both human voice and singing. As a music critic, Asafiev often focused on the ability of a performer to interpret melodic lines and to express the emotional essence of melodies. Traditionally, pedagogues of the Russian Piano School focus on the ability of students to play and interpret melodic lines from the first lessons. Neuhaus mentions it in his book \textit{The Art of Piano Playing}:

\begin{quote}
Work on the artistic image should begin at the very first stage of learning the piano and note reading. By this I mean that if a child is able to reproduce some very simple melody, it is essential to make this first “performance” expressive, in other words, that the nature of the performance should correspond to the nature (the “content”) of the melody; for this purpose, it is especially advisable to use folk tunes in which the emotional and poetic element is much more apparent than even in the best educational compositions for children. The child should be made, at the earliest possible stage, to play a sad melody sadly, a gay melody gaily, a solemn melody solemnly, etc., and should make his musical and artistic intention completely clear.\textsuperscript{143}

The process of intoning the melos is influenced by breathing. As a singer has to breathe when performing, an instrumentalist should have breathing points in the music: “In terms of importance, musical content cannot exist without breathing, organized by natural rhythm.”\textsuperscript{144} Asafiev mentioned numerous examples of how breathing affects the process of intoning the melos, this is one of these examples: “Short or long breathing has an influence on the structure and breakdown of music, on its contraction and

\textsuperscript{142} Asafiev, \textit{Музыкальная форма} [Musical form], 357.
\textsuperscript{143} Neuhaus, \textit{The Art of Piano Playing}, 11.
\textsuperscript{144} Asafiev, \textit{Музыкальная форма} [Musical form], 299.
expansion, on the length of the ascending and descending motion of melodic arcs - in a word, on the dynamics of the melos.”\(^{145}\)

Asafiev closely associates the concept of “tone” with human breath and the voice: “Tone, the tension or effort required for the expression of an affect, of a prolonged emotional state (it does not matter whether in musical tone or word), evolved in close connection with the evolution of the human ‘public’ ear.”\(^{146}\) Asafiev also uses the term “tonation” to mean the manifestation of tone:

> It is not simply the expression of a separate affect (a shout, an interjection). It is always a formation, i.e., is given as continuity, as fluidity, as vocal tonus, the limits of which are naturally defined by the method of breathing and the characteristics of breath. This continuity is governed by rhythm and timbre. The latter quality permits us freely to distinguish the voice of one’s mother, of a beloved woman, of one’s own child, etc.; furthermore, an emotional image, such as anger, endearment, greeting, terror, etc., may be expressed in timbre, independent of the pronounced word or phrase, but very meaningful and significant with respect to the tonus of sound.\(^{147}\)

McQuere summarizes Asafiev’s definitions of the term “tonation” as “the manifestation of tone, possesses continuity and timbre, which permit identification and character.”\(^{148}\)

Asafiev mentions that for pianists it is flattering to hear that their instruments are “singing,” and that the hands of pianists can almost “put a voice” into instrumental intonation. Such an expression as “this pianist’s tone is singing and beautiful” means that a pianist has a certain touch of keys that is expressive and counteracts the

\(^{146}\) Tull, 929.
\(^{147}\) Tull, 929–930.
\(^{148}\) McQuere, Russian Theoretical Thought in Music, 246.
instrument's percussiveness. According to Asafiev, “to have tone” is “to keep some quality of sound consistently, without interruption, like the natural smoothness and clarity of well-delivered speech by a human voice.” Any instrumental player should be meaningful and expressive when producing any sound.

In the Theory of Intonation, tone and tonation are connected with the quality of intervals as correlations between different pitch points of spoken speech. If in verbal speech the interval in its pitch quality is relative to a certain extent, the interval in music is the exact determinant of the emotional semantic quality of the intonation.

One of the primary expressive unities of intonation is an interval. The interval, governed (organized) by rhythm, forms the simplest, shortest, and most persistently expressive rhythmic intonational form (a metric foot) - either iambic or trochaic, depending on the distribution of durations (quantitative rhythm) or accents (tonic rhythm).

Certain traditions of intervallic organization form the styles and individual musical traits of composers:

Intervals, as a form of expression in any given system of tones, any scale, comprise intonational indicators which are in constant operation (stability, pitch range, the degree of tension of a tone, all of which are qualitatively different for different instruments). But the prevalence of any interval in the music of any time period or genre, within a given epoch, is a consequence of intonational selection, occurring under the influence of the public consciousness, and becomes a manifestation of style.

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149 Asafiev, Музыкальная форма [Musical form], 216.
150 Asafiev, 16.
151 Iambic and trochaic rhythms concepts are derived from the rhythms of poems. In poems, iambic rhythm is when an unstressed syllable is followed by a stressed one, while trochaic rhythm is when a stressed syllable is followed by an unstressed one. These rhythms can be recognized in music as well.
152 Asafiev, Музыкальная форма [Musical form], 220.
Asafiev discusses some musically significant intervals, such as the fourth intervals in the melos of French bourgeois revolution music, the sixth intervals in the music of romantic composers, the augmented fourth and diminished fifth intervals among the Russian Mighty Five composers, the intervals of the fifth among the French Impressionists, etc.\(^{154}\)

Each interval is recognized and perceived by the ear, and the melody manifests and expresses the intervals in the Theory of Intonation.\(^{155}\) Asafiev emphasized that every aspect of music is a process. As he characterized musical form as a process, not just a scheme, Asafiev considered an interval not just as a vertical or horizontal measurement between two pitches but as the process of movement from sound to sound with rising of tension, elasticity, and resistance in the process of sensation. Asafiev believed in the vocal nature of every interval in any music, including instrumental music: “If one does not train oneself to perfection in the ‘vocal,’ i.e., the ‘tangible,’ feeling of the tension of intervals and their interrelations, their resiliency, their resistance, it is not possible to understand ‘what intonation in music is.’”\(^{156}\)

\textit{Rhythm and Timbre in the Theory of Intonation}

The melos and speech inevitably exist within the conditions of specific rhythms or timbres. Both rhythm and timbre have intonational traits and express the artistic meaning of music.\(^{157}\)

\(^{154}\) Asafiev, \\(\text{Музыкальная форма [Musical form], 345.}\)
\(^{155}\) Asafiev, 219.
\(^{156}\) Asafiev, 226.
\(^{157}\) Orlova, \\(\text{Интонационная теория Асафьева [Asafiev's intonation theory], 182.}\)
Asafiev believed that the biological origin of musical rhythm came from breathing that facilitated the economic distribution of energy for any task.\(^{158}\) As music has rhythm, our body has certain rhythms that change or alternate in the multitude of our sensations and the work of muscles, for example, in the alternation of disequilibrium and balance, in ascending and descending, in a heartbeat, etc.:

Rhythm, of course, is always the constructive and organizing principle of “breathing” and of the regularity of motion, but it is closely fused with the elements of music. It always constructs and organizes something, but, in general, does not systematize. This “something” is intonation, but concrete intonation - vocal and instrumental melody or a succession of chords.\(^{159}\)

Neuhaus incorporates Asafiev’s vision about rhythm to his teaching approach:

The pulse of a healthy person is regular but accelerates or decelerates under the stress of physical or psychological experience. The same applies to music. But just as every heathy organism has a regular rhythmical pattern for its vital functions, which is close to meter, so, too, in performing a musical composition, rhythm should, in general, be nearer to metre than to arrhythmia, more like a healthy pulse than a seismographic record of an earthquake. One of the requirements of a “healthy” rhythm is that the total of accelerations and decelerations, and indeed of all rhythmic changes in general throughout the work, should be equal to a constant so that the arithmetic mean of the rhythm (i.e., the time needed to perform the work, divided by the unit of time, for instance, a crotchet) should also be constant and be equal to the basic metric duration.\(^{160}\)

Asafiev considers rhythm as the “intonational core” and an essential structural element of music.\(^{161}\) Rhythm merges with all the elements of music and should be interpreted holistically: there cannot be an unintoned rhythm.\(^{162}\) The ear distinguishes

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\(^{158}\) Asafiev, Путеводитель по концертам [Concert guide], 114.


\(^{161}\) Asafiev, Музыкальная форма [Musical form], 312.

\(^{162}\) Asafiev, 311.
not only the distance of tones (pitch ratios) but also their distribution in time because of rhythm. Rests are also parts of the rhythm, so they do not stop musical movement and “do not turn off perception from the circle of sound conjugation.”

