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D'un Profane de New York à Stravinsky
Mark McFarland

Stravinsky's *Poétique musicale*¹ and his 'conversation' books with Robert Craft² purport to present the composer's thoughts on Neoclassicism; but these ideas were filtered through the agendas of various writers, whether credited or not,³ and were written decades after Stravinsky began to compose in this style. The 1924 article *Some Ideas About My Octuor*⁴ and his 1927 article *Avertissement*,⁵ on

1 IGOR STRAVINSKY, *Poétique musicale sous forme de six leçons*, Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 1942.

2 IGOR STRAVINSKY and ROBERT CRAFT, *Conversations with Igor Stravinsky*, Garden City, NY, Doubleday, 1959; *Memories and Commentaries*, 1960; *Expositions and Developments*, 1962; *Dialogues and a Diary*, 1963; *Themes and Episodes*, New York, A. A. Knopf, 1966; *Retrospectives and Conclusion*, 1969.

3 For information on the role as ghostwriters of both Pierre Souvchinsky and Alexis Roland-Manuel, see STEPHEN WALSH, *Stravinsky. The Second Exile: France and America, 1934-1971*, New York, Knopf, 2006, pp. 94-95. For information on Craft's role as ghostwriter, see Ivi, pp. 421-422, 496-497, 512 & 662-663.

4 This article originally appeared in «The Arts», January 1924 and is reprinted in ERIC WALTER WHITE, *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works*, 2nd edition, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1984, pp. 574-577.

5 This article originally appeared in «The Dominant», December 1927 and is reprinted in WHITE, *Stravinsky cit.*, pp. 577-578.

the other hand, were written by Stravinsky as artistic manifestos in defense of his recent change in style. Interviews the composer gave during his 1925 tour of America help to illuminate Stravinsky's conception of Neoclassicism, although the differences between published accounts of the same interview make these sources less than definitive.⁶ A recent discovery in the Stravinsky Nachlass at the Paul Sacher Stiftung has produced a previously unpublished interview⁷ with the composer from 1928, one that clarifies the composer's statements during his 1925 tour and expands on his two articles.

The origins of this interview lie in an odd set of circumstances. An internal memo dated November 27, 1928⁸ from the Aeolian Company, the British player piano company with which Stravinsky was then under contract, mentions a cinematic presentation planned for January 1929, one presumably designed to publicly announce the upcoming release of the set of rolls for the *Concerto for Piano and Wind Instruments* (1923-24). Stravinsky's written introduction and commentary was required for this presentation, and it was needed quickly. Aeolian had first-hand experience with Stravinsky's business acumen; the negotiations for his 1924 contract lasted almost three months before the document finally met his satisfaction.⁹ It was quite possibly for this reason that a novel plan was devised, one that would demand as little of Stravinsky's time as possible while at the same time would give Aeolian the material they needed in a timely manner. They arranged for Henri Dubois, an Aeolian employee, to meet Stravinsky at his house in Nice to show him the first roll of *The Firebird* and to «have a conversation on another subject».¹⁰

The «other subject» was a list of questions about the *Concerto* that Dubois would ask Stravinsky while a stenographer would record his answers. The Ae-

6 See, for example, the conflicting versions of the same interview from January 1925 reprinted in Scott Messing, *Neoclassicism in Music*, Ann Arbor, UMI Research Press, 1988, p. 141.

7 One paragraph of this interview appears elsewhere, although it is credited simply as an unpublished manuscript from December 1928. See STRAVINSKY and CRAFT, *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1978, p. 197.

8 PSS 84, 000625. Telegrams between Aeolian and Stravinsky regarding this project begin to be exchanged on October 10th with the interview scheduled to take place in Nice on the 14th. The document itself, on the other hand, is dated November 27-28. PSS 84, 000618-000636.

