

Performance and Pedagogical Principles of Heinrich Neuhaus through the Prism of Philosophical Hermeneutics

Ayna Isababayeva
Erciyes University, Kayseri, Turkey

Abstract

The name Neuhaus has become a legend in piano pedagogy. Raising a galaxy of talented pianists (Richter, Gilels, Vedernikov, and others), Neuhaus applied various methods in his teaching practice, the basis of many of which were hermeneutic theories. Neuhaus repeatedly said that the main component of a musical work is its artistic image, and that this ideal image, enclosed in the material framework of the text, should be deciphered and interpreted in the spirit of the author, in the style of the era of its creation. Neuhaus approached this issue, involving philosophical hermeneutics resources but resolving them in a musical key. Thus, from the point of view of musical science, he developed purely philosophical hermeneutical concepts – the hermeneutical circle, the whole and the part, the form and content, and others.

In this work, Neuhaus' performance and pedagogical activities are examined through the prism of hermeneutics. Hermeneutical ideas and theories that were developed in the pedagogy of Neuhaus are studied.

Keywords: musical hermeneutics, Neuhaus, interpretation, musical text

1. Introduction

“...understanding is an act not only of intelligence, but of the whole human spirit”
(Alekseyev 1986/7, 73)

Heinrich Neuhaus created the pianistic school at the Moscow Conservatory in Soviet times¹, which became the cradle of dozens of talented performers. He developed a unique in its quality system of piano pedagogy. Being a gifted performer, Neuhaus in his pedagogical practice used both the rich

experience of the European piano school (he studied in Vienna with Godowsky) and his own methods. A distinctive feature of the Neuhaus' educational system was its creation and existence based on philosophical principles. Neuhaus' philosophical views were extremely deep and interesting precisely from the point of view of their application to piano pedagogy and performance. Often, Neuhaus philosophically explicated even the simplest techniques, not to mention large-scale formative concepts. Neuhaus, as a performer and teacher, faced several crucial problems, one of which was the most complex and multi-level relationship between an author, a text and a performer. This question of understanding the work was one of Neuhaus' main areas of thought. In different periods of his activity, he found various answers to this question and tried to consider it from different points of view. In his thought, the main point of reference was always the essence of the work, that is, its artistic image.

2. Artistic image

Neuhaus began his book *The Art of Piano Playing*² with a chapter, which he called "The Artistic Image of a Musical Composition". What was an artistic image for Neuhaus? He said in the book that an artistic image is the music itself (Neuhaus 1973, 7). He further elaborated that the artistic image is the music, the live musical speech with its regularities and consistency (ibid.). Thus, Neuhaus put equal symbols between music, an artistic image, and a musical speech. In order to understand the musical speech, to cognize the artistic image, and therefore to interpret the music itself, certain means are necessary, which Neuhaus reflected on. He found them, compared them, and brought his intuitive guesses to the perfection of a harmonious philosophical system.

Neuhaus certainly was a philosopher of music and since, by the nature of his activity (he dealt with the interpretation of musical texts), hermeneutics occupied a large place in his philosophy. Neuhaus never spoke of hermeneutics as a philosophical system and did not even use this term, but almost everything he said about music was connected with a musical text, with its interpretation, with its performance, and this

means that it somehow affected hermeneutical ideas. During his performing and teaching activities, Neuhaus developed a peculiar philosophical and aesthetic system of concepts, which are comparable with philosophical hermeneutics' ideas.

3. Neuhaus' hermeneutical ideas

Cognition

The central concept of hermeneutics is the following idea: the world is such as I understand it. This idea is also applicable to the musical sphere. In this case, we can reformulate it as follows: music is such as I understand it. Here, however, it is necessary to place emphasis not on the understanding subject, and not even on the object to be understood, but on the very act of understanding. From this perspective, the above-mentioned formula takes a completely different shape and volume, when the act of cognition is focused on understanding. Neuhaus developed this form in relation to the understanding of music.

