

# THE INTERACTIVE MUSE

## PIANO IMPROVISATION IN THE 19TH CENTURY

OCTOBER  
16-19  
2024



**October 16**  
**University of Cassino, Aula Magna**  
15.00 – 18.00

**October 17**  
**Sapienza University of Rome, Aula Pirrotta**  
9.30 – 13.00

**October 17 – 19**  
**Accademia Filarmonica Romana, Sala Casella**  
October 17, 15.30 – 19.30  
October 18, 9.30 – 13.30 and 15.00 – 19.30  
October 19, 9.30 – 13.30 and 15.00 – 21.00

THE DOUBLE  
IDENTITY OF  
EUROPEAN  
MUSIC  
IMPROCOMP.ORG



**SAPIENZA**  
UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA  
DIPARTIMENTO DI LETTERE  
E CULTURE MODERNE



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI  
DI CASSINO E DEL  
LAZIO MERIDIONALE



**TOR VERGATA**  
UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI ROMA



ACCADEMIA  
FILARMONICA  
ROMANA



**Improvisation**, once an essential constituent of a pianist's life and work during the so-called Classical period, in the Nineteenth century underwent a slow decline and transformation, until it disappeared almost completely in the Twentieth century. **Not everything was lost**, however: the practice of preluding before the performance of a musical work continued during the Nineteenth century and beyond and is well documented by coeval sources.

Through the improvisation of a prelude, the interpreter would **interact creatively** with the music she or he was about to perform, thus establishing a deeper connection with the audience. Several live (but not studio) recordings by pianists active in the first half of the Twentieth century, such as **Wilhelm Backhaus** and **Dinu Lipatti**, attest to the survival of the art of preluding, as well as the willingness of interpreters to extemporize modulations and stylistic and textural transitions between pieces in a concert program.

As for today, most interpreters are extremely reluctant to revive these practices, partly because the expectations of audiences and professionals are increasingly modelled on the recording industry's standards, partly because of the insufficient familiarity with historical performing practices. The greatest obstacle, however, is represented by the **training of musicians**: whereas in the past improvisation was integral to piano pedagogy, today the teaching of repertoire is still based on the modernistic idea of a more or less mechanical reproduction of the score.

Western art music is a tradition based not only in the reproduction of written scores but also in non-written practices. In order to revitalize them, it would therefore be necessary to explore the possibility of bringing improvisatory practices to new life. Most historical evidences are obviously lost, but not the possibility of **exploring those spaces** in the musical work where the performer's creative intervention is possible, as it was in the past. In regaining those spaces, we don't 'betray' the score: rather, we recognize its implicit potential as bearer of stimuli that may allow the interpreter to bring it in relation with the **contemporary era**.

Integrating musicological research and performance, **The Interactive Muse** project aims to open a discussion on these issues, as well as to test new teaching methods for bygone practices. It will include theoretical sessions, live performances and panels with scholars and musicians, in addition to **three workshops** on piano improvisation in the Nineteenth century. Three teachers - **Costantino Mastroprimiano**, **John Mortensen** e **Giorgio Sanguinetti** - will work with ten pianists, chosen through an international competitive selection, on the following fields: historically informed performance; early Nineteenth century partimento; sources of improvised preludes in early Romantic piano music; techniques of improvisation in the Romantic era, with special regard to improvised prelude and interlude.

**wednesday, october 16 – University of Cassino, Aula Magna**

**15.00 – 18.00**

Greetings from the Rector of Cassino University, **Marco Dell'Isola**

Greetings from the Director of the Department of Humanities, **Sebastiano Gentile**

chair **Gianluca Bocchino** (Università di Cassino)

**Costantino Mastroprimiano** (Conservatorio di Perugia)  
*Chopin and the art of starting a piano piece*

**Giorgio Sanguinetti** (Università Tor Vergata di Roma)  
*Patterns, stratagems and their transformations in Chopin's music*

ore 16:30

**IMPROVISED CONCERT**

Concert by **John Mortensen** (Cedarville University, Ohio)

PRELUDE

**thursday, october 17 – Sapienza University of Rome, Aula Pirrotta**  
9.30 – 13.00

PREMISES

Greetings from the Director of the Department of Modern Humanities and Cultures,  
**Marco Mancini**

Greetings from the President of the Accademia Filarmonica Romana, **Paolo Baratta**

Greetings from the President of the Graduate Program in Musicology, **Andrea Chegai**

chair **Franco Piperno** (Sapienza Università di Roma)

**Susanna Pasticci** (Sapienza Università di Roma)  
*The interactive muse: The text and its performance*

**Stefano Oliva** (Università Niccolò Cusano)  
*From text to gesture: improvisation and atmosphere*

**Andrea Ravignani** (Sapienza Università di Roma & Aarhus University, DK)  
*Mind and brain in musical performance and improvisation*

**Emanuele Ferrari** (Università di Milano-Bicocca)  
*Traces of improvisational matrix in the piano repertoire*

**Giovanni Bietti** (RAI RadioTre, Lezioni di musica)  
"This must seem improvised!" Writing and improvisational gesture in Chopin

**thursday, october 17 – saturday, october 19**  
**Accademia Filarmonica Romana, Sala Casella**  
**Workshop Piano Improvisation in the 19th Century**

