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## **THE PIANO CYCLE *CHILD'S PLAY* BY HELMUT LACHENMANN: FEATURES OF SOUND SPACE CREATION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper aims to analyse the specifics of the sound space of the cycle as an example of the adaptation of modern sound techniques for young musicians. Its artistic and pedagogical significance is also considered. The research method includes a detailed analysis of the structural features and characteristics of the sound space in each miniature. The analytical approach focuses on the unique techniques of sound production. The results of the analysis show that the piano cycle *Child's Play* by H. Lachenmann has a significant influence on the development of auditory perception and spatial thinking in young performers. The compositions of the cycle open up

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modern sound textures and techniques to listeners, including such unique methods as the “silent octave” and “long-sustained notes”. Each of the seven pieces in the cycle serves as a self-contained musical miniature, allowing for experimentation with sound production, immersing the performer in the world of avant-garde music, thus contributing to the formation of modern musical thinking. The cycle not only expands the understanding of the possibilities of the piano but also performs a pedagogical function, introducing the performer to the techniques of 20th-century avant-garde music. The main conclusions of the study highlight the significance of the cycle as a resource for teaching young musicians modern sound techniques. It stimulates auditory perception and musical thinking, fosters an interest in contemporary music, and develops creative perception.

**Keywords:** Extended piano techniques, children’s piano album, spatial sound perception, phonic texture, sound aesthetics, acoustic gestures, miniature variation cycle.

## **HELMUT LACHENMANN'IN PİYANO DÖNGÜSÜ ÇOCUK OYUNU: SES ALANI YARATIMININ ÖZELLİKLERİ**

### **ÖZ**

Bu çalışmada, genç müzisyenler için modern ses tekniklerinin uyarlanmasına örnek teşkil eden bu döngünün ses alanı özellikleri analiz edilmesi amaçlanmıştır. Ayrıca, eserin sanatsal ve pedagojik önemi de değerlendirilmiş, araştırma yöntemi, her bir minyatürdeki ses alanının yapısal özelliklerinin ve karakteristiklerinin detaylı analizini içermiştir. Çalışmada, ses üretiminde kullanılan özgün tekniklere odaklanan analitik bir yaklaşım benimsenmiştir. Analiz sonuçları, H. Lachenmann'ın *Child's Play* piyano döngüsünün, genç icracıların işitsel algısı ve uzamsal düşüncesinin gelişimi üzerinde önemli bir etkiye sahip olabileceğini ortaya koymuştur. Döngünün bestelerinin, sessiz oktavlar ve uzun süreli notalar gibi özgün teknikler aracılığıyla dinleyicilere modern ses dokularını ve tekniklerini açtığı gözlemlenmiştir. Döngüdeki yedi parçanın her biri, ses üretimiyle ilgili deneylere olanak tanıyan ve icracıyı avangart müzik dünyasına dahil eden bağımsız bir müzikal minyatür işlevi görmüş olabileceğinden bu döngü, yalnızca piyanonun olanaklarına dair kavrayışı genişletmekle kalmamış, aynı zamanda icracıyı 20. yüzyıl avangart müziğinin teknikleriyle tanıştırmak pedagojik bir işlev de üstlenmiştir. Çalışmanın temel bulguları, döngünün genç müzisyenlere modern ses tekniklerini öğretmek için önemli bir kaynak olabileceğini ortaya

koymuş, işitsel algı ve müzikal düşüncenin uyarıldığı, çağdaş müziğe olan ilginin artırıldığı ve yaratıcı algının geliştirildiği sonucuna varılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Genişletilmiş piyano teknikleri, çocuklar için avangart repertuvar, mekânsal ses algısı, fonik doku, deneysel ses estetiği, akustik jestler, minyatür varyasyon döngüsü.

## INTRODUCTION

The work of Helmut Lachenmann, despite its relative novelty, is recognised as classical and relevant in the sound space of the 21st century. His unique approach, known as “instrumental concrete music”, uses traditional instruments while focusing on nontraditional sound production techniques. The concrete music genre, to which Lachenmann belongs, is not new – it traces its roots back to the mid-1960s. Technical progress and expressive moods at that time drove art, and alongside concrete music, popular directions included technical, electronic, and tape music. However, while Lachenmann is often classified among composers working in concrete music, it is important to note that he uses fundamentally acoustic, non-electronic means, focusing primarily on expressive tools such as articulation, strokes, and timbre.

The cycle *Child's Play*, consisting of seven piano pieces, draws attention for its focus on young performers, which is unusual for a composer known for his complex musical language. The title of the cycle emphasises the ease and informality of the works, while also suggesting the adaptation of advanced technical methods for beginner musicians. By including a wide range of sound effects, Lachenmann introduces children to the world of instrumental concrete music, promoting the development of hearing and musical perception, which becomes the foundation for their further creative growth.