It should be noted that cognition, in the broad sense, for Neuhaus, was primarily an experience. He says: "All knowledge is at the same time an experience" (Neuhaus 1973, 28). That is, the understanding and cognition of an object are possible only through entering into sensory contact with that object. Neuhaus applied this position to music too. According to his views, a sensual experience is the most necessary component for understanding a work and accordingly, for its correct performance. Neuhaus says: "The absence of such experience, and still more of any experience whatsoever, results in soulless, formalistic music and an empty, uninteresting performance" (ibid.). Thus, the sensory experience, as Neuhaus called it, is a necessary matter for the performance. However, it is not the only one. For Neuhaus, cognition had a two-component nature. He required his students: "not only to feel the music, but also to enforce their feelings with the understanding" (Milshtein 1988, 279; my translation). If the experience for Neuhaus meant to feel, then what does this understanding mean? What is this understanding and why should it be the basis of a sensual experience? Neuhaus answers this question: "We attempt to

find in the very substance of which music is made a confirmation and an explanation of our undoubted and intense musical experience. This cannot fail to affect performance; when one delves deep into one's perception of what is beautiful, and attempts to understand its origin, how it arose and what was its objective cause, only then does one grasp the infinite order of art and one experiences a new joy because intellect throws its own light on what was perceived directly by the senses" (Neuhaus 1973, 176).

So, first the feeling, and only then the analysis, and not vice versa! Neuhaus repeatedly confirms this: "Deficiencies of instinct i.e. of talent must be made good by reason" (Neuhaus 1973, 89) and "... if so-called intuition is not enough, then you have to use analysis" (Neuhaus 1973, 125).

In order to understand better the nature of cognition, it is necessary to turn to another phenomenon of Neuhaus' thinking – to the idea of talent.

Talent

Talent was one of the themes that really excited Neuhaus. He thought a lot about the phenomenon of talent and came to some conclusions, quite interesting from the point of view of both art and philosophy. These conclusions have a very close connection with hermeneutics.

Like cognition, talent for Neuhaus also had a two-component essence. However, if cognition to Neuhaus was equal to experience and analysis, then talent was "passion plus intellect" (Neuhaus 1973, 24). Neuhaus said that passion in this equation is "an inconvenient *X*, which they³ simply discard, not knowing what to do with it" (ibid.). Neuhaus understood very clearly that talent was not only the "cerebral properties" (intelligence), but also something else, the same "inconvenient *X*". What is this? Why is intelligence not enough for a talented interpretation and performance? Apparently, Neuhaus shared the views of Plato, who said that: "the poetry of the sane man vanishes into nothingness before that of the inspired madmen" (Plato, *Phaedrus* 245a). Neuhaus' point of view on this question was very close to the above dictum by Plato. Neuhaus says that: "...whoever is moved by music to the depth of his soul, and

works on his instrument like one possessed, who loves music and his instrument with passion, will acquire virtuoso technique; he will be able to recreate the artistic image of the composition; he will be a performer” (Neuhaus 1973, 29).

Neuhaus called this “inconvenient *X*” passion, and for him it was apparently a component of talent, which has the same, if not more, significance than intelligence. He said: “This, I believe, is the picture of any and every successful labour if a man is possessed of a true passion, of wish multiplied by will” (Neuhaus 1973, 123-124) and “the tremendous importance of intensive will-power, passion, determination to forge ahead in order to reach the goal one has set oneself” (Neuhaus 1973, 213).

Neuhaus understood that passion is some quality in the field of intuition and subconsciousness. However, there was another component in the understanding of music, which Neuhaus also referred – a phenomenon of preunderstanding.

Preunderstanding

Preunderstanding is the initial judgment of what is to be known, a preliminary and uncritical understanding of the object of cognition. According to Gadamer, preunderstanding is a necessary element of understanding. Consciousness, when intellectually and emotionally completely purified, is not capable of cognition. Heidegger also showed that the interpreter must more or less be connected with the text (Gadamer 1977). However, for the realization of preunderstanding, the interpreter must possess a certain amount of knowledge, existing in different levels of consciousness. Understanding, especially in such an area as music, always is based on a certain baggage of knowledge, feelings, etc.

