

# GABRIELA MAYER (IRELAND)

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Dr Gabriela Mayer is currently the Head of the Department of Keyboard Studies at the CIT Cork School of Music and President of WPTA Ireland. As a recipient of a Fulbright Graduate Fellowship to Germany, Dr. Mayer studied piano performance at the Hochschule für Musik 'Hanns Eisler' in Berlin. She also completed a Doctorate in Musical Arts at the University of Maryland in the USA. Since moving to Ireland, she has engaged in teaching as well as performing. Her area of artistic research revolves around rhetorical and linguistic influences in Classical and Romantic piano music and the applications of these concepts to teaching and performance. She is currently involved in activities of the Association of European Conservatoires (AEC) and European Piano Teachers Association (EPTA) through participation in seminars, giving presentations at conferences on pedagogical and performance topics and as an international representative of the AEC on institutional review panels. As a performer, she continues to be actively involved in concerts and regularly collaborates in chamber music projects with colleagues from professional orchestras and the CIT Cork School of Music. In addition, she has given concerts and masterclasses at Erasmus partner institutions.

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## Rhetorical and Linguistic Influences in Solo Piano Music from Mozart to Liszt

This presentation will offer a glimpse into performing traditions which were important to German composers writing for the piano, from Mozart and Beethoven to Schubert, Schumann and Liszt. These traditions provided a context for a certain aesthetic understanding in performance, which has been gradually lost. Practical examples recorded by the presenter will be used for illustration. Rhetoric offered a guide for logical organization and persuasion, while dramatic ideas and singing style were two other linguistic influences. These elements combined to offer a natural model for characterization, expression and inflection in solo piano music. The most important musical aspects influenced by rhetorical principles were composition, emotional expression and delivery. Composers relied on the logic of discourse as a model for musical structure and content, while performers sought to persuade their audience much as an orator would do. Singing style was another linguistic parallel that continued to be present in the performing tradition of solo piano music. Singing style remained a constant reference point for musicians, particularly as a vehicle for understanding and delivering expressive performance, and 'speaking' to the audience through music. Understanding the influence rhetoric and language had on solo piano music in the past opens a path to a more meaningful and informed approach to modern performance.

