

## Composing Identities: Visual Representations of Music Performers

### 1. Introduction

The focus of the present article is the visual artifacts that often serve to promote, or communicate, the sonic art and its practitioners. A question may arise, Why such a topic is seen as a relevant discussion within the analysis of the art of classical musical performance? Seeing it from a semiotic perspective, which is my main methodological viewpoint, performance of music is understood as a communication model in which a series of coded messages are sent or enacted and their meanings received or decoded. For example, in a theatre or opera performance, which have been for a long time subject to semiotic analysis, the meaning is encoded and transmitted through the various systems of staging, such as set, lighting, costume, music, etc. In addition, rich and complex significations are provided by the performers/actors themselves, their bodies, actions and interpretive choices. All this can be said about the art of music performers as well, and, if we think of a musical performance as a mere actualization of a musical score, we obviously overlook (or, consciously deny) the potential density of its semiosis.

The performative dimension of music, perhaps mostly due to its ephemeral, less tangible nature, has been for a long time at the margins of academic research. Nowadays accepted as an equally important object of study as the written aspect of music, it still calls for new methodologies and thorough investigations. Here, I propose a way of analyzing musical performance not as *performance-as-text* (where text is some purely 'musical' action: performance and/or musical work), but rather as *performance-as-paratext*. This includes, among other things, those elements surrounding the text that normally support one's comprehension of it, offering clues and alternative interpretations, while not being the musical action itself. Such socio-cultural matters as notions of schools and traditions, ideologies, verbal communication of and about the performers constitute a significant part of the phenomenon of musical performance; so does image constructing.

### 2. Performer's corporeal identity

Before talking about the relations of performance and visual arts, it is worthwhile mentioning, however briefly, that in any performance there exists the visual component which allows the researchers acknowledging that "performance is not only a sonic event" (Clarke 2004, p. 92), and judging the expressive properties of various performances on the basis of visual and aural stimuli experienced through live observation and/or video data (e.g. Davidson 1993, 1994; Thompson *et al.* 2005; Schutz 2008) of concrete performances.

My assumption is that not only certain messages are conveyed through the performer's body, in this way communicating to the listener or spectator, but also the body itself *is* a message. Many times we might have noticed that there is often just a subtle nuance which is able to distinguish a performance with optimal lightness and grace, or, with concentration and deepness, from one acceptably competent and yet somehow ordinary, which apparently lacks nothing and yet lacks something. In terms of physicality, it might be just a slight difference of shaping one's gestures, and this slight difference brings a huge difference in how this performance communicates and affects the whole process of listening to and perceiving it. In other words, the apparently insignificant transformations that a certain performer brings to a piece of music using his bodily gestures as a means of conveying the message provide this piece with the important qualitative changes. Often, performers even intentionally 'act' while playing in order, with the help of their facial expressions or other bodily movements, to convey to a listener as clearly as possible the musical significance.

At a very perceptual level, it is a performer's body as such that creates the primary *charme*, as Vladimir Jankélévitch (2003) calls it, the identity and charisma of an artist. How else, if not in terms of their personal identity could we define all-body motion, singing and conducting of Glenn Gould, flat and elastic fingers of Vladimir Horowitz, large hands of Sergey Rachmaninov or Ivo Pogorelich, singing and standing up of Keith Jarrett, generally still posture of Radu Lupu, or purposefully (so it seems) hypnotizing looks at the audience by such artists as Gidon Kremer or Yo-Yo Ma?

As Naomi Cumming points out, although a listener's attention, when playing a CD, may not be directed to bodily actions, the impression of a 'personality' can be gained subliminally through the markers in sound of what seem to be the performer's characteristic physical responses (Cumming 2000, p. 22). These charac-

teristic bodily responses of a performer may be determined by several factors: the capabilities and limitations of the performer's individual body as such, but also by the sort of 'behavioural codes', the sets of norms and standards that exist in the interpretation schools and concert practices of the Western musical performance and strongly regulate them.

Paradoxically enough, quite an important impact on the listeners' reactions in a concert hall has exactly the bodily behaviour of a performer. Undeniably, the visual aspect of the performance is important to how we perceive the whole act of musicianship. Once a listener/spectator has seen a particular performer onstage, it is hard to believe that this image will be completely absent while listening later to the recorded performances of the same artist. (For instance, it is rather improbable that, after once having seen the gestures and facial expressions of Lang Lang, it would be possible to dissociate one's listening to this artist without having in mind the corporeal side of his performances.) There is more than one instance to be exposed concerning the prejudices of the listeners towards the performers, judging solely by their apparent 'misbehaviour'.<sup>1</sup> Thus, it seems that performers must pay attention to the visual aspect of their performances and, in most of the cases, make an attempt to accord with certain prescribed behavioural patterns.