Preunderstanding in music

Boris Asafyev, in his book *Musical Form as a Process*, reflected on this phenomenon and came to the following conclusions: musical perception depends on the amount and quality of musical intonations already existing in the human mind. Asafyev called this *intonation reserve*. In every moment of the listening to music, there is a complex process of

recognizing or not recognizing even the smallest elements of musical texture in the consciousness of a listening person. This process is a comparison or identification of new musical objects with already known ones. The consciousness accepts the familiar object, which has been heard once before, as a native one. An unfamiliar sound combination produces a repulsive effect; the consciousness accepts it as a kind of a chaotic invasion. It is interesting that over time, with constant meetings with these same elements, the consciousness begins to perceive them as familiar ones and accepts them.

Some types of musical expression give way to others. Asafyev called this phenomenon “the struggle of intonations for existence”. This musicologist gave a very important place to the problem of perceiving music as a process of preunderstanding, and based on his observations, he drew quite ambitious conclusions for the entire development of musical culture: “Without the gymnastics of remembering, there is no progress in the perception of music and there is no evolution of musical culture. And memorization is unthinkable without the activity of comparing, distinguishing and highlighting of sound combinations during their alternation” (Asafyev 1971, 21).

Preunderstanding by Neuhaus

Neuhaus’ preunderstanding could be compared to *a priori knowledge*. Because, if the preunderstanding presupposes a certain temporary process, then *a priori knowledge* is some kind of already existing presence. Neuhaus understands it as a combination of knowledge, feelings, and subconscious sensations of a musician and explained it in this way: “Before beginning, to learn an instrument, the learner, whether a child, adolescent or adult, should already be spiritually in possession of some music; he should, so to speak, carry it in his mind, keep it in his heart and hear it with his mind’s ear. The whole secret of talent and of genius is that in the case of a person so gifted, music lives a full life in his brain before he even touches a keyboard or draws a bow across the strings. That is why Mozart as a small child could “at once” play the piano and the violin” (Neuhaus 1973, 1).

Neuhaus says how a gifted musician has “acquaintance” with a new music piece: “There, apparently, an instantaneous and subconscious process of “work at the artistic image” takes place” (Neuhaus 1973, 17). This is considered subconscious, because it assumes that a talented musician has all the music in the subconscious memory. Here is what Neuhaus says about this: “the greater the musician, the greater his capacity to approach music like an open book, the less the problem which working on the image represents for him” (Neuhaus 1973, 8). He added that this happened instantly because the appeal to this subconscious memory occurs simultaneously, *per saltum*. It is because of this *per saltum* perceptibility, that Neuhaus calls the first acquaintance with a piece as “grasping” and says that: “the difference between this first ‘grasping’ and the following performance is only that ‘the spirit is clothed with flesh’ – everything, that is predetermined with conception, feeling, inner ear, an understanding (an aesthetic-intellectual) becomes a performance” (Neuhaus 1988, 30; my translation).

What kind of a skill is this “grasping”? Is it a natural gift? Oddly enough and no matter how we would expect this from Neuhaus’ idealism, he never determines it as a gift - unconditional and stable. On the contrary, Neuhaus persistently and often mentions this “grasp” as a quality that can and should be developed.

“Grasping” and its development

In order to be able to “grasp” a piece of music, as Neuhaus puts it, a musician needs: “intelligence, imagination, inner hearing (!), temperament, etc., as well as the purely technical abilities of the student” (Neuhaus 1988, 30; my translation). Neuhaus did not speak about any gift, or about natural qualities⁴. On the contrary, he insisted, precisely that “success in work on the ‘artistic image’ can only be achieved by continuously developing a student musically, intellectually, artistically, and therefore pianistically, otherwise there will be no embodiment!” (Neuhaus 1988, 31; my translation). Neuhaus methodically detailed this approach. According to him, it was required to develop hearing potentials, to familiarize the students with musical literature, while forcing them to “get

accustomed” to one author for a long time, to develop theory (harmony, polyphony, etc.), “to develop fantasy with successful metaphors, poetic images, analogies with the phenomena of nature and life, especially mental, emotional life” (Neuhaus 1988, 31; my translation). As a result of such a comprehensive development, a student “must be able to tell, to say in words much that is significant ... from the point of view of musical-theoretical analysis ... to supplement and interpret the musical speech of the work” (Neuhaus 1988, 31; my translation). That is, to express verbally the artistic essence of the composition. However, this is unthinkable without an understanding of the artistic image. For this process of understanding, Neuhaus proposed some methods with a hermeneutic basis.