The study of Lachenmann's legacy is of great importance to musical art, and his works remain the subject of research. Utz (2022) analyses Lachenmann's aesthetic technology, noting the composer's focus on the physical aspects of sound production, which gives his music unique acoustic qualities. In another work, Utz (2020) explores the typology of sound, emphasising that it becomes an independent expressive medium regardless of melody. This makes Lachenmann an innovator who stands out among his contemporaries. Schreiber (2020) examines the philosophical roots of Lachenmann's work, including the influence of post-structuralism and deconstruction, deepening the understanding of his commitment to non-standard solutions. Leipert (2019) highlights the significance of his music for training young performers, where complex techniques

become accessible to young musicians. Magas (2024) focuses on the special connection between music and the performer, where the process of sound production is crucial to developing creative thinking. Gras (2020) emphasises the pedagogical potential of *Child's Play* as a resource for teaching children the fundamentals of modern musical technique, combining traditional and innovative approaches that allow young performers to immerse themselves in the world of contemporary music.

The aim of this research is to analyse the specifics of the sound space of the cycle *Child's Play* as an example of the adaptation of complex sound production techniques for beginner musicians, as well as to identify new principles of piano performance. To achieve this goal, an analytical method is used that allows for a detailed examination of each piece in terms of technique and form, identifying unique performance techniques such as the “silent octave” and “long-sustained notes”. This method contributes to revealing the interrelationship between the content of the pieces and the characteristics of the performing technique, emphasising the value of the *Child's Play* cycle in mastering the art of piano performance. The key strengths of this article include a clear focus on the pedagogical potential of avant-garde techniques, a systematic analysis of each miniature, and the identification of how unconventional sound methods can develop musical thinking in children.

### **Evolution and Significance of Children's Piano Albums**

Children's piano albums began to evolve in the 19th century and became popular educational resources for young pianists in the 20th century. One of the earliest significant contributions to this genre was *Album for the Young* by Robert Schumann, created to educate children by introducing them to musical art and revealing the complexity of musical forms and imagery. Schumann paved the way for pedagogical music that not only teaches technique but also fosters the artistic thinking of children. His approach was later supported by composers such as Claude Debussy, who, through his piano cycles, created a repertoire for young performers with profound artistic value (Bourg, 2021; Steliou and Jakubowski, 2024).

Two types of educational compositions can be distinguished in the history of piano works: instructive and artistic. The instructive type, being earlier, includes exercises and études aimed at developing pianistic technique (Silvey, 2024). Meanwhile, the artistic type unites pieces where technical and aesthetic tasks are equally important. It is the traditions of the latter type that have

sustained the popularity of the children's piano album genre throughout its development (Feist, 2019).

When considering the reasons behind the emergence of the finest examples of children's piano albums, an important argument is that they must take into account child psychology and performance capabilities. This leads to the creation of an adapted and maximally clear sound structure. It seems that the patterns of a child's psyche should be intuitively grasped. The most popular children's piano albums, both then and now, were often composed by composers for their own children (Akutsu, 2022).

The content of children's music albums is orientated towards the perception of music by the still-developing child psyche, with little or no prior listening experience (Varella, 2023; Puy, 2024). Therefore, the foundation of such pieces and miniatures is one specific image, which imprints itself on the listener/performance's consciousness through the expressive means of music. Rapid changes of images are poorly perceived by the child's psyche, which is why musical information directed at children must be specific, tonally understandable, memorable, concise, and accessible. These albums concentrate on such qualities. At the same time, the album is typically structured as a sequence of contrasting pieces united by one idea. This "larger" form of an instrumental work is convenient for perception (Igamberdiev, 2024). Each miniature represents a particular story from a child's life, and together, they depict a whole world. The contrast between the pieces is softened by programmatic elements, which is necessary to activate the listener's attention, dulled by continuous listening (Madmarova et al., 2023; Bazaluk and Nezhyva, 2016). Developmental types found in "adult" music are less suitable for young listeners. Long-lasting sounds, sharp contrasts, and dynamic dramatic development are tiring for them and can lead to serious psychological "anti-musical" consequences (Romaniuk, 2021; Spytska, 2024). The musical fragments of such works, adapted for children, do not provide a holistic picture and do not activate all possible elements of perception (Lewis, 2019). Therefore, programmatic elements constitute an important component of children's musical albums.

One of the functions of programmatic elements is anticipation, which involves setting the listener's/performer's associative and imagistic thinking to the required "atmosphere" as intended by the composer (Diachenko et al., 2024; Romaniuk and Yavorska, 2022). In other words, it is necessary to awaken the desired response, interest, activity, and positive mood. The titles of the miniatures in the cycle should provoke associations because only what is understandable will be

perceived (Toktagazin et al., 2016; Lobanova et al., 2023). The image familiar to the young performer/listener is created through simple and accessible means. The programme can either embody already familiar concepts or introduce new ones based on existing knowledge.

Helmut Lachenmann goes beyond the traditional approach to children's albums, offering not only the teaching of technique but also the development of skills in auditory analysis and the perception of sound textures (Cavalotti, 2006). In *Child's Play*, each piece offers a unique challenge in creating a sound space, turning the cycle into a unique "textbook" for young performers wishing to master modern sound production methods. This approach allows young musicians to broaden their understanding of music, encourages the development of auditory attention, and enhances their ability to find musical imagery in a sound context.