Asafiev considers the art of pianism as one of the highest intellectual cultures of the intonational realization of timbre that demands the most subtle auditory attention despite the “acoustical limitation” of the piano:

The history of pianoforte construction reveals, in it “changes of character” the struggle of intonational determinants. In the striving toward intonational fluidity on the harpsichord, a most refined technique of ornamentation was worked out. But this refinement was consigned to oblivion under the impact of the melodic, anti-chamber culture with its concertante style, which was, of course, coarser than the harpsichord style, but answered the new expressiveness. Naturally, the pianoforte and the grand piano prevailed over the harpsichord with their melodic possibilities. The piano ceases to be just a percussion instrument when a pianist understands the orchestral instrumentation that influenced and inspired piano music and expresses it in the process of intoning of timbre. Asafiev discusses the timbre of Chopin's music:

Chopin proved that the piano is, in essence, the "speech of timbres," sensitive, passionate, contrasting in its pathos. Indeed, if the "atmosphere of timbre," the breath of Chopin's melodic material, is removed, the music, in many of its features, withers. This is an indication that the charm and force of Chopin rests in his bewitching, logical knowledge of the "instrumentation" of the pianoforte.

Neuhaus supports Asafiev’s idea of the importance of Asafiev’s recommendations about intoning timbre:

Because the piano is, as I believe, the most intellectual instrument and is not endowed with the emotional substance of other instruments, the player’s imagination should, indeed must, be peopled by the most expressive and specific

163 Asafiev, 65.
165 Tull, 870–871.
musical images, by every existing variety of shade and timbre contained in the human voice and in every instrument on earth in order to reveal fully all the wealth of the piano’s potential.166

Musical Form, Musical Style, and the Art of Interpretation in the Theory of Intonation

In the Theory of Intonation, Asafiev considered musical form and style as phenomena of the process of intoning. Both books of Musical Form as a Process are full of chronological historical facts that trace the intonational evolution of musical forms and expansion of boundaries of musical styles in Europe from the first attempts at polyphony in the ninth century to complex romantic symphonies of Bruckner or Mahler and operas of Wagner in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Asafiev states that the evolution of music is periodically interrupted by crises of intonation that may foreshadow political and social change. The reforms of Peter I in Russia, for example, led to cultural changes in the country that influenced musical art. Asafiev writes that “the sharp turn to Western European instrumentalism, with its academic norms, transferred almost mechanically onto Russian soil, evoked a complex and prolonged intonational crisis,”167 which was the need for a new method of hearing and understanding music.

When the intonation crisis occurred, the intonational expectations of society were rapidly changing.

Asafiev’s work is permeated with a profound sense of history. Observing the development of musical art, he provides theoretical and aesthetic generalizations based on historical facts. Asafiev identified and observed patterns and trends of music and

166 Neuhaus, The Art of Piano Playing, 64.
formed intonational vocabularies of different epochs and composers: “Intonational habits acquired through several generations gradually become blunted, and the associations and semantics connected with them (for example, F Major as the sphere of the pastorale quality) expose their conditional nature.”

Asafiev believed that the comprehension of intonational vocabulary was essential for the process of intoning and performance:

Some patterns tend to repeat in the musical works of a particular era and become musical semantic patterns that reveal the content of music as one of the forms of social consciousness. Observing the existence of repetitive characteristics of the music of a particular historical era, a performer can find the intonations of certain periods or composers, such as, the Roman style of a capella, Mussorgsky’s populist operas, Debussy’s impressionist sound painting, etc. These constant and repetitive musical patterns or sound images determine the style of certain eras and composers.

Asafiev’s observations and conclusions about the melodic nature of music, common and uncommon traits of speech and music intonation, rhythm and timbre as musical expression were part of developing the philosophical vision of musical form as a process. All the aspects of music and musical form exist in their undeniable unity.

The essential issue of musical form for Asafiev is the nature of form as a process that operates in time. Asafiev perceived musical form as a way of social identification and recognition of the music as well as a phenomenon comprehended in the deployment of meaning. He believed that the musical form should be understood beyond constructive schemes; it should be analyzed as a process of the formation of an

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168 Tull, 556.
169 Asafiev, Путеводитель по концертам [Concert guide], 56.
170 McQuere, Russian Theoretical Thought in Music, 247.
artistic image. Asafiev even compares musical form with a musical instrument: “form, like a musical instrument, is a tool for treating the material of music.” The musical form is established in the process of development, and as a result of this process, it has a certain structure.

Asafiev created the term “symphonism” that can be applied to any music, including instrumental music:

Symphonism [simfonizm], one of Asafiev’s earliest concepts, is the potential of music to be symphonic, to be developmental. The term may apply to any kind of music, even opera. In 1918 he described symphonism as the “continuous nature of a musical thought [soznanie].” In the early 1920s he called it the “creative comprehension and expression of the world of feelings and ideas in a continuous musical current.” In his last years he distinguished between two types of symphonism: intellectual and pictorial (or representative).

Symphonism [simfonizm]. The symphonic principle of development applied to all music, not just symphonies; the dramatic developmental potential of music.

Symphonism in the Theory of Intonation is a continuity of musical awareness when every musical element of musical form is considered holistically among the multiplicity of the rest of the elements of musical material. A pianist must develop the skill of perceiving any musical form holistically in order to have a flowing and coherent performance.

Asafiev defines style as “attribute, manner, characteristic features, summation, and finally, a system of expressive traits.” Musical styles of compositions or

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171 Asafiev, Музыкальная форма [Musical form], 185.
172 Asafiev, 8.
173 McQuere, Russian Theoretical Thought in Music, 224.
174 McQuere, 382.
175 Asafiev, Путеводитель по концертам [Concert guide], 137.
performance practices of a certain time period, classes, and their individual representatives, as well as types of works, are distinguished according to these expressive traits.

Orlova identifies four aspects of Asafiev's analytical observations regarding style in the Theory of Intonation. The first aspect is the clarification of the intonational genesis and the discovery of intonational sources in a given work. It is primarily identifying melodic sources and the most valuable aspects of the melos for understanding the artistic value of composition. The second aspect of stylistic observation is the analysis of the genre traditions of a composition. The third aspect is the determination of the traits of the characteristics of thematic material movement in a piece. It is the definition of style through the analysis of the thematic development of a piece. The fourth aspect is the stylistic analysis of the primary expressive features of the musical language, such as melody, harmony, rhythm, and texture.176

According to Asafiev, the style of musical performance is actually “art within art.”177 A performer has to present a reproduction based on the mastery of a composer. The primary goal of a performer is to present a composed piece to the listeners. Unfortunately, an inappropriate performance style of a performer or a conductor can completely distort the musical ideas of a composer. Asafiev observes that the piano performance is a very sensitive process where the slightest intonational nuance, which could be even due to the structure of the pianist’s hand, can lead to a stylistic imbalance.

176 Orlova, Интонационная теория Асафьева [Asafiev’s intonation theory], 239–240.
177 Asafiev, Путеводитель по концертам [Concert guide], 137.
between the performance and the music being played.\textsuperscript{178} The quality of a performance influences the perception of a musical piece by listeners: “A musical composition has a life that depends on its performance, subsequent recollection, reinterpretation, and discussion. If the work succeeds and is understood, fragments enter the musical consciousness of the general public as memorable moments of music that have an independent artistic life.”\textsuperscript{179}

Asafiev followed the Rubinstein brothers’ ideas about the performance practice philosophy being not based purely only on finger dexterity and technical development. He believed that virtuosity as brilliance and perfection of technique must not exist without serious work on expressive qualities of the melodic and instrumental style.\textsuperscript{180} Asafiev mentions that pianists communicate during performances through touché.\textsuperscript{181} Only the natural touch of the key overcoming the percussive nature of the piano can express musical meaning: “A strike on a key and a separate sound that has arisen without further continuation does not form music. Only a push or a blow that draws our consciousness into the system of sound relations acquires a musical meaning.”\textsuperscript{182} Every aspect of the technique should facilitate the process of intoning.

Interpretation, according to Asafiev, is a “performance of a musical work, in other words, reasonable, organized, and not random reproduction of music.”\textsuperscript{183} The art

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
    \item \textsuperscript{178} Asafiev, 143.
    \item \textsuperscript{179} McQuere, \textit{Russian Theoretical Thought in Music}, 239.
    \item \textsuperscript{180} Asafiev, \textit{Музыкальная форма} [Musical form], 322.
    \item \textsuperscript{181} The term “touché” means the manner in which piano keys are touched while playing. This term is widely used in the Russian Piano School written sources.
    \item \textsuperscript{182} Asafiev, \textit{Музыкальная форма} [Musical form], 55.
    \item \textsuperscript{183} Asafiev, \textit{Путеводитель по концертам} [Concert guide], 54.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
of performance is not only interpretation but also the art of intonation. Asafiev summarizes the value of the Theory of Intonation in the performance practice:

The value of intonation is extremely important because music is predominantly an intonational art. Intonation introduces significant deviations into works without changing their basic constructive characteristics. When there is no longer evidence of the tradition of performance practice, intonation can influence the interpretation of the work by introducing new expressive ideas into the performance. Intonation is the qualitative side of sound production, “understanding” and “representation of the soul” of sounds. While mechanical articulation is the passive presentation of the sound, intonation constitutes the most important feature of music as a living expressive speech. Of course, a performer must consider the expenditure of energy to overcome the material's resistance because the musical tone is not abstract. It is revealed through the material environment mediating sound production (the instrument and its mechanism). Meanwhile, the acoustical qualitative side of any sound during the moment of sound extraction, like purity and accuracy, is closely connected with the desirable music expression. Music exists not as a sound wave that can be measured, but it is full of meaning and depth beyond measurable aspects.\(^{184}\)

Asafiev’s method of musical analysis in the context of the Theory of Intonation is multilateral and holistic: an analysis of the stylistic patterns in a particular genre, observations on the stylistic traits of individual composers, general observations related to a certain style or period, and identification of national traits of musical material.\(^{185}\)

The main purpose of the Theory of Intonation is to express and communicate the meaning of all the aspects of any musical piece:

The Theory of Intonation facilitates taking musical ideas beyond the limits of formal analysis and forcing musicians to think about the connections of music sounds with social and stylistic contexts. Moreover, this approach encourages musicians to think about the sources of musical intonations such as human speech, noises, sounds of the surrounding life and nature, etc. The doctrine of intonation can help to understand deeply how to interpret and perform the works of any composer. For example, Mussorgsky observed musical qualities and expressive tools in the Russian language and actively used them in his...