Neuhaus’ hermeneutic circle

The hermeneutic circle in philosophy is a metaphor, describing a dialectical character of understanding a text or any other phenomenon. It is one of the most basic concepts in hermeneutics. In antiquity and the middle ages, this method was widely used in philology and exegetics. Much later, it was enshrined in philosophy by Friedrich Schleiermacher.

Its basis is the principle of text analysis, based on the dialectics of the part and the whole: an understanding of the whole consists of an understanding of the parts and an understanding of the parts requires a preliminary understanding of the whole. From this point of view, the understanding of the text is a movement in a circle from the whole to the part and from the part to the whole.

The hermeneutic circle in music is the principle of understanding a text, based on a constant, repeated return from the whole to the part and from part to the whole. This dialectical approach allows the musician to concentrate on the part as a structural unit of the whole and on the whole as a kind of multi-level construction. In the process of working on the principle of the hermeneutic circle with a constant return from the whole to the part and vice versa, the ability to increase widespread text coverage is developed. There is the possibility of simultaneous concentration and deepening into the smallest

part of the structure – into a unit and the ability to cover the entire mass of the work.

Although Neuhaus did not specifically mention this anywhere, his theory of the whole and the particular almost coincides with the theory of the hermeneutic circle. What is this Neuhaus theory? Its most interesting component consists in almost simultaneously coverage of the whole and its parts, down to the smallest details. This simultaneous perception of a musical piece as a whole, which seems unrealizable in music (after all, music is a time-unfolding phenomenon) turns out to be for Neuhaus not only possible, but also a normal and even the desired phenomenon. So, “processual and substantial understanding” (Bogin 1993), that is “linearity” and “blockiness” are combined in Neuhaus’ thoughts.

In his book, Neuhaus cites words from the apocryphal letter of a Mozart’s friend, about how Mozart composed music: “Mozart said that sometimes, when composing a symphony in his head, he became more and more elated and finally reached such a state that it seemed to him that he could hear the whole of his symphony from beginning to end at once, simultaneously, in a single instant! (It is before him like an apple in the hollow of his hand.) He then added that such moments were the happiest in his life for which he was prepared daily to thank his Maker” (Neuhaus 1973, 49). Neuhaus concludes: “For anyone who knows anything at all about the psychology of the creative process, what Mozart said here is an example of the highest gift of the human spirit, that gift which defies words and before which we can only bend our heads in wonder and adoration” (Neuhaus 1973, 50).

For Neuhaus, such a vision and sensation of the whole is one, if not the main condition for the perfect musical performance. Here are Neuhaus’ words about his student, Sviatoslav Richter: “that’s why I so much admire the rhythm of Richter’s performances: one feels clearly that the whole work, even if it is of gigantic proportions lies before him like an immense landscape, revealed to the eye at a single glance and in all its details from the eagle’s flight, from a tremendous height and at an incredible speed” (Neuhaus 1973, 48).

For Neuhaus, the ability to see the whole was not only one of the main signs of performing talent, but also the quality of intelligence: “the more intelligent the pianist, the better he can manage a large-scale composition, and the more stupid he is – the less well he can manage it. In the first case it is perspective thinking – i.e. horizontally; in the second case it is short-term thinking - i.e. vertically” (ibid.).

