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DEFINING NATIONAL PIANO SCHOOLS

Perceptions and challenges

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Musical Arts (Performance) (Piano)

2015
Declaration

I declare that the research presented here is my own work and has not been submitted to any other institution for the award of a degree.

Signed: [Signature]

Date: 01/11/2015
Dedicated to my parents
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Abstract

The main purpose of this study was an investigation of contemporary piano professionals' perceptions with regard to the key areas describing national piano schools and their current state, as well as definitions of what constitutes a national piano school in the twenty-first century. The perceptual data was collected through an international, open-ended internet questionnaire and five in-depth interviews with piano professionals. The opinions were gathered and placed within the context of the relevant historical literature, while the design of nineteen graphical genealogical trees, representing the teacher-student lineage across the centuries, provided another dimension to this research. National piano schools can be described to varying degrees by means of: national characteristics - which include factors such as culture, conditioning, historical circumstances, the personality of the population as a whole; traditions of interpretation - including sound, aesthetics, technique; and the personality of individuals - particularly key archetypes of each school. The definition of ‘national piano school’ is proposed in Chapter Seven. This research is a resource for music educators, students and performers wishing to further explore their own artistic identity and it aims to encourage and inspire a true and intelligent or honest variety in performance style.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The variety of supposedly obvious descriptors of national piano schools used in colloquial language has not yet been studied in order to create a theoretical framework for distinguishing and describing them. Sofia Lourenco (2010, p. 6) identifies distinctive national piano schools of interpretation heard while analysing various recordings, in areas such as phrasing, tempi, approach to rubato and aesthetics. An analysis of descriptors and definitions used in dictionary sources ("Oxford Music Online," 2015) and piano-related encyclopaedia (Hinson, 2004) does not result in a closer definition of what constitutes a national piano school, either in general or in particular. At the same time, a growing body of opinions of piano professionals suggests that national piano schools are either currently in the process of unification (Berman, 2004, minutes 16-17) or are already completely extinct (Schonberg, 1987, pp. 463-465). This current study attempts to define more closely the phenomenon of national piano schools, exploring the most recent perceptions of pianists and piano pedagogues.

‘National piano school(s)’ is a colloquial term rather than a dictionary defined term. Subsequently, determining its point of origin is a challenge. Using the phrase for key word searches of hard copy published texts and online publications brought back only scant results. However, the term ‘national piano school(s)’ is present in the topic-related literature, for example, ‘French Pianism’ (Timbrell, 1999b), a recording study entitled Tendencies of piano interpretation in the twentieth century: Concept and different types of ‘piano interpretation schools’” (Lourenco, 2007), and ‘The Russian Piano School’ (Barnes, 2007). The phenomenon studied here is also discussed amongst piano professionals and it seems to be found in their perception of a variety of past and present piano performance styles. Authors such as Malik and Distler (1999, p. 61) and Uszler (1998, p. 29) use the term as a common, internationally recognized and accepted notion. They also assume that the reader understands its meaning, despite using it amongst themselves to refer to different sets of factors such as technique (Uszler, 1998, p. 29), interpretation (Lourenco, 2010, p. 6) or history and politics (Schonberg, 1987, pp. 464-465).
Dictionary definition

The semantic analysis of the tripartite expression ‘national piano school’ reveals one substantial issue whilst attempting to understand the term. The ‘national piano’ component seems self-explanatory and suggests a piano performance or pedagogy that is “relating to, or typical of a whole country and its people, rather than to part of that country or to other countries” (Woodford & Jackson, 2003, p. 825). The challenge lies in the multiple and broad meanings of the word ‘school’. It is worth noting that the word ‘school’ could, in most cases, be replaced by ‘style’ – “a way of doing something” (Woodford & Jackson, 2003, p. 1273), although the piano literature most relevant to this study uses the word ‘school(s)’. For this reason, the current research focuses on ‘national piano school(s)’ rather than ‘national piano style’.

There are three dictionary meanings of the word ‘school’ that can be related to national pianism. ‘The Cambridge Dictionary’ (Woodford & Jackson, 2003, p. 1115) defines ‘school’ as: 1) “an institution that provides an education”, 2) “a group of painters, writers, poets, etc., [often artists], whose work is similar, especially similar to that of a particular leader, [including] his followers” and 3) “a part of a college or university specializing in a particular subject or group of subjects”. To further clarify the expression ‘national piano school’ the definition of the word ‘school’ needs to be placed within the context of this research.

Definition one

Topic-related literature supports the use of the word ‘school’ as referring to a particular institution. Gerig (2007) begins his discussion on ‘national piano schools’ by stating that soon after the establishment of the main conservatoires, such as Paris Conservatoire de Musique 1795, Leipzig 1843 and St. Petersburg 1862 amongst others, “nationalistic traits began to be evident and definite schools of piano playing to emerge” (p.287). Whenever the French School is discussed, the Paris Conservatoire is mentioned (Gerig, 2007, p. 315; Timbrell, 1999b, pp. 26-34) and whenever the Russian School is discussed, its two main centres, the St. Petersburg and Moscow Conservatoires, are listed by Barnes (2007, p. ix) and Gelfand (1986, p. 39). The English School according to Gerig (2007, p. 361) was centred around the Royal Academy of Music. At the same time, none of the analysed sources consider these institutions as being synonymous with a ‘national school’, despite the fact that each of them was considered the main centre of a relevant associated school. The reason for this lies in a variety
of factors, such as interpretation or technique, being used by the same sources to describe other factors pertaining generally to national piano schools.

**Definition two**

The second meaning of the word ‘school’ relates to a group of artists who create in a similar style and often follow the most prominent person - the ‘leader’ of the group (Woodford & Jackson, 2003, p. 1115). The idea of a leader or a key archetype defining or representing a school is also well-supported throughout the literature. On the French ground, Pierre Zimmerman is considered a “grandfather” (or “great-grandfather”) of the French piano school (Gerig, 2007, p. 315; Timbrell, 1999b, p. 38). In Russia, John Field, a student of Muzio Clementi, played “a major role in the emergence of Russian pianism” (Barnes, 2007, p. xiv; Gerig, 2007, p. 288), and one of the most important key archetypes to influence many generations of Russian pianists was Anton Rubinstein (Barnes, 2007, p. xvi; Gerig, 2007, p. 292). Within the early stages of the Austro-German School, the lineage of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and his follower, Johann Nepomuk Hummel, is considered important (Gerig, 2007, p. 65; Schonberg, 1987, p. 116). Arthur Schnabel, on the other hand, appears to be the carrier and leader of the German School in the twentieth century (Schonberg, 1987, pp. 432, 446). It is also important to note that the pedagogical work of some of the most notable key archetypes, such as Franz Liszt or Theodore Leschetizky, extended beyond any national borders and it would be a challenge to categorize them within any national school.

**Definition three**

The third definition that refers to the “part of a college or university specializing in a particular subject or group of subjects” (Woodford & Jackson, 2003, p. 1115) does not directly address the phenomenon of national piano schools but indicates the separateness of a particular national style (in the case of a university - a particular specialized section of the university) as opposed to the styles of other countries.

One of the challenges in defining a national piano school is the speculation of why the word ‘school’ instead of ‘style’ is used throughout the literature, even though in many cases ‘style’ might have been more appropriate and less misleading. The main difference between these terms, at least at the dictionary level, lies in the fact that the term ‘school’ implies a set of deliberate actions (‘schooling’), leading to a situation wherein traditions are preserved, passed
on to and continued by the next generation, which the word ‘style’ does not imply (Woodford & Jackson, 2003, p. 1273). It also suggests the existence of key figures, such as teachers or pianists, resembling a traditional school, whose followers actually constitute the ‘school’ itself. Since the current study focuses on exploring the phenomenon labelled ‘national piano school’, this term will be used throughout the thesis as it appears in the literary sources. The word ‘style’ will be used only when it does not directly address this central phenomenon.

Schools of piano playing

Topic-related literature mentions several schools of piano playing. Some were named after cities, notably the Viennese and Stuttgart piano schools (Gerig, 2007, pp. 52, 230, 507) while the most commonly mentioned are the French School (Gerig, 2007, p. 315; Lourenço, 2007, p. 191; Malik & Distler, 1999, p. 61; Timbrell, 1999b, p. 251), the German School (Lourenço, 2007, p. 190; Malik & Distler, 1999, p. 61; Schonberg, 1987, p. 446) and the Russian School (Barnes, 2007, p. ix; Lourenço, 2007, p. 190; Malik & Distler, 1999, p. 61; Schonberg, 1987, p. 278; Uszler, 1998, p. 28). The Russian School is sometimes also connected with the Slavic School (Malik & Distler, 1999, p. 61). Less frequently mentioned are the Italian (Schonberg, 1987, p. 461; Uszler, 1998, p. 29), English (Schonberg, 1987, p. 455), and American Schools (Schonberg, 1987, p. 495; Timbrell & Chappell, 1999, pp. 79-70). Some sources create a distinction between an ‘old’ and ‘new’ school (Kramer, 1992, pp. iv-v), and ‘romantic’ and ‘modern’ piano style (Hamilton, 2008, p. 259), and this will be discussed later in the context of notions which overarch piano styles, regardless of geographical origin.

To complete the list of schools found in the literature, Schonberg’s identification of an Oriental School must be mentioned (1987, p. 461). Owing to the fact that nearly thirty years have passed since this publication, the Oriental School should probably now be sub-divided in order to distinguish between specific countries, principally on the basis of international careers and the most prestigious competition winners coming most notably from China, Japan and South Korea. It was beyond the scope of this study to analyse these relatively new schools, particularly without the ability to investigate primary source literature in these countries’ native languages.
Current state of national piano schools

The abovementioned examples from the literature constitute a statement in favour of an historical existence of national piano schools. Nonetheless, it must be stated that nearly all the previously mentioned publications, with the exception of the studies by Lourenco (2007, 2010), refer to the state of piano styles of forty to fifty years ago, which in the case of national piano schools might since have resulted in substantial change, particularly considering how much the world has evolved over the past fifty years. Any discussion of the current state of national piano schools must remain open and not simply conclude that “indeed national piano schools still exist” (Uszler, 1998, p. 29).

The literature discussed below indicates that the status of national piano schools has changed in recent years, and that they have undergone an evolutionary step and are currently shifting towards unification. Boris Berman (2000, p. 191) says that “the influence of national schools is vanishing in our global village”. A similar stand is taken by Jean-Philippe Collard quoted in ‘French Pianism’ as saying that “all schools have now combined” and that even the French School “has not really existed after the 1960s, since the death of Marguerite Long” (Timbrell, 1999b, p. 225). An obvious authority on pianism, Harold C. Schonberg states:

After the First World War a new school of artists came to the fore, all of them conditioned by the new precepts. A few of them had been active before 1918, but not until after that did they really start to dominate the scene as representatives of the modern style. The ambience in which they worked and lived had nothing in common with the world of the Liszt and Leschetizky pupils who had dominated the previous generation. For better or worse, the style had changed, and it was the style that has remained in existence to the present day. (Schonberg, 1987, p. 424)

He continues this discussion by stating that after the 1980s, a national style of music “seemed all but extinct” except for the French School (Schonberg, 1987, pp. 463-465). In conclusion, Schonberg suggests that “thanks to the incredible speed with which ideas are transmitted and bodies hurtled around the world, we have an international school of music-making rather than national schools” (Schonberg, 1987, p. 456).

Kenneth Hamilton (2008) speaks with even more scepticism, albeit with a well-reasoned tone, suggesting that only while the differences between manufactured instruments - preferred by
various countries - were pronounced, the “contrasts” between national schools were “identifiable” (p. 12). He goes on to say that “when the differences between pianos began somewhat to lessen as the nineteenth century progressed, national schools became a much more nebulous matter of collective taste - if there is such a thing - rather than a practical response to differing instruments”. He too attests to the French School resisting the influence of foreign instrument makers, “hanging on to the Erards, until [the] early twentieth century”, making it one of the longest-standing schools (taking instrument manufacturing as the defining factor in this case) (Hamilton, 2008, p. 12).

In the case of the Russian School, the trend towards unification on the grounds of government policies (Cold War) has been raised by Schonberg (1987). He states that due to the enclosed character of the society and the lack of exposure to “contemporary Western thought, [Russian] pianists necessarily had to fall back on a tradition that had its roots in Anton and Nicholas Rubinstein” (p. 464). This situation, while it lasted, separated the Russian piano school from other countries. After 1960, with more and more Russian artists travelling abroad, and some artistic ideas being exchanged, the “inevitable happened”:

... Russian musicians today [the book was published in 1987] are trained according to international standards. The result is a new generation of musicians in the Soviet Union, who are indistinguishable from musicians elsewhere... (Schonberg, 1987, p. 464).

Across the ocean, this trend is confirmed by Timbrell and Chappell (1999) who believe that there is no such thing as an American School due to American schooling being open to outside ideas and pedagogy, while European state-run institutions managed to “resist outside influences for decades”. Furthermore, the authors call the “gradual breakdown of the old national schools” an ‘achievement’, which took place in America before occurring in any other country (p. 94). This stance is mirrored by Berman (2000) who says:

If the term “national school” stands for limitations of one’s musical understanding of pianistic abilities, then the time for national schools has passed, to the benefit of all. We should no longer assume, or tolerate, that a Russian pianist cannot play Mozart or that a German may have difficulties with Debussy. But there are times when I miss the idiosyncratic intensity of musicians who play “their” repertoire with full dedication to a certain tradition. I cherish instances when I can say, “He played Schubert like a
“Viennese,” no matter what the performer’s origin or place of schooling may have been. (p. 191)

Paradoxically, Berman views the descriptions of past national schools as representing their limitations while expressing a longing towards some of their styles.

Most of the authors mentioned in this discussion point to the second half of the twentieth century as the moment when ‘national schools’ lost their prominence. Hamilton (2008) gives the reason for the change in performance style in the twentieth century as being “… our recording-based music industry, standardized instruments, and standardized training … [which] may represent a radical break with the past” (p. 30). The impact of history on national styles has been discussed by Malik and Distler (1999) who state that until World War II, “the German, French and Slavic schools of piano playing dominated” but due to the turmoil of war, artists were forced to resettle across the globe, “plant[ing] seeds for the flowering of international piano styles in the post-war era” (p. 61). This process, according to Barnes (2007, p. xx (p. 20)), continues with the Russian piano style being “enriched with other traditions after 1970” and the Russian tradition influencing other nations because Russian “artists and teachers … have been spending extended periods, or become permanent[ly] resident, in Western Europe and North America” after 1991.

There seems to be a consensus in the analysed literature that the era of national piano schools has now passed or that those national styles are now in sharp decline. At the same time, no voices have been found during the research for this thesis, which absolutely dismiss the idea of an historical existence of national piano schools. The current study focuses on exploring twenty-first century piano professionals’ perceptions of areas that define ‘national piano schools’ both past and present, and their current state.

**Purpose statement**

The purpose of this qualitative study is to collect and present perceptions found in the literature and amongst currently living piano-specialized musicians from around the world with regard to defining and assessing the current state of the phenomenon of national piano schools.
This study makes an important foray into exploring the state of national piano schools and piano performance style in the twenty-first century, and aims to assist future research into the features of performance style, according to its place of origin. The results will be stimulating and inspiring for students, scholars and artists alike.

**Research questions**

1. How are national piano schools perceived today?
2. What is the present state of national piano schools as found in the results of the current study?
3. What areas are currently perceived as being characteristic of past and present national piano schools?
4. What is currently recognized as a national piano school?
5. What can the genealogy of teacher-student lineage across the centuries tell us about the tradition of national piano schools?

**Methodology**

Due to the central topic’s descriptive nature, the research for this thesis was conducted in a qualitative paradigm. The elements of the grounded theory approach allowed for the dynamic character of this study (Burns, 2000, pp. 19-43; Hammersly & Atkinson, 2007, pp. 97-120). Firsthand experiences and opinions of music professionals, collected through interviews and an open-ended internet questionnaire, were compared with the results of the literature review. The geographical spread of national schools across the globe was presented on nineteen genealogical graphs, depicting the lineage of pianists over the centuries. The results of this study were achieved through an analysis of the convergences and differences amongst all methods of data collection.

**Limitations and delimitations**

This study is limited to English and Polish language research as these languages are known by the researcher. There is potentially a large body of studies on various national piano schools in other languages which therefore could not be included. This study does not aim at describing any of the particular schools in detail, but rather uses examples from the various
schools to identify differences and similarities. Recordings were not used at any stage of this research, and thus could form a focus for a different future study.

**Personal statement**

The topic for this research has arisen from the researcher’s years of admiration for certain national styles and the myriad performances produced by them in concert halls and recordings. This study brings the reader closer to an understanding of those styles while encouraging a greater diversity in performance style.
Chapter 2: Methodology

A thorough understanding of the field is considered to be one of the most important characteristics of good qualitative research (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, pp. 298-310). To achieve this, three main methods of data collection were used in this study, namely, a literature review, interviews and a questionnaire. The analysis of literary sources was used to provide an historical perspective, while perceptions regarding firsthand experiences of music professionals, collected through interviews and questionnaire responses, explored the most recent opinions with regard to national piano schools. To add another dimension to the collected historical information, genealogical trees were created. The majority of the material was descriptive (qualitative) in nature, with only a few questionnaire sections being quantitative in character.

The choice of methods was determined by the initial literature review and by pre-research discussions conducted with piano professional friends and acquaintances of the researcher. Some of these conversations occurred after the researcher’s lecture-presentation regarding preliminary findings of the current study, given at the Third World Piano Conference in Novi Sad, Serbia in 2011. The opportunity to discuss the topic in a professional environment had a positive impact on the choice of methodology. During the course of conversation with participants, it became apparent that the piano community was eager for the results of such a study as this. There was a variety of opinion amongst professionals concerning the issue of piano schools and the ways in which they are exemplified in live performance. Nearly all the pianists were able to engage in a well-sustained discussion, particularly regarding the schools with which they were personally familiar. Their knowledge of national piano schools was of a practical nature - from their teachers and live or recorded performances - rather than learned from publications. The variety and complexity of their experiences were considered an important demonstration that perceptions were a valid source of data for this study.

The choice of methods for the current research was dictated by the necessity to validate collected opinions by means of triangulation - a traditional model in the qualitative paradigm (Creswell, 2009, pp. 190-193). Since the geographical origin of data was considered important, attracting participants from around the globe via both an internet questionnaire and personal interviews, ensured that the results were not limited to solely Australian circumstances. The results were drawn from searching for convergences amongst the three
different methods of data collection (literature, questionnaire, interviews) and comparison with the genealogical trees.

**Literature sources**

The literature review in Chapter Three focuses on delineating key areas that define the phenomenon of national piano schools, identifying the factors which influenced the schools over the years, and understanding their evolution.

The list of sources chosen for the literature review included only those publications that directly addressed the phenomenon of national piano styles, that is, publications which used the actual phrase ‘national piano school’ in relation to piano performance or pedagogy. No assumption was made that a book would describe a particular school simply because it was written by one of that school’s archetypes. Only texts that made direct reference to what areas define or describe a national piano school were included in the source material for this thesis.

This approach was necessary to avoid any preconceptions regarding what might constitute a national piano school, and it limited the choice of publications considered suitable in this study.

The literature review commenced with an analysis of widely known general music references and piano-related dictionaries by respected musicologists such as Lyle (1985) and Pauer (1923), as well as reputable online encyclopaedia ("Oxford Music Online," 2015). Unfortunately, those sources neither contained the phrase ‘national piano school’, nor made any direct reference to particular national piano schools.


The literature review for this topic proved to be time-consuming and exhaustive. Many large scale publications had to be analysed in their entirety since, more often than not, the indices or chapter titles did not contain direct references to national piano schools, and the relevant
information was scattered throughout the text. The only exception to this was ‘French Pianism’ (Timbrell, 1999b), which, as the title immediately suggests, deals directly with the French national style of piano playing, often addressed in the book as ‘school’ (for example, the title of chapter five, “Coda: The French School, Past and Present”) (p. 251).

Further perceptions of professionals with regard to the central issue of this research were found in collections of interviews with well-known pianists and pedagogues (Brower, 2003; Cooke, 1999; Grindea, 2007; Mach, 1988), biographies ( Bertenson & Leyda, 1956; Mitchell & Evans, 2009; H. C. Schonberg, 1992; Walker, 2010), personal experiences of well-known artists (Brendel, 2001; Hofmann, 1976; Schnabel, 1988; Slenczynska, 1986) and finally, books dealing with the various aspects of piano style (Berman, 2000; Hamilton, 2008; Letnanova, 1991; Thieffry, 1937). They all contained an occasional mention of national schools or their history. An analysis of several pedagogy-specific publications (Gieseking & Leimer, 1972; Lhévinne, 1972; Mark, 2003; Matthay, 1905, 1920; Neuhaus, 1994; Onishi, 1996; Prentner, 2005; Waterman, 1983) yielded no useful literary findings. In the field of academia, some important information can be found in the writings of Lourenco (2005, 2007, 2010), while Kramer (1992), Gaunt (2008), Bongrain (1999) and Uszler (1998), related only remotely to the issues studied here.