Thus, *Child's Play* by Lachenmann is not just a collection of piano pieces but an innovative educational resource for children aimed at introducing them to contemporary sound aesthetics. Including such works in educational programmes helps children develop both performance skills and an understanding of contemporary music. Lachenmann provides young performers with the opportunity to explore new sonic horizons, offering access to complex yet understandable sound structures. This perspective sets the cycle apart from classical examples and positions it as a ground-breaking tool in music education, as it merges traditional tasks with modern creative methods, allowing children to engage with the intricate and multifaceted world of contemporary music.

### **Musical and Technical Features of the Cycle Child's Play**

The piano cycle *Child's Play* (7 Little Pieces) by Helmut Lachenmann, composed in 1980, belongs to the composer's mature creative period.

The cycle consists of seven movements, each with its own title:

1. *Little Hans.*
2. *Clouds in Icy Moonlight.*
3. *Akiko.*
4. *Fake Chinese (Slightly Drunk).*
5. *Filter Swing.*
6. *Bell Tower.*
7. *Shadow Dance.*

Each of the seven miniatures has its own original concept and a unique set of musical and “technical” means of expression. It is the technical performance techniques that serve as the unifying factor throughout the cycle. Some of these techniques are carefully explained by the composer in a brief note titled “Notes” (Kass, 2024). For example, one technique used in all seven miniatures can be called the “silent octave” (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Technique of “silent octave”

This technique refers to a cluster consisting of all the chromatic semitones, silently pressed and held by the palm. In three miniatures – *Little Hans*, *Akiko*, and *Bell Tower* – the “long-sustained” sounds are notated graphically with thick lines, as the piano keys are sequentially pressed and held by one hand (Irving, 2024; Devaney et al., 2023). This deviation from traditional notation contributes to a clearer and more understandable presentation.

In Figure 2, an unconventional method of indicating the pedal is shown, which Lachenmann uses in the pieces *Clouds in Icy Moonlight* and *Shadow Dance*. Unlike the traditional placement of the pedal mark below the staff, the pedal mark is placed between the parts for precise synchronisation with the right hand. This positioning emphasises the importance of coordinating sound and movement to create a special rhythmic structure.



Figure 2. Pedal notation in the miniatures

The third piece, *Akiko*, can be performed in version a), where a second performer takes on the role of playing the bass pedal with their hand. After the piece has been learnt in this version, it can be performed with a sostenuto pedal (if available). Alternatively, in version b), the piece does not require an additional performer or sostenuto pedal.

The notes in the final measures of No. 5 *Filter Swing* do not indicate a lowering but rather a softening of previously lowered tones (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Scheme of Filter Swing

Figure 3 illustrates the structure of the piece *Filter Swing*, where Lachenmann uses a continuous back-and-forth motion to create a “swinging” effect. In the first section of the piece, a repeating vertical sound is presented, which is intensified by clusters, creating a continuous “swinging” sound that symbolises the operation of an industrial filter.

In No. 2, No. 4, No. 5, and No. 7, the indication Vi- and -de suggests fragments that can be omitted if the entire piece proves too physically or psychologically challenging for a young performer (making it difficult for them to concentrate). The metronome markings are approximate. The total performance time for the entire cycle is approximately 17 minutes.

### **Analysis of Musical Images and Techniques in the Cycle *Child's Play***

The first piece, *Little Hans*, opens the cycle by introducing performers to the primary technical techniques and style of Helmut Lachenmann. Here, the composer employs a simple and concise structure based on a descending chromatic motion that spans almost the entire range of the piano: starting in the high register (c, V octave), the notes deliberately descend to the lowest and deepest register. By organising sounds into constructions corresponding to syntactical units (motifs, phrases, sentences, and periods), rhythm plays a formative role. Subordinated to rhythm, this piece can be conditionally divided into three sections (Table 1).

A	B	C	+ addition
1-8	9-16	17-28	29-31
period	period	3 phrases	

Table 1. Structural division of the piece *Little Hans*.

The first section (measures 1-8) is devoted to monophonic presentation: at “fff” in the fifth octave, the notes sound very staccato with a special stroke – accentuated staccatissimo (also called “staccatissimo wedge”). The pedal, held for five measures, softens the descending “melodic” line. However, in the first two measures, a clearly defined melodic line is formed, which alludes to (whether accidental or intentional) the initial motif of the Habanera from *Carmen*, achieved through a similar sound-rhythmic organisation (descending chromatic motion, pause on the strong beat)



and a grace note on the strong beat. The entire first section is organised into a logical period of rhythmically repeated structure, adhering to the principle of syntactical summation: 1+1+2, 1+1+2. Figure 4 demonstrates the form of the piece *Little Hans*, divided into three sections with an additional conclusion. This descending motion creates a spatial perception and generalises the sound space, serving as the foundation for the subsequent pieces in the cycle.