\(^{184}\) Asafiev, 55.

\(^{185}\) Orlova, Интонационная теория Асафьева [Asafiev’s intonation theory], 239.
compositions. He did not rely as much on the trends of composition techniques of his predecessors. Meanwhile, Debussy strived to enrich the musical language by looking for new intonations, mainly in the sounds, noises, and rhythms of nature.\textsuperscript{186}

Asafiev’s Theory of Intonation is a philosophical and aesthetic study that explains the historical and theoretical aspects of musical art comprehensively. By creating the Theory of Intonation, Asafiev followed the traditions of the Rubinstein brothers, who created a model of education with the primary goal of preparing well-rounded musicians who are extensively knowledgeable about music and art. The Theory of Intonation facilitates the development of one of the main traits of a well-rounded musician: an ability to understand, analyze and interpret musical pieces. Asafiev presented a unique method that educated and shaped the minds of a generation of musicians. The Russian Piano School masters shared the goal of raising generations of not only skilled pianists but educated musicians. Neuhaus mentions his teacher Godowsky: “During the lesson Godowsky was not a teacher of piano, but first and foremost a teacher of music, or exactly what any real artist, musician, pianist, becomes the moment he begins to teach.”\textsuperscript{187}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{186} Asafiev, Путеводитель по концертам [Concert guide], 56–57.  
\textsuperscript{187} Neuhaus, The Art of Piano Playing, 14.
\end{flushright}
CHAPTER 4

THE APPLICATION OF ASAFIEV’S THEORY OF INTONATION IN PIANO PEDAGOGY

Asafiev’s holistic vision of musical art and the Theory of Intonation serves as the methodological support for performance practice and pedagogical approaches in the Russian Piano School. One of the Russian Piano School’s primary goals is to prepare skillful pianists and educate generations of versatile and well-rounded musicians. These musicians should be spiritually developed, knowledgeable about all the aspects of musical art, critical and analytical thinkers, and responsible educators with a sense of duty to share their knowledge and pass it on to future generations.

The Theory of Intonation facilitates both performance practice skills and the development of general musicianship as it comprehensively discusses music history, music theory, and music pedagogy. Samuil Feinberg discusses how all qualities should be combined and enable a pianist to become an artist in his book The Art of Being a Pianist:

Only a combination of many qualities, interconnected, and creatively combined, creates a real pianist. Demanding taste must rely on technical perfection, intuition on a conscious understanding of form, and individual qualities on the

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188 Alexandr Nikolaev, Очерки по истории фортепианной педагогики и истории пианизма [Essays about the history of piano pedagogy and the history of pianism]. (Moscow: Музыка, 1980), 78.
ability to evaluate objectively. Outward virtuosity should not get ahead of the true, all-round development of mastery, variety of temperament should be combined with a wisely constructed plan, spontaneity with the deep creative experience.\textsuperscript{189}

This chapter will discuss the application of Asafiev’s Theory of Intonation in piano performance and pedagogy. Performance and teaching suggestions will be illustrated with musical examples based on the idea that applying the Theory of Intonation in piano performance and teaching means meaningful and expressive analysis of music, in which the identification of relations between the elements of music composition and aspects of the musical form is achieved based on a holistic organization of artistic means in specific stylistic, semantic, genre, and textural contexts.

It is essential to note that there is no unified approach or scheme of application of the Theory of Intonation in piano pedagogy. The musical notation of a composition is an integral system of relations that has unlimited possibilities for sound expression. The performer’s choice of how to intone each element of the musical text is determined by many aspects, such as traditions of the style of composition, traditions of performance practice of a certain time period, emotional and semantic meaning, specific composer’s traits, the performer’s personal vision of the composition, etc. The Theory of Intonation introduces pianists to the choices they can make in communicating piano compositions to the audience.

Traditionally, the Russian Piano School teaching approaches focused on finding the artistic meaning of the musical piece by analyzing the intonational nature of the

\textsuperscript{189} Feinberg, \textit{Мастерство Пианиста} [The art of being a pianist], 527.
musical form as a whole structure and discovering the elements (such as the melos, phrasing, rhythm, etc.) that create a particular musical image. Meanwhile, all of the elements of technique are tools for facilitating artistic image expression.\textsuperscript{190} What musicians want to express defines how they will proceed. Heinrich Neuhaus comments in his book \textit{The Art of Piano Playing}:

\begin{quote}
My method of teaching, briefly, consists of ensuring that the player should as early as possible (after a preliminary acquaintance with the composition and mastering it, if only roughly) grasp what we call “the artistic image,” that is: the content, meaning, the poetic substance, the essence of the music, and be able to understand thoroughly in terms of theory of music (naming it, explaining it), what it is he is dealing with. A clear understanding of this goal enables the player to strive for it, to attain it, and embody it in his performance; and that is what “technique” is about.\textsuperscript{191}
\end{quote}

While leading pedagogues and pianists of the Russian Piano School, such as Konstantin Igumnov, Alexandr Goldenweiser, Heinrich Neuhaus, Samuil Feinberg, Dmitry Kabalevsky, Vera Gornostayeva, and others, shared common teaching values; they also had distinctive ways of applying the Theory of Intonation in their teaching approaches. Indeed, every piano teacher can develop unique ways of incorporating different aspects of the Theory of Intonation in their teaching. Although the Theory of Intonation can be applied to any piano piece, the teaching approaches should always be student-specific and age/level appropriate. The author of this study received her initial musical training, as well as bachelor’s and master’s degrees in music, in Russia, where Asafiev’s ideas are a standard methodology for the majority of musical disciplines. While it is an impossible task to demonstrate all the possibilities of the application of the

\textsuperscript{190} Nikolaev, \textit{Очерки} [Essays], 79.
\textsuperscript{191} Neuhaus, \textit{The Art of Piano Playing}, 2.
Theory of Intonation within one study, the author will present ideas that can be extensively used in piano teaching.

Table 4.1 contains terms of the Theory of Intonation, discussed in depth in chapter three, that are essential for further discussion:

Table 4.1 The Theory of Intonation Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Musical form</td>
<td>is a shape that is operating in time. It is unique to one musical work. Form and content are seen as related manifestations of intonations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intonation</td>
<td>is the organization of acoustical media by the human consciousness into meaningfully expressive sound correlations. Musical intonation is considered as an expressive and semantic element that connects music with humankind's existence and history through a series of associations in a complex indirect way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To intone</td>
<td>to define a system of sound relationships. (The verb is derived from the word “intonation.”)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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192 McQuere, *Russian Theoretical Thought in Music*, 382.
The intonational vocabulary is conceived as an accumulation of musical ideas, often no more than fragments, which are crystallized in the collective consciousness of people within a given epoch and environment, and which represents the totality of all previous musical experiences of that epoch.\(^{195}\)

The intonational analysis is clearly to be viewed as indicating an analysis of the communicative and expressive properties of the composition under study.\(^{196}\)

The melos is the concept that combines all forms of melody and the properties of melody. It is the qualitative, expressive side of all types of sound relations as sequences in time.\(^{197}\)

Tone is the tension or effort required for the expression of an affect of a prolonged emotional state (it does not matter whether in musical tone or word), evolved in close connection with the evolution of the human “public” ear.\(^{198}\)

Tonation is the manifestation of tone, possessing continuity and timbre, which permit identification and character.\(^{199}\)

It is important to note that intonation as a term has multiple meanings. In this chapter, intonation will be viewed as a concept that expresses the sound embodiment of musical thought and the carrier of musical content. According to the Theory of

\(^{195}\) Tull, “Asaf’ev’s Musical Form,” 159.

\(^{196}\) Tull, 163.