Some of the sources mentioned above are not peer-reviewed scholarly documents, so the personal character of these articles and the subjectivity of the written material can be seen as problematic. However, many of these authors are well-respected professionals and thus suitable for consideration in academic research. The challenge of including such subjective material is addressed in the current research by collecting data from a variety of sources and comparing it with interview and questionnaire results, thus validating the literature’s descriptions of national piano schools.

Genealogical trees

The nineteen genealogical trees described in Chapter Five below are a graphical representation of teacher-student lineages across the centuries, grouped according to geographical origin and central pianists and pedagogues. The genealogical trees have been designed on the assumption that there exists a certain value in the teacher-student lineage, namely, its ability to transfer a piano pedagogy or performance tradition – in this case the tradition of a ‘national piano school’ – across generations of pianists. The researcher
considered it important to understand whether this lineage coincides in any way with the phenomenon of national piano schools, and if it can tell us anything further about the subject. The graphs presented in this thesis are an entirely original contribution to the field by this researcher.

The validity of the assumption that the lineage between teacher and student is a reasonable means for passing on a tradition of piano playing is crucial to drawing any conclusions from these graphs. Academic researchers have extensively studied the instrumental setting of one-on-one music tuition (Fredrickson, 2007; Gaunt, 2005, 2008; Kennell, 1997), but often admit that understanding this environment is challenging. Recent studies show that the connection and influence between mentor and pupil is, indeed, very strong in this setting (Gaunt, 2008, pp. 230-231). The professorial staff in Gaunt’s study describe their main reason for becoming music teachers as either the need to pass on their experience and knowledge to the younger generation, or as a form of gratitude to people who firstly transmitted this knowledge to them. This suggests a rather personal approach to the teaching process. All participants in Gaunt’s study admit to adopting a specific attitude of friendship and care towards their students, reminding them more of family ties than a formal teacher-student relationship. The influences of this relationship are seen to be long-term, often resulting in lifetime friendships. Similarly, in another study (Presland, 2005), students at a UK conservatoire point to the importance of their piano teacher as a “mentor”, “guide” and “consultant” (p. 239) which, over the years, usually led to a more personal and “intimate” relationship. This history of the one-on-one instrumental setting suggests at least a favourable context for successful transmission of the tradition of national piano schools.

The idea of passing on traditions from teacher to student is also supported in piano-specialized dictionaries and publications, which often list teacher and student for each index entry (Dubal, 1995; Lyle, 1985). Furthermore, various sources indicate that famous pianists took pride in and often talked about their teachers as one of their most important influences (Mach, 1988, pp. 119-120).

There is an obvious challenge of how well, if at all, the tradition of national schools can actually be passed on from teachers to students, particularly over many successive generations. Sceptical voices suggest that students of the same teacher might not play similarly to one another. This issue has been raised already by Schonberg in 1987 when he posited:
Did these pupils of Liszt have anything in common? One wonders, when thinking of pianists as dissimilar as Lamond and Rosenthal, Sauer and Friedheim, Joseffy and Reisenauer, or, for that matter von Bülow and Tausig. Liszt, after all, founded no school and as a teacher was mainly an inspirational force. Most of the Liszt students did have “line,” tone and a romantic approach. But, then again, the same could be said of the Leschetizky pupils. All his pupils got, through osmosis if by no other means, the romanticism that he exemplified. Which meant concentration on tone, a good deal of bravura, freedom in phrase and rhythm (uncontrolled in some pupils, but delightfully handled by others of the calibre of Rosenthal, de Greef, Sauer and, one feels certain, Joseffy), and perhaps the notion that the piano and the pianist came first, the music second. But there was never any such thing as a Liszt school of playing. His students, having sat at his feet, rose to depart on their respective ways and play according to their respective philosophies, as have all students of all teachers from the beginning of time (p.324).

This quote, despite saying that Liszt’s and Leschetizky’s students played very differently to one another, also suggests that some elements (such as “romanticism”, “concentration on tone”, “freedom in phrase and rhythm”) were common amongst them. Hamilton (2008) doubts the existence of continuous performance tradition, since he himself encountered performers claiming their lineage as proof of their artistic style being rooted in a great tradition - “a last living link with Liszt” - while their performances “did little to enhance the reputation of the glorious lineage” (p. 16). Neal Peres Da Costa (2012) argues categorically that the tradition of late nineteenth and early twentieth century performance styles has very little to do with how we perform today, and that our taste has changed considerably. He adds to the voices critical of a continuous performance tradition even within the past hundred years.

In summarising the validity of this study’s genealogical trees, the challenge of providing anything definitive must be borne in mind. Given so many variables, the interpretation of this data should be questioned at the individual level, even where the lineage is strong and clearly indicates the school to which each participant belongs. The results of the data collated using this method have been treated as supportive when discussing the findings and conclusions of this thesis.
Data collection

Data collection comprised cross-referencing various sources in order to establish a broad array of connections between teachers and students across the centuries. The list of sources for the genealogical section of this study included:

Dictionaries/encyclopaedia:

- Lyle (1985) – one of the richest sources of connections between teachers and students;
- Pauer (1923) – detailed, but needed cross-referencing due to the early publication date;
- Dubal (1995) – often discusses the importance and various influences of pianists and performers;
- Grove ("Oxford Music Online," 2015) – used as a cross-reference for all other sources;

Online resources used as a starting point of reference:

- Wikipedia.com – often included information not readily available from other sources;
- Pianowoman.com (Eide-Altman, 2001) – source directly addressing female pianists;

Historical publications related to piano:

- Schonberg (1987) – rich source of data describing the strength of influences between pianists as well as their students and teachers;
- Gerig (2007) – also a very detailed source, describing the technical spread of tradition across centuries and connecting teachers with students;
- Timbrell (1999b) – useful source particularly for the design of the French lineages.

The sources considered most reliable, such as Grove ("Oxford Music Online," 2015), usually provided a complete list of teachers, but the number of students was often rather limited. On the other hand, sources such as Wikipedia, while not peer-reviewed, often included much
longer lists, occasionally anecdotal, which significantly expedited the process of collecting and connecting names. Such sources were then verified by cross-referencing with at least two other publications or detailed biographies of relevant pianists. This procedure was considered sufficient to ensure the reliability and validity of data in the current research.

In order to understand the place and importance of each person included on the genealogical trees, the researcher collected the following data:

1. Name and surname
2. Year of birth and death
3. Place of birth
4. Country/countries of artistic activity
5. List of students and teachers
6. Relevant biographical notes
7. References.

**Data analysis**

The analysis and preparation of data for inclusion on the genealogical trees focused on solving two primary challenges: firstly, that of identifying the particular national school(s) to which each member of the tree belongs, and secondly, assessing the importance of each person (pianist, performer or composer) within the particular genealogical chart.

**Classification of members of schools**

Classifying individuals on the genealogical trees was one of the challenges found in this study. The complexity involved in deciding how to assign Theodore Leschetizky, for example, serves to illustrate this challenge vividly. Hamilton (2008) describes Leschetizky as arguably one of the most prominent piano pedagogues of all time, who had “elements that could be described as Polish, Viennese, and even Russian” (p. 11). Considering that Leschetizky was born in Poland, studied with Liszt (Hungarian), and taught in Vienna and Russia, it is rather problematic to classify him as belonging to any single national piano school (be it Hungarian, Polish, Viennese or Russian).

This challenge was dealt with by analysing the biography of each member in the context of both the influences they received from, and the influence they exerted on, others, and then by
clearly indicating the findings on the graphs. In instances where pianists were born, studied, taught and concertized mostly in a single country, the process was straightforward and they were assigned on a graph to a single national piano school. In cases where the country of birth and/or education, and the place of pedagogical and concert activity varied, the genealogical graphs clearly indicate those multinational factors. Separate graphs were created for pianists of great international standing, such as Leschetizky and Liszt, in order to highlight their influence across all schools and geographical regions. Various branches of particular national trees are also delineated wherever divergent styles developed within a single school (such as the Russian School being divided between Anton Rubinstein in St. Petersburg and Nicolai Rubinstein in Moscow).

**Level of importance of a teacher/pianist**

Having collected 625 names, the researcher began a process of elimination so that the final graphical representation of the data would be clear and contain only the most relevant information. The process of elimination was conducted by assessing the level of importance of each member within the context of a particular national piano school. The assessment criteria included particular requirements that each member needed to meet in order to be included on the graphs. The musicians who were included in the final genealogical trees were:

- Pedagogues who had a well-respected student or students, who in turn became concert artists or pedagogues;
- Pianists whose concert activities were well documented in the literature assessed during the course of this study;
- Pianists and pedagogues who, while being themselves not so well known, connect through their lineage to two other well-respected names (for example, the connection between Bach and Beethoven through other lesser-known names);
- Most well-known composers, who in past eras were also performers;
- Some of the lesser-known twenty-first century representatives of each school, to address where surviving members of each school are currently found.

Such an assessment process can be criticized as subjective. Because of the broad range of variables, to some extent it must necessarily be so. Delineating the process of elimination and criteria for selection should help the reader understand why certain decisions were made and the reasoning behind those choices.
**Design process**

Data collection and early designs were commenced in a Microsoft OneNote document. This file type provided an unlimited expansion capacity for recording data, and graphic arrows pointing from teacher(s) to student(s). During the first eighteen months of this study, a simple investigation into connections between all the artists found in the sources, resulted in an indiscriminate sample group of 625.

Since the graphical capabilities of OneNote software did not allow for creating a professional layout, all the data was transferred into SmartDraw 2013 – specialized computer software for drawing charts and diagrams. The nineteen genealogical trees included in this thesis were finalized, after several revisions, in the updated SmartDraw 2014 Enterprise Edition and are attached to this document as Appendix G (files 1-10).

Two issues, related to data availability and software capability respectively, are present on the genealogical graphs. In a number of cases, the dates of birth were not available, and it was obvious from various biographical notes accessed by the researcher, that some artists preferred not to disclose this information. In those few cases, the data shown on the graph indicate only the name, nationality and lineage of those members. The second issue is related to the SmartDraw software, which was not able to input the diacritical markings in some names. The researcher did not consider this an impediment in continuing to use the software in its most recent version.

**Conclusions**

The main purpose of including a genealogical section in the current research is to understand whether there are any convergences between the genealogical trees and the opinions collected through the literature review, questionnaires and interviews, which could shed more light on the definitions of, and existence, past and present, of national piano schools. The current study does not seek to definitively conclude whether the teacher-student lineage is a valid path for passing on the traditions of national piano schools or even for transmitting the elements of pedagogy and piano style of particular teachers. It assumes that the one-on-one setting is suitable for passing on some of the knowledge and experience from teacher to student. It also assumes, at this point, that due to the complexity and multitude of the key areas defining a
national piano school, there might be some overarching features of a particular school despite some obvious and possibly dominating differences.

**Questionnaire**

Traditional, paper-based questionnaires have been used for years mostly as a quantitative method of data collection. In the past two decades, the development of the internet has made questionnaire distribution through the World Wide Web a viable option for researchers (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009, pp. 271-299). The few limiting factors are the lack of internet accessibility in some parts of the world and the internet habits (or lack thereof) of the studied group. Denscombe (2007, pp. 8-11) points out also that the varying levels of computer skills of potential respondents, and the response rate itself, are both lower than in the case of a paper-based questionnaire. The study by Reips (2002, pp. 241-244) indicated a few areas that can be targeted in order to improve the response rate. Presenting the questionnaire with professionalism, controlling the download times (too slow might discourage participants) and providing information about the length of the questionnaire are amongst the more important aspects. The possibility of reaching a wide variety of professionals across the globe, together with the low cost of disseminating the questionnaire, were decisive factors in this researcher’s using the internet to gather international opinions concerning national piano schools.

**Participants**

Participants in the questionnaire were the most diverse sample group in this study. To initiate the questionnaire online, the researcher created an introductory page where the Participant Information Statement (Appendix B) and Participant Consent Form (Appendix C) were posted (Wisniewski, 2009). Hyperlinks to the site were also given on various pianistic websites such as PianoWorld ("Piano World," 2012) and PianoStreet ("Piano Street," 2012) resulting in a number of responses. After the presentation of preliminary findings at the Third World Piano Conference in Serbia in 2011, the number of questionnaire participants increased considerably.

Seventy-nine out of one hundred and fourteen respondents finished the questionnaire. This represented a 69.3% response rate and was considered sufficient, particularly for an open-ended, qualitative questionnaire (Dillman et al., 2009, pp. 62-63). The introductory website and questionnaire itself (Appendix D) were taken offline at the conclusion of this study.
**Design**

The open-ended, qualitative questionnaire was created using web-based Zoomerang software ("Zoomerang," 2009) merged with SurveyMonkey (Ebersman, 2005) - an online service providing easy-to-use survey templates. The design of the questionnaire included thirty-nine questions, and was divided into three main thematic categories:

**Section one** - Determined the participant’s level of experience; only the responses of participants who indicated at least an eight year level of experience were included for the data analysis.

**Section two** – Indicated the elements of the participant’s artistic upbringing that had an impact on the development of their personal style (national or otherwise).

**Section three** – Described the participant’s direct experiences and opinions concerning the topic of national piano schools generally.

Participants agreed to the conditions of this study simply by entering the survey. They were then directed to answer only those sections that were relevant to them, using the “skip” button to bypass any sections they chose not to answer. The questionnaire was constructed of dichotomous, multiple choice and rating scale questions. To allow for a freedom of response, unlimited text box space for further qualitative comments was provided after each question. Great care was taken to avoid any suggestion in the wording of the questions that could reflect the researcher's opinions based on the results of the literature review. The approximate time required to finish the questionnaire was twenty to forty minutes. The full version of the questionnaire is included in this thesis as Appendix D.

To prepare the data for analysis, all results were first downloaded from the website in the format of individual responses and as separate documents for each question (qualitative). Quantitative graphs (where relevant) were created in Microsoft Excel to simplify the reader’s understanding of the data.

Anonymity of the data was assured, and while no personal details were sought, some questionnaire respondents consented to being identified for purposes of direct quotation in the thesis, and all questionnaire respondents were invited to provide their email addresses if they wished to be informed of the results of the study.
Interviews

The interview has become one of the most popular qualitative research methods during the twentieth century, being used in sociology research since the 1980s. In the music and music education fields, interviews are also a common method of data collection, very often combined with other methods such as focus groups and/or individual observation (Burns, 2000, pp. 423-432).

Interviews were used in the current study to question, in detail, some of the data patterns occurring in the literature, and to provide an even more in-depth picture of the studied phenomenon. The interactive characteristics of this method allowed for further clarification of new information collected by means of the questionnaire and interview responses. Five interviews with piano professionals were conducted during this study.

Interview participants

The interviewee sample group included concert performers, pedagogues and a music manager, and was selected on the basis of professional standing, performance and teaching experience, as well as education. The interview participants received their education and upbringing in numerous countries (Australia, Germany, Poland and Russia) and have tutored students of diverse nationalities as well.

Interview procedures

Each interview was scheduled to last nearly an hour. Each interviewee was given a copy of the Participant Information Statement to read (Appendix B) and a Participant Consent Form to sign (Appendix C). All interviews were conducted according to the Sample Interview Protocol (Appendix E). The interviews were recorded on a Sony PCM-D50 portable audio recorder and an iPhone 3G smartphone as a backup device. Each audio recording was played using VLC media player software that allowed for precise changes to the playback speed. The speed was adjusted to the typing speed of the researcher in order to allow for fluent and continuous transcription. Each interview transcript was separately documented. In the case of Interview 3, conducted in Polish, a translation from Polish to English was provided by the researcher. All collected material was double-checked with the audio recordings to ensure the accuracy of transcriptions. Interview transcripts, as advised by the Human Research Ethics
Committee, were not attached to the thesis, in order to protect the anonymity of participants. Instead, direct quotations have been included in Chapter Six to substitute for the lack thereof.

**Interview skills**

Based on the literature review, the researcher devised a list of skills necessary for professional interview conduct. It can be difficult in a semi-structured interview style, as used in the current research, to retain focus on topic, and complete within the given timeframe. Unlike in casual conversation, the interviewer needs to take a leading role. The aim is to gather information and direct the flow of conversation so that all predetermined topics are covered. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p. 45) suggest that the researcher should make it evident that his or her whole attention is given to the interviewee. Listening to what has already been said should be a primary concern. Attention should be paid to what a person might or might not want to say, and in particular, the content that might require the investigator’s involvement to accurately elicit what the interviewee wishes to say.

The art of questioning further what has already being said, or as it is called by Kvale and Brinkman “the art of second questions” (2009, pp. 138-140), was practiced by the researcher writing down anticipated responses and creating follow-up questions and statements. These included questions to clarify what had already been said, or introduce new topics or questions to further explore new or emerging themes. An understanding of the “art of second questions” allowed the researcher to better facilitate the interviewees’ communication and explore new topics.

Kvale and Brinkman (2009, p. 147) consider that some pre-knowledge is a requirement which the interviewer should prepare before the interview commences. As Denzin and Lincoln (2005) suggest, “a close rapport with the respondents opens the door to a more informed research” (p. 708). The interview data should not be looked at without noticing its context, and thorough preparation helps in establishing rapport. For example, it is necessary to address participants of high professional status in an appropriate manner. Some knowledge of their history allows the interviewer to ask direct questions that would not be possible without proper preparation. Information collected prior to an interview can save time during the interview itself. It can also influence the interviewer’s questioning strategy and demonstrate that he or she is well prepared and conscientious.
Pilot interview

In order to test and improve the theoretical skills gathered from the literature, the researcher prepared and conducted a pilot interview. The pilot interviewee's difficulty with answering particular questions - answering them only very briefly - and the constantly interrupted flow of conversation suggested some serious flaws in the researcher’s interviewing technique. After listening to and transcribing the recording, it became obvious that the researcher’s pre-existing beliefs were an inhibiting factor (prompting and suggesting answers). In subsequent interviews the interviewer’s input was restrained and minimal. During each interview the researcher tried to minimize the impact of his presence on the interviewees (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, pp. 361-365) by listening rather than talking. Participants were encouraged to express their opinions freely and unreservedly, with the researcher mainly focusing on clarifying what was being said, and taking it further, rather than focusing on covering all planned areas. This approach allowed participants to focus on the areas they felt competent to discuss rather than forcing them to stay on topics they were not confident to comment on. The interview script took on a dynamic role, being adjusted to newly collected opinions while still asking questions to cover as many anticipated areas as possible.

The researcher ensured reliability of data by carefully correcting mistakes in transcription and checking that concepts and patterns created during coding remained consistent throughout the study (a practice suggested by Creswell, 2009, pp. 183-190). At the same time, the impact of the researcher on the data (reflexivity) was openly acknowledged as Hammersly and Atkinson (2007, pp. 14-19) suggest:

The concept of reflexivity acknowledges that the orientations of researchers will be shaped by their socio-historical locations, including the values and interests that these locations confer upon them (p.15).

The researcher’s own beliefs were considered to have a strong impact on the whole process of data collection and analysis. In order to clarify those beliefs a self-interview was conducted, with the researcher answering all set questions and addressing all the topics planned for interviews with other participants. Having the researcher’s perceptions in the same Word format as the other interviews enabled the researcher to form an understanding of his own beliefs in order to avoid personal bias, particularly when analysing the data and forming conclusions in this thesis.
Conclusions

All ethical considerations as delineated in the Ethics Proposal were observed during the conduct of this study. Invitations to participate in interviews were sent by email together with the Participant Information Statement and a sample Consent Form, often as a follow-up to a personal approach by the researcher which assessed the level of interest. Every effort was made to maintain participant confidentiality during all stages of data collection and presentation in thesis form, and participants were informed that they were free to withdraw from the study at any point without adverse consequences. All collected data, including the portion in audio formats, remain in secure condition and will undergo no further disclosure.
Chapter 3: Literature review

The analysis of literature directly describing American, Austro-German, English, French, Italian, Polish and Russian schools, is presented in this chapter. It delineates the key areas describing them, as well as providing a discussion on how those national styles evolved over time, and what influenced the changes. Some of the publications already mentioned in the Introduction suggest a number of areas defining national piano schools. Sofia Lourenco (2010) finds the concept of national piano schools “useful” and suggests that similarities between performers of the same school, as heard on recordings, can be found in the areas of “repertoire, characteristic sonority, tempo, use of pedal, pedagogical methods, technical-interpretation approaches, use of rubato, polyphonic clearness” (p. 6). Hamilton (2008) adds that distinctions between national schools were present based only on the differences in instrument manufacturing between various countries (p. 12). The literature’s general consensus that a process of unification is underway was also mentioned in the Introduction. The descriptions of particular national piano schools, presented in the current chapter, further extend those findings.