9 See PSS 84, 000585-000598 (July 2 – October 20, 1924).

10 PSS 84, 000618. Telegram from Dubois to Stravinsky dated October 10, 1928.

lian Company hoped that, in addition to completing their presentation on time, this interview would help to rehabilitate the composer in the eyes of the public. As they noted:

The New York public's current impression of Stravinsky is quite surprising and not entirely favorable. We would like to change this opinion by giving the public a clearer idea of Stravinsky's thoughts in his own words through these Audiographic rolls. In order to do this, certain specific questions that immediately arose in the public's mind following the 1925 performance of the *Concerto* must be dealt with by Stravinsky himself.¹¹

Stravinsky could not have been pleased with this trap being sprung on him – there is an undeniable testiness in his responses at times, as detailed below – although it was agreed that he would be given the chance to revise his answers before they appeared as annotations.¹² Although the piano rolls for this work were never produced, Stravinsky did polish his answers, and these revisions are included in the discussion of the interview below.

The title of the interview is *From an Amateur in New York to Stravinsky*.¹³ Due to the role he played as the voice of the New Yorker, one assumes that Dubois stuck strictly to the script written by Aeolian. If this is true – and the tone of Stravinsky's response suggests it is – then the interview does not start with a question, but rather with a lengthy philosophical statement regarding the reciprocal role between the composer and layman, one that literally ends with a plea for help from the composer as the only person who can answer the layman's questions. Due to the length, complexity, and tone of this introductory statement, it seems doubtful that it truly represents the New York public's reaction to the *Concerto*. Rather, it is more likely that Aeolian carefully crafted this introduc-

11 «L'impression du public de New York actuellement sur Stravinsky est très spéciale et non entièrement favorable. Nous voudrions changer cette attitude en mettant devant le public par les moyens AudioGraphic une idée plus claire des propres principes de Stravinsky exprimés par lui-même. Pour cela certaines questions spécifiques qui ont surgi dans l'esprit du public à la suite de l'exécution en 1925 du *Concerto* doivent être abordées par Stravinsky lui-même.» Internal Aeolian memo dated November 27, 1928. PSS 84, 000625.

12 I have not included simple changes of words, but rather the more extensive writings and corrections that reveal the development of Stravinsky's thought process.

13 *D'un Profane de New York à Stravinsky*.

tory statement, if not the majority of the questions in the interview, to elicit as much information as possible from Stravinsky.

Stravinsky's response to the layman's opening statement is to dampen expectations regarding his ability to explain inspiration to anyone who believes this to be the sole component of music. He then adds that he has more confidence in his ability to make the layman understand that music is made from objective elements that pose problems whose solutions require methods both numerous and complex. With this pivot, Stravinsky masterfully steered the conversation away from the layman's intended philosophical discussion towards the expansion of his early ideas on Neoclassicism.

This process continues with the first half of the questions posed by the layman, questions that begin with the origins of the *Concerto*'s musical material and musical structure, move to the work's orchestration, and end with a discussion of counterpoint. Stravinsky's responses to these questions are remarkably similar in content and tone to his 1924 *Octet* article. This situation is not surprising; as Walsh notes, Stravinsky may have written the *Octet* article while he was composing the *Concerto*.¹⁴ What is surprising is the fact that Stravinsky could immediately recall the tone and language of his *Octet* article four years after he had moved past the period of "doctrinaire severity"¹⁵ that these two works, along with the *Piano Sonata*, represent. Finally, these two writings complement one another in terms of material: while the *Octet* article makes explicit Stravinsky's attitude towards musical form (to which he simply alludes in the interview), the interview goes into much greater depth on the subject of counterpoint. Common to both is a detailed explanation of Stravinsky's choice of instrumentation.

The topic of counterpoint is first broached when Stravinsky is asked whether the *Concerto* was written in the style of the 17th century. Due to the wording of this question and the one that follows it, it is clear that Aeolian had read a published interview with Stravinsky made during his American tour of 1925 in which he described the *Concerto* as «quite in the style of the Seventeenth Century; that is, the style of the Seventeenth Century viewed from the angle of today»¹⁶ In the