\(^{197}\) Orlova, Интонационная теория Асафьева [Asafiev’s intonation theory], 173.

\(^{198}\) Tull, “Asaf’ev’s Musical Form,” 929.

\(^{199}\) McQuere, Russian Theoretical Thought in Music, 246.
Intonation, the art of performance is the art of intoning. Intonation connects music, performer, instrument, and audience. The Theory of Intonation makes it possible to consider the process of performing in its unity with the composer’s intentions and the listener's perception. Intonation is closely related to all elements of piano playing. If performers do not intone and understand musical compositions holistically, they cannot express the composers’ ideas and communicate these ideas along with their interpretations. As in the Russian Piano School teaching traditions, all the elements of technique and artistry lead to the expression of the artistic meaning of the composition, and all the elements of the Theory of Intonation lead to the same goal of communicating this artistic meaning to the listener.

The elements of the Theory of Intonation co-exist together, facilitating a comprehensive perspective of the composition or certain aspects of the composition. Asafiev discusses the melodic principle as a key element in the Theory of Intonation and emphasizes the importance of the melos as one of the most significant aspects of music for expressing musical meaning. It is important to note that the piano is not a monophonic instrument, so all the elements of the musical texture should be intoned from the perspective of the melos. The melos exists under conditions of a certain rhythm and timbre. Meanwhile, musical form as a process and style are considered as phenomena of the process of intoning.

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200 Asafiev, Музыкальная форма [Musical form], 295.
201 Orlova, Интонационная теория Асафьева [Asafiev’s intonation theory], 173.
202 Orlova, 182.
Pianists should understand holistically the musical form as a process happening during a certain time. Malinovskaya describes three levels of musical form perception:

The First level - small units: supporting voices, motives, and small phrases. It is called phonic (phonetic), as it correlates with the phonemes of speech (sounds, syllables). The second scale-temporal level - phrases, sentences, and sometimes entire periods. It is the syntactic level, as it is correlated with the syntactic units of speech by phrases, phrases. The third is the scale-time level, called the compositional level, which covers the largest units of form from all the elements to the whole work. 203

Music flows on these levels simultaneously and continuously as analogous to physical time, flowing into seconds to minutes, minutes to hours, etc. 204

The discussion of the following musical examples will present the practical application of the Theory of Intonation. However, it is important to note that this process of application of the Theory of Intonation is unique to each individual pianist. The author will introduce a few measures of piano pieces from the standard teaching repertoire and explore how Asafiev’s ideas can be applied on the phonic and syntactic levels of musical form perception. The Theory of Intonation will be applied on the compositional level of musical form in the discussion of Dumka by Tchaikovsky. The author chose musical excerpts from editions published before 1923 for illustration of most musical examples due to copyright laws. According to these laws, these chosen examples (published before 1923) can freely be used without the permission of publishers. The author will present these examples to illustrate the ideas of the Theory of Intonation application without implying or suggesting favoring these editions.

204 Malinovskaya, 198.
As discussed earlier, the melos is the key element for expressing musical meaning and ideas in the Theory of Intonation. When pianists work on a musical piece, they should consider the following principles of the Theory of Intonation that can be applied to any melos in any piano piece:

1. Connection of the melos and verbal speech, as both of them are sound expressions of the human mind. Analyzing the structure of verbal speech and identifying structural similarities in the melos help with the phrasing and recognition of the climaxes of the melos. Pianists can use subtexts and associate the melos with the word as a practice method. It helps with intonational comprehension of the rhythmic organization of the melos, shaping, and phrasing.

2. The melos is vocally conceived. When pianists work on the melos, they should be employ different singing practice strategies, such as singing the melodic line while playing it, singing the melodic line before playing it, audiating melodic lines, alternating playing and singing in certain measures of the melodic line, etc. The melos is also influenced by breathing. Pianists should find breathing points in the melos and observe rests and caesuras. Music should continue through rests, although pianists must acknowledge each rest in their playing.

3. The melos consists of intervals. An interval is not just a vertical or horizontal measurement between two pitches, but it is the primary expressive tool in the Theory of Intonation. The process of moving from sound to sound should be intoned to reveal the

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205 A caesura is a metrical pause or break in a verse where one phrase ends and another phrase begins.
emotional and psychological essence, rising of tension, elasticity, and resistance in the process of sensation of each interval.

4. The melos should always have a direction. The decay of piano sound makes it impossible for pianists to control how sound is developing once a key is pressed. Still, pianists can control how the next sound will be produced and ensure that it fits into a melodic line. Neuhaus comments on this aspect of piano playing in his book *The Art of Piano Playing*:

> Time and again I have to remind pupils that long notes (minims, semibreves, notes lasting several bars) must, as a rule, be played with more force than the shorter notes that accompany them (quavers, semiquavers, demi-semiquavers, etc.). This again being due to the fundamental “defect” of the piano: the extinction of its tone (with the organ this rule obviously does not apply). I have often been amazed to find that even very talented pupils did not always appear to have a sufficiently demanding ear in this respect and did not render the musical texture with sufficient plasticity.

Each note of the melos should be either slighter louder or softer than the previous note to have a smooth melos with a direction that expresses the musical ideas of the melos.\(^\text{206}\)

*Fugue in C-sharp Minor, BWV 849 and Prelude in C Minor, BWV 999* by Johann Sebastian Bach

Asafiev gives numerous examples of analysis of Bach’s music in both books of *Musical Form as a Process*. When it comes to intoning Bach’s music on the piano, it is important to understand that the means of expression of Bach’s music were different due to the constraints of the instruments of the time. Harpsichordists and organists had

\(^{206}\) Neuhaus, *The Art of Piano Playing*, 76.
no power over the timbre and quality of sound through the touché as do modern pianists. The primary expressive means of the intonational vocabulary of the Baroque period were through rhythm (using agogic accents, ritenuto, and so on) and the melos (recognizing the intervallic nature of the melos). Viewing harmonic progressions holistically and understanding their directions in Bach’s music facilitates the feeling of the flow of the music.

The feeling of the quality of each interval in the melos of each voice is even more essential for intoning Baroque music, including Bach’s music, due to limited means of expression compared to music from the Classical and Romantic periods. Generally, each interval should be considered in the context of a given melos, and it would have a different emotion, level of tension, and color. Pianists should be able to express through sound the essence of each interval by understanding what they want to play before playing and then expressing their ideas while playing. While it is possible to explain theoretically how this process works, eventually, pianists develop an intonational intuition as they learn the intonational vocabulary of well-known composers of the Baroque period.

Asafiev gives a detailed intonational analysis of the theme of the Fugue in C-sharp Minor, BWV 849 (Figure 4.1):

The correlation C#, B#, E, D#, C# - the theme of the C# minor fugue is intensively concentrated. One has only to alter the correlation of the tones thus: C#, B, E, D#, C#, and the sharpness is gone. The point is that in the theme selected by Bach each moment of progression from sound to sound evokes a tense expectancy in the ear. The leading tone, B# follows the tonic C#; this first correlation [that is, tonic to leading tone] is already a succession of tones contrary to the normal progression. Next, the significance of B# as a leading tone is so undermined by its “leap” of a diminished fourth, that to the ear it
constitutes (enharmonically) a major third. Thus, the second correlation contains a dual character for aural evaluation, for the hearing of music is, I repeat, a process of the most intensive comparison of each intoned moment with that which precedes and that which follows it. The duality is revealed by the fact that, taken outside its relation to C# independently, the correlation B# and E is perceived as a consonant, just the same as if we had sounded the correlation C# and E without the B#. But C# and E through B# gives a feeling of instability and demands continuation. At this point, the new relation, E and D# is intoned in which D#, as if it were the initial tonic according to its duration, is twice the length of either B# or E. This new feature complicates the relation, for even if the correlations C# and B# and E and D# were rhythmically identical, and even with the obvious presence of ascent, the comparison does not lead the ear to a feeling of equilibrium, since D# in relation to B# is a minor third, and in relation to the initial tonic as a minor third, and in relation to the initial tonic is a major second. Moreover, D# emphasizes the dissonance B# and E, and the stop on D# before its drop to the point of departure, C#, accentuates still more instability and expectancy. But at the moment when the C# sounds, balancing the whole formula, the answer (G#) enters, begins to intone the theme a fifth higher, and thereby, picks up the motion.²⁰⁷

![Figure 4.1 Johann Sebastian Bach, Fugue in C-sharp Minor, BWV 849, mm. 1–10.](image)

This intonational analysis looks complex, but it shows how each interval of the subject of Fugue in C-sharp Minor can be intoned and the importance of intoning each interval in the context of the whole melos. Obviously, each voice in the fugue has a different timbre. All of the voices should be considered as independent, but when they are played together, the vertical interval relationships between voices should be intoned holistically. Experienced performers are familiar with Bach’s intonational vocabulary and intuitively express all the correlations of the intervals without the need

for such detailed analysis, but beginner and intermediate pianists need more guidance from their teachers.