The French School

The beginning of the French School is tied by Charles Timbrell to the opening of the Paris Conservatoire in 1795 (1999b, pp. 26-34). In an interview with Marianne Uszler (1998), Jerome Lowenthal states that he personally encountered two traditions of French playing (p. 29), suggesting that the French style was not entirely homogenous. The French School was one of the longest-standing schools, preserving its unique character up to the mid-1950s (Timbrell, 1999b, p. 254). An even later date is suggested by Schonberg who says that the French School was the only survivor of the national schools in the late 1980s while other national styles of pianism seemed all but extinct (Schonberg, 1987, p. 465).

One possible cause for its longevity was a strict directive to use French-developed methods only, supported by regulations requiring French citizenship in order to become a professor at the state-run conservatories. This resulted in French conservatories actively resisting the influence of Liszt, Anton Rubinstein and Leschetizky, unlike many other countries (Timbrell, 1999b, p. 253; Timbrell & Chappell, 1999, p. 94).
Another reason lies in instrument manufacture. The prolonged preservation of light-action instruments allowed the French to use finger-oriented technique which resulted in specific sound aesthetics (such as 'jeu perle') and repertoire choices (Timbrell, 1999b, pp. 94, 254). Hamilton (2008) confirms that the French persisted in producing and using Erard pianos of light action even at the beginning of the twentieth century, allowing them to sustain a "nimble" style of playing (p.12). Well-known members of the French School, pianist Friedrich Kalkbrenner (1785-1849) (Dekeyser, 2015) and composer Ignace Pleyel (1757-1831) (Benton, 2015), joined in promoting and manufacturing Pleyel pianos. This fact is important, since the French performers might have had an influence on the piano manufacturing process and vice versa.

The particular type of instruments favoured by French pianists had certainly influenced also their physical manner of playing. Schonberg (1987, p. 285) suggests that the French “do not get into the keys” and that they play with “finger and wrist rather than arm and shoulder” - a view supported by Jerome Lowenthal (in Uszler, 1998) who states that the French used a physical method with “high fingers, rigid hand, and the ricky-ticky kind of playing. It was said to be good for discipline.” (p.29) Schonberg (1987, p. 445) adds that “most French pianists of the nineteenth century and now” favoured the top-of-the-keys approach and fast tempi stemming from Herz, Zimmerman, Saint-Saëns and Isidor Philipp. It seems that the style of playing described above was well suited to the light-action instruments popular in France until the 1930s.

While the light type of technique dominated the French style, it was a rarity to hear a French pianist perform or record late romantic concertos composed by Sergei Rachmaninov, Piotr Tchaikovsky or Johannes Brahms. Those who did record their works, despite having sometimes great interpretive artistic value, were very often perceived as lacking in rich sound (Timbrell, 1999b, p. 254). This fact suggests that the area of a particular repertoire choice was characteristic of the French School.

The changes in the technical approach of French pianists seem to coincide with their adoption of instruments manufactured in other countries, a view supported by the most important French teachers, such as Edouard Risler (1873-1929), Alfred Cortot (1877-1962), Lazare Lévy (1882-1964), Yves Nat (1890-1956) and Marcel Ciampi (1891-1980), all of whom indicate the need for more use of other parts of the hand (particularly the wrist) and weight of the whole arm (Timbrell, 1999b, p. 254). Timbrell (1999b) confirms that the sound and
technical demands of recently composed repertoire caused a shift in the technical approach of the French School around the 1920s (p. 254). The change consisted in using arm weight, in place of the old-school sole use of finger technique, and was better suited to both the changes in instrument manufacture and the demands of the newly composed repertoire.

The results of the Marguerite Long - Jacques Thibaud International Piano Competitions between 1950 and 1960 represent a demarcation in the encroachment of foreign (particularly Russian) influences into the French style. The top prize winners were Russian artists (including Evgeny Malinin and Dmitri Bashkirov), suggesting that the use of fingers alone was not sufficient for the modern concert stage, and that finding ways of producing a rich sound was absolutely necessary for success in international competitions (Timbrell, 1999b, p. 254).

Further changes to the French School, and its cross-fertilization with other styles, were indicated in the literature as a result of the world becoming a ‘global village’. Timbrell (1999b) sees the reason for such a state in the emergence of new media (recordings, television, radio broadcasts and international competitions), which brought external influences to the French style (p. 254). Nowadays, the pedagogues of conservatories in France include more international artists ("Conservatoire National Superieur De Musique et de Danse de Paris," 2015), while more French pianists seek further instruction overseas after finishing their studies in France (Timbrell, 1999b, pp. 254-255).

**French aesthetics**

The literature focuses greatly on the aspect of aesthetics as one of the main factors differentiating the French School from piano styles of other countries. Pierre Bernac says (Timbrell, 1999b):

*In the French ‘melodie’ the singer and pianist must succeed in combining precision with lyricism. But it must be controlled lyricism, for just as the French composer never gives way to sentimentality of emphasis and abominates overstatement, so in the same way his interpreters must have a sense of moderation of expression, a critical capacity, which after all is not more than one of the most vigorous forms of intelligence.* (p. 252)
According to Annette Hullah (Gerig, 2007), Theodor Leschetizky was of the opinion that French pianists did not have a great intensity in their playing, but:

>{{"ff"}}lew lightly up in the clouds, unconscious of what lies below. They are dainty, crisp, clear-cut in their playing, and they phrase well\(^\text{(p. 288)}\).

Marguerite Long – one of the most prominent key archetypes of the French School (Timbrell, 1999b) – in a similarly artistic manner describes the French School as:

... lucid, precise and slender. If it concentrates above all on grace rather than force, guarding primarily its equilibrium and sense of proportion, it nevertheless does not bow to any other in its power and the profundity of its inner emotions\(^\text{(p.251)}\).

Schonberg (1987, p. 455) quotes her as saying that French pianists are “sophisticated, rhythmically alert, intelligent, technically flexible and musically charming”.

Lowenthal (Uszler, 1998) cites differences between the pianists Robert Casadesus and Alfred Cortot, suggesting a variety of French aesthetics. The former he defines as having “good taste” and “style” which can also make “wonderful playing sounds a little bit like a typewriter” and the latter as “eloquent”, not closely defined and perhaps simply too difficult to be so\(^\text{(p.29)}\).

‘\textit{Jeu perle}’

One of the trademarks of the French School was ‘\textit{jeu perle}’ (Dubal, 1995, p. 7) - “so called pearled style of playing” (Timbrell, 1999b, p. 94). According to Marguerite Long’s student, Nicole Henriot-Schweitzer, this sound colour, from the technical point of view, requires “fast-fingered work very close to the keys” (Timbrell, 1999b, p. 94). Every note should be ideally formed like even pearls in a necklace (Timbrell, 1999b, p. 38). Timbrell (1999b) calls Friedrich Kalkbrenner the pioneer of ‘\textit{jeu perle}’\(^\text{(p.38)}\), followed by famous continuers of this style such as composer Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921) and pedagogue Isidor Philipp (1863-1958) (See Branch II of the French genealogical tree - Card Five, Appendix G5).

Interestingly, the longest-standing champion of this tradition was Marguerite Long (1874-1966) (Timbrell, 1999b, p. 95), who did not have any direct lineage with Branch I of the French genealogical tree in which it developed. This leads to the conclusion that ‘\textit{jeu perle}’ was not just the invention of a single teacher, but the result of a general consensus guiding the
aesthetics of pianism in France. In the context of areas defining the French School, ‘jeu perle’ seems to converge the aesthetics with a particular technical approach to create a special timbre characteristic of this style.

**Other key areas**

When mentioning the French School, the literature simultaneously lists the main *key archetypes* of pianists and pedagogues associated with it. Amongst the most commonly mentioned are Alfred Cortot and Marguerite Long (Timbrell, 1999b, pp. 91-112).

Interviews with various representatives of the French School discussed in ‘French Pianism’ (Timbrell, 1999b, pp. 183-250), seem to suggest that French teachers were also particular in assigning exercises and technical regimens to students. They often included études by Czerny, held-note exercises (by Joseph Pischna or Isidor Philipp) and were using the rhythmical patterns to improve technically challenging sections of the repertoire (Gerig, 2007, p. 320; Timbrell, 1999b, pp. 93, 147, 200). The collected data suggest that the French School could be defined by means of the pedagogy it used. Challenging this view, however, is the fact that the methods and exercises mentioned above are commonly used not solely in France, leaving it open for further discussion whether this particular key area can successfully differentiate the French School from other piano styles.

The last important key area that emerged from the literature falls into a category which the current study calls *esoteric descriptors*. These descriptors are not easily assigned to typical factors associated with a style of playing, such as interpretation, technique or aesthetics. For example, Lowenthal (Uszler, 1998) describes the French style as “something very French, the style, you had to do things in a stylish way” (p.29). Schmitz (Timbrell, 1999b) states that every Frenchman is born with an affinity towards certain artistic qualities and adds that “[the] French School of piano playing, of singing, of composition, of art – of anything at all … has its roots in a French mind and heart” (pp. 252-253). It seems that the esoteric descriptors relate to features of personality common to performers from the same nation, forming a certain, in this case, French, national characteristic.

**Concluding notes**

The French School, as portrayed throughout the literature, can be defined by areas of technique, aesthetics, sound, and repertoire choice. The literature also mentions key
archetypes, institutions and their policies, as well as instrument manufacture, as the main factors shaping this style. The esoteric descriptors in this case refer to descriptions of this school by means of the national personality and qualities that are inborn in a typical French person.

Timbrell (1999b) summarizes that in recent years the external influences on the French School stemmed from French students seeking further instruction overseas after finishing their education at home, as well as from the emergence of new media (recordings, television, radio and international competitions) (pp. 254-255). Schonberg (1987) believes that:

... to this day [1987] the French style has remained one of suppleness, of elegance and logic, of finger technique in the classic style (from hand and wrist rather than from arm and shoulder), resulting in the clear but percussive tone in fortissimo passages that so many French pianists display (p. 285).

The Austro-German School

The beginning of the Austro-German School seems to be associated with the artistic activity of L. van Beethoven and W.A. Mozart. Particularly the former, through the pedagogical work of his student Carl Czerny – himself a teacher of Liszt and Leschetizky – greatly influenced piano playing across the world. The lineage of pianists and pedagogues from both Austria and Germany seems to overlap, as will be shown in Chapter Five. Therefore, for the purposes of more accurate classification, this study will call this particular school ‘Austro-German’. It is also important to note that in the current thesis, two other schools, namely the Stuttgart and Viennese schools, are also included in the term Austro-German. Further research is needed into this classification, particularly since the current perceptions described in Chapter Five and Six of this thesis, mention the existence of the German School only.

The description of the Austro-German School is rather brief due to the majority of the literature about this school being written in German and thus not accessible to the researcher. In spite of its brevity, it contributes to the search for key areas defining national styles, and provides some insight into the changes and influences affecting this school across the ages.
Aesthetics

Topic-related literature discusses the aesthetics developed within the German style by juxtaposing it with the French. Timbrell quotes Claude Debussy as saying that the German style has “features of profundity and overemphasis” (Timbrell, 1999b, p. 252). In an interview with Timbrell, Pierre Bernac surprisingly described the German style as one of “sentimental outpourings” (p. 252) while E. Robert Schmitz conversely labelled it “more massively concrete” (p.253). It seems that Schonberg (1987) also disagrees with Bernac’s description, describing the characteristic features of German aesthetics himself as:

- “scrupulous musicianship;
- severity and strength rather than charm;
- solidity rather than sensuosity;
- intellect rather than instinct;
- sobriety rather than brilliance” (p. 446).

Schonberg summarizes this list by saying that the German style “leaves nothing to chance” (p.446). Well-structured and organized while using the intellect - this is the picture the literature paints of German pianists, and it is confirmed by other sources that describe them further as characterized by “[s]obriety, scholarship and straightforwardness” (Malik & Distler, 1999, p. 62). Janina Fialkowska (Mach, 1988) attributes German influences to the style of Arthur Rubinstein (who studied with a German teacher), and describes them in terms of characteristic clarity of phrasing and careful planning of development and climaxes “so that the whole piece makes sense”(p.82). Similarly, Leschetizky (Gerig, 2007):

respects German earnestness, the patient devotion to detail, the orderliness, and intense and humble love of the art, but criticizes the style for its outlook being a little gray (p. 288).

It can be concluded that elements of personality overlap with broad generalizations about the German nation, and can also be assigned to a ‘national personality’ key area.

Other areas

Schonberg (1987) considers "the archetype" (p. 446) of modern German pianism to be Schnabel and believes Wilhelm Backhaus, Edwin Fisher, Wilhelm Kempf, Rudolf Serkin and
Alfred Brendel to be the followers of this tradition. He also believes that much of the 
definition of the German piano school stems from the repertoire - mostly of German and 
Austrian origin (pp. 446-450). As seen in the opinions above, the literature describing national 
piano schools in the case of the German School coincides closely with perceptions and 
descriptions of the French School as found in the literature and described earlier in this 
chapter.

The Russian School

Similarly to the French School, the inception of the Russian School seems to be marked by 
the opening of two of the most important institutions associated with this style: the Moscow 
and the St. Petersburg Conservatories (Barnes, 2007, pp. x-xii). Curiously, the existence of 
these two main centres contributed to the internal division within this school. Hamilton (2008) 
describes the Russian style as not being homogenous, pointing to the differences between the 
“virtuosic” Moscow style and the “contemplative and intimate” style of performers from St. 
Petersburg (p.12). The Russian School seems also to be well-preserved until at least the late 
twentieth century, with Jerome Lowenthal (Uszler) insisting in 1998 that the Russian School 
still exists (p. 29). The Russian School is also described by Schonberg (1987, pp. 464-465) as 
being the last bastion of romanticism in pianism beyond the 1960s.

History and politics

When discussing the Russian School, the literature often refers to historical and political facts 
as having a strong influence on the state of this style. Schonberg mentions that due to political 
restrictions, modern music is not of interest to Russian pianists, but we should be mindful of 
the year in which Schonberg’s book was published (1987, p. 464). Egorov (Mach, 1988) also 
notes that the general non-acceptance of twelve-tone music, because of its decadence and not 
belonging to socialist realism (that is, not being suitable for large masses of people), affects 
and restricts the Russian pianists’ choice of repertoire. Added to this is a lack of exposure to 
new repertoire due to the regime’s restrictions on travelling and reading (p. 51). Again, 
Egorov’s opinions are dated and the political, and therefore cultural, circumstances have 
changed considerably since 1988.

The connection between political factors and the attitude of Russian artists is confirmed by 
Ashkenazy (Mach, 1988) who says that the pianists’ attitude of “spirit and great discipline”
(p. 17) in Russia comes from the strong influence of a despotic political regime as “everything in Russia is controlled by party ideology” (p. 21). As with the French School, state-run conservatories are also discussed as one of the reasons for resistance to outside influences in Russia (Timbrell & Chappell, 1999, p. 94). Schonberg (1987, p. 464) suggests that due to the isolation which lasted until the 1950s, “musically, [Russian] culture was in a state of all but suspended animation.” The lack of exposure to new trends in music forced them to “fall back on a tradition that had its roots in the brothers Rubinstein”. Around 1965, when more and more Russians could travel, study abroad and bring music home, they started to be trained “according to international standards and became indistinguishable from musicians elsewhere”, suggesting that their unique identity was compromised (Schonberg, 1987, p. 465).

**Key archetypes**

Similarly to other described schools, *key archetypes* are present also in the literature discussing the Russian School. Zaltsberg (2002) confirms Anton Rubinstein as having a tremendous influence on many generations of Russian musicians, being a cornerstone of that school and the “greatest Russian Romantic” (p. 19). John Browning (in Mach, 1988) suggests that due to the Russians’ great admiration for Rubinstein’s art, particularly in the area of technique (p. 38), their pianists imitate Rubinstein’s “use [of] a higher bridge and flatter fingers as opposed to what Americans do” (p.39). Schonberg (1987) adds that many Russian pianists are heirs of not only Rubinstein but also Alexander Skriabin and Sergei Rachmaninov (p. 464).

**Technique**

The Russian School seems to be well known for its “prodigious technique” as Leschetizky calls it (Gerig, 2007, p. 287). Ashkenazy (Mach, 1988) suggests that the technique of Russian pianists comes from their early start which results in nearly ten years’ training prior to entering the conservatory (pp. 14-15). He claims that quiet arms and hands, together with economy of movement, are cornerstones of Russian technique (p. 17). John Browning (Mach, 1988) confirms that by the age of fifteen, students “are ready” technically (p.38), while some of the biographical notes of Russian pianists (Paperno, 1998) show that hardship and a passionate attitude towards life and music created the necessary discipline to overcome sometimes very onerous historical or political obstacles. Neuhaus (1994, pp. 107-172) paints a picture of the Russian technique as based on an understanding of the physical laws
applicable to piano playing, always guided by artistic goals. Lhévinne (1972) describes in
detail how finger and weight technique can be used to vary tone colour (pp. 17-24). He gives
examples of the Russian style using both finger and weight technique depending on the
repertoire (pp. 35-39).

**National personality**

The national personality key area seems to be present in the literature regarding the Russian
School. Authors explain it as a certain affinity of the Russian nation towards particular
musical qualities, while being resistant to some of the other foreign styles. Schonberg (1987)
states that when playing Mozart and Haydn, Russians tend to be “restricted, dutiful and rather
stilted, in accordance with their ideas about the ‘classic’ nature of the music” (p. 464).
Leschetizky (Gerig, 2007) offers a reason for such musical restrictions, stating that the typical
Russian qualities of “passion, dramatic power, elemental force and extraordinary vitality”,
might not be suited to the German classics. He espouses that Russian pianists are gifted with
turbulent natures, difficult to keep within any bounds. This “turbulent nature” of the typical
Russian personality also affects the choice of repertoire. According to Schonberg, Russian
pianists tend to focus “mainly on the nineteenth century and on the twentieth century Russian
repertoire, particularly Prokofiev and Shostakovich” (Schonberg, 1987, p. 464). Egorov
(Mach, 1988) suggests that the Russian School of teaching Bach and Scarlatti is more
romantic than others, with lots of pedal and using ‘Mugellini’ editions (p. 45). This seems to
be a broad generalization as there are certainly pianists from the Russian School who
successfully perform music of other nations. The argument of what is stylistically appropriate
differs - sometimes considerably - between pianists, but there might be some similarities in
the artistic approach to style and aesthetics that could be ascribed to a typical national
personality.

**Sound**

The Russian type of sound is described by Schonberg (1987) as focused “on tone, phrasing,
on the cantabile quality of the instrument” (p. 464). Lowenthal (in Uszler, 1998) adds that the
Russian School:
[k]nows how to bring out things. In particular, they know how to bring out a melody. They know how to voice. The Russians know how to play the piano so that it sounds like an orchestra (p. 28).

In spite of there being limited data with regard to the sound – possibly due to the difficulties in verbalizing this aspect – the reviewed literature adds to the growing body of literature that defines various national styles in this way.

**Conclusions**

Opinions regarding the Russian School confirm and extend the findings already described. The majority of key areas overlap, particularly key archetypes, repertoire and technique. Political and historical influences are explored further as having an influence on the “spirit and attitude of great discipline” (Mach, 1988, p. 17), and the ability to travel and communicate with other nations. The notion of a national personality is supported by the statements suggesting that a pianist might be more suited to perform music composed in a country of his or her upbringing rather than any other (the example given of Russians feeling restricted when performing Mozart) (Schonberg, 1987, p. 464).

**Other Schools**

American, English, Italian, Oriental, Polish and Slavic schools were also mentioned in the literature but the scant extent of it allows only a cursory analysis. It is important to note that the quantity of collected literature does not indicate the size or importance of the schools.

**American School**

The characteristic features of the American School emerge primarily in the area of technical training. John Browning says that attention has been drawn to the delayed introduction of a thorough musical education to the youth in America and that technical training seems to be “spotty at best” (Mach, 1988, p. 38). Of course, statements such as these may no longer be applicable as decades have passed since, for example, the date of Mach’s publication, and they more likely refer to the average student than to a top performer. In terms of technique, Browning distinguishes between the American pianists’ more frequent use of a lower bridge in the hand than their Russian counterparts. Leschetizky (in Gerig, 2007) describes American pianists as being:
[spontaneous, accustomed to keeping all their faculties in readiness for the unexpected. Their perceptions are quick, and they possess considerable technical facility (p.287).

Other sources (Malik & Distler, 1999) point to more esoteric descriptors of the typical artistic personality and physical features of an American person, such as possessing “good looks, merciless integrity”. The prototypical American pianist, William Kapell (Malik & Distler, 1999) has been described in this article as having great technical ability that “withered the competition plus discipline and drive” (p. 64).