Considering the relationship between the whole and its parts, Neuhaus clearly gives the priority to the whole, explaining that it is “first of all” and that “otherwise there can be no complete idea of the composition, no complete image” (Neuhaus 1973, 21). Neuhaus proceeds from the fact that “at the level of sensory knowledge, in almost any contemplation, we always deal with the presumption of wholeness” (Avtonomova 1991, 105). Thus, the whole bears the semantic meaning of the artistic image because it has philosophical significance. However, the parts of this whole – on the contrary, although they contain all the basic properties of the whole, have more musical, theoretical, and even narrowly pianistic significance. Neuhaus proposes to decompose the music piece into “components – a harmonic structure, a polyphonic structure... to dwell particularly on the decisive “turnings” of a composition..., *on the main landmarks of the formal structure*” (Neuhaus 1973, 21). In addition, Neuhaus offers to consider separately the conceptions of main and secondary, for example – melodic line and accompaniment.

The concepts of the whole and parts to Neuhaus, embodied in the theory of the hermeneutic circle, were connected closely with the concepts of form and content.

Form and content as hermeneutic concepts

One of the main principles of hermeneutics is the principle of the unity of form and content. Moreover, the proponents of hermeneutics believe that the content is not only enclosed in a form, like an idea in matter: “Means of expression of the text are the empirical objects, meaning is an ideal one” (Bogin 1993, 137), but also encoded in it. Therefore, hermeneutics sets its task as the disclosure of the meaning

inherent in a work or, in other words, the decoding of content enclosed in a form.

In musical aesthetics, the concepts of form and content have similar meanings. The content (meaning) is realized using the formative means of music. For this reason, one of the most important tasks of the interpreter is the search for the performing means, which would most accurately and fully match both the content of the work and its form⁵: "... a performance can be good only when all the infinite variety of means available to the performer are made to concord fully with the work performed, with its meaning, its content and first and foremost with its formal structure, its architecture, its actual composition, with that specific organized tonal material which we are to turn into a performance" (Neuhaus 1973, 40). That is cognizing the idea (content) and realizing it materially, which means to embody the form corresponding to this idea. This unconditional and idealistic philosophical approach, oddly enough, was refuted by Neuhaus himself. From the point of view of musical hermeneutics, matter was primary for him. Not more important than the content, but primary. His point of view was very clearly revealed in performance. Neuhaus says: "The musical material gives birth to the form" (Neuhaus 1973, 226). This means that the material, the work itself reveals its meanings in the process of the interpretation, without the need for reflection on the part of the performer. For this "birth" of the content, Neuhaus suggests applying an interesting method. It consists in a long and continuous repetition⁶ of even the simplest and shortest phrases of a work (Neuhaus 1988, 27). Such a simple technique is advised by many musicians, as well as by theater artists. In the process of this continuous repetition, an interpreter, intuitively, out of dozens of possible variants, finds the most suitable intonational embodiment of the artistic content embedded by composer or poet in the form.

In his teaching activities, Neuhaus attached great importance to work on form and content and believed that the earliest music education should include necessary knowledge about these phenomena. Neuhaus said that at the very first piano lessons, teacher must demand that even the smallest children have a performance style (form) that exactly matches

the character (content) of the music. That is, a little performer, from a very early age, should realize the most important goal of a musician – to bring form and content into unity. Neuhaus advised using folk music for this, as the “emotional-poetic” origin was most pronounced in it.

Neuhaus - “the creator of a musical word”

For Neuhaus, a word, ontologically, had a uniquely primary meaning in relation to music. He says: “... the piano is, after all, only a mechanical box, a wonderful, an amazing box, on which it is possible to express anything one wants, but a box, and to “humanize” it requires infinitely more effort than does the lovely, living, flexible, ever-ready and infinitely expressive, most human and marvelous invention of man - the human word” (Neuhaus 1973, 57). Moreover, Neuhaus considered poetry not only as the basis of music, but also as the philosophical fundamental principle of absolutely any art: “...the core of any art, its deepest essence and innermost meaning is poetry” (Milshtein 1988, 286; my translation).