However, the main focus of this article is not so much the performers' visual appearance onstage, but rather considering the variety of ways in which musicians nowadays (re)present themselves in the media.

### 3. How do performers present themselves: The consumer media

The centrality of media in the representation and promotion of a musician is nowadays more relevant than ever. Not only do media perform the most part of such jobs, but also – particularly new media – they became a vehicle to convey new, unusual and more intriguing forms of picturing and description of a given artist. A quick look to how certain CD covers, websites or concert publicity look in these days (with layouts that range from mysterious to intellectual to sexy) will immediately confirm how the image of performers and composers has undergone thorough evolution and multiplication of its manifestations.

Additional variables intervene in and affect this process. First, the impact itself of new media in musical consumption has generated an entirely different landscape in the market and the culture. The metaphor of internet as virtual society has often been used to describe how each of the diverse contexts where internet communication occurs (websites, blogs, social networks, etc.) correspond to social contexts and communities exercising similar functions: social networks as city squares, blogs as newspapers, and so forth. Listeners buy their music in internet shops, purchase their concert tickets online, and share their experiences through posts and threads, instead of traditional conversations or musicological reviews. It is only natural that the ways musicians present themselves in the world had to develop accordingly.

Second, there have been instances of representational changes that are intrinsic to art music. While popular music was always keen to pursue a diversified aesthetics that would characterize each artist according to their own image and music (and following the graphic trends of a given period), art music has been anchored for decades to a standard aesthetics displayed in not more than two or three recurrent templates: the layout features of each recording company (white and yellow framing for Deutsche Grammophon, white and dark red for Phillips, and so forth); neat portraits of the performer or composer; classical paintings serving as clear but unoriginal metaphor of the musical work itself (e.g., countless wilderness landscapes associated to Romantic music). All this, in the last few years, was dramatically challenged by the need of renewing and refreshing the communication between the art music and its consumers.<sup>2</sup> Performers could no longer be perceived as museum waxworks stuck in a time and space frame that was not reaching out anymore to their listeners.

Thus, how do the performers nowadays communicate with their potential or actual audiences? How do musicians present themselves, and to whom actually they address their messages? What is the musical message

<sup>1</sup> In the Lithuanian context, perhaps the most famous illustration of this statement that comes to mind is a highly controversial reception of the winner of the M. K. Čiurlionis International Piano Competition in 1999, a Polish pianist Jan Krzysztof Broja, whose persona was ardently discussed by the colleagues and critics because of his seemingly arrogant posture on the stage. A different case, however followed with a similarly aggressive reaction, is of a Bulgarian pianist Evgeni Bozhanov at the XVI International Chopin Competition in Warsaw, year 2010. Bozhanov's onstage facial expressions have provoked heated online discussions, and, at times, even openly mocking attitudes towards his playing.

<sup>2</sup> In his most sorrow complaints, decades before now, Adorno was writing that "... it no longer makes any difference whether it is to [react to] Beethoven's Seventh Symphony or to a bikini" (Adorno 1991, p. 33). And indeed, when seeing someone like the prominent pianist of the *serious* German tradition Wilhelm Kempff performing Beethoven in the Deutsche Grammophon series *Weekend Classics* with the amazingly kitschy CD covers, there is only one conclusion to be made, that no juxtaposition is considered as inappropriate anymore. (I feel a bit more comfortable with the Gershwin or Chopin weekends, yet it is altogether too evident that all these are meant for the consumption of the women magazines' readers.)

of the pianist, a truly remarkable virtuoso, when he demonstrates his impressive musculature in the picture that his public relations assistant sends to the organizers of the festival? What professional skills are represented in the photo of a beautiful half-naked violin player having a sea bath with the instrument gracefully resting in her hands?<sup>3</sup> And in what terms actually should we compare those artists with the purely ascetic ones, such like Sviatoslav Richter, Grigory Sokolov or Ivo Pogorelich, or with Glenn Gould, passionately creating TV and radio broadcasts? They are all so different, and the only same means that they have are their instruments and music.<sup>4</sup> Obviously, most of them have long time ago abandoned the romantic conception of the artist as an unworldly creature starving in the attic and following the divine precepts. They are rather minded to look after an apt PR, and, together with the music played, to be noticed themselves.