14 STEPHEN WALSH, *The Music of Stravinsky*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1993, p. 129.

15 Ivi, p. 133.

16 H. O. OSGOOD, *Stravinsky conducts an interview and a concert*, «Musical Courier», 15 January 1925, p. 7.

current interview, Stravinsky denies having made this earlier statement, although his following comments provide a possible reason for this dissembling. His 1928 answer is more nuanced: it clarifies the work's relationship to the past by pointing out that he was faced with the same musical problems that confronted the musicians of the 17th and early 18th centuries. Although Stravinsky in 1928 makes no mention of «the style of the Seventeenth Century viewed from the angle of today», Dubois' next question looks for clarification on this very subject. Stravinsky's answer, «Yes, my music is the music of today and not of tomorrow; it is for me and those of my contemporaries that find themselves at the same level of development as myself», is surprisingly candid and out of character. It essentially anticipates by three decades the central argument from Babbitt's infamous article *Who Cares If You Listen?*¹⁷ that celebrates rather than regrets the gap between the general audience and the specialist composer. This is one of the few passages that Stravinsky altered after the interview. His emendation, however, occurs much later in his answer to this question and does not change his essential point. These piano rolls were never released, so his reputation was not harmed. It is nevertheless surprising that Stravinsky did not omit this comment, one that can be easily interpreted as elitist, as he was notoriously careful to tend to the public's perception of him. Indeed, a similar statement in such bold terms appears nowhere else in Stravinsky's extensive publications.

While the interview thus far seem to reflect the musically sophisticated and well-considered opinion of the Aeolian employees, one question, unlike all the others, could believably have come from a member of the New York audience after the première of the *Concerto*. This question concerns the relationship between Stravinsky's *Concerto* and his early ballets, in answer to which Stravinsky volunteers that his *Concerto* has nothing in common with his early ballets. At the same time, he comments that his *Concerto* does not represent progress since he does not believe in this concept. Rather, he believes in perfectionism, a state he attempts to achieve through all the means at his disposal during the course of his constant evolution. Stravinsky is making an extremely fine distinction between stylistic evolution and progress in this context. Nevertheless, such hair splitting is preferable to obviously false statements, such as his 1921 claim that «I have never made 'applied music' of any kind. Even in the early days, in the 'Fire-

17 MILTON BABBITT, *Who Cares If You Listen?*, «High Fidelity», vol. 8, no. 2, 1958, pp. 38-40.

bird,' I was concerned with a purely musical construction». ¹⁸ Messing cites this quote as an example of Stravinsky at his most hyperbolic in his attempts to explain away the radical change of style between his Russian and Neoclassical works. It would be years before Stravinsky would be able to objectively describe the radical nature of this stylistic transition:

I have had to survive two crises as a composer... The first – the loss of Russia and its language of words as well as of music – affected every circumstance of my personal no less than my artistic life, which made recovery more difficult. Only after a decade of samplings, experiments, amalgamations did I find the path to *Oedipus Rex* and the *Symphony of Psalms*. ¹⁹

Finally, several moments in the interview are particularly heated. Stravinsky refused to go through the score of the *Concerto* measure by measure with Dubois in order to explain his compositional choices. He also points out the historical inaccuracy of Dubois' attempt to compare the problems faced by Stravinsky while composing the *Concerto* and those faced by Beethoven with a dismissive allusion to the stylistic disparity between the painters de Champaigne and Delacroix. In one case, instead of answering Dubois' question, Stravinsky provides the interviewer with a better way to have worded it. Yet the most heated moment of the interview actually takes place in Stravinsky's introductory remark. Stravinsky ends on the subject of musical habit, which he describes as the source of evil. This topic more precisely deals with the process by which music is accepted by audiences: Stravinsky rails against the opinion of music critics and repeated concert performances as the means to this end, and argues instead in favor of each individual's own intellectual reaction to a work as the sole criterion. Just like Stravinsky's unwillingness in 1928 to recognize what he would later describe as the first of his 'crises' noted above, the composer's own acceptance of music would change over time. The reverse of Stravinsky's argument against musical habit is the blind rejection of a work without intellectual examination, an attitude he had at that time, and would continue to have until the early 1950s, towards the music of Schoenberg and his school. It is to Stravinsky's credit that he would adopt his own advice from decades earlier about avoiding musical

18 «The Observer», 3 July 1921, reprinted in MESSING, *Neoclassicism in Music* cit., p. 104.