One of the more recent trends, possibly related to the American School, if, indeed, it exists, includes style affected by the pedagogical approach of injury prevention techniques, based on bio-scientific foundations (Fraser, 2006, 2010, 2012; Karpoff, 2009; Lister-Sink, 2008; Mark, 2003). Apart from obvious artistic goals, those authors seem to focus on a particular approach to technique, exemplified in a clear awareness of the pianist’s body and its movements.

Conversely, Timbrell and Chappell (1999, p. 94) state that there is no such thing as an American School of pianism:

Unlike the state-run music schools of Europe and Russia, which resisted outside influences for decades, America’s younger, independent institutions have always been able to embrace all types of pedagogy.

This statement could certainly be true were piano methodology the sole factor defining the nationalism of a school. However, as discussion of this study’s genealogical trees will show, American pianism underwent a most complex set of global influences. Historians have not yet had sufficient time to gain perspective when assessing whether or not an American School exists. The opinion of Timbrell and Chappell (1999, p. 94) given above relies also on an assumption that whatever defines national piano schools is related to the pedagogy and institutions, which might or might not be the case – as discussed later in Chapter Seven of this study. Nonetheless, the description of Kapell’s performances supports the theory that the perception of a national piano school can be strongly influenced by a key archetype, with well-defined personality traits, such as Kapell.
The unique artistic and pedagogical idiom of Tobias Matthay – an influential English pedagogue – is linked closely to the English piano tradition, at least until his death in 1958 (Schonberg, 1987, p. 361). It seems that the English School, with regard to Matthay, is defined mostly in terms of technical approach. He focused on various physical aspects of sound production with a thorough understanding of the pianist’s body and its movements. The musicality of a performer and various aspects of interpretation are rarely mentioned in either of his books (Matthay, 1905, 1920).

A comparison between the short guide to interpretation provided by Last (1960) and Matthay (1905, 1920) and the literature concerning other schools (Agay, 2004; Goodwin, 1892; Neuhaus, 1994), shows that it was a particular style of Matthay as a key archetype, rather than the whole English School, that could be characterized by his achievements.

Some sources describe the English School as having been influenced by German pianists and composers - Handel, Mendelssohn, Cramer (Schonberg, 1987, p. 455) - citing the manner of “sobriety, scholarship and straightforwardness” as direct influences of the German style. Malik and Distler (1999) offer the examples of Myra Hess, Solomon and Clifford Curzon as performers who epitomize the English style:

- “combination of German intellectualism and British civilization;
- eclectic;
- they have taken the best that European schools have to offer and modified it to their national temper;
- urbane, seldom passionate and seldom even dramatic, but never closed-in.” (p. 62)

A student of Leschetizky, Annette Hullah (Gerig, 2007), in 1906 said that her master considered the English to be “good musicians but bad executants” and thought they possessed “heads serving them better than their hearts” (p. 287). These comments, although extremely critical, point towards the challenges in distinguishing the stylistic elements of the English School.

Opinions regarding the English School reinforce the theory that foreign nations build a picture of a national piano school (English in this case), based on the performance style and personality of well-known pianists (key archetypes) and aesthetics within that particular
school (Hess, Solomon), thus diminishing the role of other key areas (such as technique). Furthermore, analysis of the literature suggests that each particular school can be defined to varying degrees by different sets of key areas delineated in the current study.

**Oriental and Polish Schools**

Oriental and Polish Schools are mentioned almost parenthetically in the literature reviewed. The Oriental School has been described in the manner of an upbringing that instils a strong sense of discipline in students and performers. This, according to Leon Fleisher, creates an advantage for Asian students over American students (Mach, 1988, p. 99). It is necessary to note that it is only the literature found within the course of this study, which describes schools developed across Asian countries as Oriental. It is not an indication of a uniform character of national styles across countries like China, Korea or Japan – countries which the literature did not address. These countries’ more recent entry into the world of piano performance and pedagogy, and the relative lack of English-language research regarding them, allow for only limited inclusion of these styles in the present study.

Polish pianists are described by Leschetizky (Gerig, 2007) as:

> less strong and rugged than Russians, leaning more to the poetical side of music. Originality is to be found in all he does; refinement, and exquisite tenderness, and instinctive rhythm (p. 287).

Features of the Polish School can be classified as esoteric or personality descriptors since most of the mentioned features seem to be inherited or conditioned during upbringing and education.

**Italian School**

Topic-related literature about the Italian School often relates to the main key archetypes that belong to this style, namely Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli (1920-1995), Maurizio Pollini (1942) or Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924). The literature reviewed during the course of this study did not provide sufficient information to form a usable description of this school. More information can be found in Chapter Four with regard to genealogy, particularly in relation to the American genealogical graphs.
List of key areas

Analysis of the literary sources described in this chapter provided a list of key areas in which descriptions of particular national piano schools can be sought. These include:

- interpretation (technique, sound, aesthetics);
- national personality/national characteristics;
- repertoire;
- key archetypes;
- instrument manufacture;
- upbringing/conditioning/historical circumstances.

Key areas - Discussion

Technique

One of the challenges in defining national piano schools in terms of technique is that while certain technical characteristics are perceived as being more pronounced in one school over another, this could be said to be due to a tradition of an individual, and his or her teaching method, rather than the school itself. Technique might also be said to be influenced by the conventions of the times, for example, the light finger action of the French School (‘jeu perle’). Individual physical attributes (Mach, 1988, p. 39) must also contribute to technical development, making it difficult to characterize a national approach to technique.

A selection of key figures in the literature seems to suggest that defining a national approach by technique is impossible. Schnabel (1988) believed there was only one technique that served to “attain a maximum of achievement with minimum effort” (p. 198). Although he could describe his technique, he could not ascribe it to a national “German approach”, despite having spent thirty years living in Germany (p. 197). Gerig (2007), in his seminal book on piano technique, states:

How they all may have varied in their physical playing approach to the piano is not so clearly defined. The stereotyped technique of the Stuttgart school may well have been indicative of the methodological, meticulous aspects of the German character, and an Anton Rubinstein technique more likely to develop among the more passionate Slavic
people. Although cultural makeup will surely be reflected to a considerable degree in interpretation at the keyboard, an ethnic cataloguing of different types of technique is impossible. (p. 288)

Similarly, Rudolf Serkin and Dean Elder (Timbrell & Chappell, 1999) say that “there are no two people alike” and that there is no one path to acquiring technique (p.90). There is, of course, a possibility that some technical methods are particular to national style, and that they can be transferred across generations. Nevertheless, the literature reviewed during the course of this study only partially supports this view.

**Sound**

The challenge in using sound as a characteristic by which to define national piano schools is the scarcity of literature regarding this key area. This suggests that there is only a slight possibility of sound colour being a characteristic feature of a national school. In this particular key area, a study that focuses on an analysis of recordings or live performances would be more appropriate in resolving the issue of whether or not each national piano school can be characterized by means of its preferred sound timbre.

**Aesthetics**

The national aesthetic particular to each school was well documented in the literary sources as an area differentiating national schools from one another. It must be noted, however, that the descriptions with regard to aesthetics are rather broad, often esoteric, and commonly coincide with broad generalizations concerning nationality (for example, passionate Russians, well-organized Germans).

**Repertoire**

There is a clear indication that pianists from various countries might have a preference for or affinity towards certain repertoire. Furthermore, the desire to perform repertoire, such as Tchaikovsky or Rachmaninov concertos, influenced a shift in the twentieth century technical approach by the French School (Timbrell, 1999b, p. 254). The reason for particular repertoire choice is also closely related to ‘national characteristics’, which makes certain piano music more accessible to particular nationalities (again, Russians feeling restricted while playing Mozart) (p. 464).
**Instrument manufacture**

Over the centuries, different types of manufactured instruments, with their particular characteristics, influenced piano performance style in a major way. Already in 1828, Hummel (Gerig 2007) made a clear distinction between German and English pianos. The former, according to him, were well-suited for weight technique, and could be played “even with the weakest hand”, while the latter, with their “fullness of tone”, did not “admit the same facility of execution” due to much greater key depth (pp. 78-79). Hamilton (2008) went even further, saying that the distinction between national piano schools was only possible while the differences between the "heavier London instruments and agile Viennese pianos" were very pronounced (up to the end of the nineteenth century) (p.12). In the twentieth century, Austrian-made *Bosendorfer* and American-made *Steinway* found their way onto the concert stage and neither of them was suited to the light, high-finger technique used by French pianists (Hamilton, 2008, p. 12). As described earlier in this chapter, the evolution of the instrument suggests a shift towards more generous use of arm and weight, instead of the light-finger technique of the French.

**Institutions**

According to the literature, the emergence and continuous tradition of national piano schools were closely related to the rise and existence of the institution of conservatories. Gerig (2007) states that:

*The prototype of all conservatories was founded in Paris in 1795: the Conservatoire de Musique. The first quarter of the nineteenth century saw others come into existence in Milan, Naples, Prague, Brussels, Florence, Vienna, London and The Hague. In 1843 Mendelssohn founded the Leipzig Conservatory, and Anton Rubinstein the St. Petersburg Conservatory in 1862. Nationalistic traits began to be evident and definite schools of piano playing to emerge.* (p. 287)

In spite of those institutions being identified as the main carriers of a tradition for national piano schools, the literature did not treat them as synonymous but rather used them in conjunction with other areas to describe the studied phenomenon. Particular institutional policies, such as the requirement of French citizenship to teach at the state-run conservatoires in France, had an impact on the ability of this school to remain homogenous.
**Key archetypes**

The literature review strongly supports the idea of a key archetype area. For the majority of schools described, examples of pianists and pedagogues were given as prime examples of each, most notably Anton Rubinstein in Russia (Gerig, 2007, pp. 290-294), Arthur Schnabel in Germany (Lyle, 1985, pp. 253-254), and Alfred Cortot and Marguerite Long in France (Timbrell, 1999b, pp. 91-111). This list is by no means exhaustive and at this stage, the challenge is to determine to what extent national schools influenced the abovementioned pianists or to what degree general public opinion regarding the character of particular piano schools was based on the performances of those artists and their pedagogical work.

**National personality**

The literature review, through the delineation of esoteric descriptors, suggests that certain personality traits could be similar across many artists of a single nation, contributing to its particular, national characteristics. Gerig (2007) states that “cultural makeup will surely be reflected to a considerable degree in interpretation at the keyboard” (p. 288), which suggests that national features of personality are a key area for describing national piano schools.

The literature also suggests the existence of an affinity of certain nations towards particular music. Whatever their national characteristics are, they might or might not be attuned to certain types of music. The Russian feeling of being “restricted, dutiful and stilted while playing Mozart or Haydn” (Schonberg, 1987, p. 464) supports this idea. Philippe Entremont (Dubal, 1997) comments that:

> French musicians are not more likely to play French music better than others, although the fact that [they were] exposed to this music at an early age helps”

(p.159).

Ashkenazy states with regard to the Russian School (Mach, 1988) that “human personality cannot be removed from pedagogy and performance, and has a very strong impact on the individual style of teaching and performing” (p.17). This is certainly true of individuals, but at the same time, does not preclude the similarities or generalizations regarding the artistic personality of a nation from also being true. The proposed existence of a national personality is discussed further in this thesis as having an influence on various aspects of performance style.
**Conditioning**

Although the literature indicates that some national features of a style are ‘inborn’ qualities of a person, it also contains mention of upbringing and cultural aspects as factors influencing the development of a national personality. As Gembris and Davidson suggest (in Parnutt & McPherson, 2002, pp. 17-30), socio-cultural systems (music culture, technological culture), institutions such as home and school (upbringing and education) and groups such as classes and peers (other pianists, recordings), all have an impact on the musical development of musicians. Conditioning is a very broad key area and its influence on national piano schools is further investigated through the questionnaire and interviews conducted in this research.
Summary of literature review findings

The findings of the literature review are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Literature review - Summary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY AREAS</th>
<th>FACTORS/CHANGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Technique</td>
<td>• Cross-fertilization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sound</td>
<td>• Travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Aesthetics</td>
<td>• Commercialization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Repertoire</td>
<td>• Recordings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Instrument manufacture</td>
<td>• Unification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Conditioning (institutions, upbringing, culture)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Key archetypes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• National personality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Esoteric areas/National personality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The literature review found a fairly consistent use of a variety of key areas in descriptions of national piano schools. A number of factors influencing changes in piano style over the centuries were also found during this process. Commercialization, competitions, travelling and recordings shift piano styles across the world towards unification. At the same time, none of these factors was indicated in the literature as affecting particular piano schools; they were applicable to piano styles regardless of geographical origin. The following chapters on teacher-student lineages and the questionnaire and interviews, further extend the findings presented during the course of this literature review.
Chapter 4: Genealogical trees

Chapter Two discussed the caveats for teacher-student lineage and the challenge of making necessarily subjective decisions during the design process of the genealogical trees. To address these issues and fulfill the goal of adding an extra dimension to data extracted from the literature, questionnaire and interviews, the researcher chose to address several pertinent questions in the genealogy section:

- Is the idea of cross-fertilization of influences supported by the data represented in the genealogical graphs?
- How nationally pure are the lineages of national piano schools as presented on the graphs?
- According to the genealogical findings, in which national trees can the foreign influences be considered important?
- Are the genealogical graphs convergent with the historical factors indicated in the literature review?
- Are any of the key areas describing national piano schools, as formulated from the literature review, supported by the genealogical tree data?
- In what way can the genealogical section of this thesis be useful for future research with regard to national piano schools?

Appendix G (files 1-10) containing nineteen genealogical trees is attached to this thesis. The trees are named after either the country or the most influential member for each school. Each graph includes data boxes with names and surnames, accompanied by the dates of birth and death if relevant. The country’s flag beside each name represents the member’s country of birth. Additional flags represent countries of long-term residence, and/or countries historically influenced by the particular member.

The structural design of the trees was dictated primarily by the collected data, while every effort was made to provide aesthetically pleasing and easily comprehensible content. The variety of colours and fonts was chosen to separate various influences and highlight the most influential members of each style. Arrows, a crucial element of each graph, point always from a teacher to the student. All trees were designed to be read from bottom to top, and wherever possible, names were presented in chronological order - with the bottom of the page showing
the oldest member of each lineage and the horizontal plane indicating similar years of activity for pianists.

### Table 2. Index of trees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the tree</th>
<th>Card number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austro-German</td>
<td>Card One (Appendix G1)</td>
<td>Czerny and Clementi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liszt/Austro-German</td>
<td>Card Two (Appendix G2)</td>
<td>Liszt (student of Czerny) and Austro-German Tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leschetizky</td>
<td>Card Three (Appendix G3)</td>
<td>Leschetizky (student of Czerny)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>Card Four (Appendix G4)</td>
<td>French Tree I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Card Five (Appendix G5)</td>
<td>French Tree I (simplified)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>French Trees II and III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Card Six (Appendix G6)</td>
<td>Russian Tree I – N. Rubinstein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Russian Tree II – Leschetizky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Russian Tree III – A. Rubinstein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>Card Seven</td>
<td>American Tree I – Leschetizky and Serkin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At this point, readers might like to familiarise themselves with the content of the graphs. They are all supplied as JPEG files, commonly used on a variety of computer platforms and are best viewed on a computer or TV screen with Full HD capabilities. The following section addresses the findings drawn from this supplementary method of data collection.

**Discussion**

**Origins**

The origins of piano lineages are shown on Card One (Czerny and Clementi) and Card Five (French). Some of the oldest members represented on the first card include Johann Sebastian Bach (1675-1750), Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) and Muzio Clementi (1752-1832).
The two main figures of this lineage are Carl Czerny (student of Beethoven) and Muzio Clementi, who was often considered to be the “father of the modern pianoforte virtuosity” (Rubinstein, 1892, p. 62) and a pianist representing the “early beginnings of a true pianoforte technique [legato]” (Gerig, 2007, p. 59). Both of these are indicated on the graph by blue-coloured data boxes. The three most important students of Czerny, namely Franz Liszt, Theodor Leschetizky and to a lesser degree Theodore Kullak (marked on the graph by pink-coloured boxes), can be found at the beginning of nearly all other lineages (Austro-German, American, French, Polish and Russian).

It is important to note that the connection between Bach and Beethoven shown on Card One is rather anecdotal. The tradition that was passed between them is tenuous since there were three other educators in between (student of Bach - Gottfried August Homilius 1714-1785; his student - Johann Adam Hiller 1728-1804 and then Christian Neefe 1748-1798, who in turn taught Beethoven) ("Oxford Music Online," 2015). Some of the lineages, although documented, like the one between Bach and Beethoven, present very justifiable challenges to their validity, particularly when the radical changes in style between the two composer-performers are considered.

Card Five shows some of the earliest members of the French Tree including François-Adrien Boieldieu (1775-1834) and Louis Adam (1758-1848). This lineage existed in parallel to the lineage of Czerny and Clementi, and research during the course of this study found no evidence of major cross-fertilization between them.

Several relatively recent lineages, most notably late nineteenth century Russian and twentieth century American, emerge from those described above. Card Six represents the three main divisions of the Russian Tree. Branches I and III are shared between the brothers Anton and Nikolai Rubinstein, but the influences of Clementi and the students of Czerny (Liszt and Leschetizky) are clearly visible at the bottom of this card. The American graphs represent a great diversity of traditions including French (Card Nine), Hungarian (Card Eight) and Italian (Card Eight) lineages as well as the composers Frédéric Chopin (Card Eight) and Franz Liszt (Card Eight). The Polish, Hungarian and English lineages are also shown on the graphs, but their limited presence in the reviewed literature does not allow for drawing valid conclusions.
National purity

The purpose of using flags rather than names of countries was to facilitate a visual assessment of the national purity of each lineage. The country lineages of England (Card Ten), France (Cards Four and Five), Hungary (Card Ten), Poland (Card Nine) and Russia (Card Six), appear to be relatively free from international influences, showing mostly the flag of the single relevant country.

In the case of the French School, this relative national purity is not surprising, particularly when considering the French policy of allowing only French citizens to work at the state-run conservatoires (Timbrell & Chappell, 1999, p. 94). This can be observed in Branch I of the French School (Card Four). There are only two areas where a variety of flags appear on this graph. The first one can be found around Alfred Cortot, whose fame was indeed international and thus drew the attention of students from all parts of the globe. The second area is around the students of Olga Samaroff, who being American herself, returned to the United States after a period of studying in France. In both cases, rather than its being enriched by external styles, the French School can be seen to influence other countries.

While discussing the Russian Tree (Card Six), the political restrictions, as indicated in Chapter Three, could be at the heart of why this lineage also appears so clear of international influences. The one area where non-Russian flags appear includes Rosina Bessie Lhévinne who, after studying in Russia, spent most of her artistic and pedagogically active years in the United States. The current state of Russian lineages seems to remain unchanged, given that the staff at the Moscow Conservatory, for example, still consists mostly of Russian-born artists ("Moscow Conservatory," 2015). On the other hand, many well-respected Russian artists immigrated to Germany and America, spreading this tradition overseas.

In both the French and Russian Trees (and to some extent the English, Hungarian and Polish), the purity of lineage speaks in favour of those traditions being insulated from other countries, and possibly preserving some sense of homogeneity.

Cross-fertilization

Contrary to the examples of national purity given above, all graphs named after the most influential members of lineages, such as Leschetizky (Card Three) and Liszt (Card Two), and all the American Trees, represent a mixture of influences from various national lineages over
time. Cards Seven to Nine show the extent of international and personal influences on the United States, some of which include the French (Card Nine), Hungarian (Card Eight) and Italian (Card Eight) lineages, as well as the composers Frédéric Chopin (Card Eight) and Franz Liszt (Card Eight). The influences of Leschetizky are shown on Card Seven, and it should be pointed out that through the influence he exerted on the Russian School, this graph represents also the Russian lineages present in the United States - most notably Joseph and Rosina Bessie Lhévinne.

While looking at the American Trees, it becomes obvious that it is the pedagogical body, rather than the students, that brought external influences throughout the twentieth century to the United States. The reason for this is explained by Timbrell and Chappell (1999):

\[
\text{Since the mid-1800s it had been logical for serious American musicians to finish their pianistic studies in Europe. Those who were talented and could afford it ... [studied] with such great teachers as Liszt, Leschetizky, Tausig, Kullak or Moszkowski (p. 79).}
\]

It is worth noting that in the late twentieth century and now, the new generation of Americans (often trained overseas or by foreign teachers within the United States) are teaching at America’s best universities. It is now the student body that has become more international. The migration of teachers and students from around the world to the United States makes it currently a place of convergence for all major lineages.