And this is where the novel discourses on musical performance in the contemporary culture come to help the analysis of the art. In this following part of the article, I shall present some aspects of the possible analysis of personal websites of the classical music performers, pianists in particular.

#### 4. Novel discourses on musical performance

##### 4.1. Website analysis

Let us begin with the very function of the website. In most cases, a website is for a pianist the vehicle for promoting his/her profession. Nowadays, and not rarely, it is the *primary* vehicle of promotion. The necessity (or lack thereof) of promoting one's activity may be the reason why websites of this type are rather common, almost compulsory, among pianists who have not achieved a monumental fame. Conversely, in more than one instance (say, Argerich, Pogorelich, and others), internationally-acclaimed performers are not particularly interested in launching their own homepage. Information and promotion of their concerts and repertoires is entrusted to their agencies, which issue basic profiles coated in a standard graphic template. Nothing else is really needed in this case: the existence of personal websites of such stars as Daniel Barenboim or Evgeny Kissin is more explained by a wish to add to the characterization of the pianist as a 'persona', rather than 'artist'.

In fact, in rather many websites, besides the wish or necessity to promote a pianists' activity (i.e. their concerts, recordings, repertoire), their 'personality' is also demonstrated. This feature, in principle, serves two functions: inspiring sympathy among the visitors by showing that the performers have a 'life' outside music, with thoughts, hobbies, preferences, etc., and creating a connection between their human character and the way they play (a manifested passion for nature may correspond to a sentimental/delicate performing style; an idiosyncratic personality may equal an idiosyncratic style, and so forth).

To generalize, it is possible to distinguish three forms of promotion that may work separately and/or simultaneously, and that can be summarized in a *3P model*<sup>5</sup>:

- A promotion of the pianist as *Performer*: in this case the attention-grabbing features of the websites are designed to convey information and create curiosity around the pianists' playing style, their repertoire, the orchestras/musicians they have played with, etc.
- A promotion of the pianist as *Product*: the accent, here, is on all the elements that are commercially valuable (information on the pianists' releases, on their concerts, recitals, etc.).
- A promotion of the pianist as *Persona*: the website, in this case, focuses the attention on the extra-musical world of the pianists. A picture gallery may show them in a non-concert outfit; a list of their 'likes' may appear, and so on.

It goes without saying, every single medium employed in the website (which is a multimedial and multimodal text) contributes to these three functions, which may specialize on one particular promotion, or represent more. The appearance of a picture gallery where the pianist is happily sitting on a meadow in a sunny day is predominantly a promotion of the persona, but might also hint a thing or two about his/her approach to playing, or his/her preferences in repertoire. Or, to make another example, the inclusion of audio samples

<sup>3</sup> In my research, the inspiration for this remark came from the visual representations by the American pianist Anthony de Mare and the pop-violinist Vanessa Mae. These two artists, however, are by no means the only representatives of a marketing of this very kind.

<sup>4</sup> A particularly interesting phenomenon that is perhaps worth a separate paper is the marketability of certain performers. Obviously, some artists possess more of a personal charisma than the others, and again the dissemination mechanisms come to help them. For instance, Joseph Horowitz shows in his influential book *Understanding Toscanini* (1987) how radio led the record industry in making Toscanini a household name in the United States, much as television later did for Leonard Bernstein; similarly telegenic was also Herbert von Karajan, who became a real cult figure in the media times.

<sup>5</sup> The terms, and the methodological strategy, chosen here are a slight re-elaboration of Dario Martinelli's *Professional/Product/Persona* scheme (Martinelli 2014).

that can be freely downloaded or randomly played is certainly a promotion of the pianist's musicianship (P for Performer), but it can also serve the function of advertising his/her recordings (P for Product).

#### 4.2. Case-studies

Roughly speaking, we can say that a website employs four main groups of media, each in turn possessing different codes. Those are: 1) the *visual* medium, consisting of images, layout, most of the info-graphics, chromatic choices, management of the space, etc.; 2) the *linguistic* medium, consisting in all the written text and some of the info-graphics; 3) the *videographic* medium, consisting of moving images, such as videos or animations (some of which can still be part of the info-graphic area); and 4) the *sound* medium, consisting of all kinds of sounds (particularly the musical files, but not rarely also specific sounds and noises used to liven up links or animations). Here, primarily the visual aspect shall be discussed. My overall sample consisting of 11 websites by Lithuanian pianists (cf. Navickaitė-Martinelli 2013), in what follows I present two of them, representing rather different strategies even though the two pianists share similar backgrounds and career-orientations.