Figure 4. Structural division of the piece *Little Hans*

Grace notes form a “countermelody”, which descends not in semitones but in the whole-tone scale (c, b, as, fis, e). The second section (measures 9-16), also spanning 8 measures, can be defined as a period of non-repetitive construction, consisting of two contrasting types of phrases. The first phrase introduces the new technique of “long-sustained notes”. Instead of the sharp staccatissimo, the notes “remain in place”, merging into gradually expanding clusters. In the second phrase, two types of presentation are combined: against the lingering cluster, short staccato notes continue to descend, maintaining the rhythmic pattern of the second phase of the first period (measures 5-8). The third section (measures 17-28) consists of three phrases, continuing the downward movement established in the first section. Strengthened by a third-based doubling, the notes first descend staccato, then extend, lingering on each quarter note instead of an eighth note. The final stage becomes a counterpoint to the descending thirds – a “stretto” in the high register, where the initial descending motion is given in augmentation. In addition, against the “silent chord” (b-es-ges), the initial motion is “finished”, bringing a sense of closure to the form. “Visualising” the sound space of the cycle, *Little Hans* lays the structural foundation for the subsequent miniatures.

Thus, *Little Hans* opens the cycle of contemporary constructive music for children. This miniature not only introduces listeners to the basics of this musical style but also demonstrates that modern musical techniques can be perceived in an accessible and understandable way.

The next piece, No. 2 *Clouds in Icy Moonlight*, is, like No. 1, a representative example of constructive thought. Although the piece may evoke the impression of effortless virtuosity, it is underpinned by a deliberately constructed system of linear melodic development. In just 20

measures, a concise and somewhat schematic landscape sketch unfolds. Mechanistically smooth elements in the high register create a picture of sluggish silver masses of cloud elements in a distant atmosphere, far removed from the listener.

*Clouds in Icy Moonlight* begins with an ascending scale-like motion in eighth notes (in 4/4 time), with one “missing” note (f – g – as – c). This even motion sets the pulse for the steady eighth-note movement throughout the piece (except for the last measure). The opening motion is balanced by another musical theme – a pendulum-like movement, a kind of resolution of the introductory tones into “stasis” (b – a-as – g – a-as). Although it is difficult to call the split sound (a-as) stable. These two movements (each lasting half a measure) can be conditionally called the first and second melodic elements of the piece. The third element becomes the pounding, reflective repetition of one note (in the second measure, it is the note “c”). These three elements form the basis for further development.

The exposition of the elements forms the first phase of movement. On the last weak beat, the second phase begins – against the pounding sound (c), the first element enters. In the second phase, it progresses gradually, without skipping notes, but does not reach its peak; it returns to “stasis” (a-as). The parallel exposition of the third and first elements forms a two-voice texture (sub-voice imitative). The technique of “silent octave” adds a muffled quality. As in No. 1, the octave is on the note a in the subcontra octave. The second element in the second phase also undergoes changes – it still clings to “stasis”, but it captures a lower tone and transitions to the third element – the pounding note “fis” (measure 4). The tendency toward two-voiced texture continues – as the repeated “fis” note alternates with “cis” and “h” notes, forming pure fourths upwards and downwards. The two repetitions of these fourths create the effect of selecting the appropriate intervals and listening to them.

The continuing repeated monophonic “fis” (measure 5) introduces a new phase of movement. The end of measure 5 and all of measure 6 are based on the principle of the second element – waves of sound alternate with the repeated “stasis” (as-b). In this case, “stasis” is a major second interval, but its narrowing to a minor second leads to the expansion of the third phase with a new element. It can be said that the fourth element follows the principle of movement from the second element – it also involves constant return on the weak beat, but to a new “stasis” (the note “c”), with gradual descending shifts (minor thirds) on the strong beats. The only difference is that this element is

presented in a slowed harmonic rhythm, and the “stasis” gradually splits – its lower note moves in semitones in parallel with the thirds on the strong beats.

Another phase – the fourth (measures 10-13) – is marked by the composer as Vi-de, meaning the miniature can be performed either with or without it. The beginning of this phase is similar to the start of the previous one – the repeated monophonic note “fis” transitions into a wave-like movement of parallel minor seconds. However, the absence of a “stable note” and its inherent “gravitational pull” leads to the expansion of the seconds into micro-clusters, spanning a tone. Repeating pairs of micro-clusters (fis-g-as) alternate with a micro-cluster a tone higher (gis-a-b). Their repeated iteration (2 bars of the fourth phase + 2 bars afterwards, measures 12-15) in the full performance of the miniature sounds like a prelude to the “recapitulation” – the final phase of the piece. In the shortened version, the two bars of micro-clusters (measures 14-15) are perceived as an additional stage in the development of the third phase. Consequently, both the full and shortened versions of the performance have a logical structure.

The final phase can be conditionally called the recapitulation: it features a modified first element (a tone higher, g – as – b – c), which, upon reaching the “stable note” – the sound c, begins to split, forming a chain of gradually increasing intervals (diminished 1, minor 2, major 2, minor 3, major 3, diminished 4, diminished 5). The resulting fifth (f – c) freezes, repeating in place. Only in the final 20th measure does the regular eighth-note pulsation cease, and after a pause, it repeats once more, but as an echo of the picture that has passed by.

Closely tied to the melodic line is the pedal. The composer gives the pedal a substantial “role” and treats its notation with great care, writing it not, as usual, under the staff, but between the lines. From the second half of the first measure, the pedal almost continuously highlights and complements the accent on each weak beat. Only when the micro-clusters sound does the composer emphasise them with a strong beat (Kelmendi, 2024). Unlike its traditional use for prolonging sound or creating a soft and enveloping timbre, in *Clouds in Icy Moonlight*, the composer uses the pedal as a rhythmic accent tool.