The idea of cross-fertilization between national piano schools is also supported in the graphs named after Franz Liszt (Card Two) and Theodor Leschetizky (Card Three) and presents some challenges. The work of both these artists seems to impact on a great variety of students and performers across the globe. The fact that the same three well-known figures, Clementi, Leschetizky and Liszt, occur so often in the context of many national lineages, can certainly be interpreted as arguing against there being differences between national piano schools. Their influences are, in fact, so overarching that entire genealogical trees (Cards Two, Three and Seven) are devoted to the lineage of their students. Their work can be seen as a factor unifying a performance style, depending on which key areas are taken to describe those styles, for example, aesthetics or technique. However, the pedagogical work of both Liszt and Leschetizky can be seen, conversely, as highlighting national differences. This is particularly so with students of strong artistic personality, who carry national features and whom good pedagogues support. Furthermore, as stated in Chapter Three, the literature review shows that
students of both Leschetizky and Liszt did not play similarly. We can assume, then, that whatever pedagogical work was done, students’ personalities were cherished and potentially transmitted some features of their particular national schools.

Finally, it is important to note that a significant number of well-respected artists from various national styles are, in fact, of Jewish origin. This thesis, however, does not focus on this aspect due to the researcher’s different central focus and a lack of sufficient documentation regarding the background of Jewish pianists included in this study. It would certainly merit separate research.

**Key archetypes**

The genealogical section fully supports the idea of *key archetypes* as found in the literature review, several of whom converge with the main figures represented on the genealogical trees. Some key figures, such as Czerny, Leschetizky or Clementi, can neither be associated with a single national style, nor used to define it.

**Future research**

The genealogical trees designed by the researcher in this study could be useful for future studies concerning national piano schools. The indications contained on each graph might assist those researchers needing direct contact with the most recent continuators of various traditions, in searching for interviews and recordings. Readers wanting to expand their knowledge of twenty-first century counterparts of various styles can easily follow the relevant genealogical trees in searching for students or pedagogues who were educated by the most recent members shown on each tree.

**Conclusions**

The fame of a pianist or teacher usually results in his or her pedagogical and artistic achievements being well documented. Based on this observation, the relatively rich picture of lineages across the globe was presented in this chapter. At the same time, for the genealogical trees to represent a complete picture would have required constant revision of their content and an exploration of many additional sources, both published and unpublished. Undeniably, some of the newer and less well documented lineages could not be presented in the current study - most notably the Chinese, Japanese and Korean - due to the researcher’s linguistic
limitations. The Hungarian, Italian, Polish and English genealogical trees require further investigation into which characteristics mark them as recognizably unique at an international level. The question of an American School remains a challenge, at least until the features of a national piano school are clearly defined. With so many cross-cultural, pedagogical and stylistic influences active in America, it is difficult to talk about one homogenous style.

From an historical perspective, the genealogical trees clearly show that a lineage of teacher-student relationship can be found in a majority of countries from the beginning of each piano style right through until the present day. The results of the genealogical study suggest very strongly that it is crucial to understand precisely which key areas describe a national piano school in order to know what exactly is being passed on. If, indeed, government policies or political circumstances were historically the reason for some lineages remaining pure, it follows that changes to those policies and circumstances could result in national piano schools being extinguished, pre-existing schools being sustained, or even new schools being created. Some areas, such as technique or sound production, are more prone to being influenced and eventually changed, while factors such as national personality would require more time to evolve, and might remain a characteristic feature of a national piano school, regardless of the international influences discussed here.
Chapter 5: Questionnaire data

Dissemination of the questionnaire resulted in a total of 114 responses. Twenty-five of these were removed on the basis that they were incomplete and/or provided no useful information. After removing a further ten participants who had less than eight years’ experience studying, teaching or performing, the remaining 79 qualitative responses formed the final sample group used for data analysis.

The average length of experience of participants was calculated as 30 years (Q3). Nearly half the respondents (49.35%) studied with four or more teachers; 24.68% studied with three teachers; 16.88% with two; and 9.09% with a single teacher, which suggests that the majority of participants could have been influenced by a variety of pedagogical approaches (Q10). Additionally, all participants considered music to be their profession (44.3% students, 55.7% teachers and performers, with a substantial overlap of both) (Q4).

The questionnaire participants are the most nationally diverse group investigated in the current research. Fifty-eight of the 79 respondents came from English-speaking countries: 34 (43%) from the United States, 20 (25.3%) from Australia and 4 (5%) from the United Kingdom. The remaining 21 (31.64%) indicated the following countries of origin: Argentina (1), Brazil (3), Canada (2), Ecuador (1), Germany (2), Greece (1), Hungary (1), Italy (1), the Netherlands (2), New Zealand (3), Poland (1), Portugal (1) and Singapore (2).

This sample group met the criteria for this research, namely, a high level of professionalism – they were all music professionals with at least eight years’ experience, and a representative variety of nationalities – they came from a diverse range of countries of origin. The number of collected responses, particularly considering their descriptive nature, was considered sufficient to create a reliable picture of perceptions with regard to national piano schools from English-speaking participants.

Sources of technique and artistic personality

The purpose of the questionnaire section regarding development of technique and artistic personality is to identify, and rate according to perceived importance, those factors which the participants indicated as influencing their personal piano styles. The researcher suggests that the elements rated highest must constitute the main carriers of traditions of piano playing,
assuming that, indeed, the tradition of a school can be carried forward. This assumption is due to a number of participants (48.3, Q30) indicating their membership of one or more national piano schools.

Respondents were asked to rate their answers from one to ten, one being of no importance and ten being of the utmost. Scale scores were derived by averaging the rating-type survey questions and are shown in brackets beside the responses below.

In the area of artistic personality development, participants considered teacher-influence (8.32) and their own personalities (8.19) as having slightly higher importance than their personal life (6.99) or listening to performances (7.28) (Q6, 77 responses). Other influential factors included:

- other arts, literature, painting, film, visual arts, philosophy, poetry;
- access to good instruments;
- research;
- encouragement from family and friends;
- being teachers themselves;
- religious beliefs.

In the area of technical development (Q8, 77 responses), participants considered teachers (8.56) and practising (8.48) to be more influential than their own personalities (6.83) or listening to performances (6.44). In the space provided for additional, qualitative responses, participants suggested a number of other important factors:

- understanding the physics and movement of the hand;
- practice methods from books (Sandor, Gieseking, Berman, Neuhaus, Deppe, Liszt, Chopin, Cortot), treatises, anecdotal stories about famous pianists’ practising;
- experimentation;
- competitiveness, discipline;
- masterclasses.

The influences of participants’ teachers, personal lives, individual personalities and familiarity with other artists’ performances, were all indicated as factors having a great impact on the development of their artistic personality and technical skills. In the case of participants
who indicated belonging to a particular national school or schools, these factors can be seen as a means of transmitting a particular tradition to them.

**Direct experiences**

Participants were asked to indicate their direct experiences of national piano schools. The areas of interest included the self-identity of participants in the context of the studied phenomenon, and the presence of distinctive national piano schools in their lives.

The 66 participants who answered Question 21, moderately agreed (6.42) that national piano schools still exist in the twenty-first century (‘1’ - I do not believe they exist, and ‘10’ - I strongly believe they exist), and supported their responses by saying that those styles still have a moderate influence (6.58) on teaching and performing piano music nowadays (Q22). 0 below represents participants’ indications for the national piano school to which they belong (Q30, 68 responses).

**Figure 1. Do you represent any particular national piano style?**

As a musician, do you think you represent any particular national piano approach? (Question 30)

- Yes: 29.40%
- Represents more than one national school: 19.10%
- Has created own style: 29.14%
- Does not know: 14.71%
- Skip question: 2.94%
- No: 4.41%

Figure 1 above clearly shows that even in the twenty-first century, nearly half the pianists participating in this questionnaire (48.3%) consider themselves as belonging to at least one national piano school. This is not surprising given that the majority of respondents came from Australia and the United States, countries that represent a mixture of many national piano schools. It could also be said that, if the styles were already watered down in a substantial way, more participants would have indicated creating their own personal style, rather than
still belonging to one or more national school. Data presented here, clearly contradicts the idea that national piano schools have already vanished in the twenty-first century.

Questions 31 and 33 asked respondents to name and describe the single or multiple schools to which they belong, 11 and 19 participants answering respectively. Figure 2 below presents the number of schools indicated (multiple selections were allowed).

**Figure 2. Participants’ national school(s).**

Despite only two participants originally coming from Germany, and none from Russia, the overwhelming majority of respondents identified themselves as belonging to either the Russian or German School. Other schools not represented on 0 included: American (2), Argentinian (1), Australian (1), English (2), Dutch (1), Hungarian (2) and Spanish (1). Due to the insufficient sample, this data does not represent trends amongst schools around the world. It does, however, suggest that the Russian and German piano schools have an important influence in Australia and the United States.
These questionnaire findings converge with the genealogical results, suggesting that Russian and German pianists and pedagogues are spread around the globe sharing their knowledge. The influence and unique character of both these schools are sufficiently strong as to result in their students considering themselves living exponents of those piano schools, regardless of whether or not they studied in their respective homelands or abroad. The fact that some participants indicated belonging to schools not identified in the literature, such as Argentinian or Danish, suggests that those participants believe a unique piano school exists based on nationality itself.

Of the 78 participants who completed this section, nearly half (30) were able to assess the school to which their teacher belongs (see Figure 3 below).

**Figure 3. Does your teacher represent a national piano school?**

![Pie chart showing responses to the question about whether the teacher represents a national piano school. The chart shows the following percentages: Yes - 47%, No - 26%, Do not know - 25.64%, Unknown - 1.28%.](image)

Question 14 asked which particular school the teacher represented. Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of answers again identified the Russian (18) and German (6) schools, with a few examples of French, Hungarian and Polish.

After discussing their direct experiences with the studied phenomenon, participants indicated the main sources of information for their opinions regarding national piano schools (Q36, 56 responses). See Figure 4 below (multiple selections were allowed).
For “Other”, participants indicated sources of information such as conversations and interviews, or a combination of all three given choices. Six participants were unable to indicate where their knowledge of national piano schools came from and did not indicate their own or their teacher’s piano school.

**Summary of direct experiences**

Participants who stated that they (29.3%, Q30, 68 responses) and their teacher (20%, Q13, 78 responses) did not belong to any national school delineated their reasons as feeling at a loss on how to answer, or lacking an awareness of the existence of national piano schools. This represents a significant number of participants who were not aware of a phenomenon of national piano schools.

**Descriptions of particular national schools**

Participants in the questionnaire were rather generous with their descriptions of particular national piano schools. Table 3 below provides a verbatim summary.
Table 3. Questionnaire – Key areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key area</th>
<th>French School</th>
<th>German School</th>
<th>Russian School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technique</strong></td>
<td>Digital approach (‘jeu perle’), large variety of physical approaches, dexterity and technical development emphasized, flatter hand, accuracy, clarity, lightness of touch</td>
<td>Good deal of rotation, Czerny-based technique</td>
<td>Low wrist, hours of practice, injuries, harsh or forced technique, freedom of the whole arm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sound</strong></td>
<td>Large variety of touches, more superficial tonal qualities, tone-sensitive playing, sonority</td>
<td>Orchestral, tone production</td>
<td>Sound, deep sonorities, thicker sound, bold sound, intensive singing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aesthetics</strong></td>
<td>‘Jeu perle’, many kinds of non-legato playing, emphasis on articulation, poetry, lightness, humour, intellectual, too formal, impressionism, clarity, balance and taste in interpretation</td>
<td>Structural integrity of music, structured, ‘innig’ [heartfelt, profound], serious, not showy, substantial, phrasing, emotions and intellect, classic-form-consciousness, more reserved</td>
<td>When they play Scriabin: poetic lyrical, emotion more “on the sleeve”, very romantic approach to musical expression, emotion, not too big stress on style, sometimes too much emotion, very passionate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key archetypes</strong></td>
<td>Follows Debussy and Chopin’s style of playing: Nadia Boulanger, Pascal Rogé</td>
<td>Influenced by Beethoven technique and musicianship; Artur Schnabel</td>
<td>Vassily Safonov, Lev Naumov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other areas</strong></td>
<td>Poetry (esoteric); too intellectual, formal</td>
<td>Not showy, serious (personality);</td>
<td>Disciplined (personality)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most of the expressions quoted above were used multiple times across the responses, and the excerpts presented here mirror the most often discussed factors. They are grouped according to key areas identified from the respondents’ descriptions of particular schools.

The descriptions for the French School, in particular, seem to confirm the literature review’s findings of lighter touch, and focus on articulation with particular mention of ‘jeu perle’. The term ‘poetry’ was also similarly described by Alfred Cortot in the literature to describe the French School.

A focus on structure and form-consciousness and an emphasis on performing Bach’s music were particular to the German School. Respondents also indicated that phrasing, syntax and tone production, as well as “structural integrity” and “fundamental tempo” are important features of that school.

The questionnaire respondents’ descriptions of the Russian School confirmed its features as a depth of sound and romantic and emotional approach to playing, as found in the literature review. Respondents who described the Russian School talked about its emphasis on sound production (rich tone, beauty of tone) and technique. Some of them talked about the economy of movement. One respondent described the Russian tradition as being grand and “Tsarist” as shown not only in the sound, repertoire and virtuosic technique, but also in “stage deportment, posture and apparel” (Respondent No. 19). The descriptions used by respondents coincide with broad generalizations about nations. This challenges the very notion of national piano schools, suggesting that the phenomenon could be a false perception.

The respondents mentioned other schools to a lesser extent, and Table 4 below summarizes their descriptions verbatim.

Table 4. Questionnaire - Other schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY FACTOR</th>
<th>DESCRIPTORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technique</td>
<td>(Italian) concerned with articulation of fingers sometimes detached from the use of arm, very detailed action of fingers; (Polish) technically brilliant; (English) cultivating the relationship between the hand and the key, precise;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants’ descriptions may lack clarity and precision and may lean towards broad generalizations. However, the key areas identified by the majority of respondents are similar to those found in the literature, and often refer to technique, aesthetics and various elements of interpretation. Some respondents also mentioned key areas such as national language, personality traits, characteristics of a particular nation, and repertoire choice particular to individual schools.

**Key archetypes**

The area of key archetypes found in the literature review was supported in the questionnaire. Respondents (Q37, 60 responses) stated that the personalities of famous pianists were influential (rating 7.52) in forming their perceptions of national piano schools. This area was also confirmed by the many examples of actual key archetypes mentioned by participants when discussing a particular national school. Participants often provided a full history of their own lineage (Q33), dividing it into schools and tracing it right back to the earliest stages as given in the genealogical trees in Chapter Four.

**National personality**

The questionnaire responses reflected the findings of the literature review regarding the existence of a national personality, defined here as particular features of personality inherited from an upbringing within a particular national culture. While the literature did not address
this key factor directly, the analysis showed that many of the literature’s descriptions of schools matched this area. In the light of this, the questionnaire’s relatively low number of descriptions for this area is not surprising. It can be interpreted as participants either not believing that such a thing as a 'national personality' could influence the style of national piano schools, or that participants simply did not believe that such a factor exists.

Conclusions – Changes and the current state

The great majority of participants (91.23% of 57 responses) indicated that over the past fifty years the state of national piano schools has changed (Q34), and that it is more difficult to recognize national piano schools from recordings captured recently (4.75) than from those of fifty years ago (6.79) (Q23, 63 responses).

A collection of direct quotations presented below summarizes the general tone expressed by questionnaire participants with regard to changes in national piano schools over time and their current state. For the purposes of direct quotation, some respondents consented to being identified. Considering their professional standing, it was deemed important to include their opinions. Readers should be aware that responses to this questionnaire were usually colloquial in style. The full context of the quotations is given in Appendix F.

Steven Armstrong (M.Mus) strongly supports the idea that the time of national piano schools has passed. His opinion is based on the literature he has read as well as his personal experience with many international pianists. He identifies a major change and sees the reasons as being international travel and ideas spreading around the world.

*I believe the notion of the National Piano Schools is mostly irrelevant today.... The fundamental technical and artistic principles are universal. Also professional pedagogues move around the world a lot more than they used to. Ideas have spread. The nuances of different schools today are far more subtle than what they used to be. Besides, what do you consider to constitute a national school? This should be defined. Interpretation of music is subjective – not determined by school. Technique? Perhaps some conservatoires around the world put different emphasis on different aspects of technique but it seems unlikely that the country has little to do with it.... I don’t think there is any value in asking students of today these sort of questions. I think these*
questions are 50-70 years too late. I may be wrong, but that’s my feeling which is a product of reading a lot and my own research. (Q18)

Armstrong states that it is not clear what national piano schools are, while negating the idea that currently technique or interpretation could be characteristic of any one of them. He further suggests that the current research has missed the time when national piano schools flourished, and concludes that the value of questioning it nowadays is greatly diminished. The challenge in accepting this opinion is that, regardless of whether or not national piano schools are a phenomenon of the past or present, a rich body of opinion about them certainly still exists in the twenty-first century, as shown in this study, and requires better understanding.

The insights of Dr Charles Timbrell, an active performer and teacher, Professor of Music and Coordinator of Keyboard Studies at Howard University, Washington, DC, were considered highly relevant to the current study, due to his extensive experience in researching various performance styles (Timbrell, 1999a, 1999b; Timbrell & Chappell, 1999). Timbrell says of the phenomenon of national piano schools:

_I have interviewed more than 60 French-trained pianists from my book ‘French Pianism’. It is my conclusion that the “French School” became assimilated with other schools in the 1950s due to widespread international teaching and absorption of trends. I think that there is still a “Russian school” because they are more closed (in many ways!). (Q25)_

He further explains what he sees as the reasons for changes in schools:

_... I think that national schools pretty much died out after WWII, with international competitions, international teachers outside the borders, books and articles by various international pianists, proliferation of recordings and videos, internet, YouTube, etc. I think the national schools have become homogenized today, except for the Russian school. (Q35)_

The perception of questionnaire participants is clearly one of national piano schools being in the process of unification, various processes of globalization being given as the main reason for this change.
Respondents often indicated that schools, if indeed they have survived into the twenty-first century, “exist maybe at the individual level, meaning you may not be able to identify a certain institution or conservatory with a particular national piano school” (anonymous, Respondent No. 24, Q35). Participants’ beliefs that they belong to particular national piano schools, speak in favour of national piano styles being preserved in the twenty-first century, at least on an individual level.
Chapter 6: Interview data

Five interviews were conducted for this research, all of which provided valuable in-depth perceptions of the areas and factors defining the phenomenon of national piano schools. Each interviewee expressed a slightly different perspective on the subject. The first interview was a pilot, conducted with three aims: to test the general concepts behind the questions, to provide markers for the direction of subsequent interviews, and to hone the researcher’s interviewing skills. To protect the identities of interviewees, each was assigned a pseudonym, their gender was altered to be male only, and any personal information was culled from the descriptions of their artistic achievements.

Interview One - Pilot

The first interview was conducted with Andrew, an Australian-born pianist and pedagogue, whose main influences came from Russian and German training. Andrew described his teacher, as an heir to a “Romantic School” characterized by freedom of expression, which Andrew claimed was even more evident amongst such different pianists as Vladimir Horowitz and Vladimir Sofronitsky. The notion of key archetypes emerged in Andrew’s interview when he cited Anton Rubinstein as the prime example of Russian pianism. Thus he proposed that the tradition of schools was transferred through the relationship between teacher and student.

Key areas

German School

Andrew mentioned Artur Schnabel and Wilhelm Kempf who, in spite of being very different, still had elements in common – demonstrating that being part of one school does not preclude the existence of personal differences. One of the main features of the German School is discipline, which Andrew expected and received during his education in Germany:

*The reason I went to Germany was that I had always loved the German style ... I knew it from recordings, ... and the other reason I went to this particular teacher was I was aware that I needed discipline. I certainly got it in Germany.*
**Australian School**

Andrew has spent the majority of his career in Australia and explained that due to the lack of long-standing traditions, pianists born in this country tend to study overseas. Conversely, performers of various backgrounds come to live in Australia creating a “very healthy mix”, “… all these different pieces of expertise” and “…input from different cultures….”

Clearly Andrew believes that the Australian School, if indeed it exists, combines a variety of features unique to a broad spectrum of styles. He also said that Australian students, not having such a strong connection with history and tradition, can enjoy much more freedom in creating their own interpretations and establishing relationships with teachers.

The interview protocol used for Andrew was focused on gathering the definitions of national schools with which he was familiar. His opinions provided several descriptive areas rather than a detailed portrayal of any particular school. His main descriptive areas included:

- the physics of playing/technique;
- sound;
- the composer’s heritage/tradition passed on through generations;
- preconceptions and generalizations about nations (Germans – strict and disciplined).

Andrew described French School pianists as having a “particular sound because they are very concentrated on fingers”, while the Russian School uses more arm. He cites Richter’s performances of Debussy as having a fuller sound than the recordings created by French pianists.