The first example, the website of a Lithuanian pianist **Gabrielius Alekna** (see a snapshot of the homepage in Figure 1), is probably the one from the whole sample mostly aiming to provide a young/informal image of the artist. It is also one of the least 'traditionally-looking' layouts, as far as classical pianist's sites go, from more than one point of view. Importantly, this website presents a 'blog' structure: blogs are more recent platforms, as compared to traditional websites, which possibly adds to the 'fresh' and 'dynamic' spirit of the whole image that Alekna conveys to his visitors. Reasons for this strategy may be more than one: firstly, he *is* a young pianist, having been born in 1975. In addition to this, it must be said that Alekna lives in New York, where an artist's image (including the *serious classical musician*) may easily acquire a more informal shape. To sum up in key-words, and in a half-serious way, the main message of this website, we can easily suggest that Alekna is telling his visitors: "I'm young, talented and cosmopolitan".



Figure 1. A snapshot from Gabrielius Alekna's homepage, [www.gabrieliusalekna.com](http://www.gabrieliusalekna.com)

Using Greimassian categories (cf. Greimas 1976, pp. 129–157), we can approach Alekna's website (as also the others) by distinguishing between topological, plastic and eidetic categories. In the first case, we notice a rather standard planning of the objects' position, with a basic two-column layout with header and footer. The header serves altogether as both a logo and navigation bar (name, qualification, index of the pages and the main iconographic material, all of them appearing in every page). In the middle of the page we have a content column on the left (occupying 2/3 of the space, roughly), and a menu column on the right, showing links to the video and photo gallery pages and a widget to Alekna's Facebook page. This part is not redundant, as compared to the navigation bar, because none of the three links are there featured, at least not directly. Videos and pictures are in fact subsections of the *Media* page, along with sound samples, so the menu column helps

locating pages that are not explicitly stated in the navigation bar. The connection to Facebook is not featured at all in the header, so it is a totally novel piece of information. Finally, the footer has the sole purpose of reporting copyright information, and is therefore very tiny comparatively.

From a plastic point of view, the website offers a neat colour scheme, albeit not the most recurrent one within the special genre of classical musicians' sites (which normally tend to emphasize black). As a combination, it is rather neat and sober (although not 'austere'), with an informal, sunny accent provided by the use of orange. Besides orange, the palette employs exclusively neutral colours: white (the primary one) and several degrees of grey, including very dark ones approximating black. So, depending on how we define white and grey, the palette is either triadic or monochromatic. White, as dominant colour, provides the whole background of the site. Grey is used for most graphics and infographics, including the name "Gabrielius Alekna" on the header, the links in the navigation bar, and the whole content of each text. Orange, finally, serves the purpose of qualifying the profession on the header ("pianist"), highlighting the links in the navigation bar (with the typical mouse-over technology), giving emphasis to each entry's title, and signaling the presence of a clickable passage inside the texts (like the typical "Read more" function). Orange is not overstated, meaning that it is far from saturation: there is obviously no need for that, since it already stands out against white and grey. Plus, it was surely the designer's intention that of simply providing an 'accent' of vitality to the website, not certainly a teenageresque quality. Additional, incidental colours appear whenever a full-colour picture is featured. For instance, the eight Alekna's portraits included in the navigation bar (in correspondence of each main section), which are black and white by default, become coloured once the correspondent section link is clicked. That means that the overall colour layout of the website is never *exactly* the same. And this is another addition to the sense of youth and dynamicity that the website conveys.

