



Steinway & Sons, New York City, 1860

The Piano Concerto

A LIFE Institute Course

Bob Fabian

<http://LIFECourses.ca/Piano>



Course Objectives

- Enjoy great music, great performances
- Changes, from 18th century to today
 - How the piano changed
 - How concerts changed
 - How the music changed
- How the piano became *the* musical instrument, for composers, performers and the newly present middle class



Your View ...

- What is it that would make this course a success?
 - There are no right answers!



Course Structure

- Every class -
 - Introductory material
 - History, practice, musicians
 - One complete piano concerto
- Six sessions
 - J.S. Bach & J.C. Bach
 - Haydn, Mozart & Salieri
 - Beethoven, Schubert & Ries
 - Schumann (Robert, Clara) & Brahms
 - Chopin, Liszt & Busoni
 - Bartok, Shostakovitch & Gorecki

My Background

- In high school, music & science
- My father strongly favoured science
- All my degrees were in math
 - Tech was a part of all my work
- At The LIFE Institute
 - A gaggle of classical music courses
 - Mix: philosophy, urban planning, tech



Some Practical Details

- A pdf version of the slides will be posted at <http://LIFEcourses.ca/Piano>
- Whenever possible, music will be taken from the YouTube library
 - Click on the image or URL to view
- I'm open to suggestions for what to include and exclude
 - robert@fabian.ca
- Questions are always welcomed, even when I don't have the answer

Today - Session One

- The composer as star performer
 - 12 year old Alma Deutscher
- A 5 minute history of the piano
- The first piano concertos
 - Johann Sebastian Bach - Keyboard
 - Johann Christian Bach - Piano
- A concert, typical of the 19th century, including a concerto by JS Bach

The Child Prodigy

- Mozart was taken on tour by his father at age 7
 - His sister, age 11, was included in the tour
- Leopold exploited the opportunity
- Tour lasted from 1763 to 1766



Alma Deutscher



- Alma Elizabeth Deutscher is an English composer, pianist, violinist, and child prodigy. At age six she composed her first piano sonata. At age seven, she completed her first major composition, the opera *The Sweeper of Dreams*.

- [Wikipedia](#)

World Premier - July 2017



Alma Deutscher, Vienna Chamber Orchestra, Joji Hattori.
35 min: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWIAgksUQyo>

Playing Mozart (age 10)



Mozart piano concerto no.8 K. 246, 1st movement
Cadenza by Alma Deutscher. Alma Deutscher, piano
Israel Philharmonic Orchestra

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bxUI4DeoWGg>



Her Future ?

Only time will tell



Some things change

- The “star” performer continues to fascinate audiences to this day
- But the technology and economics of music have changed radically since the 18th century
- In 1750 composers needed a wealthy patron, royalties were rare and unpredictable
- The harpsichord was *the* keyboard instrument, but the piano was coming

5 min. history of the piano



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BMxqAKxWMYA>

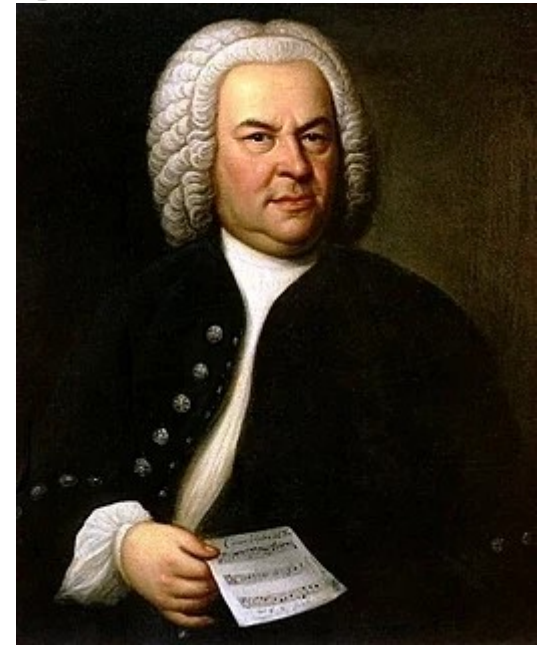


“Authentic” Music

- Music as it was when first composed!
- But the instruments were different
- But there were no concert halls in 1800
- But *we* could not be an 1800 audience
- We can make music that sounds as it did back in 1800, but it’s not the same
- We *can* enjoy the musical ideas, even if expressed somewhat differently

Johann Sebastian Bach

- Bach: 1685 – 1750
- Bach may have sold the king a piano, but the harpsichord was his instrument
- 7 harpsichord concertos, plus several for more than one
- Bach focused on the patterns, the performer shaped their expression