Prelude in C Minor, BWV 999 (Figure 4.2) was originally composed for the lute, but it has since been adapted for various instruments, including the piano and the guitar.

![Figure 4.2 Johann Sebastian Bach, Prelude in C Minor, BWV 999, mm. 1–7.](image)

The main element of musical development of this piece is harmony, as repetitive rhythms and harmonic changes express the unstoppable flow of the piece. In order to intone this piece, pianists should practice the right hand of the prelude with blocked chords when all of the notes of each are played together. Besides learning each chord position and identifying common notes of chords, pianists should feel the connection of each chord to the next one, as well as notice how tensions and releases of chord progressions are built.

The right hand of the prelude is entirely based on the arpeggio technique and is challenging, as each note should be played with an even tone. Pianists should practice each rhythmic group of four notes with stops on the first, second, third, and fourth sixteenth notes.
The strong beat of each measure in the left hand has multiple intonational functions as the bass note of each chord and as part of the melodic line. The motion or stagnation of the first beat creates the melos. Each measure begins with a quarter note in the bass. Still, a slight agogic accent (as a slight increase in the duration of the note) is possible in the sections when harmonic tension is built.

Piano Sonata in E-flat Major, No. 59, Hob. XVI/49 by Joseph Haydn

Piano Sonata in E-flat Major, No. 59, Hob. XVI/49 (Figure 4.3) by Joseph Haydn marked the beginning of Haydn’s mature style.

Figure 4.3 Joseph Haydn, Piano Sonata in E-flat Major, No. 59, Hob. XVI/49, mm. 1–16.

The first twelve opening measures of the Sonata in E-flat Major form a musical phrase with diverse articulations, dynamics, and characters. When pianists intone Haydn’s sonatas, they should consider the humorous nature of intonations: “Haydn's innate humor, his ability to give to instruments intonations almost like the pantomime of 'comic characters,' his powers of observation, and the animation of his sensible imagination help him to create in his symphonies his own kind of 'Flemish' scenes and
pictures in ‘realistic sound paintings.’\textsuperscript{208} The opening measures of the piece have light sixteenth notes followed by eighth notes with a sforzando in m. 3. creating a playful and vivid image of the hide-and-seek game. Pianists should invent a story about what is going on and reflect with appropriate touché and articulations. When searching for musical meaning and expression, it is essential to consider practicing without a pedal to awaken aural sensibility. The melos of the right hand has numerous ascending intervals of thirds, but there is one descending third on the last beat in m. 1. Such small details should be recognized intonationally as they give new color and characteristics to the melos.

On the compositional level of music form perception, Asafiev believed that the highest expression of the principle of contrast\textsuperscript{209} is the sonata form that contains such processes as impetus, breaking of equilibrium, and restoration of equilibrium expressed through the structural elements of exposition, development, and recapitulation.\textsuperscript{210} Asafiev considered the sonata form as a dynamic and living musical phenomenon that exists beyond schematic vision. He compares a living organism and a cell, describing this idea: “The sonata-allegro in relation to the organic scheme (cell) is a developed organism.”\textsuperscript{211} When it comes to the phonic and syntactic levels of music form perception, the principle of contrast can be found in all the elements of musical

\textsuperscript{208} Tull, 732.
\textsuperscript{209} Asafiev’s criteria for categorizing forms are derived from the principle of resemblance or contrast.
\textsuperscript{210} Asafiev, Музыкальная форма [Musical form], 119.
\textsuperscript{211} Asafiev, 119.
material. For example, the opening four measures have dynamic and character contrasts (mm.1-2 vs mm. 3-4).

_Musical Form as a Process_. He compares Haydn and Mozart in their use of intonations:

> They are contemporaries. They both solidly assimilated the vocationally firm, one may say, guild bases and aims of mastery and even the vocational tenor of life and habits. Neither is ashamed to use the "small change," especially the commonplace, most habitual intonations of their contemporaneity. Their aesthetic individuality manifests itself in "selective deviations" from generally familiar material, and in peculiarities (the "how" of its "development" and "coloration"). Mozart, as a musical dramatist, to a considerable degree depends more on popular operatic intonations approved by the taste and sensations of the epoch.\(^{212}\)

While they used the similar intonational vocabulary of their epoch, and their music is linked with the ideas of their time, there are profound differences between them:

> "Haydn, a sensible village intellect, endows his vocational mastery with his own sensibleness and reasonableness of thought, feeling, and skill."\(^{213}\) Asafiev comments about Mozart:

> He is already more of an urbanite, more of an individualist, almost a ‘nineteenth-century Romantic intellectual,’ in spite of the rationalistic trend of his mastery and the erotically tinctured sensitivity typical of the end of the eighteenth century. In Mozart, there is no emotional balance, none of the sensibleness of reason.\(^{214}\)

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\(^{212}\) Tull, “Asaf’ev’s Musical Form,” 731.

\(^{213}\) Tull, 732.

\(^{214}\) Tull, 733–734.
Asafiev summarizes the discussion: “Haydn is a monolith, a model of ‘sensible meaning.’ But the creation of Mozart is always an art of experiencing, the experiencing of a limitless world of sensations, and, through it, of objective reality, but not the reverse.”

According to Asafiev’s glossary, “Fantasia is a musical composition that does not have exact constructive norms (limits, rules of construction). It can have a more strict or free structure.” As was mentioned, Mozart’s intonational thinking is operatic and theatrical, as can be seen in the opening of the Fantasia in D Minor (Figure 4.4):

![Figure 4.4 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Fantasia in D Minor, K. 397, mm. 10–15.](image)

The adagio section starts in m. 12 and has a homophonic texture. It is reminiscent of Gluck’s *Melody* from the opera *Orpheus and Eurydice*, as both have common intonational traits, such as pristine clarity, a sad character, and the intonations of sorrow expressed by second intervals. The melos in the right hand is full of sensitive step and half step intonations that should be expressed through the character and type

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215 Tull, 733–735.
216 Boris Asafiev, *Путеводитель по концертам* [Concert guide], 162.
of sound. When intoning this melos, pianists should listen to how long notes fade (F in m. 12, G in m. 14) and make sure that succeeding short notes do not break the smooth line of the melos.

Similar intonations in mm. 20–22 (Figure 4.5) can be found in the act two finale of the opera *Don Giovanni* when Don Giovanni is consigned to hell.

![Figure 4.5 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Fantasia in D Minor, K. 397, mm. 20–22.](image)

When pianists intone this section, they should express the tense descending chromatic intonations of the melos of the bottom voice of the right hand and both voices of the left hand. Meanwhile, the top voice in the right hand stays on note E but then starts to move and has the largest interval leap of the tritone (D# to A) in m. 21. This tritone creates even greater tension and needs to be expressed atomically.

*Sonata No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 10, No. 1 by Ludwig van Beethoven*

Asafiev discusses numerous aspects of Beethoven’s intonational vocabulary, as Beethoven was an innovative composer for his time. Among them, rhythm was one of Beethoven’s primary tools of the melos development: “Beethoven was not afraid, at times, to ‘lay bare’ the rhythm, as if wishing to emphasize the birth of mass, spontaneous clashes from some cosmic pre-existence, and he elicits a theme from clear
cut rhythmic intonations, from which the melodic idea sprouts.” When pianists intone the opening eight measures of C Minor Sonata, they should work on precise and steady rhythm because the melos character derives from it. Asafiev describes the rhythm intonational meaning of Beethoven using his Third Symphony as an example:

The simple “in appearance” trochaic meter of the opening, basic theme of the symphony is changed into a sort of rhythmic hammer; juxtapositions of triple meter and within-the-bar duple meter appear as a struggle of opposing forces; thus, they are both figurative and dynamic. In a word, rhythm is heard as the directing thought, as the motivating will. It is vital, and melody and harmony resist it with equal resiliency. The melody, which is graphic, in sharp relief, and dynamically saturated, aspires to draw to a close in its own thematic aspect, but rhythm already evokes the next stage of its disclosure; the melody is “frustrated,” having been led up to the point of support, and immediately sounds again, confirming its conformity to the rhythm.

The rhythm has a similar function, as in the Third Symphony, on all levels of form perception in Beethoven’s piano music, piano music, including this sonata (Figure 4.6):

Figure 4.6 Ludwig van Beethoven, Sonata No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 10, No. 1, mm. 1–8.

Generally, the melos in Beethoven’s music is expressed through rhythm and timbre more than through intervallic relations of tones. Asafiev believed that Beethoven was not a vocal composer: “His chief strength was not in this area; therefore, it is natural that the emotionally affective manifestation of the intonational quality of his

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218 Tull, 748.
work is properly examined in instrumental expression, that is in melodic and harmonic, modal conjugation.”