Within the eidetic categories, we have a certain regularity and straightness of lines and shapes. Borders, contours and frames are all straight with sharp edges and horizontal/vertical lines, adding to the 'sober' part of the website. The 'informal' element is in this case provided by the diagonal positioning of the navigation bar, which grabs most of the attention, and remains unchanged throughout the whole navigation. Along with other features, this is an important part of the young/fresh component that dominates on the website's semiosis. The navigation bar displays 8 different photographs of Alekna. The pictures portray him in different poses, moods, fashion styles (mostly informal, and certainly not concert-like), and are taken from different distances and angles. Once again, the pianist communicates to us in a youthful, informal and dynamic manner. Also, the eight pictures are framed into a photographic film-looking stripe, and one might possibly remark that this particular idea may be slightly misleading, not being an *explicitly* musical element, but rather reminding to other arts like photography, cinema and possibly fashion. This is quite interesting when we consider that altogether there is very little visual material informing us that Alekna is after all a musician, and a pianist in particular. We get a linguistic statement ("pianist" written in orange on the header), a pentagram-inspired background for the navigation bar (conveying a general 'musical' sense, although the pentagrams can be easily mistaken for simple, decorative horizontal lines), and a video-still from the menu column showing Alekna playing the piano in a concert. For instance, none of the eight photos in the navigation bar shows Alekna by a piano. As compared to most musicians' websites, this is a rather small amount of explicit information. On the basis of the main attention-grabbing features, a stranger's first glimpse to the website would give three types of information: *Gabrielius Alekna* (linguistic), *pianist* (linguistic) and *cinema/photography* (visual). Of course, in the end, the visitor trusts language more than images, so 'pianist' comes out as a statement, while 'cinema/photography' is just interpretation. Yet, it cannot be excluded that some casual visitor will get an idea that Alekna is a pianist specialized in film music, or perhaps a musician who also works as an actor.

Of the other pictures appearing inside the website, three are included in the photo gallery, and are the type of material that a concert organizer or a journalist are going to need when dealing with a performer. Once again, Alekna plays the card of the informality, as two out of three pictures portray him in 'civilian clothes', and only the third one displays the classical musician's 'uniform', that is a tailcoat with a bow tie (although, one may argue, casual clothes sporting a very visible scarf, as in Alekna's case, still convey an unmistakable idea of 'artist'). Remarkably, once again, no piano appears in any of these pictures.

We can compare what was analyzed above with the website of another young Lithuanian pianist **Gabrielė Gilytė** (see a snapshot of the homepage in Figure 2). Here, we enter a different dimension. The site does *not* have a blog structure and layout, but rather belongs to a more classic, visually-refined, category of web communication. By playing the cards of feminine beauty and elegance, the values conveyed by this website

are best summarized by a quote reported at the beginning of the *Bio* section: *Critics describe the artistic work of Gabriele Gylyte as “Cantability and transparency, apparently effortless virtuosity with endless energy reserves...”*. In a sense, this is exactly what this website is about. There are even specific elements that remind to the exact words used in this quote.



Figure 2. Homepage of Gabrielė Gylytė’s website, [www.gylyte.com](http://www.gylyte.com)

The visual dimension is certainly the emphasis of this website. Starting this time from the plastic dimension, we witness a colour scheme that is certainly more typical of classical pianists’ websites. The dominant colour is black, which has several important connotations that fit the purpose. To start with, black is the colour of most pianos and, more importantly, of the *prototypical idea* of a concert piano. Besides that, black is the colour that most closely conveys ideas of elegance, classicism, austerity, seriousness, style. It is no coincidence that no less than seven websites out of the eleven in my sample adopt the same chromatic strategy.

Other colours include the lightest shades of grey and a mild orange for the text, a darker nuance of grey for the text background in the various sections, and the full palette for the many colour pictures available in each page.

The topological dimension is obviously focused on Gylytė’s many pictures. As already said, she intends to convey an image of femininity, elegance, beauty and effortlessness (it should not sound surprising, in this respect, that her repertoire largely consists of classic and romantic composers). In the quote that inaugurates the *Bio* section, we read, among other things, that her music is “transparent” and “cantabile”: by consequence, it is intriguing to notice how many of her pictures relate to concepts of ‘brilliance’, ‘light’, ‘cheerfulness’, ‘luminosity’. The homepage picture shows Gylytė sitting by a piano, with a bright glass wall as a background. The same environment is displayed in four more pictures in the *Gallery* section, while in seven more cases (out of a total of fifteen photographs) the pictures are taken outdoors, during a sunny day. However, the quote also refers to “endless energy reserves”, so what we have here is not a weak/fragile type of woman, but one who is energetic and resolute. Checking the photo gallery, I would say that there are at least four pictures that suggest this kind of image: we see Gylytė walking or standing in rather confident, self-assured poses, almost always smiling, and anyway far from the melancholic/insecure mood that many women artists like to convey.

Back to the homepage picture, the fact that Gylytė is sitting by a grand piano, leaves no doubt on her occupation, so – differently from Alekna’s website – there is no need to add any ‘pianist’ inscription after her name.

The website’s layout lacks a proper header, replaced by a simple navigation bar, and presents a two-column structure with the contents on the left, and a picture on the right. Under the picture, we find the inscription “Gabrielė Gylytė” and, always at hand, the language menu: any time, at any page, a visitor can switch to any of the three languages available.