Glenn Gould - BWV 1058



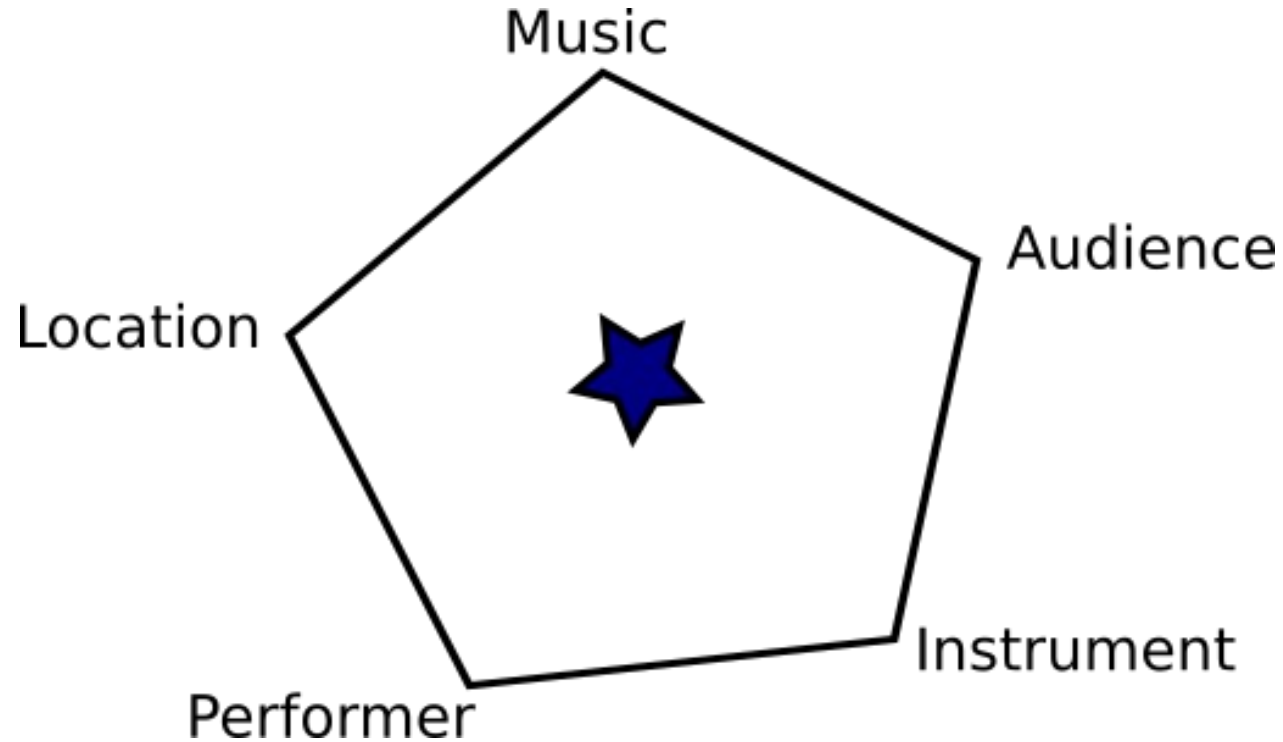
A CBC Colour Presentation
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qEHsDe5Vaxg>



Creative, but right?

- Glenn Gould saw himself as recomposing each piece as it was being performed
- The performer isn't a computer and we don't want her to be just parrot the notes
- Personal view: Does the performance work as an aesthetically satisfying experience?
- Your view: Should performers take the liberties that Gould did?

Authentic ...



Objective? ... Rewarding Experience

Johann Christian Bach

- Leipzig 1735 – London 1785
- Youngest son of J. S. Bach
- After 1750, lived with CPE Bach
- Moved to London in 1762
- Became a Catholic – John Bach
- Noted for influence on the concerto style of Mozart



J. C. Bach - Opus 13



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1vT-Mb8PO9Y>

A 19th Century Concert

- C. Katsaris: Spontaneous Improvisation on various themes
- J. S. Bach: Piano Concerto in D major, BWV 1054
- W. A. Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 21 in C major, K. 467
 - Cadenzas: C. Katsaris
- F. Liszt: Piano Concerto No. 2 in A major, S. 125
 - arranged for solo piano by Cyprien Katsaris (excerpt)
- F. Chopin: Nocturne Op. 9, No. 2 in E flat major
- M. Ravel: Le tombeau de Couperin • Daphnis et Chloé
- G. Bizet: L'Arlésienne - La Farandole

It's close, even if some of the pieces are too modern

Cyprien Katsaris - Budapest



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mdO3fw3iaWc>



Next Week ...

- Vienna in 1800 was where it was at, musically speaking
- Haydn and Mozart had laid the foundation
- Beethoven and Schubert would take it the next step
- But Vienna was full of gifted composers, Antonio Salieri is only one of many
- And the piano was coming into its own

Bon-Bon



Victor Borge, The History Of Pianos
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4_FuxwnCrdY