19 STRAVINSKY and CRAFT, *Themes and Episodes* cit., p. 23.

habit so that he could proclaim near the end of his life «Anyone who survives a sixty-year span of creative activity in our century must sometimes feel a satisfaction merely in being able to metabolize new experience, to 'stay with it'». ²⁰

The similarities between this 1928 interview and Stravinsky's article *Some Ideas About My Octuor*²¹ were pointed out above; however, the article includes extensive discussion on the idea of interpretation, while this topic does not come up in the interview. The concept of interpretation is nevertheless felt as subtext in the interview. This interview was destined to appear on a set of piano rolls, and Stravinsky admitted that his interest in the pianola was due to its ability to eliminate interpretation.²² His Pleyel rolls were all released with the statement *The Works of Igor Stravinsky Recorded by the Composer* as testimony to the definitive nature of these performances. Such a guarantee would be especially valuable for the rolls of the works from his Russian period, the nature of which made performance interpretation especially common. In his 1924 *Octet* article, however, Stravinsky noted that «The aim I sought in this *Octuor*, which is also the aim I sought with the greatest energy in all my recent works, is to realise a musical composition through means which are emotive in themselves» and added

a work created with a spirit in which the emotive basis is the nuance is soon deformed in all directions... On the other hand, a musical composition in which the emotive basis resides not in the nuance but in the very form of the composition will risk little in the hands of its executants.²³

This led Stravinsky to the conclusion that his Neoclassic style defines the composer as the sole interpreter, while the performer becomes a mere executant. If Stravinsky's interest in the pianola was due to its ability to eliminate interpretation, and his Neoclassical style made the composer the sole interpreter, piano rolls of Stravinsky's Neoclassical works would seem unnecessary. Nevertheless, Stravinsky's relationship with the pianola only ended in 1930 when the Aeolian company unexpectedly went out of business. A possible explanation for Stravin-

²⁰ STRAVINSKY and CRAFT, *Dialogues* cit., p. 127.

²¹ STRAVINSKY, *Some Ideas About My Octuor* cit., pp. 574-577.

²² See the composer's comments on this subject in IGOR STRAVINSKY, *An Autobiography*, New York, Norton, 1962, p. 101.

²³ STRAVINSKY, *Some Ideas About My Octuor* cit., p. 576.

sky's continued involvement with the pianola is found in a letter to the composer from Ansermet.

This letter is dated June 12, 1919, two years after the completion of Stravinsky's *Étude pour Pianola* yet before Stravinsky had had a chance to hear the work performed on the pianola.²⁴ Ansermet's letter provides Stravinsky with the first feedback on this work, and the letter contains the devastating critique that «one feels the intervention of the performer».²⁵ With this revelation, Stravinsky's belief that the pianola could eliminate the problem of performance interpretation was crushed.²⁶ The timing of this news coincides with Stravinsky's work on the ballet *Pulcinella*, his «discovery of the past»²⁷ that led quickly to *Mavra* of 1921-22 and the *Octet* of 1923, the first of his wholly original Neoclassical works. This timing may be purely coincidental. On the other hand, the reasons that lie behind Stravinsky change of style to Neoclassicism are myriad. His realization about the limitation of the pianola combined with his continued desire to position himself as the sole interpreter of his scores, may have been a contributing factor that has thus far been overlooked.

24 The première of this work took place only in 1921.

25 *Correspondence Ansermet-Stravinsky (1914-1967)*, ed. by Claude Tappolet, Geneva, Georg, 1990, vol. 1, pp. 115-117.

26 In spite of the fact that all of the Pleyel rolls of Stravinsky's works were labeled «Les œuvres de Igor Strawinsky enregistrées par l'auteur» this was in fact not the case. Rex Lawson notes that it is only certain that Stravinsky recorded his performance for the first movement of the *Concerto for Piano and Wind Instruments* from the keyboard (See REX LAWSON, *Stravinsky and the Pianola*, in *Confronting Stravinsky*, ed. by Jann Pasler, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1986, p. 293). That Stravinsky would choose this particular work to record is logical, since it was then part of his concert repertoire. Yet, as noted above, a piano roll of a Neoclassical work recorded by the composer is redundant in terms of the elimination of interpretation. Instead, Stravinsky's choice to record this piece perhaps also reflects his realization of the pianola's limitations.

27 STRAVINSKY and CRAFT, *Expositions and Developments* cit. , p. 113.

*From a Layman in New York to Stravinsky*²⁸

You are an artist and I am a layman, but as human beings we share a common need – the desire to find sense and beauty in life.