Andrew confirmed the perception of there being various national styles, and indicated his own encounters with them. He saw schools as being defined by areas of technique, sound, tradition and generalizations regarding nationalities. Andrew agreed that rough stereotypes and preconceptions of nations dictate how people perceive each school.
Factors and changes

Approach to musical notation

Andrew stated that his German teacher represented a “much more modern” approach than Schnabel or Kempf, because she was a strong believer in the written urtext score. Following some further questions about the freedom in Schnabel’s performances, Andrew pointed out that in comparison to other performances, such as Frederic Lamond’s, Schnabel’s performances would still appear very strict. Only to us, as performers in the ‘urtext era’, do Schnabel’s recordings sound free. Andrew hypothesized that if one could hear Beethoven performing, one would be profoundly shocked by the freedom of his interpretations. These statements suggest that there was a constant change from freedom to strictness across the development of pianistic style from Beethoven through to recent years. Questioned further about these changes in the past fifty to one hundred years, Andrew assured the researcher that from the 1960s when the urtext editions became more popular, “[t]here was an increasing strictness in the way … interpretation was taught.”

He then suggested that around 1990 this trend was reversed and that we are currently experiencing a movement towards greater interpretive freedom. Andrew evaluated what he calls the “urtext syndrome” as being positive, explaining that it cleared the score from editorial notes that had obscured the composer’s original indications. On the other hand, he saw the movement towards freedom as allowing the performer to look for artistic meanings beyond the imperfections of the written score. Andrew was able to describe this change in style in great detail. According to him, the slow shift from freedom in performance (Beethoven) to strict adherence to the score (1960-1990) has been reversing for the past twenty years. This tendency, or to use Andrew’s term, ”urtext syndrome”, has possibly affected the entire piano world rather than any one particular national school.

The need to study with various nationalities

Andrew disagreed with there being a necessity to study, for example, with a French teacher to play French music well:

*There is always something to be learned [from other teachers], but a good teacher should - through his reading and listening experience - be able to teach all styles.*
At the same time he pointed out that each school might have some insight unique unto itself:

_"I had a student doing Prokofiev’s 5th Piano Concerto and I got him to have a lesson with a Russian teacher, and she thought he played it well, but she did have some valuable insight; she talked about Russian bells ... so I think there is always something to learn."_ 

This statement implies a tradition of performance developed and sustained in a particular country, which is not easily accessible to other national schools.

**Current state**

As a closing remark, Andrew suggested that, despite all the changes in national piano schools, it would still be possible today, in a “blindfold test”, to recognize a French pianist such as Yean-Yves Thibaudet or Pascal Rogé.

**Interview Two**

The second interviewee, Edward, is an established concert agent. While living in Europe and America he heard live performances of such eminent artists as Walter Gieseking, Arthur Rubinstein, Wilhelm Kempf, Wilhelm Backhaus, Pablo Casals, Pierre Fournier, Yehudi Menuhin, Maria Callas, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Christa Ludwig, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Victoria de Los Ángeles amongst many others. Above all, he is a music lover, with a large collection of recordings of classical music, and a special affinity with the piano.

In comparison with the data gathered from the first interview, this second one focused on changes in pianistic styles over the centuries and areas or factors defining national schools in general, rather than focusing on any particular piano schools. Similarly to Andrew in Interview One, Edward found it difficult to define the distinctions between national schools. In fact, he stated that he was not aware of the existence of the term _national piano school_ prior to this research, but since he was invited to take part in this study (having read the Participant Information Statement a few weeks earlier), he found the concept useful and now sees it as being commonly found in the music world.

Edward said that his choice of performer for certain repertoire was determined by the origins of the pianist. He stated that he would not listen to Tchaikovsky’s Piano Concerto performed
by a French pianist because the core of this music is not part of “a heart or the whole psyche of a French person” (esoteric descriptor):

*If I was the listener of a Russian pianist who is playing Liszt, I would like to know what is his background and credentials. Of course it gets watered down, so the further away it is, it is changing, people and the world is changing. But still there is a legitimate line of tradition ....*

Obviously, Edward supports the concept of lineage, wherein tradition, in spite of its being "watered-down", remains to a certain extent intact.

**Key areas**

Edward believed that Russian pianists have a very distinct sound characterized by “grandeur” – “particularly the large chords” - while the French style has a “certain colour and feel” and is very discreet. Further questioning opened a field for discussion in which the areas defining national piano schools could be found:

- language;
- climate and its influence on personality, and general features of nations, lifestyle and life attitude;
- tradition and heritage (including upbringing, education, studies and cultural background);
- the great (rather than average) personalities of each school;
- technique and skill;
- sound colour;
- the appearance of a pianist;
- the level of professionalism and the definition of professionalism in each school;
- generalizations and stereotypes of nations.

During the interview some of these listed elements were described by Edward in detail while others emerged from analysis of the data.


**Language**

The importance of understanding language was often mentioned in this interview. Edward suggested that the ability to speak and understand a variety of languages aids a full exploration of the works of composers from France or Russia. He said that pianists without this knowledge will play the music of Debussy differently to those who can fluently use the relevant language:

*I think if you want an all round good classical pianist, you have to go [a] little bit beyond just knowing the technique and knowing the feel of the music. I think you have to even go as far as the language, because I cannot see that anyone can understand Debussy or Ravel, without even having heard somebody speak French – the same with Germans, Italians and Russians.*

Edward believes that “colouring of the language” affects a pianist’s phrasing and performance.

**Climate/lifestyle/esoteric factors**

Another element that appeared as a factor defining national styles was the influence of climate on people’s personalities. Edward described Russians as people who, due to severe weather conditions, “spend their lives inside”. He explained that this affects their “life celebration” in many ways. To make his explanation clearer he compared Russians with Italians who, in contrast, spend their lives outside in the open “showing the world: Here I am!” Edward concluded that these elements can be heard in performances and that Russian music performed by a French pianist will still have the “colour of France”. According to Edward, relatively new schools, like the one in Japan, are trying to imitate some of the old traditions, but he claimed, nonetheless, to still be able to hear their cultural background in their playing.

Edward claimed that a person from a country where the traditional upbringing does not allow for a free expression of emotions will perform in a different manner to an Italian or Spanish pianist. He underlined these were broad generalizations and said it was important to mention that, particularly in the case of great talents or geniuses, these elements might not apply.

Edward suggested that in a blind test using a hundred pianists from the Russian, French and German Schools, for instance, an acute listener would be able to detect “a line, or thread of
characteristics” despite the acknowledged great importance of personality. Some national features, according to him, are inherited “through blood” and can form part of a pianist’s character. In such cases, a performer from Russian roots, studying in France, “might not even like the way he is being taught.” He supported this opinion by saying that Ivo Pogorelich, in spite of being trained in the Russian School, often went against it because of his natural affinity towards a different style. Edward confirmed his belief that there are elements of piano style that can be attributed to the country of origin, regardless of the strength of an individual performer’s personality.

**Tradition and heritage**

Many times in the interview Edward stressed how important he believed pianistic heritage to be in the context of national schools and their key archetypes:

> Each country has produced in the past outstanding musicians that made an impact, a permanent stamp, on what you call schools. People have learned from that school, from many generations that actually lived in the composer’s times. This is what I mean by tradition.

Edward suggests that in Poland, for example, the process of idealization of Chopin’s music must have influenced how this music has been performed over the years. He believes that certain traditions were passed on from the composer himself and might still be alive today. The fact that these processes vary between countries leads Edward to the conclusion that the aesthetics developed in, say, Russia or Poland, would differ, for example, in the playing of Chopin.

**Personality**

Edward considered the role of personality in the context of national styles as being very important and he spent a considerable amount of time stressing it. He considered it to be an important factor in identifying pianists from the same national background regardless of their training. Edward listed several personality traits that he believed affected performance style:

- “level of sensitivity”;
- “level of conviction regarding the artistic content of music”;
- outlook on life (“how the pianist looks upon life”);
ability and willingness to “expose” oneself on stage (or lack thereof);
“strengths and weaknesses of personality” (all get expressed on stage);
external appearance on stage (depends on personality and “also on upbringing and
culture”);
“insecurities”.

Edward did not attempt to assign any of the listed traits to a particular school. Nor did he
differentiate any of these factors between schools. However, he did acknowledge the
possibility that some of the listed features might not only be influenced and shaped by
circumstances of upbringing, national tradition, history and an affinity of certain countries
towards particular personality features, but could also be factors contributing to the
phenomenon of national schools.

Factors and changes

Edward delineated a number of processes transforming national schools. He believed that
recordings have had a “great impact” on the changes in piano style over the years. In
particular, he claimed that access to hearing great and well-respected performances affects the
interpretation of young musicians who tend to follow rather than create, thus contributing to
the unification of piano performance style.

Commercialization

Edward explained that commercialization has affected several aspects of the music world:

- audience perceptions;
- piano competitions;
- recordings;
- music education institutions.

He claimed that the need for commercial success has become the most important goal for
teachers, performers (particularly during competitions), and for large organizations such as
universities or management companies:

I believe at this present time that there are pianists that have established themselves as
being very successful, that are under the control of their agent and impresario, who is
very happy because they make good money. But [the] agent actually says, ‘do not change the performance, do not change the way you play ... when you come on stage do it this way’. It is because they manage the artist and their profession in order to sell it.

Edward believes that the recording industry needs to profit from their sales and that quality is often considered less important. Universities and teachers need financial support, so the necessity to produce successful students becomes paramount. He states that the level of success in today’s world is sometimes related to many non-musical factors, and his overall tone of expression suggests that he does not consider these influences to be positive. He did not associate those factors with any particular national piano style, suggesting instead that they affect the music world in general.

**Unification of styles**

Edward noted that currently teachers and students have greater freedom than ever before in deciding where they would like to study and work. His opinion aligns with the commonly found perceptions in this study that different national schools blend together in music universities, that there is a trend towards a unification of styles, and that students adopt different elements of technique, interpretation and cultural traits from a variety of nations due to travelling. He stated his conviction that a pianist who was born, raised and educated in a single country, would perform differently to a person who was able to travel and study in a variety of places.

Edward concluded that national styles are no longer idiosyncratic to their country of origin. His opinion suggests that the state of national schools is related to the socio- and geo-political situation around the world, as well as to a nation’s material status (such as its capability to employ overseas teachers and send its students abroad to study).

**Conclusions**

Throughout the interview Edward found the concept of national piano schools valid, even though he had not previously encountered the term, but he stated that the differences between the schools are less pronounced in the twenty-first century:

*There is probably less distinction to detect; (style) has become more uniform.*
He often talked about old-school pianists as opposed to modern performers, thus supporting the findings of Kramer (1992, pp. iv - v) who discussed the existence of old and new schools. Edward’s opinions suggest that national schools are undergoing constant evolution and that all countries are being influenced by similar factors.

In conclusion, Edward pointed out that people in general are usually not aware of the phenomenon of a national school. They might be subconsciously referring to it or prefer one style over another, but only upon having it pointed out to them would they realize its existence and validity (as was the case with him). He said that listeners assume that a German pianist will be more suited to performing a Beethoven sonata, believing that it would be a performance close to “how Beethoven would like it to be”. The factors that emerged from this interview as influencing national styles serve to limit the repertoire, diminish the differences between schools and make it a challenge to define them. Edward believes that the followers of well-established recording artists tend to replicate them rather than create new interpretations, and that this diminishes the uniqueness of aesthetics developed historically in different regions.

Interview Three

Interview Three was conducted with John, a recording artist, well educated musician and successful performer, and therefore an obvious choice for inclusion in this study. John was born and educated in Poland but continued his higher studies in Germany. His interest in history and politics, as well as his wide participation in piano competitions and festivals, were indicative that his knowledge and experience would provide valuable insight into the topic of national piano schools.

John defines his heritage and piano school as Polish. He sees his nationalistic approach as being particularly evident in his interpretation of Chopin Mazurkas, and says that being part of the Polish School makes it easier for him to understand such music:

*My interpretation of Chopin Mazurkas, I do not know if this is Polish School, but the typical features of a Polish peasant, dances, Polish folk music - if I did not experience any of this, then how to even attempt to play this music?*
Having lived in Japan for several years, he has also come to understand how difficult it is to explain the “essence” of this music to a person of completely different cultural background. These statements reflect John’s opinion that the nationalism of a performer is clearly heard and felt when connected with the national composition style of a country.

John stated that his own pianistic development was influenced by many artistic personalities in his life. Due to the accessibility of travel, recordings, DVDs et cetera, he was able to gain those influences from a variety of sources. In addition to these influential personalities, he listed the following areas as defining national schools:

- roots and tradition;
- cultural upbringing;
- education.

John also pointed out the necessity of understanding and gaining hands-on experience of other cultures:

_No matter what, even if you watch on the TV, programs about culture of, for example Mexico, you will never understand it as well as if you personally visit the place._

**Key areas**

John made very few broad generalizations regarding the definition of particular national piano schools, but the few he gave presented an insight into areas that define them.

**German School**

John defined the German School as being one that cares greatly about the form and structure of music: “There are no artistic elements outside the set norm, ... the logic of phrasing, everything has to be predictable and balanced”. He claimed that German pianists have very fast fingers and that the sound is more toned-down in comparison with the Russian School: “There is a lack of carrying, long tone, instead we have rather dry, focused playing and sound”. John stated that the German style of interpretation is reinforced by their teachers.
French School

According to John, the French School is more difficult to define. He suggests that its approach to articulation differs from other styles and that a certain lightness, short sound and articulation used for the purposes of phrasing could “possibly come from earlier harpsichord players”.

Russian School

John states that Russian pianists “do not prefer exaggerated sensitivity and sentimentalism”. They are taught how to explore a composer’s markings in order to create an artistic interpretation and they understand well the different types of articulation and sound control – gained from the musical score. John thinks of the Russian School as consisting of a wide variety of tone and good sound control. He also pointed out that the Russian School is, in itself, very diverse (Igumnov – “very polyphonic thinking” versus Ginzburg and Neuhaus), thus reinforcing this study’s literature and questionnaire findings. John concluded that the Russian School retained its identity even though it is “not possible to tie the Russian School with the Russian country any more”.

In the case of the Russian School, John suggested a few factors that might have contributed to its particular style still being relatively distinct and influential. He talked about the Russians’ strong conviction regarding the superiority of their school. He also mentioned that a great majority of pianists who study in Hanover want to study with Russian pedagogues and choose other teachers only if not assigned their first preference. His impression was that young Russian pianists tend to prefer studying with Russian professors more so than their counterparts while French students are less likely to choose French teachers. This suggests a national preference towards certain teachers.

Japanese style – Technique/cross-fertilization

Having lived several years in Japan, John suggested that the Japanese School can be characterized as being mostly concerned with “precision and skill”. He sees this as an “influence of German culture and the respect that Japanese people have toward German classics (such as Bach, Beethoven and Czerny)”. The high level of Japanese performance is also affected by accessibility to high quality instruments (a factor mentioned for the first time in this study). John believes that due to the relative “wealth of Japanese society” it is subject
to many outside influences such as overseas teachers giving masterclasses and students returning from studying abroad.

**National personality**

As a sidenote, John suggested that the sound of the Vienna and Berlin Philharmonic Orchestras differs due to the different national content of those institutions. He suggested that Vienna was full of Slavs and Jewish musicians while Berlin was more insular in its racial content. John concluded that these differences came from their respective “roots and traditions”. He stated, with regard to one of his well-known Polish teachers, that:

> [h]e is a great example of a pianist, who performs music of Beethoven in the style of Chopin. He believes that this is [the] normal way. I think the reason for this lies in a very strong and typical Polish personality, and strong influences he received by being educated in the Polish style. Had he studied somewhere else, these influences might have been not so pronounced.

John points clearly to some of the features of national personality and their consequent limitations.

**Religion**

John suggested that national personality features differ between schools and affect their development in particular religions:

> It is interesting to note how different countries favour particular religions: Germany – Protestant, Poland – Catholic and Russian Orthodox. [The] Roman Catholic church is more popular amongst nations that have a more emotional approach to life, whereas amongst people thinking in a more rational way, this church is not so popular.

**Summary of key areas**

The main defining areas provided by John while discussing national piano schools are:

- sound (French – “short sound and articulation”, German more “toned-down in comparison with clarity and brightness of Russian sound”);
- aesthetics (“Japanese focused on precision and skill”, “German focused on form and structure”);
emotional preferences/national personality (Russian - no sentimentalism, no exaggerated sensitivity);
level of adherence to the score;
“cultural roots” and tradition.

These findings are similar to the themes revealed in the literature review and previous interviews. The generalizations and stereotypes of nations mentioned in Interview Two related to the non-sentimental Russian style and German focus on structure and form and the level of adherence to the score was referenced in Interview One in relation to changes in approach to the urtext score.

Factors and changes

John was convinced that the concept of national piano schools is not entirely valid from the perspective of the year 2012. He suggested that nowadays schools tend to exist only as “migrants” rather than in their countries of origin. He gave as an example the Hochschule für Musik, Theater und Medien Hannover where only a limited number of German teachers is currently employed amongst others such as Russian, Israeli, English and American. With each subsequent generation that studies in more than one place, it becomes more difficult to identify the school to which they belong:

It is very difficult to identify the school of a pianist nowadays. They might be born in England, study with [a] teacher that already represented various national influences and then travel to study in Russia for [a] few years. Are they influenced more by [the] English or Russian school? How to classify them?

John questioned the ability of a tradition to remain pure in recent years due to the cross-fertilization amongst countries caused by travelling. He said that the first generation living and studying outside their country of origin usually remains relatively close to its source, while every subsequent generation moves further away.

John suggested that in the case of the Polish School, the reason for its state of good preservation lies in the socio-political situation of Poland. He refers to the fall of communism in 1989 and the relative separation from other countries prior to that date – “western influences were simply not allowed”. There was no option of importing the best overseas teachers. According to John, the reason for the current state of the Polish School lies also in
an historical lack of funding. This is the reason for the relative absence of external influences – “no money to bring in overseas pedagogues”. He suggested that Germany’s policies caused its government to spend a large amount of money to support education and stated that Poland is changing quickly and, similarly to Germany, in twenty to thirty years’ time external influences will be more pronounced.

John brought to light another problem that could certainly have an influence on the current state of the Polish School. He mentioned that “a certain lack of competitiveness, inherited from communist times, caused the lack of natural selection” (teachers are nominated and have security of tenure regardless of their achievements or failures). He identified this lack of competitiveness as one of the main reasons for its current state. John suggested that it was Poland's policies that allowed this situation to occur.

**Conclusions**

John concluded that in a blind test of listening to several pianists from different schools it would still be possible to guess the national school of the performers provided they were exceptionally gifted. There would also be little difference in the national elements between recordings produced recently and those created fifty years ago.
**Interview Four**

Interview Four was conducted with Eddy, who stated that studying in a number of countries affected his outlook on life and his musicianship. He admitted that his way of thinking in life became more structured and this in turn affected his style of piano playing. He suggested that this was a result of being influenced not only by the people with whom he studied but also by the languages he learned and spoke. Eddy also identified his ancestry as a major influence, emphasizing he had spoken the language and been surrounded by that culture since birth.

Eddy identified Baroque era origins for three main national schools – French, German and Italian. Since the composer and performer were synonymous at that time, the term ‘national schools’ referred to both performance and composition: “The composition was a notated performance”. His indication of such an early era for the inception of national piano schools seems to come from his association of compositional style with performance style in early music, regardless of the instrument.

According to Eddy, the distinction between styles was clear in the Baroque era due to the relative isolation of countries, which was caused by a slow exchange of information, limited travelling opportunities and the absence of recordings. He believed that at the beginning of the twentieth century the differences between schools were still very distinct.

**Key areas**

Eddy identified five schools: German, French, Italian, Hungarian and Chinese. Analysis of his interview revealed the following list of defining elements:

- interpretation;
- “people’s mentality”;
- repertoire;
- sound;
- language;
- geography;
- food;
- "whole culture – that is, how we hear differences between schools".
**Russian School -Political influences**

Eddy talked about a Russian approach to art, saying that under the strict regime of the past, people lived in difficult circumstances with their freedom, for instance to travel, being limited. Artists took an “internal immigration” trying to use their musical lives as their escape, fulfilment and happiness.

Eddy stated that there is also a great variety of styles within the Russian School.

*Simply by looking at Gilels, Richter or Zak, who had completely different personalities, you cannot put them into the category labelled as ‘a Russian pianist’.*

He sees the personality of performers as a factor differentiating between them, thus suggesting that this is not an area where the description of national piano schools should be sought.

**Chinese School**

In discussing newly emerging schools, Eddy stated that the Chinese School is already very strong, and that after a few generations of successfully acquiring technical skills, the Chinese are now gaining a deeper understanding of European culture, including music. Their work is driven towards success but they are also embracing the deeper concepts and meaning of music. He believes that they will be an important part of the pianistic world in the future, particularly those who are being brought up in Eastern traditions from their birth.