The third piece in the cycle, *Akiko*, is presented in two versions (3a and 3b) for selection, depending on the type of instrument available. Version 3a is intended for performance either by two players at one piano or on an instrument equipped with a sostenuto pedal, while version 3b is adapted for a standard piano lacking this pedal.

In this miniature (comprising only 19 measures), the composer integrates two techniques characteristic of the cycle: the “silent octave”, which does not sound in the first and last three measures, and the “long-sustaining notes”, which create the effect of suspension in space. Another element of the musical fabric in *Akiko* includes staccato sounds and harmonies.

The form of the miniature leans toward a one-movement structure with a dramatic wave-like progression. The overall descending movement in the first half (measures 1-11) is counterbalanced by an ascending, uplifting motion in the second (measures 12-19). The pivotal moment a quiet (almost silent) climax occurs at the golden section (the end of the eleventh measure).

The first “phase” is a descending movement. After the introduction measure, filled with a “silent octave”, the first musical surge sounds – two lines moving toward each other in pentatonic tones. The composer differentiates the parts for the left and right hands, assigning one to play on the black keys, the other on the white. The rhythmic dissonance between the lines creates a distinctive playful dotted rhythm. Light, bouncing thirds and seconds descend through the middle and then the lower register. The placement of the weak beats highlights their instability, airiness, and elusiveness (Nosenko, 2024; Pydiura, 2024).

The balancing phase begins similarly to the first with lines moving in opposition, but in the lower register. In the detached left-hand part, the ascending motion begins, moving along the black keys of the piano. Passing through much of the instrument’s register, this pianistic passage slows down and eventually halts at the melodic peak the note “des” in the third octave.

In *Akiko*, the composer continues the trend of presenting musical material in isolated fragments as in *Little Hans*, where the material seems to hop on pointe, and in the icy shards of *Clouds in Icy Moonlight*. Despite the unusual imagery encoded in the title, Lachenmann emphasises the expressive character and accessibility, with techniques already familiar from No. 1 and No. 2, which do not intimidate and, rather, enhance the pleasure of performance.

No. 4, *Fake Chinese (Slightly Drunk)*, is the formal centre of the cycle. Positioned between two relatively calm pieces *Akiko* and No. 5, *Filter Swing* this miniature seems even more frantic and chaotic. The composer adopts an ironic stance toward the image being portrayed – it is not only *Fake Chinese* but also comic in nature. The atmosphere of busyness, instability, and a ringing, swirling world is created through a series of “pseudo-exotic” means.

First, there is a distinction between the parts of the right and left hands, which play on the white and black keys of the piano, respectively. For the left hand, the composer places five flats, and for

the right hand, five sharps. Thus, each part has its scale, representing a distinct layer of musical texture. Second, there is an abundance of parallel triads and then seventh chords. Regular pulsation in eighth notes, alternating adjacent triads, ascending and descending chains of parallel triads, and seventh chords form the upper layer of the musical texture. Third, a detached chain of intervals (mainly alternating fourths and thirds) in staccato represents the lower layer of sound. In contrast to the even metric structure of the upper layer, the irregularity of the lower forms an intricate, unified rhythmic pattern. This contrapuntal texture creates a kaleidoscopic effect, “deconstructing” the form into small fragments.

Despite the apparent simplicity and vividness of the imagery – portraying the world through a stylised and culturally mediated lens – the dramaturgy of this miniature follows the principles of wave-like structural development. Starting with a five-voice vertical, the composer gradually thickens the texture to seven, eight, and even nine simultaneously sounding notes. This synchronised expansion is underscored by the dynamic plan – from “f” at the beginning, “ff” to “fff” in the densest moments and back.

This piece also features the unifying cycle technique – the “silent octave”. In the final measures, its backdrop is filled with slowed, quarter-note pulsating four-note chords that gradually narrow down to a single sound.

In general, *Fake Chinese (Slightly Drunk)* is the dynamic centre of the entire cycle. Its activity and humour, rhythmic “constant instability”, and the accent on verticals with a more percussive than harmonic function will certainly engage, delight, and provide significant benefits to the young pianist.

No. 5, *Filter Swing*, is another structurally charming miniature. Built on constant rocking, it embodies the image of a continuously working industrial filter. The form of this miniature can be loosely divided into two sections. They differ in their type of exposition, notation, and rhythmic formula. No. 5 begins with a short introduction: though graphically shown as only one measure, its actual sound lasts for four. This is due to the repeat sign and the “2x” multiplication mark in the top left corner of the measure. The repeated measure contains two verticals of half-duration notes (in 4/4 time), outlining the entire phonetic complex of the first section. These are the harmonies des-es-ges-as-b in the left hand and d-e-f-g-a in the right. As in the previous miniature, the composer differentiates the playing on the black and white keys for the two hands.

The first section (measures 1-15) of this piece is based on a rhythmically oscillating forward-backward motion: the familiar sound vertical, played on the strong beat, weakens on the weak beat, releasing new sounds each time (from the available ones). Thus, the effect of rocking is created through constant alternation between tense clusters and a weak, harmonious “release”. With the unchanged strong beat, the “remaining” “chord” on the weak beat repeatedly takes on new forms. Expanding at the end of the section (measures 13-15), it freezes.

