

***Impromptus for Piano: 23 Events* (1973)**

Impromptus for Piano: 23 Events was commissioned by the CBC and was premiered by Peter Elyakim Taussig, who has had a long-standing relationship with the CBC since the 1970s. Similar to other works of the 1970s, *Impromptus* is divided into several brief “events,” a structure which rejects large-scale movement organisation. Weinzwieg describes these events as “fragments whose time span varies from fleeting seconds to extended seconds—a series of shorter and longer piano events without chronology... .”

Weinzwieg explains that *Impromptus* contains “juxtapositions of thematic quotations from the composer’s own work with interpolations of musical memories from years past.” Elaine Keillor describes *Impromptus* as a “parody of a piano recital,” filled with exaggerated gestures and references to the piano’s musical past, including a brief quotation of Chopin’s *Minute Waltz*, and nods to the piano style of Liszt, hymns, and boogie-woogie. Weinzwieg’s advocacy of serialism emerges through the use of tone rows and reference to Anton Webern’s piano style.

Many of the event-based works of the 1970s incorporate theatricality. In *Impromptus*, Weinzwieg asks the performer to turn each page “with a slow deliberation,” while certain specially-marked pages are to be turned more quickly. Weinzwieg’s loving mockery of the piano recital tradition is best expressed in Event No. 20 - Mime. He provides the following instructions:

Slow, deliberate mimetic actions on keyboard surface only: Rapid finger movement in both hands at centre of keyboard—Continue across white keys in contrary motion to ends of keyboard—Raise hands slowly and return to centre of keyboard in arch-like movement—Make several appoggiatura gestures in jerky spasmodic manner over different areas of keyboard—R.H. brusquely plucks string—Return to original position without finger action—L.H. moves slowly and chromatically to Postscript.

Written by Alexa Woloshyn