Beethoven's musical themes often consist of contrasting elements at the syntactic level. The first eight measures of the C Minor Sonata exemplify such a theme. The first three measures have a decisive character and forte dynamics, followed by one measure with a restrained character and piano dynamics, and after that this pattern is repeated. Although there is a contrast of characters, the restraining character derives from the decisive character. The contrasting restraining section (m. 4) inevitably follows from the intonation of repetition of the last note of m. 2 from a weak beat to a strong one in m. 3. This intonation of repetition also initiates the process of dialectical development within the theme. Pianists should find an appropriate tone and sound expression for both characters and maintain the flow of this section when they go from one character to another. Although the contrasting structure of themes can be found in Beethoven's predecessors’ music (especially Mozart) on the compositional level of musical form perception, one of Beethoven's musical traits is that the contrast within the theme dialectically develops into a vivid and dramatic conflict between the primary and secondary themes in the sonata form.

Polka in D Minor by Mikhail Glinka

The intonational vocabulary of the romantic period was more diverse than in the baroque and classical periods:

Music of the nineteenth century, starting from Beethoven, reveals humanity still far from the exhausting world of equally sublimely exciting intonations. Man's

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219 Tull, 761.
excellence and the reality which he perceives, even in the midst of the century's brutality, is reflected, not only by the stars of the first magnitude but also by small, lesser stars, twinkling modestly but still with light and color. Their music, of course, is psychological and does not, in general, attempt to be anything other than the music of the human heart: Berlioz, Chopin, Liszt, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Weber, Glinka, Schubert, Wagner, Tchaikovsky, Verdi, Bizet, Grieg, and Brahms (this is just a small list!), however different their talents, the power of imagination, intelligence, tastes, characters, directions, creative methods, all observed the psyche of human and sympathized with the inescapable questions about the meaning of life, arising in the human mind.\textsuperscript{220}

Romantic music allows pianists to have some freedom and find more solutions for intoning and interpreting all of the elements of music on all of the levels of musical form perception.

Mikhail Glinka’s Polka in D Minor is a short dance piano piece of only sixteen measures. The form of the Polka consists of a single period that contains two phrases of eight measures. One of the first steps in learning this piece should be a discussion of the polka dance genre. According to Asafiev’s glossary: “A Polka is a dance of Czech origin in two beats, with a constant rhythmic figure of two eight notes and one quarter note per measure. The existence of the polka was ubiquitous in the nineteenth century (since the 30s), but the polka did not receive wide distribution in comparison with the waltz.”\textsuperscript{221}

The opening four-measure phrase of Polka has two microphrases of two measures each (Figure 4.7). The melos in these four measures primarily consists of second intervals, so the opening third interval and the fourth interval at the end of the third measure leading to the fourth measure should be expressed and intoned by a slight delay of the second note of each interval. To intone an interval means to feel that

\textsuperscript{220} Asafiev, Музыкальная форма [Musical form], 328.
\textsuperscript{221} Asafiev, Путеводитель по концертам [Concert guide], 108.
the larger the interval is, the more space and tension build within the distance from one note to another.

While intoning the melos of these four measures, pianists should notice a combination of traditional accents on the strong beat in the first and third measures as well as accents that fall on the weak second beats in the second and fourth measures. Glinka helped to intone these accents by putting eighth notes and rests before them, so accented notes are more distinguished by their durations. Pianists can use light touché for the accent and maintain a vivid and light dance character in a performance.

Pianists should be aware of the problems in matching dynamics when long notes are involved. For example, pianists should listen to the eighth note D and dynamically match the sixteenth note F after that in measure one.

The chord progression in the left hand should be seen as a connected chain of chords in the context of the holistic approach of the Theory of Intonation. Pianists should practice left-hand chords as united blocked chords with bass notes (for example, the first chord would be played as D, F, and A at the same time) and feel the harmonic changes, tensions, and connections between each chord. It is important to feel the direction and the flow of the chord progression. Since harmonic progressions are considered from the melos perspective in the Theory of Intonation, pianists can practice
broken chords melodically and improvise with a focus on the expressivity of each chord to define character and color.

*Prelude in B Minor by Frédéric Chopin*

The role of Chopin as a composer is similar to the role of Glinka in the history of Russian music since both of them reflected national traits in music, incorporated folk music traditions, and contributed to national recognition of their culture.\(^{222}\) Asafiev admired Chopin and believed that Chopin showed that piano music is sensitive and passionate as “the speech of timbres.”\(^{223}\) Asafiev mentions that Chopin’s music is permeated with a complex connection and interchange of an intensified leading tone quality and a refined influence of folk traditions:

This interaction, carried out with striking naturalness, conditions the exceptional vital capacity, the expressiveness, of all the elements of a form which is always exposed in unbroken intonational formation; in the process of perception, a feeling of the clarity just proportion, balance, and “tonic quality” of the musical thought remains in the consciousness, irrespective of the nervousness of the work’s emotional tone. In the works of Chopin, everything - each intonational detail - organizes the mode as it were reinterpreting it.\(^{224}\)

Chopin’s Preludes, op. 28 contain twenty-four preludes arranged in pairs, with a major prelude complemented by a prelude in a parallel minor. Originally, the word “prelude” in Latin meant an introduction. Historically, the prelude had a role as an introduction, for example, of a fugue. Chopin had a different vision of the prelude as an independent piece that captured a certain image or mood.

\(^{223}\) Asafiev, *Музыкальная форма* [Musical form], 330.
The Prelude in B Minor (Figure 4.8) has two interplays of genre foundations in the texture, consisting of a vocally inspired melos in a low register in the left hand and continuous choral style accompaniment in the right hand.

![Figure 4.8 Frédéric Chopin, Prelude in B Minor, Op. 28, mm. 1–8.](image)

The timbre of the melos is reminiscent of the cello sound or baritone voice. Chopin suggested sotto voce (dramatic lowering of the vocal or instrumental volume), which indicates a restrained tonal quality. Understanding the desired tone production is essential for expressing musical meaning and facilitating it with proper motion and technique. Each successive note of the melos should be interpreted in the context of the melos direction. If a pianist perceives a produced sound as a passive sound instead of continuous and does not listen to the produced sound to the end, the hand motion is not smooth. Each successive note of the melos will be approached with a separate motion, and the melodic line will be broken.
The direction of each microphrase leans towards the highest note and then back to the initial starting point area, creating a feeling of a lack of motion and melancholy (Figure 4.9).

![Sheet Music Image]

Figure 4.9 Frédéric Chopin, Prelude in B Minor, Op. 28, mm. 1–8 with the melos directions.

While the first and the second microphrases return within two measures, the third longer phrase of four measures has a longer melos that consists of numerous steps and half steps, reflecting an even more emotionally complicated stagnation point.

When intoning Chopin’s melos, it is essential to draw attention to the climaxes’ specific emotional features. The change in tempo should be applied as a means of expression without breaking the flow of the meter of the music. Tempo rubato is based on the individual intonation vision of musical material by performers. Intonational freedom of expression is one of the foundations of romantic style intonational vocabulary. Means of expression, such as tempo rubato, delays of certain notes and breathing, and flexible melos, should influence the flow and emotional content of the performance, giving performers a prominent role as co-creator in the process of music-
making. Definitely, more impactful tempo rubato can be applied in m. 5, where emotional tension is greater.

The chain of chords in the right hand is remarkable. It is a long and almost uninterrupted chain of choral-inspired intonations on each beat of the measure in a minor key that creates melancholic monotony. Each chord should be intoned from the melos perspective. Each voice of the chords should be practiced separately. Although there are many repeated notes in each voice, all of them should maintain directions and be performed accordingly. Generally, not only melodic lines but also accompaniment lines are permeated with the melos in Chopin. Milshtein discusses the intonational nature of the melos-inspired textures in Chopin’s music:

In essence, we are dealing here with melodic harmony, with the unity of the melos and harmony. Chopin’s texture is therefore characterized by vocal polyphony (in the spirit of the music of the Slavic people). Chopin’s accompaniment is almost always an active melodic element, not a passive figurative one. One can talk about Chopin’s melodic richness of musical texture through the special texture of Chopin’s supporting voices, a whole system of interweaving and highlighting independent melodic lines of supporting voices (especially in his later works), and about the texture of imaginary polyphony (for example, about highlighting the melody of wide broken arpeggios, about showing hidden melodic notes in passages, etc.) Chopin’s harmony came out of melodic plexuses and supporting voices.  

*Dumka, Op. 59 by Pyotr Tchaikovsky*

Asafiev mentions numerous times throughout his works that folk music studies inspired his vision of musical art and the Theory of Intonation. Asafiev strongly believed that all the melodic elements of music originated in folk music. The word “dumka” means thought, and it is a musical genre of Slavic epic melancholic ballad with

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225 Milshtein, *Очерки о Шопене* [Essays on Chopin], 113.
contrasting lively sections. Moreover, Tchaikovsky’s *Dumka* is inspired by Russian nature and of daily life and traditions of Russian peasants that Tchaikovsky observed when he spent a more secluded period of his life in the countryside around the city of Klin. The composer subtitled *Dumka* as rustic Russian scene.