The eidetic dimension keeps no particular surprises in reserve. Straight lines, regular shapes, horizontal orientation for every text. It is only the pictures (various photographic portraits of the pianist) that add some dynamics to the layout. Gylytė’s poses are indeed always lively (she bends, crouches, sits down in a slightly asymmetric way, etc.), and are certainly the main attention-grabbing features of the website.

## 5. Concluding remarks

In addition to such 'classical' means of finding out and establishing new stars as competitions or usual verbal communication by performers as interviews and books, the present world of musical performance has become particularly surrounded by all the consumer media and branding inventory. Music performers are made known and purposefully advertised by various types of advertisements (whether of a concert or a new CD release) in media, concert season brochures, personal websites and blogs of the musicians, musical magazines, documentaries or half-fiction films, 'life-style' stories on TV, etc. Not only: the visual culture of our days allows putting a musical recording on the same shelf where photographs and magazine articles are stored: these are all products of the commercial apparatus of the music industry. Clear comparisons can be drawn with the popular culture, the representations of which can sometimes upstage the music itself.

What impressions and/or insights of the musicians' personality do we get from the websites of classical music performers, and how do they correspond with how the artists themselves want to portray their identities? What kind of music we think they play? What sociocultural background they assume representing? Would this kind of analysis, coupled with the more conventional performance studies, enrich or even alter the ways we think of the art of musical performers? Without, obviously, having answered to all these questions and more, the main message of this text is that the meanings that are conveyed not through the art of music, but rather through seemingly extraneous medium, the visual one, are nevertheless relevant and revealing in the study of musical performance art.

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## Santrauka

### Kuriant tapatybes: vaizdinė muzikos atlikėjų reprezentacija

Atlikėjiškasis muzikos matmuo – visų pirma dėl efemeriškos, neapčiuopiamos jo prigimties – ilgą laiką glūdėjo mokslinių tyrinėjimų paraštėse. Įvairiuose kultūros baruose, taip pat ir muzikos atlikėjų mene, performatyvumas tik visai neseniai buvo pripažintas rašytiniam muzikos aspektui lygiavertiu tyrimų objektu. Kaip tik todėl atlikimo studijoms dar trūksta metodologinių įrankių bei išsamių tyrinėjimų.

Žvelgiant iš semiotinės perspektyvos, muzikos atlikimas yra suvokiamas kaip komunikacijos modelis, kuriame siunčiami ar įkūnijami užkoduoti pranešimai, o jų reikšmės gavėjų yra suvokiamos ir iškoduojamos. Antai teatro ar operos atlikimuose, kurie semiotikų jau senokai analizuojami, reikšmė užšifruojama ir perteikiama įvairiomis pastatymo sistemomis: scenografija, apšvietimu, kostiumų dizainu, muzika ir t. t. Greta to, prasmių kupiną ir sudėtingą signifikaciją šiems atlikimams suteikia patys atlikėjai/aktorai – jų kūnai, veiksmai, interpretaciniai sprendimai. Visa tai galima pritaikyti ir muzikos atlikėjų menui: mąstant apie jį vien kaip apie muzikinę partitūros realizavimą, nepastebimas (ar sąmoningai neigiamas) potencialus jo semiozės sudėtingumas.

Šiame straipsnyje nagrinėjami vaizdiniai artefaktai, kurie neretai vartojami garsų menui ir jo atstovams komunikuoti bei reklamuoti. Dabarties vizualioji kultūra leidžia atliekamą muziką – tiek gyvas jos interpretacijas, tiek garso įrašus – padėti ant tos pačios lentynėlės su tinklaraščių straipsniais ir žurnalų nuotraukomis: visa tai yra komercinio muzikos pramonės aparato produktai. Remiantis CD bukletų, asmeninių tinklalapių ir kitų klasikinės muzikos pianistų vaizdinių reprezentacijų pavyzdžiais, straipsnyje nagrinėjama, kokiais būdais atlikėjai linkę kurti savo menines tapatybes, kokiam adresatui skirti šie pranešimai ir kaip šios vizualinės reikšmės susijusios su atliekama muzika. Tyrimo praktiniai atvejai – dviejų lietuvių pianistų (Gabriėliaus Alekno ir Gabrielės Gyltės) asmeninių tinklalapių, kurių kiekvienas savaip perteikia atlikėjų asmenybes ir formuoja potencialių klausytojų nuomonę apie pianistų meną, analizė.