**Australian School**

Eddy did not attempt to define an Australian School, stating that he did not believe one exists. He considered that because influences came from various places throughout the world, it was difficult to find common features that could define a new style. He pointed out that a majority of great Australian artists left the country, citing Nellie Melba as an example.

**Repertoire/national affinity**

The Russian School, according to Eddy, frequently performs Rachmaninov and Tchaikovsky while avoiding Mozart and Bach. Of the Romantic composers, they prefer Chopin and Schumann over Schubert and Brahms. He pointed out that German pianists rarely perform
works such as Rachmaninov’s 3rd Piano Concerto, and use “Beethoven as a backbone of the repertoire, complemented with Mozart and Brahms”. In summary, Eddy stated:

*National schools can be characterized by means of repertoire. It comes easier to them, if they play something that is close to their personality. That does not mean that Germans cannot play Rachmaninov, it’s not true, they can do sometimes a better job than Russians, but it comes easier to Russians.*

**Sound/technique**

Eddy identified the variety of sound as a distinguishing factor between schools, using the example of four in particular: German, French, Russian and Italian. When describing the German style, for example Handel, Buxtehude and Reinecke, Eddy focused on the full sound and thick texture in chords. His choice of such early composers as examples was probably due to his perception of the beginnings of national piano schools as being tied to early compositional styles. According to Eddy, the French style is light, has no interest in polyphony, is concerned with the expression of “refined effects”, and its pianists are preoccupied with finger work and the use of arm weight with nothing beyond the shoulder in their playing. In conclusion, Eddy suggested that the Russian School prefers playing with the whole body to produce more sound. He saw this tradition as originating with Liszt and being passed on through his students who taught in Russia. This opinion supports the idea of technique being transmitted over generations of pianists. Eddy explained the differences between the sound aesthetics developed in various schools, confirming that sound and its production are important aspects defining schools. He suggested that the “focus on melody and uncomplicated textures” are characteristic features of the Italian School.

**Language**

Eddy considers the influence of language to be a very important factor characterizing national schools, this topic reappearing several times during the interview. According to Eddy, the structure of language shapes the “mentality” of the performer and together with “thick grammar” – a rather enigmatic expression - is one of the reasons for Germans being “intense” and “concerned with structure”. He contrasts this with the French, citing “Couperin and Debussy who are very light”. Eddy goes on to say:
The grammar, the syntax, the melody of the language has a lot to do with it [piano style]. Why for example does Hungarian folk music and Bartók, [have] a lot of really crazy unstructured rhythms, one bar of 2/4, 6/8, 4/4 - very unstructured, it always changes. I think it has to do with their language which is not so structured. And that gets passed through to the music, to the folk songs, and that shapes the musicians that are of that background - for them it is a second nature.

It can be concluded that being raised in and surrounded by a particular culture (folk songs) and speaking its native language all have an influence on the ability of a performer to understand the music of a particular country.

**Factors and changes**

Eddy listed and described several factors he perceives as having influenced performance style over the past hundred years:

- accessibility of travel;
- variety of teachers;
- masterclass participation;
- commercial expectations;
- recordings;
- instrument changes;
- society changes;
- competitions.

**Commercialization/unification**

Eddy expanded on commercial expectations, listing features of performance required from commercial pressures:

- “high level of reliability”;
- “narrow choice of repertoire”;
- “lack of individuality and spontaneity”;
- “lack of time to fully explore music”.

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He explained that in order to succeed in mainstream performance today, pianists have to play absolutely cleanly and be extremely reliable due to the high frequency of concerts. He claimed that people who earn a living from performing have to present a certain repertoire that sometimes has nothing to do with what they would actually want to play. Eddy believed that commercial requirements produce performances that are less individual, that can be “bleak and dull”, and that are virtuosic and stable but interchangeable with other pianists. He sees these as limiting factors for a musician.

Eddy discussed an example of two musicians, Evgeni Koroliov and Heinrich Neuhaus. Koroliov chose not to suspend his artistic integrity and left his music managers in favour of further developing himself artistically. The disadvantage of this was the necessity to support himself financially from teaching, but the concerts he performed were now his own choice of frequency and repertoire. The example of Neuhaus who, fifty years ago could maintain a successful career giving perhaps one spectacular performance from every ten concerts, demonstrated the change in modern-day audience expectations of reliability.

The individuality and spontaneity of performance are difficult to sustain in a situation where most famous artists are required to perform a great number of concerts or record the complete oeuvres of various composers. Eddy claims that performers just manage to learn it well but there is no time or even any need to make an effort to bring new energy to each performance. His opinions throughout the interview seem to point to a unification of performance style, caused, for example, by commercialization as discussed above.

**Instrument changes**

Eddy noted that the types of instruments varied greatly in the past and mentioned the Austrian Stein with an “action very different to the instruments produced in England and France”. He gave an example of a tempo indication in Chopin’s Study in A minor Op. 10 No. 2 that was easier to achieve on contemporary instruments of the era than on modern instruments today. He also suggests that the current “[stage] domination of Steinway and Yamaha pianos is a factor that contributes to the unification of performance style”.

**Current state**

Eddy comments on the current state of national piano schools saying that:
[t]here is still something there, I think, in mentality, but it is very diluted because everyone can listen to recordings, they might take some ideas from a French pianist, from Gould, study from many teachers, masterclasses. Let’s say we have Russian pianists finished their education in Russia, who went to study in Germany, with a French teacher. What do you get? It [the difference] is now not so clear as it was at the beginning of the century.

The similarities of this statement to the interview with John are striking, both interviewees suggesting that identifying a national piano school for modern performers is difficult.

Eddy comments on the idea of lineage as being rather futile, explaining that it does not always carry what is claimed:

Pianists often trace their lineage back to, for example, Beethoven. But I think through changes in society, migration of the people, the whole change of attitude, I do not think there is anything left of that Beethoven tradition. We have different instruments, we have different playing technique, and society tells us what they want to hear.

Conclusions

Similarly to previous interviewees, Eddy believes that by listening to recordings of pianists from different schools he would, indeed, be able to indicate their origins, but that it would be more difficult in recordings from the past ten years than from fifty or more years ago. He confirms the perception that the differences are much less pronounced in recent years. Eddy believes that performance style is heading towards unification, and that historically informed performance practice is making its way to the concert stage, with more and more players turning towards recently discovered knowledge.

Interview Five

Ben was raised and educated in Russia and has been a member of the faculty at two of its major conservatories. For the past thirty years he has been an active performer and pedagogue, and currently works at a major conservatory in another country.
Ben challenged the usefulness of national piano schools as a concept. He clearly perceived labels as limitations. With regard to the tendency to put things in boxes, Ben believed that “calling something Italian or Russian or German in style is already a limiting factor”. Although we may label ourselves as being "Polish" or "Russian", Ben pointed out that our behaviour is not solely a result of this, and that we constantly change, adjust and develop. He also suggested that cultural background itself can be a limitation which needs to be overcome in order, for example, to allow an Italian pianist to be able to play Rachmaninov well. It seemed to Ben that those differences live a life of their own, but by placing labels on them, they tend to start living up to expectations rather than evolving. Ben suggested that even this study, by labelling things, might adversely affect piano styles, for any subdivision, according to him, represents a limitation.

After careful consideration of Ben’s suggestion, the researcher concluded that by providing a list of areas which describe the various national piano schools, this study would, in fact, facilitate a better understanding of particular styles and be a means to encourage greater variety in performance style. If, as discussed in Chapter One (p. 18), national piano styles do indeed stand for limitations (Berman, 2000, p. 191), then a better understanding of these could help performers overcome them.

Ben described the current state of the Russian School as being different from the past due to its pedagogues still relying on a received tradition which previous generations had experienced first-hand. They comply with the generally accepted way of playing so long as it remains successful, which Ben defined as resulting in winning competitions or getting a job. He stated that prior to the “iron curtain”, Russia was “never closed, nationalistic or ego-orientated” in its approach to art. The generation of pedagogues who taught his generation of students, was described by Ben as having “brought all the necessary knowledge from France and other countries” calling it a “firsthand experience”. They spoke a multitude of languages and were able to read the relevant literature in its original tongue.

**Key areas**

**Aesthetics/technique**

In discussing piano technique, Ben talked first about its origins. He suggested that the technique created by Clementi in the eighteenth century is fully functional and well
understood today, having been passed on through his students to Beethoven (although there is no direct lineage from Clementi to Beethoven) and Liszt, and down to our times. He claimed that Liszt’s technique was “not worse” than that which is currently used. As an opposing example, he stated that the nationalistic trends in France, in the case of that school’s technique, were not necessarily really successful.

Ben saw the differences between national schools not in technique but in the aesthetics developed in each country. For him, aesthetics came from cultural background, which he saw as affecting a performer’s artistic imagination.

\[
\text{Cultures are different, aesthetics are different, the way how [different nationalities] want to hear is different, the way they emotionally perceive certain things is different. But when I was speaking about musicianship, or piano technique, piano technique is the same .... It's aesthetics, it's not methods that are different.}
\]

Ben stated that “we can, and did, preserve technique, but we cannot preserve the human soul, so the aesthetics have changed and currently freedom of expression is not welcomed”. These statements suggest that musicianship and technique are unifying factors across generations of pianists, and therefore would not be suitable for differentiating between national piano schools.

\[
\text{Beginnings of national schools}
\]

In Ben’s opinion, the art of piano playing originates in France and in the French language. The findings of this study support Ben’s opinion, the lineages on the genealogical trees indicating the French School as one of the earliest.

\[
\text{National features of personality}
\]

According to Ben:

\[
\text{How you feel pain, how you feel joy, how you express it, is a personality in general. And of course it is influenced but not only by the culture. The point is that we cannot ... say that this is how French, English or Germans play the piano, which is not happening all over the world. I think those are limitations.}
\]
In other words, while being an individual personality trait, the way we perceive and express pain or joy is, to some extent, also developed and influenced by cultural background and other factors. This suggestion that national features are, indeed, expressed in the personality of a performer, supports the idea of a recognizable national personality. According to Ben, national features can be seen as limitations. He states that playing different styles requires flexibility of mind, and comments that a Russian pianist, for example, would be forced to stretch his or her imagination in order to play Debussy without “making it sound absurd”.

In discussing an Italian competitor in an important 2012 international piano competition, Ben spoke clearly in terms of national personality. He stated that he believed that this particular performer was different to the other competitors because he perceived life in a more “exquisite” way, anything affecting his point of view, such as the “weather or the typical manner of speaking”, as a result of his cultural background. Ben went on to give the example of a French competitor in the Tchaikovsky Piano Competition in Moscow, who performed “amazingly” ‘The Seasons’ by Tchaikovsky. When asked how he could understand this music so well, he replied that he had been reading Russian literature. Here again, Ben clearly displayed his belief in cultural understanding having an important influence on a performer’s ability to understand the music of another nation.

**Factors and changes**

**Recordings**

Ben listed several artists, including Boshniakovitch and Sofronitzky, who “hated” recording for its ability to “freeze” a performance. Most of these artists, in his opinion, preferred to give performances in which the presence of an audience inspired them to perform differently each time they appeared on stage – such inspiration clearly an impossibility in a closed recording session. Ben stated that the majority of contemporary pianists attempt to replicate successful recorded performances rather than allowing the music to evolve. This statement highlights the challenges and limitations inherent in perceptions concerning national piano schools where those perceptions are based solely on analyses of recordings.

**Commercialization**

Ben believed that pianists tended to follow uniform standards and strive to be correct, rather than follow their musical selves. He believed that only a few were unafraid and prepared to
risk being politically incorrect, and cited Bernard Glemser as an example. Ben discussed the commercial side of professional music careers these days, especially the aspect of money. He said that large corporations and a system of oligarchy currently influenced our freedom of thought, our freedom of being and, more importantly, our education, steering it towards values commercially useful to those entities. According to Ben, the audience has no real influence on the performances offered to them; they usually have to accept what is presented to them by the directors and managers. Most of the areas identified by Ben as generally influencing piano performances are not particular to a single country and therefore suggest a worldwide trend towards unification. He suggested that China is now like the America of a “few years ago when it was buying education” and now “they [the Americans] are already producing great musicians”.

Conclusions

The idealized image of an artist influences the process of creating national schools. Ben explained that while studying in Russia, he was taught to be truthful to the music and not push his own ego to the fore. This, he claimed, is the correct way for the real personality of a performer to come to light. He also regarded this as being responsible for producing the broad variety of personalities he identified in the Russian School: “If you would take Maria Grinberg playing [a] Beethoven Sonata, Gilels, Richter, Yudina – nothing in common. Nothing in common.”

Chapter summary

A summary of all interview data is presented in Tables 5 and 6 below. The numbers in brackets indicate the interview number corresponding to each factor.

Table 5. Interviews - Data summary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY AREAS</th>
<th>DESCRIPTORS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Technique</td>
<td>(1) French, fingers; Russians more arm (4) use of the whole body; (5) no nationalism in technique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound</td>
<td>(1) particular sound; Russians fuller sound; (2) Russian grandeur; French certain colour and feel; (3) German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetics/artistic tradition</td>
<td>sound more toned-down than Russian; (3) Russian variety of sound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repertoire</td>
<td>(4) adjusted to market requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrument</td>
<td>(4) technique, affects tempi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditioning, upbringing</td>
<td>(1, 2) composer’s heritage; (1, 2, 3) tradition; (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) upbringing; (2, 3, 4, 5) cultural background; (2) lineage from the composer is important; (1) discipline; (3, 4) government policies; (4) other arts, literature, nature; (5) how they want to hear certain things and the way they emotionally perceive the musical content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key archetypes</td>
<td>(1) Anton Rubinstein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>(2, 3) typical national personality; (5) mentality, way of thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esoteric areas</td>
<td>(1) something to be learned from each school; (2) heart of the whole psyche of a French person, colour of France, national features inherited through blood; (4) outlook on life; (5) perception of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National characteristics</td>
<td>(1, 2, 3) generalizations and stereotypes; (3) understanding of own national music, particularly based on folk music; (3) racial features; (3) non-sentimental Russians; (3) Polish – sentimental; (4) national personality (found in literature)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in style</td>
<td>(5) complying with uniform standards (1) approach to text, freedom versus strictness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unification of performance style</td>
<td>(2, 3, 4) cannot tell which schools pianists belong to due to studying in multiple countries; (4) diluted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-fertilization</td>
<td>(2, 3) Japan influenced by Germans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Travel
(2, 3) schools now exist only outside their countries of origin

Commercialization
(2) diminishing differences between styles; (2) competitions limit repertoire; (4, 5) commercialization limits artists, competitions

Recordings
(1) source of knowledge about schools; (2) limit variety of interpretation; (4) cause perfectionism; (5) stop evolution of performances

Current state
(1, 2, 3, 4) National schools still recognizable

Language
(2) necessary to understand styles; (4) affects aesthetics in a country, phrasing, rhythmical accents

Climate
(2) affects typical national personality

Table 6. Interviews - Data summary (Esoteric factors).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESCRIPTORS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2) Not aware of national school prior to participating in this research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2, 3) National pride in the tradition of Chopin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3, 5) Need for hands-on experience with schools and cultures</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(3) Religion</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(3) Russians believe in the superiority of their school, therefore take care to preserve it</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(4) Nepotism, “political correctness”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(5) National pride</td>
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<tr>
<td>(5) Russian pianists need to stretch their imagination to play Debussy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Ego versus humility towards the composer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) This study can contribute to a limitation of styles by the act of labelling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) To pass on a tradition, both student and teacher need to meet certain requirements – openness and talent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 7: Summary of results, discussion and conclusions

National characteristics, traditions of interpretation, and the personality of an individual are the three main categories perceived as describing national piano schools found through this research. Based on these collected perceptions, the researcher proposes a definition for the term ‘national piano school’ below. The implications of this research, together with suggestions for future studies, are also included in this chapter.

Key areas

**Category one: National characteristics**

The category of national characteristics encompasses esoteric factors such as culture, conditioning, historical and political circumstances, the personality of a people as a whole, language, compositional heritage, repertoire and type of instrument. These are profound but largely intangible and unquantifiable factors and so present some challenges for defining national piano schools.

Some of them, including national policies (at both the institutional and governmental level), historical circumstances, and the dominance of a particular instrument type, had an important and long-lasting influence on the state of national piano schools across the ages due to their longevity. The insularity of a country (such as Russia) or the manufacture of a particular type of instrument (as in France), can affect the nature of a school and contribute to its uniqueness. Such factors can also be its limitations, resulting, for example, in a nation’s artists being unable to learn from other countries.

Many institutions which historically were centres of piano schools, remain active today, but it would be incorrect to assume that their continuity implies the preservation of their associated national piano schools. While this may well be the case, as with the Moscow and St. Petersburg Conservatories which still, in 2015, employ almost exclusively Russian pianists and pedagogues ("Moscow Conservatory," 2015), it is not necessarily so. An analysis of current American ("The Juilliard School," 2015), German ("Die Hochschule für Musik, Theater und Medien Hannover," 2015) and French ("Conservatoire National Superieur De Musique et de Danse de Paris," 2015) institutions found that a considerable number of piano
staff in those countries are foreigners and therefore a multitude of nationalities is influencing the styles of those institutions, resulting in a cross-fertilization of styles.

In addition to the aforementioned factors of political and historical circumstance, instrument manufacture, and educational institutions, is the aspect of historical conditioning. This is certainly the most challenging factor to discuss, consisting as it does of intangibles such as upbringing, language, cultural heritage, fine arts, education and religious beliefs, which collectively influence and ‘condition’ an individual’s personality. If the strength and qualities of these intangibles are particular to and common amongst a single nationality, they contribute to the emergence of a national personality, identified in this research as a ‘key archetype’ which, according to the findings, typifies the performance style of national piano schools. ‘National characteristics’ seem also to be the reason for the affinity of certain nations towards particular repertoire choice and preferred interpretation style.

**Category two: Traditions of interpretation**

The second main category found to describe national piano schools is that of interpretation received through tradition. This includes such aspects as technique, sound and aesthetics, as well as the use of *rubato*, the sense of phrasing, and the elements of discipline versus freedom in approach to notation ("urtext syndrome"). It comprises various traditions that arguably could be transferred through generations of pedagogues and performers, to become characteristic of particular national schools over time.

With regard to the role of technique in the traditions of interpretation, this study's literature review found that many authors suggested that a “national cataloguing of technical styles” simply was not possible (Gerig, 2007, p. 288), particularly due to factors such as the personal approach taken by performers, pianists’ physical differences and the accessibility of learning techniques from various styles. In fact, apart from the historical features of the French School (‘jeu perle’ and the use of light-finger action as dictated by the type of instruments) and the Russian School (more generous use of the arm), the current research did not find sufficient data to suggest that national schools can be described by means of technique except, perhaps, and only at, the personal level of a key archetype's technique becoming a staple of his or her particular school.
Aesthetics was the factor most commonly mentioned by participants in this study when describing national piano schools. The German School was often described as focusing on the structure and logic of music. Russian pianists were described as passionate while the French School, in comparison, was lighter, more moderate and balanced in its expression.

The challenge with interpretation as a key area is the question of whether or not its elements remain unchanged long enough to characterize or define a national piano school. Peres Da Costa (2012) discusses changes in style since the late nineteenth century and shows just how dramatically interpretation of the musical score around the world has changed. This suggests that our beliefs - especially those regarding the proud continuation of a tradition of a great master - are not necessarily an accurate way of understanding national trends in piano style in the area of interpretation. The fact that many students have very little in common, despite sharing the same teacher, reinforces such doubts. The category of traditions of interpretation is, however, the most tangible and measurable category describing national piano schools, and thus lends itself well to investigation in future studies.

**Category three: Individual personality**

The last category for describing national piano schools encompasses the tendency for key archetypes, that is, influential pedagogues and/or performers, to be perceived as representing broader national qualities, paradoxically, national qualities reflected through the strong personality of an individual. The perception of the performer’s ‘personality’ being the most pronounced factor in piano performance style was found both in the descriptions given in the literature and by participants in this research. This could imply that individual personality overshadows most other features of national piano schools. However, contrary to this, the perceptions suggest that key archetypes are actually one of the main carriers of national traditions. They, and their recordings and live performances, are consistently considered important in discussions of national piano schools as found in this study. The data underline that the archetype of a composer, could also be a useful concept in investigating this key area further, particularly if the continuity of a tradition of the composer is being claimed.

**Definition**

The term ‘national piano school’ is colloquially used to refer to very broad generalizations of a particular nation’s performance style. Based on the findings of this study, the researcher
proposes the following definition: ‘A national piano school is a unique style of performance or pedagogy identified normally with only one country and characterized by a set of key areas particular to it.’ This unique style was shown from the findings to consist of key areas that fell into the three main categories as given above: national characteristics (history, political circumstances, cultural and compositional heritage, language, conditioning, instrument type, key archetypes, generalized personality traits), traditions of interpretation (technique, sound, aesthetics, phrasing, repertoire) and individual personality.