For Neuhaus a musical texture was always associated with a word, with its literary and poetic expression. This was clearly felt in his performance, so critics wrote about the “talking” technique by Neuhaus (Milshtein 1988, 263). He requested the same, that is, intonational expressiveness from his students in their lessons. Here, Neuhaus seemed to be confronted with a hermeneutic obstacle for himself, which finally, he could not resolve. This is the problem of verbal illustrating of music.

Illustrating

Despite the fact that Neuhaus had the conviction that poetry is the fundamental principle of any art and that poetic word is the heart of any art work, he repeatedly spoke out that words should not be applicable to explain a musical work. He called it “illustrating” and put a negative meaning to it. Neuhaus said that it was possible: “to supplement and interpret the musical speech of a work (but God forbid to fall into banal ‘illustrations’)” (Neuhaus 1988, 31; my translation).

Milstein wrote that the pedagogical task of Neuhaus was not to “illustrate music with words, but to ‘suggest’ for students the right image, ‘extract’ the necessary feeling from his emotional memory and activate his creative imagination. Comparisons and commensurations, as it were, ‘turn on’ in the student that ‘photocell’, which, according to the apt observation of Neuhaus, is able to translate the phenomena of one world of perceptions into another” (Milshtein 1988, 295; my translation).

Neuhaus insisted that he was against “illustrating” music and revealed his thoughts in the spirit of Susan Langer as follows: “Any music is that particular music only, $A = A$, by virtue of the fact that music is a complete language, a clear expression, that it has a definite immanent meaning and hence its perception and understanding do not need any additional explanations or interpretations in word or picture” (Neuhaus 1973, 26). Then he says: “But we have in our brains a ‘photocell’ ... which can translate the phenomena of a given world of perception into another ... That’s why for people who have the gift of creative imagination all music in its entirety is programme music (even the so-called pure music devoid of programme) and at the same time does not need any program, since it expresses in its own language the whole of its content” (ibid.).

Therefore, Neuhaus quite clearly and specifically expressed the idea that music as a language is self-sufficient and does not need to be translated into any other language. Arguing about it, he wrote in his book: “I never illustrate music” (ibid.). In the same chapter, he gave a completely unexpected example from Beethoven’s *cis-moll* sonata op.27 *Quasi una fantasia*, from its second part, where in the first bars he saw “an opening cup of a flower ... and leaves drooping on the stem” (ibid.). In addition, here, Neuhaus cites List’s words about this part: “une fleur entre deux abimes” (a flower between two abysses), which he liked and which he found very appropriate for this music. That is, in fact, Neuhaus had precisely illustrated the music. Neuhaus himself was aware of this contradictory approach and said: “Such are the antinomies of our art” (ibid.).

Apparently, Neuhaus very vividly and even painfully realized the tragic difference between a poetic language and a simple, ordinary, everyday language, as Huizinga wrote: “Only he who can speak the art-language wins the title of poet. This art-language differs from ordinary speech in that it employs special terms, images, figures, etc., which not everybody will understand. The eternal gulf between being and idea can only be bridged by the rainbow of imagination. The word-bound concept is always inadequate to the torrent of life. Hence it is only the image-making or figurative word that can invest things with expression and at the same time bathe them in the luminosity of ideas: idea and thing are united in the image. But whereas the language of ordinary life – in itself a working and workmanlike instrument – is continually wearing down the image-content of words and acquiring a superficial existence of its own (logical only in appearance), poetry continues to cultivate the figurative, i.e. image-bearing, qualities of language, with deliberate intent” (Huizinga 2002, 133). This is why Neuhaus consciously did not want to mix the language of art and the language of life: “Everything that is “indissoluble”, inexpressible, untranslatable that lives in a man’s soul, everything “subconscious” (frequently it is “supraconscious”) is the domain of music. This is its source” (Neuhaus 1973, 28).

The artistic image of a music work, according to Neuhaus, cannot and should not be enclosed in the rigid and uncomfortable frames of an ordinary word. Besides the fact that it is harmful to art, it is also useless: “Music is a tonal art. It produces no visual image, it does not speak with words or ideas. It speaks only with sounds. But it speaks just as clearly and intelligibly as do words, ideas or visual images. Its structure is governed by rules, just as the spoken language, the composition of a picture or the architecture of a building” (Neuhaus 1973, 54).