In this search for significance, sense and beauty, you are an expert – you succeed in finding these things where I cannot. And I depend on you to compose your works. This mutual exchange is the social justification for art. The task of an artist such as yourself is to express the beauty that you have discovered. My task as a layman is to do all that I can in order to understand your works, and to then discover the beauty and significance that you have revealed, and here where you have described it. It is in this relationship between the artist and the layman that the social life of art resides. But there are moments in the history of an art when these mutual tasks become more difficult. The old formulas no longer lift us out of our ordinary life. Beauty and sense no longer seem to exist. They remain hidden, awaiting new modes of expression. Thus, the task of the artist becomes especially difficult; they must not only find the capacity to see beauty in a new form, but find the new forms required to express this new beauty as well. The layman must work especially hard in order to grasp this new expression.

Art is currently living through such a historical moment. We think that you have succeeded in your task, that you have seen a new beauty and found the new forms to reveal it. We are the ones who have failed at our task: you have found a new form of expression, but we have still not been able to entirely understand it.

A single example will clarify the preceding remarks. In February 1925, we heard one of your new forms of expression, the *Concerto for Piano and Wind Instruments*. We were moved by its force but were unable to understand the sense behind it. We felt that the work contained beauty, but we were unable to perceive it as clearly as you must have yourself. We looked to music critics to enlighten us, for although they are not creative artists, they are nevertheless well-versed in the perception of beauty once it has been expressed.

We discovered that music critics failed in their job. They were quick to say that beauty or sense that they were unable to perceive did not exist. We don't believe them. We turn now to the definitive source, the composer himself and we plead for your assistance. Would you be kind enough to take the place of the music critics who have previously failed us? Would you provide us with words to lead us towards a greater understanding of what you have given us in music?

If you are willing to do all this, below are some questions that you alone can answer. If you are kind enough to do this for us – even if the questions seem trivial or inappropriate – you will allow us to take one step closer in understanding your *Concerto*.

Response to the New York Layman's Letter to Stravinsky

I welcome this letter and the questions that accompany it precisely because they were not written by an expert in art in general, and more specifically of music in particular. His obvious sincerity touched me and instilled in me the same praiseworthy desire to clarify. I will try to guide him, to the best of my abilities, in an exploration of something that even escapes me, which is to say inspiration, something that the general public incorrectly believes to be the sole ingredient of music. On the other hand, I am more certain of my ability in making him understand that music, like all the arts and as with all products of human thought, regardless of the domain, is made from a large number of objective elements and poses problems whose solutions require methods both numerous and complex.

I have always said that, according to the opinion and judgment of the public, so often led by these poor shepherds, that music is seen as a product that, without the listener even being prepared to perform their part, must immediately dispense all of its joy to them. This is impossible. Music is not a candy and its composer is not a candy maker. Without any prior initiation, music has never been assimilated for long. And history proves this point: Beethoven, to use but one example, was passionately discussed in his day and examples abound of artists who were vilified during their lifetime. The widespread stupidity regarding Beethoven and his music during his lifetime yielded to praise only through the habit gained through listening to his works and not through any intellectual reaction. What was the source of this belated admiration? This is the point whose origins I would like to know since this is the source of evil. Habit and nothing but habit. Habit that destroys the critical faculties and limits free examination. It lulls the limits of the crowd's understanding to sleep, dulls their intelligence and wrongly closes their eyes to what music still has to say in the present and what it recalls in the present of what has already been said in the past.

Every composer struggles with musical problems whose solutions require technique that is not found in inspiration, and this is why one would be completely wrong to believe that Beethoven constructed his masterpieces while dreaming of the moon or while whiling away his time under the stars.

Questions Regarding Stravinsky's Concerto for Piano and Wind Instruments

H.D. Where and when did you come up with the idea of composing this work? Did external factors (influences), whatever they might have been, have any effect on the conception of this work or on its composition?

I.S. If my answers to these two questions can help to clarify the substance of this work, I will tell you that the *Concerto* was composed entirely in Biarritz in 1924. I do not see any external influence on this composition, aside from the calm of the busy but secluded life that I led at the time of its composition, one that allowed the concentration of my musical faculties on the substance of this work, about which I will say more later.