The new phase begins (measures 16-56). Like the first, it opens with a short introductory passage. This passage introduces the logic of the entire second section: the frozen cluster spanning a major sixth (with outer points des-b in the first octave) is balanced by “silent intervals” of varying lengths. The rhythm of alternation compared to the first section noticeably slows down as only the strong beats sound.

Interestingly, the composer marked most of the second section as optional (Vi-de). The optional material (measures 20-51) is divided into eight fragments of four measures each. The structure of these fragments is similar: in the first two measures, the “silent chord” is only played by the left hand, while in the second, it is also duplicated by the right hand. The difference lies in the sonic content of the silent chord. The tendency to thicken the “silent harmonies” and expand their range is evident from the first fragment (a maximum of three notes) to the last (five notes). A small ending (measures 52-56) hangs in the air with a silent monologue: the soundless cluster dissolves, and silent points of no return emerge. The connection to the real world of sounds becomes the note b, accented against the backdrop of the “silent octave”.

Thus, No. 5 can be performed in two versions – full and shortened. Depending on the performance, the form of this miniature can be diagnosed as either one-part or two-part. The alternation between sounding and “silent” elements draws the young performer/listener’s attention to the importance of balance between silence and sound in creating an image.

No. 6, *Bell Tower*, describes the ornate Gothic structures, the severity and simplicity of grey stone, and the pealing of natural bells. The tiered structure of a Gothic cathedral, typical of mediaeval Germany, is reflected in the graphical design of the miniature. Created for the performer’s convenience, the three-line staff visually divides the score into three “tiers” – low, middle, and high registers, corresponding to the bell tones.

The piece begins with the exposition of musical textures. A three-measure melodic movement (b – c – des – a – d, stepwise + affirming fourth) in the low register serves as the introduction. Over

this monophonic texture, the well-known technique of “long-sustaining notes” is layered, thickening the sound space of the miniature. Against the deep and heavy bass, the “response” sounds – a kind of bell-like echo-chime in the high register. This is formed from a chain of parallel thirds, interspersed with fourths and fifths. The wave-like movement with a steady pace evokes a distant Gregorian chant (Bazaluk, 2019; Shershova and Chaika, 2024). The middle register continues the small exposition. Its musical content consists of detached harmonies based on pure fourths. Alternating between the lower and upper parts of the texture, this layer’s melodies combine the characteristics of floating bell chimes with the “peaceful” quality of bells in a cathedral. The left hand of the middle register occasionally contains the ascending melody. Simultaneously, the right hand performs an “ornate chain”, presenting detached bell-like sounds.

The exposition of the piece *Bell Tower* contains the entire phonetic complex of the piece, consisting of three layers of musical texture. Each layer is represented by its own elements and performance techniques: “long-sustaining notes” in the low register, a flexible sequence of bell-like echoes in the high register, and detached harmonies in the middle register. The subsequent unfolding of the musical idea is a dialogue between the upper and middle registers, set against the bass cluster “pedal”. The alternating sections form the logical second part of the piece’s form. However, this process does not fragment the miniature but, on the contrary, is unified and monumental.

The final piece of the cycle, *Shadow Dance*, evokes something highly romantic and mysterious. Through a playful approach to the musical theme, the composer creates a diametrically opposed image – trembling, playful, light, like the shadow of aspen leaves moved by the wind. *Shadow Dance* “hovers in the air” with its endless rhythmic graphics. The word “hovers” can be used both figuratively and literally: the entire sound atmosphere of this miniature consists of a sustained interval of a second (B in the third octave – C in the fourth octave) and, occasionally, the “silent octave” technique in the bass.

The feeling of endlessness in this piece (for both the listener and the performer) is not only created by the monotonous phonetic complex but also by the exquisite structural level of the composition. Rhythm serves as a foundational principle for formal organisation across multiple levels of the musical composition, as is evident in several other miniatures (Nos. 1, 2, 4, and 5). The entire process of *Shadow Dance* consists of several phases with varying rhythmic activity. The rhythmic complex consists of small fragments or rhythmic formulas (lasting one measure) that the composer organises in segments of one and two measures for technical convenience. The number of

repetitions (from 2 to 8) of each segment is specified by the composer, allowing each phase of the movement to aim for an eight-measure symmetry. This transforms the relatively short piece (40 measures) into a work almost twice its original length (78 measures). Lachenmann allows a version with a cut, marked *Vi-de*, permitting the removal of measures 17 to 30 inclusive, thus reducing the piece's length without damaging its form.

The concluding piece, *Shadow Dance*, is fast-paced, engaging, and captivating. The simplicity of the phonetic space and the complexity of the rhythmic structure, combined in this piece, create the necessary balance between the embodied image and its execution.

To support young students in mastering the unconventional techniques presented in *Child's Play*, educators must adopt a pedagogical approach that balances technical instruction with imaginative exploration. First, teachers should create a safe and experimental learning environment where students are encouraged to explore the piano beyond traditional tonal expectations. For example, they can introduce exercises that isolate techniques such as the “silent octave” or “long-sustained notes,” gradually integrating these into more complex textures as students gain confidence.