Neuhaus believed that music has its own language, which you just need to be able to understand and that for those who understand this language, the musical text is extremely clear: “composers write very accurately what they hear and want to hear from those who perform their work” (Neuhaus 1973, 161). Everything else that is foreign to this text can only

harm the correct interpretation, and therefore was prohibited for the performer.

In addition, Neuhaus attributed to the alien the unnecessary, in his opinion, details from the life of composers, which can only harm the performance.

4. Hermeneutic application on the phenomenon of the author and its inappropriateness according to Neuhaus

If we take a hermeneutic approach to this question, Neuhaus stood at a completely opposite position with respect to the founder of this theory, Wilhelm Dilthey. According to Dilthey, the interpreter should do the grammatical and historical preparatory work (Dilthey 1996). Neuhaus says: "... that is probably why no biography, not even the private correspondence or memoirs, or even profound psychological research can give such a clear impression of an author as can "his deeds", in other words his work" (Neuhaus 1973, 219). That is, according to Neuhaus, all the work, seeking out the meanings of a music outside it is simply meaningless. Neuhaus absolutely did not want to consider a work as "an author's life act", as Dilthey considered it (Dilthey 1996). He wanted to see this work as some kind of substance divorced from the author.

However, Neuhaus was a musician-philosopher, and he understood that it was impossible, completely unthinkable, and even harmful to absolutely break away from the phenomenon of the author and the era: "an insufficient understanding of a composer's thought or of the style of an era, can have an adverse effect on the main elements of music: tone and rhythm" (Neuhaus 1973, 46-47). A complete separation from the phenomena of the era and the author leads to excessively free treatment of the text. This is also indicated by classical hermeneutics: "The canon of the hermeneutic autonomy as a positive determination requires compliance with the autonomy of the text, which is taking into account the intentions of the author. As a negative determination, this law prohibits arbitrary interpretation of the author's text" (Kolesnikov 2010, 408). Therefore, everything that lies outside the text was considered superficial, excessive, and harmful by Neuhaus. The

naturalness, simplicity, and logic of musical speech – this is what Neuhaus put forward in the first place: “The phrase of Neuhaus was unsophisticated and clearly delineated. Each phrase he performed ‘breathed’, each phrase was fully felt; it flowed naturally, like water from a spring, directly from the soul. Neuhaus resolutely avoided any pretentiousness that only destroys the logic of musical speech” (Milshtein 1988, 263; my translation). To this conviction by Neuhaus, the following saying by Tolstoy is close in spirit: “an artist should have three qualities: sincerity, sincerity, and again sincerity” (Neuhaus 1973, 200).

5. Conclusion

Music is a text and, being a text, requires hermeneutic decisions. Neuhaus developed and proposed such solutions. They are valuable in that they were the result of the deep philosophical thoughts and based on a long and fruitful pedagogical experience. The hermeneutic methods of Neuhaus were thought out in detail and formed a system that has both philosophical and pedagogical values.

Each hermeneutical position developed by Neuhaus and having its fundamental prototype in classical philosophy finds its refraction in his teaching practice. Thus, we have examined the ideas of Neuhaus about the hermeneutic circle, preunderstanding, and form and content. Finally, all of them are solved only in the light of Neuhaus’ theory of talent, which he defined by the presence of two qualities: the ability to “grasp” instantly the musical image of a work and the ability to integrate instantly a review of the work. These two qualities have the same idea of the *per saltum* interpretation. Neuhaus, in his teaching practice, had vast experience in observing his students, who for all their individual dissimilarity, had the same quality – namely, the ability to interpret instantly the text. Neuhaus quite rightly concluded that this ability is activated by inspiration and can exist only in the spirit of talent and passion for creativity. Realizing that contemporary musicology cannot explain the phenomenon of talent, he still spoke of this phenomenon as an objective reality. Neuhaus, as a gifted teacher, trying to solve this issue, proposed a system of

measures for developing this talent of “*per saltum* interpretation” and applied this system in practice. Therefore, hermeneutic tasks grow and became, thanks to Neuhaus’ thinking, a musical-philosophical system that affected all of the most fundamental aspects of a musical performance. Neuhaus felt and understood hermeneutics not as an applied science, which concerns only a text, but as a basis for understanding the most important component of music – the artistic image. It was this understanding that laid the foundation for the fruitful pedagogical activity of Neuhaus and made him a great hermeneut teacher.