H.D. Was your first thought to elaborate a musical structure of this type and then find the musical material to express it, or did the musical material come first with the structure developing gradually from it?

I.S. The idea of the *Concerto* was neither spontaneous nor fully-formed.²⁹ The music that my creative faculties lead me to write according to their own impulse didn't immediately suggest a work that would take the form of a *Concerto* for piano with orchestra. It was only in the course of work that I realized that the best use of the material I had accumulated little by little was its incorporation into the realm, or better, the material of the piano. The clean and clear sound of this instrument, along with its polyphonic potential, allowed for the desired dryness and the clarity of the contours for which I was searching in the music that I was composing. With this realization, I quickly came to the logical conclusion to write a concerto for piano and orchestra.

H.D. For what reason did you choose to write for an orchestra of only wind instruments?

I.S. Continuing from where I left off earlier, the concise, clean and angular character of the music of the "Toccatà" (from the Italian verb: "toccare") felt prominently in the percussive writing for piano,³⁰ made me think that nothing would better complement it than an ensemble of orchestral wind instruments using strongly contrasting musical material in which, unlike that of the piano, human breath is felt since it

29 Stravinsky scrawled in the margins next to his complete answer the exclamation «Music never determines form-together».

30 Stravinsky cut the following sentence: «The struck chords complement the musical character of my *Concerto* better than any other musical material».

extends the sound. It was from this very opposition that the idea for an accompaniment of wind instruments came to me.

H.D. This work seems to have something in common with *Petrushka*, *The Firebird* and *The Rite of Spring*.³¹ Do you feel that it is a logical derivative of these previous works or rather that it represents something completely new? If it is a development, in what direction?

I.S. My *Concerto* has nothing really in common with *Petrushka*, *The Firebird* or *The Rite of Spring*, but one could naturally find characteristics of my personality, expression and my musical writing in common, as could be found in any of my works besides these three. This *Concerto* is neither derived from the style of my earlier works nor even a necessary extension of the goals that formed the basis of my earliest works. But, like these other works, my *Concerto* contains the solution to various problems and it creates in its entirety an undertaking of a particular kind, about which I will say more below. It is the continuation, the extension, of certain problems of musical form, problems already clearly presented and resolved in my *Octet* written the year before the composition of the *Concerto*.

It does not represent "progress." I am not one who believes in progress. This is not to say that I do not believe in perfectionism, and I try in the course of my constant evolution to achieve this state by employing all the means at my disposal.

H.D. As you have stated, the *Concerto* is written in the style of the 17th century. Do you consider it to be an expression of the common elements between the 17th and 20th centuries, or an expression of elements that are common in the 17th and 20th centuries?

I.S. I never declared that my *Concerto* is written in the style of the 17th century. But I did say that while I was composing it, I had been preoccupied with the same problems that the musicians of the 17th century faced. What are these problems? They relate to matters of musical technique and refer to the form created by the musical material composed in my head, material made up of themes, melodies, rhythms and all things deriving from a spirit devoted entirely to this task of musical creation. I therefore subjected this material to procedures from the end of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th century, a style that, in general, required in developed forms a language based on what was called the severe style, which is to say contrapuntal.

³¹ A preliminary version of this answer also appears: «This [concerto] has absolutely nothing in common and derives from something completely different. The work is a confirmation of certain problems of musical form, problems that were clearly presented in the *Octet* one year ago. As to progress-I'll make none of that».

This is the main idea found in common between my *Concerto* and the music of the old masters since counterpoint was the current language for them, something that I borrowed for this occasion since I have always felt its freshness and recognized its utility.

H.D. Your music, as you have commented, is the music of today. Would you mind expressing in words what you feel are the essential elements of modern life that found their expression in this *Concerto*?

I.S. These vital elements are: clarity, brevity, and concision. Yes, my music is the music of today and not of tomorrow; it is for me and those of my contemporaries that find themselves at the same level of development as myself. There are those who listen to my music without hearing it; they are from tomorrow waiting for the day when this “tomorrow” becomes their “today.”³²

H.D. Does this *Concerto* represent your current (1928) musical judgment and views or does it represent today's phase or style of a past evolution. In the latter case, how would you define the subsequent change in your judgment?