**october 17**  
**Workshop 1**  
15.30 – 19.30

**october 18**  
**Workshop 2**  
9.30 – 13.30  
15.00 – 19.30

**october 19**  
**Workshop 3**  
9.30 – 13.30  
15.00 – 16.30

#### TEACHERS

**Costantino Mastroprimiano** (Conservatorio di Perugia)  
**John Mortensen** (Cedarville University, Ohio)  
**Giorgio Sanguinetti** (Università Tor Vergata di Roma)

#### SELECTED PARTICIPANTS

**Matilde Bianchi** (Conservatorio di Bologna)  
**Roberto Cornacchioni Alegre** (Universidade de São Paulo)  
**Julian Jenson** (Temple University, Boyer College of Music, New York)  
**Javier Liébana Castillo** (Staatliche Hochschule für Musik, Stuttgart)  
**Danilo Mondaca Rivera** (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago)  
**Lucio Perotti** (Conservatorio di Perugia)  
**Lorenzo Pusterla** (Conservatorio di Milano)  
**Sam Shortall** (Maynooth University, Ireland)  
**Basil Vandervort-Charbonneau** (Université de Montréal)  
**Daniel Vidal** (Palau de la Música Catalana, Barcelona)

ACTIONS



**saturday, october 19 – Accademia Filarmonica Romana, Sala Casella**

17.00 – 18.30

**Plenary session**

*Is a new way of enjoying piano music possible?*

REFLECTIONS

chair **Stefano Jacoviello** (Università di Siena & Accademia Musicale Chigiana)

**PARTICIPANTS**

**Gilda Buttà** (Conservatorio di Frosinone)

**Sandro Cappelletto** (Istituto per l'Enciclopedia Italiana Treccani)

**Paola Carruba** (Vicedirettrice di Radio RAI)

**Matteo D'Amico** (Accademico di S. Cecilia, Roma)

**Domenico Turi** (Accademia Filarmonica Romana)

**saturday, october 19 – Accademia Filarmonica Romana, Sala Casella**

20.00

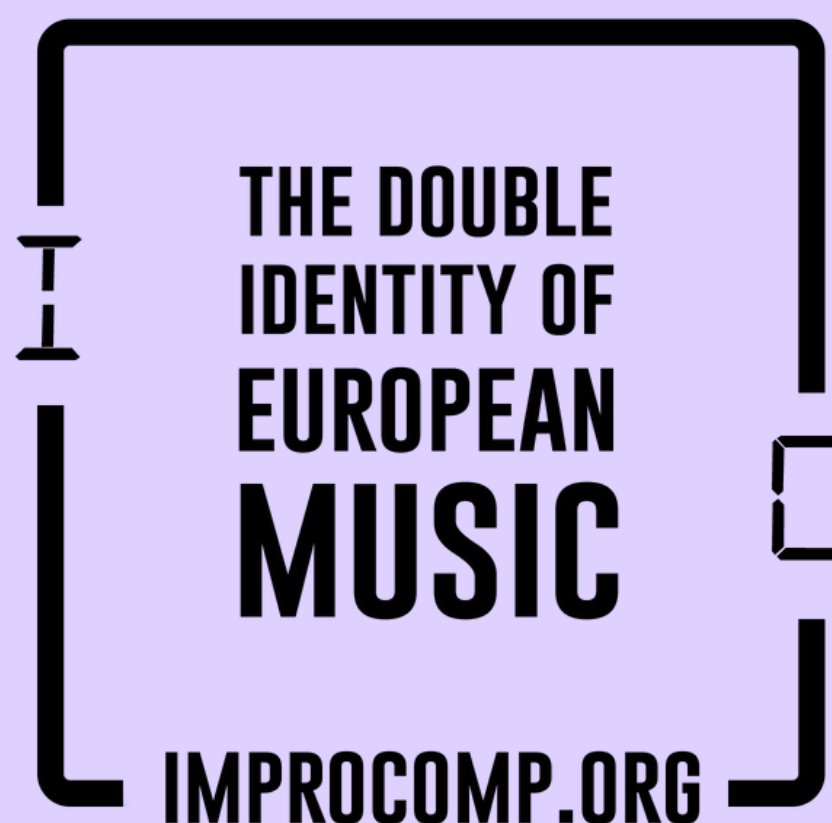
POSTLUDE

# THE INTERACTIVE MUSE

**Concert by Workshop participants**

The Interactive Muse is organized by the Department of Letters and Modern Cultures of Sapienza University of Rome, in collaboration with the Accademia Filarmonica Romana and the universities of Cassino and Rome Tor Vergata, as part of the Research Projects of National Relevant Interest **Improvisation/Composition: The Double Identity of European Music** (PRIN 2020), coordinated by the university of Pavia: <https://improcomp.org/>

The outcomes of the workshops will be discussed in a session at the conference **Performing Classics Today: The Role of the Performer in the Actualization of Music**, organized by the Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena, 4-6 December 2024.



**SCIENTIFIC COORDINATION**

**Susanna Pasticci** (Sapienza Università di Roma)

**ORGANIZATIONAL COORDINATION**

**Ludovico Peroni** (Università di Cassino)

**Maria Valentini** (Università di Cassino)

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