NOTES

¹ It is impossible not to mention the fact that Neuhaus worked in a difficult time for the development of philosophy. Philosophical materialism was the only officially supported form of thinking in the Soviet Union. In Soviet times, hermeneutics was considered as a purely idealistic science. Therefore, it almost did not develop.

² This is the only book by Heinrich Neuhaus, in which he outlined all his pedagogical theories and aesthetic views. It has a subtitle: *Notes of a teacher*, giving an idea of the main direction of Neuhaus’ activity.

³ Music scholars

⁴ “Even more!” Neuhaus said in statements about the crucial importance of talent in art: “So long as I go on teaching I shall stop my ears so as not to hear this reply” (Neuhaus 1973, 22). As an artist and musician, Neuhaus certainly could not help but understand the significance of the natural gift in art, but as a teacher, he could not agree.

⁵ In his pedagogical work, Neuhaus, speaking of the unity of form and content, used such a metaphor: “a tunnel has to be dug at both ends” (Neuhaus 1973, 99), that is, realizing the opposite nature of the idea and matter, content and form, the two-component essence of the work, try to work simultaneously on both.

⁶ Neuhaus liked to paraphrase the Latin proverb: *repetition is the mother of persuasion* (Repetitio est mater persuadendi). In this case, repetition is the mother of artistic truth.

REFERENCES

- Alekseyev, I.S. 1986/7. "Ob universal'nom kharaktere ponimaniya" ["On understanding's universal character"]. *Voprosy filosofii*.
- Asafyev, B. 1971. *Muzykal'naya forma kak protsess*. [Music form as a process]. Moscow: Muzyka.
- Avtonomova, N.S. 1991. *Zagadka chelovecheskogo ponimaniya* [Enigma of human understanding]. Politizdat.
- Bogin, G.I. 1993. *Substantsional'naya storona ponimaniya teksta*. Tver': Izdatel'stvo TvGU.
- Dilthey, W. 1996. *Selected Works in 6 volumes*. Vol. 4: *Hermeneutics and the Study of History*. Princeton University Press.
- Gadamer, Hans Georg. 1977. *The Philosophical Foundations of Twentieth Century*. University of California.
- Huizinga, J. 2002. *Homo Ludens*. London: Routledge.
- Kolesnikov, A.S. 2010. *Istoriya filosofii* [History of Philosophy]. Sankt-Peterburg: Piter.
- Milshstein, YA.I. 1988. "Heinrich Neuhaus." In *Ob iskusstve fortepiannoy igry* [The Art of Piano Playing], by H. Neuhaus, 257-299. Moscow: Muzyka.
- Neuhaus, Heinrich. 1973. *The Art of Piano Playing*. Translated by K. A. Leibovitch. New York: Praeger Publishers.
- Neuhaus, G.G. 1988. *Ob iskusstve fortepiannoy igry* [On the art of piano playing]. Moscow: Muzyka. [First published in 1961 by Gosmuzizdat, Moscow].

Ayna Isababayeva is a soloist musician (cello, piano) and a researcher in the field of music, philosophy of art and hermeneutics of art. Her recent publications: "Plato's Ion: Art as an Act of Hermeneutics" (*Hermeneia* No. 26/2021) and "Ethos and Hermeneutics: An Ancient Example of Theories' Interaction" (Art&Design Congress 2021).

Address:

Ayna Isababayeva
Erciyes University, Fine Arts Faculty, Music Department
Merkez Kampüs Talas Yolu Melikgazi / Kayseri, Turkey
Email: isababayeva@erciyes.edu.tr