Educators can also employ visualization and physical movement exercises to reinforce spatial perception of sound, such as encouraging students to perceive the keyboard not only linearly but as a multidimensional sound space. In practicing the semantics of silence, instructors may guide learners through listening exercises that focus on the tension and release created by rests, resonance, and dampened keys, fostering a heightened awareness of silence as an active musical element.

Furthermore, it is essential to contextualize Lachenmann's techniques within a broader framework of 20th- and 21st-century music. Through discussions and audio comparisons, students can be introduced to composers like John Cage, George Crumb, or Karlheinz Stockhausen, making Lachenmann's approach part of a recognizable lineage. Finally, integrating improvisation sessions based on selected techniques from the cycle can help students internalize these methods creatively rather than mechanically, nurturing both their interpretive independence and their engagement with contemporary repertoire.

## CONCLUSION

The *Child's Play* cycle by Lachenmann is popular among both beginner and experienced performers. The composer consistently visualises seven diverse musical images, introducing young



performers to unconventional sound production and piano performance techniques. The main task of each miniature in the cycle is to embody a specific image, with its content determining the choice of musical expressive means, such as the phonetic complex, performance techniques, rhythm, and form. The significance of each element within the sound space of the cycle is fundamental.

Lachenmann's compositional method deserves attention for its lack of traditional harmonic boundaries, allowing for the formation of causal relationships between paired elements: phonetic and performance, rhythm and form. For example, the sound space of the first part of No. 5 *Filter Swing* is created by the simultaneous sound of two non-tertial chords: des-es-ges-as-b and d-e-f-g-a. In different pieces of the cycle, the pedal plays different roles – from adding depth to the sound space to functioning as a rhythm-forming element. The composer emphasises the importance of coordinating the pedal with the right-hand part.

Another unifying element of the cycle is the use of “silent octave” and “long-sustaining notes”, which appear in all the miniatures, creating cohesion throughout the album. The wave-like dramaturgy in each piece highlights the development and continuity of ideas between the pieces, enhancing the structural and sonic integrity. Thus, the *Child's Play* piano cycle contributes to the development of performers' skills in perceiving and conveying the figurative content of music through innovative performance techniques.

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### **GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET**

Helmut Lachenmann'ın *Child's Play* (Çocuk Oyunu) adlı piyano döngüsü, modern ses tekniklerinin genç müzisyenlere nasıl uyarlanabileceğini gösteren önemli bir örnektir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, döngünün ses alanının özelliklerini analiz etmek ve bu eserin sanatsal ve pedagojik önemini ortaya koymaktır. Araştırma yöntemi, her bir minyatürün yapısal özelliklerini ve ses alanının karakteristiklerini detaylı bir şekilde incelemeyi içermektedir. Analitik yaklaşım, ses üretimindeki özgün tekniklere odaklanmaktadır.

Analiz sonuçları, *Child's Play* döngüsünün genç icracılarda işitsel algı ve uzamsal düşüncenin gelişimi üzerinde önemli bir etkiye sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Döngüdeki her bir parça, dinleyicilere modern ses dokularını ve tekniklerini tanıtmakta, "sessiz oktav" ve "uzun süreli notalar" gibi benzersiz yöntemlerle genç müzisyenlerin avangart müzik dünyasına adım atmasını sağlamaktadır. Bu eser, yalnızca piyanonun olanaklarına ilişkin kavrayışı genişletmekle kalmaz, aynı zamanda 20. yüzyıl avangart müziğinin tekniklerini öğreterek pedagojik bir işlev de görür. Lachenmann'ın eserleri, 21. yüzyılın ses alanında klasik ve güncel olarak kabul edilmektedir. Bestecinin "enstrümantal beton müzik" olarak bilinen benzersiz yaklaşımı, geleneksel enstrümanları kullanırken geleneksel olmayan ses üretim tekniklerine odaklanır. Beton müzik türü, 1960'ların ortalarına kadar uzanan köklere sahip olsa da Lachenmann bu türü temel olarak akustik ve elektronik olmayan yöntemlerle kullanır. Bestecinin müziği, artikülasyon, vuruşlar ve tını gibi ifade araçlarına odaklanır.

*Child's Play* döngüsü, genç icracılar için bestelenmiş yedi piyano parçasından oluşur. Döngünün başlığı, eserlerin kolaylığını ve gayri resmi yapısını vurgularken, aynı zamanda karmaşık tekniklerin genç müzisyenlere uyarlanması da ima eder. Lachenmann, geniş bir ses efektleri yelpazesi sunarak çocukları enstrümantal beton müzikle tanıştırır ve işitsel algılarını geliştirir. Bu durum, onların ilerideki yaratıcı büyümelerinin temelini oluşturur.

Lachenmann'ın mirası, müzik sanatı için büyük önem taşır ve eserleri araştırmaların konusu olmaya devam etmektedir. Utz (2022), Lachenmann'ın estetik teknolojisini analiz ederken, bestecinin ses üretiminin fiziksel yönlerine odaklanmasının müziğine benzersiz akustik nitelikler kattığını belirtir. Schreiber (2020) ise Lachenmann'ın eserlerindeki post-yapısalcılık ve yapıbozum etkilerini inceleyerek, bestecinin standart olmayan çözümlere olan bağlılığını derinlemesine anlamamızı sağlar. Leipert (2019), Lachenmann'ın müziğinin genç icracıların eğitimi için önemini vurgular ve karmaşık tekniklerin genç müzisyenlere erişilebilir hale geldiğini belirtir.