When it comes to the form analysis of *Dumka*, this piece is the case in point of musical form as a process. There is constant development of form as the piece progresses that combines elements of variation form and three-part ABA’ form. There are three scenes in *Dumka*, corresponding to the ABA’ divisions. The piece is framed by a folk-song melody (sections A and A’), and section B has challenging virtuoso dance-inspired intonations (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 The Structure of *Dumka*, Op. 59 by Pyotr Tchaikovsky

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A (The first scene)</th>
<th>B (The second scene)</th>
<th>A’ (the third scene)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme 1 (mm. 1-23)</td>
<td>Theme 2a (mm. 46-65)</td>
<td>Variation 7 on theme 2b (mm. 90-94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variation 1 on theme 1 (mm. 24-45)</td>
<td>Theme 2b (mm. 64-65)</td>
<td>Variation 8 on theme 2b (mm. 95-98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Variation 1 on theme 2b (mm. 66-67)</td>
<td>Variation 9 on theme 2b (mm. 99-102)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Variation 2 on theme 2b (mm. 68-69)</td>
<td>Variation 10 on theme 2b (mm. 103-114)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Variation 3 on theme 2b (mm. 70-71)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The lyric middle section (mm. 78-89)</td>
<td>Cadenza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Variation 1 on theme 2b (mm. 90-94)</td>
<td>Variation 2 on theme 1 (mm. 115-139)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first scene, *andantino cantabile* in mm. 1–44 (Figure 4.10), is based on folk melos and forms the first theme of the piece (theme 1).

There are numerous traits of Slavic lyric folk music in this theme, such as the extensive use of the natural minor, climaxes coming from the highest notes at the beginning of phrases (m. 9, m. 11), elements of a Dorian mode (m. 4), and the harmonic descending motion from seventh natural scale degree to dominant in minor that represents sad regret in Slavic folk songs (m. 15). When it comes to playing this melos on the piano, pianists should consider all the practiced methods that discussed at the beginning of this
chapter. Traditionally, in Russian folk-inspired music, the highest notes of the melos are slightly delayed, so the highest note should be intoned in this way. The left hand has arpeggiated chords that imitate the sound of the psaltery. The pedaling of theme one is challenging since pianists should maintain the melodic flow while reflecting all the rests and maintaining a light accompaniment.

There is a three repeated notes motive that is quoted and developed throughout *Dumka* in different scenes in mm. 9 (Figure 4.11).

![Figure 4.11 Pyotr Tchaikovsky, *Dumka*, Op. 59, mm. 9–10.](image)

Pianists should intone this motive and ensure that repeated-note melos moves to the last G.

The variation of theme one in mm. 24–44 shows the lyrical nature of the melody in the tenor timbre in the left hand while the accompaniment has contrasting passages in the right hand. The end of the scene has dramatic character changes. The melody has the final notes of the theme, and it fades away. The last four measures of this section remind one of the effects of ringing bells of the receding trio of horses, as in *Troika*.

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226 It is a traditional Russian harness driving combination, using three horses abreast, usually pulling a sleigh. It differs from most other three-horse combinations in that the horses are harnessed abreast.
from the *Seasons*, op. 37. When intoning mm. 24–44, pianists should make sure that the timbre of the left hand is clearly defined. At the same time, right-hand passages are intoned as long melodic lines that contain the intonation of sadness, reflected by a descending chain of sounds, and retain direction and a sense of climax.

The second scene, *con anima*, is a technically demanding virtuoso section. It is a scherzo-like dance episode written in the contrasting A (fast) – B (slow) - A’ (fast) three-part form with elements of variations. This scene represents the Maslenitsa celebration. It is an Eastern Slavic religious and folk holiday, which has numerous rituals like eating pancakes, jumping above the fire, and dancing traditional dances such as the Horovod. This holiday is celebrated during the last week before Lent, which is the eighth week before Eastern Orthodox Easter (*Tchaikovsky’s February in Seasons*, op. 37 also depicts holiday). This scene is the longest and the most complex in the piece. One of the most challenging aspects of intoning the second scene is to ensure that it has flow and unity despite the diversity of musical material.

The second scene begins with a dance-inspired section a of the second theme in mm. 46–65 (Figure 4.12). When intoning these measures, it is important to follow Tchaikovsky’s articulation and dynamic marks, as the vivid staccato notes, playful syncopation accents, and imitative textures create a festive mood and vivid atmosphere.
Tchaikovsky introduces section B of the second theme in m. 64–65, followed by variations on this section. These two measures are a new intonational, harmonic and rhythmic development of the three repeated notes motive in m. 9 (Figure 4.13).

Although this theme is clearly derived from the second phrase of the first theme, it is impressively transformed in character. While it was introspective, it is playful and festive in the second theme. The indication *giocoso* indicates the joyful character of this theme.

When intoning section B of the second theme, it is necessary to reflect on Maslenitsa folk dance characteristics, including humor, fast-paced musical material that
would work for dance jumps or traditional Maslenitsa jumps above the fire, and an
improvisational style. While Tchaikovsky mastered the instrumental reflection of the
Russian folk dance style, he also added skillful imitation of sounds of traditional
instruments such as a ratchet, harmonium, and balalaika.

The second theme is immediately followed by ten variations, interrupted by a
lyric middle section and cadenza after variation six. Among the eleven variations on
section B of the second theme there are several that are virtuosic, and each with a
unique intonational vocabulary requiring various piano techniques. The first six
variations have the same two measures of length section B of the second theme (mm.
66–77). While Tchaikovsky demonstrates traits of Russian romantic pianism following
the traditions of masters such as Balakirev and Rubinstein, there is an undeniable
connection to Liszt’s style; for example, the use of range in repeating motives in
different registers in variations two and three (mm. 68–72). As the variations progress,
the celebration of the Maslenitsa grows more vivid. The heavily chordal texture,
reinforced by the use of the pedal, makes the massive fortississimo dynamic possible.

Variation six is suddenly interrupted by the section with a completely different
mood. This is an important moment in the Dumka (Figure 4.14). Such a sudden change
releases the effect of increasing the tension of the previous variations and prepares
listeners for new thematic and intonational developments that will follow. This
transition is particularly difficult because the steadily growing momentum of the
successive variations needs to be instantly dispelled. The melos again becomes lyrical.
This section has a slower tempo, a change in range, and a sudden dynamic change from
fortississimo to mezzo piano. The use of rubato in the melos of this section heightens the character contrast. While the six variations had a strict rhythmic organization, the lyrical poco meno mosso section has room for rhythmic freedom of expression. The middle section of the second scene represents the psychological contrast between the lyrical Russian soul and the never-stopping world around that was shown not only by Russian composers but also by Russian writers such as Pushkin and Tolstoy.

A virtuoso cadenza in a Lisztian style follows this section. Cadenza releases build tension in the second theme and variations and lyrical middle section. The material of the cadenza starts from the lower register and moves to virtuoso passages in high register that facilitates change of character.

Part A’ of the second scene consists of variations that are expanded in length and lead to the climax of Dumka. Variation seven (mm. 90–94) moderato con fuoco is the transformation of the expressive three repeated notes motive into vigorous musical
ideas. This transformation represents the beginning of the most intense part of the piece. At the same time, the expressive three repeated notes motive gradually moves to the lowest register in variation eight (mm. 97–98), denoting the upcoming changes. There is a gradual slowdown in the scene.

The initial impulsive con fuoco turns into a more measured but agitated andante in variation nine (mm. 99–102). This variation has ascending motives in the lower register in fortissimo dynamics, and chromatic ascending melos in the right hand (mm. 99–100) move in the same direction (mm. 99–100). The next two measures are even more emotionally complicated (mm. 101–102). While there is a flowing descending line with octaves in the left hand, the right hand still has an ascending chromatic melody. Variation ten meno mosso (mm. 103–114) is the climax of the second scene and the entire piece. The dramatic nature of this variation is supported by the remark pesante e marcatissimo and dynamics. Tchaikovsky used musical effects that can be compared to cinematic close-up effects. The tempo dramatically slows down from poco ritenuto to adagio, the expressive three repeated notes motive used in crescendo dynamics and descending motion. Finally, the cadence repeats over and over, and the music slows down to a complete stop with the fermata.

The third scene is a variation on theme one that was introduced in the first scene (Figure 4.15).
The mood of this scene can be described perfectly by one of Sergey Esenin’s poems who is often called the Russian soul poet because his poetry describes the inner world of Russian people:

Who am I? What am I? Just a dreamer
Looking for a ring of happiness in the dark,
Living this life as if by happenstance,
Just like others on earth.\(^\text{227}\)

The new transformation of theme one (mm. 115–139) shows the reflective state of mind as in Esenin’s poem. The melody in this variation sounds like a shade of theme one as it is *pianissimo* in dynamic range, an octave lower, with an extremely refined texture of the accompaniment that is full of pauses and dry short eighth notes chords. There is again the expressive three repeated notes motive, but it has no hopeful...

character throughout the scene (mm. 123–126). The melody is filled with deep sadness.