This unique style was shown from the findings to exemplify itself through interpretation and individual artistic personality, including national traits, and to be affected to varying degrees by elements of national characteristics.

‘School’ versus ‘style’

‘School’ is the term used for centuries in the relevant literature, regardless of whether the word ‘style’ would have been more accurate. The reason for this predominant usage can only be hypothesized. The researcher believes that the word ‘school’ has a broader sense than ‘style’ and is used as a term to describe a deliberate act of teaching, or more accurately, the deliberate ‘passing on’ of tradition, which the word ‘style’ does not imply. The dictionary definition of ‘school’ as “a group … whose work is similar, especially similar to that of a particular leader, [including] his followers” (Woodford & Jackson, 2003, p. 1115), correlates closely to the perceptions found in this study of there being key archetypes who exist as examples of national piano schools.

Current state of national piano schools

Participants in this study perceived a weakening of national styles and a shift towards a unification of national piano schools. The main reason given for this change was globalization, particularly the accessibility of international travel and study, competitions, recordings, the internet, television broadcasts, commercialization and the dominance of a limited number of instrument manufacturers. If the perceived unification of performance style is true, then features that in the past characterized national piano schools should only be seen now at an individual or personal level. The current research found that only the Russian School, due to its historically insular character, might still be preserved. It is therefore crucial
to study this school before it becomes indistinguishable from others, if, indeed, this has not already occurred.

**Future studies**

The two most important challenges for defining national piano schools as identified in this study are certainly worthy of future investigation: firstly, the degree to which each national piano school in the past and present has been affected by the three categories identified here to describe them, and secondly, the clarification of whether or not the concept of contemporary national piano schools is a false perception.

There is already a rather large body of historical research into some of the factors describing national schools as identified in this study. On the French ground, such studies include key archetypes such as Louis Adam (Montes Arribas, 1999) and François-Adrien Boieldieu (Biget-Mainfroy, 1999), pedagogy - proceedings of the symposium *Deux Cents Ans de Pédagogie* in Paris in 1996 (Bongrain et al., 1999), which presented collected writings exploring French piano pedagogy from 1795 to 1995, compositional style (Gingerich, 1996) and musical aesthetics in France (Tchistiakova, 2007). A ‘metastudy’ of similar documents, across multiple schools, might reveal which factors make particular schools unique. It is important to note that one such study by Gerig (2007) found only a slight possibility that technique could be characteristic of the French and Russian Schools.

A computer-based analysis of recorded musical material is currently being undertaken through the ‘CHARM Mazurka Project’ (Chan, 2009). Such an investigation of the differences and similarities found in recordings of various key archetypes within a school, could prove decisive in resolving whether or not, for example, there are timing or dynamic characteristics of each school as measured precisely by the software. Another, rather revealing, method of investigation could include a ‘blind’ test in which participants attempt to identify the national piano school of a pianist from listening to recordings. Despite such a study being necessarily restricted to performances post the invention of recording, the results might be confronting should they not bear out the beliefs reported in this thesis that participants would be able to identify national schools from recordings made fifty years ago.
Implications

For those with an interest in the music of a particular country, this study has important implications. According to the findings, the necessity of understanding the technique, sound, aesthetics, and other aspects of interpretation, is equally important for identifying a national school as is the language, history and, of course, the people; in other words, a complete immersion in a particular culture.

Education curricula might focus more on the psychology of composers, that is, their personalities and emotional reactions to other arts or even the natural world, than on biographical facts and chronological events.

This research does not seek to discredit or criticize performers who choose not to fully immerse themselves in a national culture approach. Rather, it applauds their alternative and equally valid interpretive approach, wherein they commit to delivering stage performances that express their own sensitivities, filtered through their conditioning, personality and skills. Both approaches, if guided by honesty towards oneself, will result in a colourful variety in performance practices on the world stage.
Appendix A: Ethics Approval Letter

The University of Sydney

Human Research Ethics Committee
Web: http://www.usyd.edu.au/ethics/human

Marietta Coutinho
Deputy Manager
Human Research Ethics Administration

Telephone: +61 2 8627 8175
Facsimile: +61 2 8627 8177
Email: mcoutinho@usyd.edu.au

Mailing Address:
Level 6
Jane Foss Russell Building – G02
The University of Sydney
NSW 2006 AUSTRALIA

Ref: IM/AS

13 January 2010

Dr James Renwick
Sydney Conservatorium of Music
Greenway Building – C41
The University of Sydney
Email: jrenwick@usyd.edu.au

Dear James

Thank you for your correspondence dated 20 December 2009 addressing comments made to you by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). After considering the additional information, the Executive Committee at its meeting held on 13 January 2010 approved your protocol entitled “An investigation of perceptions regarding the nature and influence of National Piano Schools”.

Details of the approval are as follows:

Ref No.: 01-2010/12282
Approval Period: January 2010 – January 2011
Authorised Personnel:
Dr James Renwick
Mr Wojciech Wisniewski

The HREC is a fully constituted Ethics Committee in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans-March 2007 under Section 5.1.29

The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans. We draw to your attention the requirement that a report on this research must be submitted every 12 months from the date of the approval or on completion of the project, whichever occurs first. Failure to submit reports will result in withdrawal of consent for the project to proceed.
Chief Investigator / Supervisor’s responsibilities to ensure that:

(1) All serious and unexpected adverse events should be reported to the HREC as soon as possible.

(2) All unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should be reported to the HREC as soon as possible.

(3) The HREC must be notified as soon as possible of any changes to the protocol. All changes must be approved by the HREC before continuation of the research project. These include:
   - If any of the investigators change or leave the University.
   - Any changes to the Participant Information Statement and/or Consent Form.

(4) All research participants are to be provided with a Participant Information Statement and Consent Form, unless otherwise agreed by the Committee. The Participant Information Statement and Consent Form are to be on University of Sydney letterhead and include the full title of the research project and telephone contacts for the researchers, unless otherwise agreed by the Committee and the following statement must appear on the bottom of the Participant Information Statement. Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact the Manager, Ethics Administration, University of Sydney, on (02) 8627 8176 (Telephone); (02) 8627 8177 (Facsimile) or human.ethics@sydney.edu.au (Email).

(5) Copies of all signed Consent Forms must be retained and made available to the HREC on request.

(6) It is your responsibility to provide a copy of this letter to any internal/external granting agencies if requested.

(7) The HREC approval is valid for four (4) years from the Approval Period stated in this letter. Investigators are requested to submit a progress report annually.

(8) A report and a copy of any published material should be provided at the completion of the Project.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Associate Professor Ian Maxwell
Chairman
Human Research Ethics Committee

cc: Mr Wojciech Wisniewski, wwsj5507@uni.sydney.edu.au

Encl. Approved Participant Information Statement (Focus Group)
Approved Participant Information Statement (Interview)
Approved Participant Consent Form (Interview and Focus Group)
Approved Invitation Email/Letter
Approved Online Questionnaire
Approved Interview Topics
Approved Focus Group Protocol
Title: An investigation of perceptions regarding the nature and influence of National Piano Schools.

(1) What is the study about?

This study explores the perceptions of professional pianists, students and piano teachers regarding the validity of the concept of National Piano Schools. You will be asked to express your own opinions on various piano performance styles that you have experienced listening to live performances, recordings or in your professional work. We would like to know if and why do you believe that studying with various teachers is necessary. We would also like to find out if you think that learning for example Russian music it best done with a Russian teacher and which national piano performances style could describe.

(2) Who is carrying out the study?

The study is being conducted by Wojciech Wisniewski and will form the basis for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts at The University of Sydney under the supervision of Dr James Renwick – Lecturer in Music Education.

(3) What does the study involve?

This study is based on interviews with pianists. All interviews will be audio recorded and then transcribed. You will be given a chance to read the transcript and withdraw any section of it if you like. You can choose a convenient location for an interview in consultation with the researcher.

(4) How much time will the study take?

The interview will last 60 to 70 minutes.
(5) Can I withdraw from the study?

Being in this study is completely voluntary - you are not under any obligation to consent and - if you do consent - you can withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with the University of Sydney and the researcher himself. You may stop the interview at any time if you do not wish to continue, the audio recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study.

(6) Will anyone else know the results?

All aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential and only the researchers will have access to information on participants. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

(7) Will the study benefit me?

Yes. At the end of the research you will be sent a report of the study that might contribute to your understanding of the subject studied.

(8) Can I tell other people about the study?

Yes, you can talk freely about the study.

(9) What if I require further information?

When you have read this information, Wojciech Włosiewski will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact Wojciech Włosiewski (+61 400 155 951) or the Chief Investigator: Dr James Renwick – Lecturer in Music Education (+61 2 9351 1235).

(10) What if I have a complaint or concerns?

Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact the Deputy Manager, Human Ethics Administration, University of Sydney on (02) 8627 8176 (Telephone); (02) 8627 7177 (Facsimile) or human.ethics@usyd.edu.au (Email).

This information sheet is for you to keep.

An investigation of perceptions regarding the existence and influence of National Piano Schools.
Appendix C: Consent Forms

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

1, ..........................................................[PRINT NAME], give consent to my participation in the research project.

TITLE: An investigation of perceptions regarding the nature and influence of National Piano Schools.

In giving my consent I acknowledge that:

1. The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

2. I have read the Participant Information Statement and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher/s.

3. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without affecting my relationship with the researcher(s) or the University of Sydney now or in the future.

4. I understand that my involvement is strictly confidential and no information about me will be used in any way that reveals my identity.

5. I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary — I am not under any obligation to consent.

6. I understand that I can stop the interview at any time if I do not wish to continue, the audio recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study.

An investigation of perceptions regarding the nature and influence of National Piano Schools in Australia.

7. I consent to:

i) Audio-taping YES □ NO □

ii) Receiving Feedback YES □ NO □

If you answered YES to the "Receiving Feedback Question (iii)", please provide your details i.e. mailing address, email address.

Feedback Option

Address: __________________________________________

_________________________________________________

Email ____________________________________________

Signed: __________________________________________

Name: ____________________________________________

Date: _____________________________________________

An Investigation of perceptions regarding the nature and influence of National Piano Schools in Australia.

Firstly, we would like to ask you some general questions.

1. Please, specify your gender:
   - Female
   - Male

2. Please, specify the country you live in:

3. For how many years have you been studying, teaching and/or playing the piano?

4. Do you consider music to be your profession or your hobby?
   - Music is my profession
   - Music is my hobby

5. How would you describe your main occupation in music (choose one only)?
   - I am a student (i.e. I have a piano teacher)
   - I am a teacher
   - I am a performer (pianist, accompanist etc.)
   - Other, please specify

Now, please give us some information about your personal artistic experience.

6. What do you think has had the biggest impact on the development of your artistic personality?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No impact at all</th>
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<td>Teachers</td>
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<td>Personal life</td>
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<td>My personality</td>
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8. What do you think has had the biggest impact on the development of your pianistic skills?

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9. What else in your opinion has had an influence on the development of your pianistic skills?

Please let us know about your experiences with teachers.

10. With how many teachers have you studied for a period of more than one year since you began learning the piano?
   - One
   - Two
   - Three
   - Four or more

11. In your opinion, how important is it for the development of a pianist to study with many teachers that represent various national piano schools?

   

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<tr>
<th>Important at all</th>
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12. How important is it to study, for example, a Rachmaninov piece with a Russian teacher, or a piece by Debussy with a teacher brought up in the French pianistic tradition?

   

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<tr>
<th>Important at all</th>
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</table>

13. Thinking of your current teacher or the last teacher with whom you studied, does that teacher represent one of the national piano schools?
   - Yes
   - No
   - I do not know I am not sure
   - Skip question

14. Which national piano school does your teacher represent?

15. Please describe the teaching and performing style of your teacher in the context of national piano schools:
16. Are there any other national piano schools of which you are aware (if so, please list them below)?


17. If you specified any other schools in the previous question, would you be able to provide a brief description of any of them?


18. Why do you think that your teacher does not represent any national piano school?


19. Are you aware of the existence of any national piano schools (please list them in the space provided)?
   ○ No
   ○ Skip question
   ○ Yes, please give examples:


20. If you specified any other schools in the previous question, would you be able to provide a brief description of any of them?


21. Do you believe that national piano schools still exist in the 21st century?
   I do not believe they exist
   ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
   I strongly believe they exist
   ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

22. Is there an influence that National Piano Schools have on teaching and performing piano music in the 21st century?
   There is no influence at all
   ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
   There is a very strong influence
   ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
23. Would it be possible to recognize the national school of a performer from a CD recorded in the past 10 years?
   It is impossible 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 It is very easy
   ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

24. Would it be possible to recognize the national school of a performer from a CD recorded 50 years ago?
   It would be impossible 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 It would be very easy
   ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

25. Feel free to comment on any of the above questions:

   *

26. Have you ever participated in an international piano competition or festival?
   ○ Yes
   ○ No
   ○ No, but I have listened to performances presented during such contests
   ○ Skip question

27. When did you last attend an international piano competition or festival?
   ○ Less than 5 years ago
   ○ More than 5 years ago
   ○ More than 10 years ago
   ○ More than 20 years ago
   ○ More than 30 years ago
   ○ More than 40 years ago
   ○ More than 50 years ago

28. What do you think are the main pianistic and/or musical features that differentiate participants of competitions?
29. Is it possible to recognize the national school of a performer during such an event (e.g. German school)?
   It is impossible
   2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9
   Its very easy

*30. Do you think as a musician, you represent any particular national piano approach?
   ○ Yes
   ○ No
   ○ I represent more than one national school
   ○ I have created my own style that has nothing to do with national piano schools
   ○ I don't know
   ○ Skip question

31. In the previous question you indicated that you represent a national piano school. Please specify which one, and describe it.

32. In the previous question you have indicated that you do not represent any national piano school. Please tell us why?

33. In the previous question you have indicated that you belong to more than one national piano school. Please tell us which styles influenced you, and describe them briefly:

   Some final questions:

34. Do you think the state of national piano schools nowadays is different from the situation 50 years ago?
   ○ Yes
   ○ No

35. Please feel free to comment on the answer you have given above:

36. Where does your opinion regarding national piano schools come from (choose two main sources)?

☐ I was taught in a particular national piano style/s

☐ I have read about them

☐ I have listened to recordings or live performances representing national piano styles

☐ Other, please specify

37. How influential the personalities of famous pianists are on our perceptions of national piano schools? For instance, do we think of Rachmaninov and Horowitz immediately when we refer to the Russian piano school?

Not influential at all

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Extremely influential

38. What do you think would be the future of National Piano Schools?

Thank you very much for your time and energy spent to participate in our survey!

39. If you would like to be personally informed about the results of this study, please provide us with your email address (It will be used solely for the purpose of informing you about the results of this study):

40. If you would like the information that you have provided to be identified by your name and position held, please provide us your details below (If you wish to remain anonymous you do not have to do anything more, just click submit):


Appendix E: Interview Protocol

Semi-structured interview topics

1. Greetings. Thank you very much for you time and for agreeing to participate.

2. Do you like being interviewed? (or some other question that would make participant at ease).

3. Background questions:
   • Can you please tell me how did you start learning the piano?
   • Who was your first teacher? How do you remember her/him?
   • What were your first major music influences?
   • Can you please describe your other teachers and places you studied at?
   • Which one of them influenced you the most?

4. Second stage questions:
   • What would be the main factors that shaped your own pianistic style? (teachers, schools, live performances, recordings etc.)
   • Do you think you would be able to say that you belong to any particular pianistic style (school)? If yes to which one, describe it, and why you think you do or do not belong to it?
   • Amongst your friends, teachers and performers, there is a variety of pianistic styles (assuming there is), what do you think those differences can be attributed to?
   • What is the role of pianists' personality in the development of their pianistic style?
   • Do you think that the term of National Piano Schools is still valid at the beginning of the 21st century?
   • Can we differentiate between those schools nowadays (listening to performances or seeing different teaching styles)?

5. Third stage questions:
   • Influence of which piano school is the strongest in this city?
• Why some of those schools are more influential than others?

• When you were studying music what were common opinions on the NPS (e.g. French etc.)?

• Is this perception different now?

• Please describe how do you think the today's pianistic style differs from the one from 50 or 80 years ago?

• When we talk about e.g. German pianistic style, do we mean some general features of a style or rather refer immediately to the greatest pianists that have come from this tradition (Gieseking, Brendel etc.)?

• How influential do you think the personality of those archetypal pianists is in our perception of their schools?

• Searching for a definition of each school, where do you think I should be looking at? (Literature, recordings, current living teachers).

6. Other questions:

• Do you think it is a good idea to study with various teachers and why?

• How important it is to study e.g. Russian music with Russian teachers to understand it well?

• What do you think are the most important factors that influence performers' development?

• Do you think there is a place for national piano schools in the 21st century and what do you think will be their future?

7. Thank you for your time and insight into my topic!
Appendix F: Questionnaire – Qualitative responses

Steven Armstrong (M.Mus) (Response from 8/01/2014):

I believe the notion of the National Piano Schools is mostly irrelevant today. From the input I have had from travelling international pianists (giving workshops, coming from Russia, Holland, Germany, UK, US) and the vast amount of literature I have read on the piano (The Russian School, Hofmann, Lhevine, Neuhaus, etc) the fundamental technical and artistic principles are universal. Also professional pedagogues move around the world a lot more than they used to. Ideas have spread. The nuances of different schools today are far more subtle than what they used to be. Besides, what do you consider to constitute a national school? This should be defined. Interpretation of music is subjective – not determined by school. Technique? Perhaps some conservatoires around the world put different emphasis on different aspects of technique but it seems likely that the country has little to do with it. The early 20th century – that’s a different story. Compare Kissin and Demidenko to Gilels and Richter… The latter two arguably more academic and German (as far as the traditional “school” goes in the early 20th century) in their approach and have “bigger” technique – not necessarily better, just bigger, after all, technique is a tool for the achievement of an artistic goal, a means to an end, not an end in itself. And the latter two also played considerably more German composers than the former. I don’t think there is any value in asking students of today these sort of questions. I think these questions are 50-70 years too late. I may be wrong, but that’s my feeling which is a product of reading a lot and my own research. (Q18)

Dr. Charles Timbrell- Active performer and teacher, Professor of Music and Coordinator of Keyboard Studies at Howard University, Washington, DC (Response from 12/27/2014):

I have interviewed more than 60 French-trained pianists from my book “French Pianism”. It is my conclusion that the “French School” became assimilated with other schools in the 1950s due to widespread
international teaching and absorption of trends. I think that there is still a “Russian School” because they are more closed (in many ways!). (Q25)

As I stated earlier, I think that national schools pretty much died out after WWII, with international competitions, international teachers outside the borders, books and articles by various international pianists, proliferation of recordings and videos, internet, YouTube, etc. I think the national schools have become homogenized today, except for the Russian school. (Q35)

No personal data included (Response from 8/22/2010):

I do believe that national piano schools still exist today, but I also believe that national piano schools exist maybe at the individual level, meaning you may not be able to identify a certain institution or conservatory with a particular national piano school, but you may be able to identify a particular professor or teacher with particular national school. (...) I believe that there are so many teachers at institutions or conservatories with no national piano schools background, and it is very difficult to find the one with such tradition in their background. So, I say the influence of national piano schools is there, but on a very small scale.

I also believe that in the 21st century, where so much research have done already and such information are readily available to us, I am inclined to think that truly great teacher must have researched, explored and educated themselves with every possible approach and styles of piano playing/teaching or tradition that he/she can find in already existing national schools. Then, I would like to think that the truly great teacher of the piano in the 21st century is the one who encompasses and incorporates all styles and approaches of national schools that are beneficial to their students. (Q25)

Right now, it seems like national piano schools, even the concept of it, is on the verge of extinction simply because the art of piano playing is constantly fighting with the art of marketing and are of business in academic field as well as professional environment. But I would like to
think that there are still enough pianists (teacher as well as students) who are willing to continue the tradition, maybe not by way of distinguishing each national piano school further, but by way of recognizing the uniqueness and peculiarity while discovering and accepting the similarities that they find among different national schools. (Q38)

I think 50 years ago, you may have found a lot of unique as well as extremely individual approach and style of teaching and playing even within the same national school because of the strong character of the individual pianist. Today, because of the availability of all the research, studies, and discoveries about those pianists as well as traditions, pianists are exposed to all that embraces one particular national piano school, therefore, forcing them to generalize any national piano school, which used to be very colorful and rich, into something that is extremely one dimensional, simple, and more comprehensive one. (Q35)

Neil Rutman, Artist in Residence, University of Central Arkansas, (Response from 8/17.2011 5.24am):

National Schools today are a bit old fashioned in concept. Most good piano teaching today is rather eclectic. (Q18)

My training comes from various teachers of different backgrounds, and I have combined their teachings into my own method of processing musical interpretation and tonal production. It does not represent a national school. (Q32)
References