Bu araştırmanın amacı, *Child's Play* döngüsünün ses alanının özelliklerini analiz etmek ve karmaşık ses üretim tekniklerinin genç müzisyenlere uyarlanmasına dair yeni ilkeleri ortaya koymaktır. Bu hedefe ulaşmak için, her bir parçanın teknik ve form açısından detaylı bir şekilde incelendiği analitik bir yöntem kullanılmıştır. Bu analiz, "sessiz oktav" ve "uzun süreli notalar" gibi benzersiz performans tekniklerini ortaya çıkarmıştır. Bu teknikler, parçaların içeriği ile icra tekniği arasındaki ilişkiyi açığa çıkararak, *Child's Play* döngüsünün piyano icrası sanatının öğretimindeki önemini vurgulamaktadır.

Çocuk piyano albümleri, 19. yüzyılda ortaya çıkmış ve 20. yüzyılda genç piyanistler için popüler eğitim kaynakları haline gelmiştir. Bu türün en erken örneklerinden biri, Robert Schumann'ın *Gençler İçin Albüm* adlı eseridir. Schumann, çocukları müzik sanatıyla tanıştırmak için müzikal formların ve imgelerin karmaşıklığını ortaya koymuştur. Onun yaklaşımı, daha sonra Claude Debussy gibi besteciler tarafından da desteklenmiştir. Debussy, piyano döngüleri aracılığıyla genç icracılar için derin sanatsal değere sahip bir repertuvar oluşturmuştur.

Çocuk piyano albümleri, genellikle çocuk psikolojisini ve performans yeteneklerini dikkate alarak oluşturulur. Bu tür eserler, çocukların müziği algılamasına yönelik olarak tasarlanmıştır ve genellikle belirli bir imge üzerine odaklanır. Müzik bilgisi, çocuklar için ton açısından anlaşılır, akılda kalıcı, özlü ve erişilebilir olmalıdır. Bu albümler, genellikle bir fikir etrafında birleşen zıt parçaların bir dizisi olarak yapılandırılır. Bu "büyük" form, çocukların algısı için uygundur. Her

bir minyatür, çocuğun hayatından belirli bir hikâyeyi temsil eder ve birlikte bir bütün dünya oluşturur.

Lachenmann, geleneksel çocuk albümü yaklaşımının ötesine geçerek, yalnızca teknik öğretmekle kalmaz, aynı zamanda işitsel analiz ve ses dokularını algılama becerilerini de geliştirir. *Child's Play* döngüsünde, her bir parça, ses alanı yaratma konusunda benzersiz bir meydan okuma sunar ve bu döngüyü, bu döngüyü modern ses üretim yöntemlerini öğrenmek isteyen genç icracılar için benzersiz bir ders kitabı haline getirir. Bu yaklaşım, genç müzisyenlerin müzik anlayışını genişletmelerine, işitsel dikkatlerini geliştirmelerine ve ses bağlamında müzikal imgeler bulma yeteneklerini artırmalarına olanak tanır.

*Child's Play* döngüsü, yedi farklı müzikal imgeyi görselleştirerek genç icracıları alışılmadık ses üretim ve piyano icra teknikleriyle tanıştıır. Her bir minyatürün temel görevi, belirli bir imgeyi somutlaştırmaktır ve bu içerik, müzikal ifade araçlarının seçimini belirler. Lachenmann'ın bestecilik yöntemi, geleneksel harmonik sınırların olmamasıyla dikkat çeker ve bu durum, ses alanı ile performans teknikleri, ritim ve form gibi unsurlar arasında nedensel ilişkiler kurulmasını sağlar. Örneğin, *Filter Swing* parçasının ses alanı, iki farklı akorun eşzamanlı olarak çalınmasıyla oluşturulur. Pedal, farklı parçalarda farklı roller üstlenir ve bestecinin sağ el partisi ile pedalın koordinasyonuna verdiği önem vurgulanır.

Döngünün birleştirici unsurlarından biri, "sessiz oktav" ve "uzun süreli notalar" tekniklerinin kullanılmasıdır. Bu teknikler, tüm minyatürlerde yer alır ve albüm boyunca bir bütünlük sağlar. Her bir parçadaki dalga benzeri dramaturji, fikirlerin gelişimini ve parçalar arasındaki sürekliliği vurgular. Bu nedenle, *Child's Play* piyano döngüsü, icracıların müziğin figüratif içeriğini algılama ve yenilikçi icra teknikleriyle aktarma becerilerini geliştirmelerine katkıda bulunur.

Sonuç olarak, Lachenmann'ın *Child's Play* döngüsü hem yeni başlayan hem de deneyimli icracılar arasında popülerdir. Bu eser, genç müzisyenlere modern müzik tekniklerini öğretmek için önemli bir kaynak olarak kabul edilir ve işitsel algıyı, müzikal düşüncüyü ve yaratıcı algıyı geliştirir.