The ending of the last scene is unexpected. The last two measures become the unpredictable climax of the third scene. They have the sudden intrusion of fortissimo chords after a long pianissimo creates an effort of emotional explosion.

While it is possible to have a schematic form reflection of Dumka and present it as ABA’ form with elements of variation form, where the first scene is section A, the second scene is section B, and the third scene is section A’, the form of this piece has a structure with development of musical material introduced at the beginning.

Tchaikovsky uses variation forms to show and explore different musical characters.

Dumka is considered by musicologists to be an autobiographical piece.

Memoirist Nina Berberova considers the development of musical style and intonational vocabulary of Tchaikovsky’s music as the primary source about Tchaikovsky’s life in her book Tchaikovsky. The story of a lonely life.\(^{228}\) When Tchaikovsky was young, he composed lyrical and emotionally simple music. However, Tchaikovsky’s music became musically and emotionally complex as the composer got older and felt more conflicted about himself.

CHAPTER 5

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to create a source that explains Asafiev’s philosophical and aesthetic vision of the concept of intonation and to show how it can be applied to piano pedagogy. This study was also intended to translate and codify the Theory of Intonation and to give examples of its implementation in any piano teaching method or repertoire study.

Boris Asafiev was one of the leading Russian musicologists who influenced generations of musicians and musicologists. Gordon McQuere describes Asafiev as not only a musicologist and theorist but also as a composer of substantial repute, an influential critic, an educator, a pianist, an authority on the theater (especially the ballet), and above all, a “publicist” who carried the art to the masses.229 Despite the importance and educational value of Asafiev’s work, he is still relatively unknown outside of Russia.

Asafiev continued the traditions of nineteenth-century Russian musicology. Asafiev’s vision of the Theory of Intonation derived from works and treatises of musicologists and musicians from the previous generation. Alexandr Serov’s

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229 McQuere, Russian Theoretical Thought in Music, 217.
legacy was a significant milestone in the preparation of Asafiev’s study of the Theory of Intonation. Serov’s works inspired Asafiev to think about theoretical and aesthetic problems of the art of music and the leading role of melody in the musical art.\textsuperscript{230}

Vladimir Stasov was one of Asafiev’s mentors before he began his studies at the St. Peterburg Conservatory. Stasov introduced Asafiev to his circle of friends, taught Asafiev how to use musical manuscripts at the Public Library, and encouraged that Asafiev composed his first opera \textit{Cinderella}.

Russian nineteenth-century composers such as Mikhail Glinka, Modest Mussorgsky, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, César Cui, and others left statements and ideas in their letters to friends, documented conversations, and prefaces to their music about the intonational nature of the musical art. Studies with both Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov and Anatoly Lyadov shaped Asafiev’s mind during his years at St. Petersburg Conservatory and showed him alternative ways of viewing musical forms.\textsuperscript{231}

Orlova and other Russian musicologists mention that the process of intoning is not only inherent in music.\textsuperscript{232} The role of intonation is important in poetry, theater performance art, human speech, etc. The intonation with which words are pronounced often reveals their true meaning. Music as art also does not exist without the process of intoning. Thus, musical intonation within the Theory of Intonation can be considered one of the types of artistic thinking. It is essential to note that the definition of the word “intonation” is different from the traditional Western vision. The term “intonation” in

\textsuperscript{230} McQuere, 222.
\textsuperscript{231} McQuere, 222.
\textsuperscript{232} Orlova, \textit{Интонационная теория Асафьева} [Asafiev’s intonation theory], 5.
music is the organization of acoustical media by the human consciousness into meaningfully expressive sound correlations in Asafiev’s works.

Asafiev left numerous treatises and publications about different composers and repertoire representing his philosophical and aesthetic vision of musical art and the Theory of Intonation. Among them, both books of Asafiev’s *Musical Form as a Process* discuss musical form and the Theory of Intonation from social and historical perspectives as a form of communication and expression. While the first book focuses more on presenting the idea that music form is not a constructive scheme but a process, the second book, titled *Intonation*, focuses on more specific aspects of the Theory of Intonation.

The Theory of Intonation is a holistic approach that can be used for the interpretation and understanding of any vocal or instrumental piece by any composer. The philosophical vision that the process of intoning is a manifestation of thought determines the essence of the aesthetic orientation of the Theory of Intonation. The Theory of Intonation can only be understood when applied to the relation of sounds. The relation of sounds through intervals form the melos and other elements of music. Asafiev emphasizes the importance of the melos as the leading element in the Theory of Intonation, along with the interval being one of the primary expressive tools, as well as rhythm and timbre, as essential means of expression for the melos. According to the Theory of Intonation, both musical form and style are phenomena of the process of

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233 Asafiev, *Музыкальная форма* [Musical form].
234 Asafiev, 211.
intoning. Asafiev traced the evolution of intonation and observed the development of musical forms and the expansion of intonational boundaries of musical styles. Regularly occurring intonational trends formed intonational vocabularies of different epochs, styles, and composers. This treatise discussed and explained how the melos, rhythm, timbre, and other elements holistically shaped the Theory of Intonation. The author of this study translated and explained key elements and terms for English-speaking readers.

Asafiev’s Theory of Intonation is the methodological basis for all of the music disciplines in Russia that guided musicians’ vision and understanding of music art. Russian pianists and leading pedagogues such as Konstantin Igumnov, Alexandr Goldenweiser, Heinrich Neuhaus, Samuil Feinberg, Leonid Nikolaev, Lev Oborin, Grigory Ginzburg, Dmitry Kabalevsky, Dmitry Blagoi, Dmitry Bashkirov, Sviatoslav Richter, Lev Naumov, and others passed on traditions of the process of intoning in piano performance and pedagogy in their teaching and written works. The application of the Theory of Intonation in piano performance and pedagogy includes meaningful and expressive analysis of music, in which the identification of relations between the elements of music composition and aspects of the musical form is achieved based on a holistic organization of artistic means in specific stylistic, semantic, genre, and textural contexts. This study provides examples of how the Theory of Intonation can be applied to excerpts of pieces from the standard piano repertoire.

Boris Asafiev was a prominent musicologist in Russia who had a unique holistic and philosophical approach to understanding musical art. His approach serves as a
methodological foundation for teaching traditions in Russia and has proven to be effective in piano pedagogy. When the Theory of Intonation is used in combination with appropriate technical approaches for sound production, as facilitated by each pianist or pedagogue, it can serve as a pathway to a deeper understanding of music and communication of composers’ intentions to the audience.

*Recommendations for Future Research*

1. Translation of Asafiev’s books that are not published outside of Russia.

2. Tracing elements of intonational vocabularies of piano and keyboard music of baroque, classical, romantic, and twentieth-century music based on both books of *Musical Form as a Process* and others of Asafiev’s written works.

3. Tracing elements of intonational vocabularies of the piano music of given composers based on both books of *Musical Form as a Process* and others of Asafiev’s written works.

4. Discussing the Theory of Intonation implementation in beginner-level piano studies.

5. Discussing the influence of the Theory of Intonation in the Russian national system of music education.
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APPENDIX A

RECITAL PROGRAMS

POLINA GOLUBKOVA, piano
in
DOCTORAL RECITAL

Wednesday, April 13, 2022
4:30 PM • Recital Hall

Sonata in E-flat major, Hob. XVI: 49
I. Allegro (1732-1809)
II. Adagio e cantabile
III. Finale: Tempo di Minuet

Partita in B-flat major, BWV 825
I. Prelude (1685-1750)
II. Allemande
III. Courante
IV. Sarabande
V. Minuet I-II
VI. Gigue

The Seasons, Op. 37
II. October: Autumn Song (1732-1809)
III. February: Carnival

Dumka, Op. 59

Ms. Golubkova is a student of Dr. Charles Fugo. This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Piano Pedagogy.
present

POLINA GOLUBKOVA, piano
in
DOCTORAL RECITAL

Wednesday, March 29, 2023
6:00 PM • Recital Hall

Sonata in D Minor, K. 213
Sonata in B minor, K. 27
Sonata in F minor, K. 466

Domenico Scarlatti
(1685-1757)

Four Impromptus, D. 899
No. 4 in A-flat major
No. 1 in C minor

Franz Schubert
(1797-1828)

Prelude, Fugue et Variation, Op. 18

César Franck
(1822-1890)
transcribed by Harold Bauer

Pi Huang (Beijing Opera)

Zhang Zhao
(b. 1960)

Polina Golubkova is a student of Dr. Charles Fugo. This recital is presented in partial fulfillments for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Piano Pedagogy.