I.S. This question should be asked in the following way:³³ “Have the stylistic tendencies found in your *Concerto* (1924) remained with you now in 1928 or were they representative of a phrase that has already run its course? In the latter case, how would you define the change in or the abandonment of these stylistic tendencies?” I would respond: it is not a question of abandonment or change, but rather of circumstance that leads me to find a different application of the musical material I create.

H.D. Do the musical ideas of the *Concerto* represent definitive emotional elements or intellectual attitudes that you could express briefly in words? Do you consider these musical ideas simply as material in a self-contained work of art, without reference to the emotional or intellectual needs of the listener? Precisely what qualities must be included in modern art, and which of these qualities are missing in art from previous centuries?

I.S. The answers to these questions are found in my previous responses.

32 A draft of this answer is also found: «It [my music] is of today and not of tomorrow. There are those who are not yet there; they are from tomorrow, demanding that tomorrow comes today».

33 A different beginning to this answer is also found: «It is not a question of defining a change, but rather of observing a crossing or a change of position».

H.D. While constructing the *Concerto* and its thematic material, would you say that your own constructive principles were dramatic in origin in order to address the desires of the listener, or were they instead architectural to create a balance of weight, strength and rhythm in the musical structure?

I.S. As I wrote above, my sole concern while composing this *Concerto* was to construct a well-balanced form free from all extra-musical considerations.

H.D. Do you think that the musical problems that confront you as a composer today are in any way different than the ones that faced Bach or Beethoven? If so, in what way do they differ?

I.S. I answered above that the problems that concerned me were the same ones that 17th century composers worried about. As to the problems that confronted Beethoven, who found himself between the masters of the Classical era and Romanticism, one can easily see that Beethoven's problems and those of my *Concerto*, allied with a period next to that of Bach, have as few common elements than do paintings by Philippe de Champaigne (17th century) and Delacroix (beginning of the 19th century).

H.D. How, in your opinion, is the beauty that you seek similar to the beauty that Schubert sought?

I.S. I can't really find a way to answer this question since its meaning escapes me. Beauty has been and will be found in all periods, and I don't see how that of Schubert can be especially in or out of line with the issues we've discussed here.

H.D. Would you mind opening the score of the *Concerto* and indicate for us, phrase by phrase, your overall plan and the reason behind the specific means you chose instead of the multitude of possibilities open to you?

I.S. This task and the technical commentary, which would be difficult for the general public to understand, would take the form of a musical analysis disproportionate to the task that was originally proposed. It would nevertheless give me pleasure to indicate the overall structure and certain details of construction in my *Concerto* that, I hope, will be understood by all.

H.D. While you cannot translate into words what you have perfectly expressed in music, do you not think that such a verbal explanation would be of great value in filling the gap between a layman's understanding (such as mine) and yours, especially for a work with a new and unexpected form of expression such as your *Concerto*?

I.S. The gap that separates the intelligence of a layman from the modes of expression found in my *Concerto* that one wrongly takes to be strange is created by what I

referred to above as habit or custom. When one takes the time to listen to my *Concerto*, when one has truly become accustomed to it, one will no longer think that its modes of expression are strange, just as today's public no longer finds the music of Beethoven or so many other composers strange or subversive. And when one has become accustomed to my music, it will be the job of the Stravinskys of tomorrow to take over this task.³⁴

34 Two questions were either not posed to Stravinsky or the composer refused to answer them. The first seems to have been in response to Stravinsky penultimate answer, in which he comments on the gap in knowledge between his own hypothetical analysis of the *Concerto* and the general public's understanding of it: «Would you consent to having such a detailed critique produced in order to measure the boundaries of this gap in knowledge?». The second question is simply designed to elicit Stravinsky's reaction to carefully-chosen barbs contained in published critiques of the *Concerto*, and it is not surprising that Stravinsky would avoid such a question: «Would you mind commenting on the following statements written by critics after the performance of your *Concerto* in New York? "The composer's lack of precision in his vocabulary seemed the other night to have been felt in the style and in the material of his new composition." "The new *Concerto* is an incomprehensible work, without character." "Harmonized in such a way that when it is not perversely dissonant it is simply obtuse." "...Acrid harmony and strange orchestration."».